

PROPOSITIONAL KNOWLEDGE IN PLATO

by

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary philosophers distinguish a certain "propositional knowledge (KP)" from other sorts of knowledge such as "knowledge by acquaintance (KA)". However, when Plato began to do philosophy no one had formulated the concept of KP, indeed, no one had formulated the notion of what we call a "proposition". On the contrary, the ancient Greeks unreflectedly presupposed that all knowledge was simply some sort of acquaintance with the object of knowledge. This presupposition of theirs naturally caused a great deal of confusion in their epistemology and at the beginning of his career, Plato himself was victim and perpetrator of this confusion. However, as the following thesis shows, Plato began to make explicit and to question the presupposition that all knowledge was KA and he did make progress towards finding the crucially missing category, KP. It was not that he succeeded totally in isolating the notion of KP. For that matter, he never attained to a notion of "proposition" in all its modern generality. However, he did come to hold that sometimes knowledge involves not only acquaintance with the object of knowledge but also a knowledge of inter-relations among things known. Having at first tried to

understand all knowledge in terms of a model that construed it as nothing more complex than some sort of acquaintance with the object of knowledge, Plato subsequently abandoned this model and proceeded to develop an epistemology capable of accomodating cases of what we would call KP. I shall argue that Plato did this after he had written the Charmides and before he wrote the Theaetetus.

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary philosophers distinguish a certain "propositional knowledge (KP)" from other sorts of knowledge such as "knowledge by acquaintance (KA)". However, when Plato began to do philosophy no one had formulated the concept of KP, indeed, no one had formulated the notion of what we call a "proposition". On the contrary the ancient Greeks unreflectedly presupposed that all knowledge was simply some sort of acquaintance with the object of knowledge. This presupposition of theirs naturally caused a great deal of confusion in their epistemology and at the beginning of his career, Plato himself was victim and perpetrator of this confusion as will be shown. However, as the following also shows, Plato began to make explicit and to question the presupposition that all knowledge was KA and he did make progress towards finding the crucially missing category, KP. It was not that he succeeded totally in isolating the notion of KP. For that matter, he never attained to a notion of "proposition" in all its modern generality. However, he did come to hold that sometimes knowledge involves not only acquaintance with the object of knowledge but also a knowledge of interrelations among thing known. Having at first tried to understand all knowledge

in terms of a model that construed it as nothing more complex than some sort of acquaintance with the object of knowledge, Plato subsequently abandoned this model and proceeded to develop an epistemology capable of accomodating cases of what we would call KP.

Up to this point my sketch of Plato's epistemological development is in agreement with what W. G. Runciman says in his Plato's Later Epistemology.¹ Runciman holds that the early and even the middle Plato thought of all knowledge as "a sort of mental touching."² Even as late as the Theaetetus "Plato continued to think of knowledge as a sort of mental seeing or touching."³ However finally --- but only by the time he wrote the Sophist --- Plato at last abandoned this view and came to understand that "knowledge of certain Forms involves knowledge of the connecting properties which they possess, and the philosopher is now concerned less with contemplation than correlation."⁴ On Runciman's view, then,

¹ W. G. Runciman, Plato's Later Epistemology (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1962).

² Ibid., p. 10.

³ Ibid., p. 52.

⁴ Ibid., p. 129.

Plato did make some progress towards distinguishing KP from KA. Runciman would therefore accept the account sketched above. However, he would want to add to this account that it was only towards the end of Plato's life that he made this progress. He therefore represents Plato as propagating for most of his life the false doctrine that all knowledge is KA. According to Runciman, in spite of all his thinking about knowledge the early and middle Plato completely overlooked even the possibility of knowledge that was not KA. Runciman goes to the dialogues with the question, "how far did Plato arrive at a distinction between knowledge that ... and knowledge by acquaintance?"⁵ and he comes back with an answer to the effect that Plato did make some progress but only towards the end of his life. On Runciman's view, then, when we measure Plato's abilities against the contemporary distinction between KP and KA, then, for whatever reasons, Plato does not really come up to standard: he spent most of his life under the delusion that every case of knowing must somehow be understood only in terms of "mental seeing or touching".⁶

⁵ Ibid., p. 1.

⁶ Runciman's Theory has recently been endorsed by Jaakko Hintikka. Vide Jaakko Hintikka, Knowledge and the Known (Dordrecht-Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1974) p. 18 ff.

What I intend to argue in what follows, however, is that, on the contrary, Plato began to break through this delusion not in his late period but in his middle period. Indeed, it was by the time he had completed the Republic that Plato had achieved all the progress towards the KP/KA distinction that Runciman ascribes to him only on the basis of the Sophist. In the Sophist, I claim, Plato was merely applying an insight about knowledge which had led him to abandon as far back as the Republic his attempt to understand all knowledge in terms of a simple acquaintance model: the Sophist was not the début of this insight, as Runciman holds, but rather its marriage to a perplexing problem connected with "non-being" arranged by Plato in order to produce as offspring a solution to this problem. Thus whereas I want to argue on Runciman's behalf that Plato did indeed abandon a "KA only" model of knowledge in favour of a model capable of accomodating cases of KP, I want to say against Runciman that Plato had the good sense to do this long before he wrote the Sophist.

Before beginning to investigate the truth of this matter, it is necessary to have some idea of what is meant by KP and KA. Exactly what is this KP/KA distinction that, on Runciman's view, Plato completely

overlooked for most of his life? Who actually did make this distinction completely explicit? Who first gave it its definitive form? Interestingly, we shall find it difficult to answer these questions. As we are about to see, the distinction in terms of which Runciman judges Plato is a distinction that is not well explicated even today.

Bertrand Russell was probably the first philosopher to talk in terms of having "knowledge by acquaintance" as opposed to "knowing propositions." As early as 1905 he had mentioned "the distinction between acquaintance and knowledge about." ⁷

The word 'know' is ... used in two different senses. (1) In its first use it is applicable to the sort of knowledge which is opposed to error, the sense in which what we know is true, the sense which applies to our beliefs and convictions, i.e. to what are called judgements. In this sense of the word we know that something is the case. This sort of knowledge may be described as knowledge of truths. (2) In the second use of the word 'know' ..., the word applies to our knowledge of things, which we may call acquaintance. This is the sense in which we know sense-data. (The distinction involved is roughly that between savoir and connaitre in French, or between wissen and kennen in German.) ⁸

⁷ B. Russell, "On Denoting" (In Mind 14 (1905)) p. 479.

⁸ B. Russell, Problems of Philosophy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959) p. 44.

According to Russell KA of some object was "a direct cognitive relation to that object."⁹ Not every object, however, could be known in this way: only sense data, universals and perhaps certain entities apprehended by introspection. "It will be seen," he wrote, "that among the objects with which we are acquainted are not included physical objects (as opposed to sense data), nor other people's minds."¹⁰ Thus for Russell only a very limited number of entities qualified as possible objects of KA. His was a specialized sort of what we would normally call KA. Of course, needless to say, when some philosopher such as Runciman claims that certain ancient Greeks presupposed that all knowledge was KA, he does not mean that they presupposed that only sense data and universals were knowable. The sense in which Runciman imputes a KA doctrine to Plato is a sense in which it is possible to have acquaintance with objects, persons, places and so on. It is KA broadly speaking and not the KA peculiar to Russell that is ascribed to the ancient Greeks. Of course, one could go further and actually claim that someone like

⁹ B. Russell, Mysticism and Logic (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1925) p. 209.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 214.

Plato did hold precisely Russell's view on acquaintance but that would be taking another step altogether and raising an issue that need not and will not be raised in this paper. For our purposes the objects of acquaintance need not be limited in any special way such as Russell's.

As far as KP is concerned, Russell is not interested in KP generally so much as in KP having to do with propositions containing definite descriptions which denote objects with which we are not in Russell's sense acquainted. Indeed it is the knowledge of objects designated by definite descriptions that interests Russell and not so much the KP connected with this knowledge.

What I wish to discuss is the nature of our knowledge concerning objects in cases where we know that there is an object answering to a definite description, though we are not acquainted with any such object. This is a matter which is concerned exclusively with definite descriptions.¹¹

Thus although Russell is interested in the KP that the candidate who gets most votes will be elected,¹² he is not interested in the KP that, say, this colour with

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 209.

which I am acquainted is brighter than that one. Russell is therefore quite right not to call the knowledge that interests him "propositional knowledge" --- which would imply that he was dealing with KP in general --- but to call it "knowledge by description". This "knowledge by description" he rightfully distinguishes from his "knowledge of truths." It is only the latter that is propositional knowledge per se.

In a sense, then, it was Russell who actually first made the KP/KA distinction using our contemporary terminology. However, he made it not so much for its own sake as for the sake of the epistemological work he wished to do in connection with definite descriptions. Thus he nowhere studied the distinction itself at any great length.

Since Russell's work on the subject, a certain amount of work has been done on KP ¹³ but, surprisingly, very little has been done on KA, nor a fortiori on the KP/KA distinction. Indeed in 1969 there appeared an article in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research whose sole purpose was to remind people that there was a topic

¹³ Cf., e.g., Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1949) pp. 27-32.

called KA and that it deserved some attention. The author of this article, Paul Hayner, wrote that he hoped to "keep alive an issue which I believe has received much less attention that it deserves."¹⁴ Since Russell, then, very little work has been done in this area. Indeed, just as there was no well-defended, definitive formulation of the KP/KA distinction in Plato's time, so in fact, there is none today.¹⁵

Perhaps at this stage the reader is wondering why this matters so much. Why, after all, is it necessary to understand the distinction Runciman used any better

¹⁴ Paul Hayner, "Knowledge by Acquaintance" (In Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 29 (1968-1969) p. 423.

¹⁵ The one exception to this is Jaakko Hintikka's "Knowledge by Acquaintance - Individuation by Acquaintance" (in Knowledge and the Known, pp. 212-233). In this article Hintikka attempts a "reduction" of KA to KP. He analyses "a knows b" (where "b" denotes an individual) by " $(\exists x)$ a knows that $(b = x)$ " where " $(\exists x)$ " is used as a quantifier "relying on acquaintance". There are serious difficulties with this analysis. For one thing, suppose for example that a knows Harry even though a does not know that Harry is called "Harry". It is quite possible for a to know Harry even if a has never heard the word "Harry". Yet on Hintikka's view, a's knowing Harry is to be understood as a's having knowledge of the fact that Harry and this certain individual (with whom a is acquainted) are one and the same. a's knowing Harry amounts to a's knowing the fact that this individual is Harry. But a does not know this fact. Surely knowing a person is different from knowing a fact about a person and surely knowing a person is different from know what name (or description) applies to him.

than Runciman did? In any case, is not the distinction already clear and obvious? The point, precisely, is that the KP/KA distinction is not clear, that it is not easy to understand and that therefore someone who had not really studied it might very well misapply it. In particular it is quite possible that Runciman misapplied it to Plato and it is at least as likely that we shall misapply it to Runciman's evaluation of Plato unless we are more aware of its problems and profundities. We shall therefore take a closer look at KP, KA and the distinction between them, doing a little of the work that has been left undone since Russell and thereby also more than convincing the reader of the difficulties involved.

KA, basically, is immediate apprehension of things (or else memory of such apprehension). To know something by KA is just directly to apprehend it (or else to have a memory (perhaps unconscious) of apprehending it). KA is "cognitive contact" with an object, this object being contacted as a unity. The things that can be known in this way need not be mere sense data. For the ancient Greeks at any rate, one could know by KA persons, places and particulars. Insofar as one was

willing to reify properties, predicates or situations (---as we shall see, the ancient Greeks were more than willing to do this), one could know these too by KA.

However, just what is this "immediate apprehension" that is the essence of KA? This is very difficult to establish. Let us consider the case of someone's being acquainted with a certain group of mountains. Certainly someone who has grown up in these mountains has had the "immediate apprehension" of them sufficient for having KA of them but what about someone who merely visits them or someone who flies over them on business trips? What if political circumstances are such that they appear live on coloured television every evening on the news? Do we say that the businessman or the television viewer has "immediate apprehension" of them? How are we to understand this "cognitive contact" with the object of knowledge?

One characterization of this "apprehension" is the following fact: if something is known by KA, then that something must exist. Whatever the required "apprehension," it is at least an apprehension of some existing thing. Thus given the non-existence of say, Little Red Riding Hood, it is possible without any further information about the world to discount all

claims to the effect that someone is actually acquainted with Little Red Riding Hood.

Another characterization of this "apprehension" is that the knower may be said to know the object of knowledge regardless of what words are used to describe that object. His "cognitive contact" with it ensures that its designation is irrelevant. Thus to be acquainted with John is to be acquainted with Alex even if one does not know that John is also called "Alex". Hence KA is what Quine would call "referentially transparent."¹⁶ KP, on the other hand, does not possess this property: it is "referentially opaque". For example, someone who has met a stray donkey whose name ("Daniel") he has no way of knowing will know that this donkey is this donkey but he will not know that this donkey is Daniel. Although this donkey is in fact Daniel, we are not entitled in cases of KP to substitute one designation of the object of knowledge for another. On the other hand, one's knowing this donkey by KA does imply that he knows Daniel by KA.

We have just seen, then, that the "immediate apprehension" which is KA can be characterized by the

¹⁶ W. V. O. Quine, Word and Object (Cambridge, Mass.: M. I. T. Press, 1960) pp. 141-156 & 166-169.

fact that it is apprehension of a single object that exists and by the fact that it is referentially transparent. Given the present state of knowledge on the matter, these are, moreover, the only two well-defined characterizations of KA. Unfortunately, not even both together can answer the questions we raised about knowing the mountains. These then are the first set of unanswered questions in this area.

Whereas KA involves some sort of contact with one single object, KP involves what might be called a correct judgement that relates two or more entities (i.e. things, properties, concepts, etc.) in the way in which they are actually related. These entities may or may not exist. Cases of KP, therefore, typically involve a number of entities. Thus if it is said that some person "A" knows x by KP, we may assume that the x is a complex made up of various constituents. Since, moreover, KP is referentially opaque, it makes a great deal of difference which terms designate these constituents. Thus it would be better to say more explicitly that A knows $x(t_1, t_2, \dots)$ where t_1, t_2, \dots are all the terms of " x " and where t_1, t_2, \dots are indeed designated as such in " x ". (These terms may be nouns, adjectives, predicates, etc. and, of course, they will not be words like "a", "the", "which", etc.)

A second point to note in connection with KP is that whereas in KA the verb "know" takes a direct object, in cases of KP it takes what is in effect a subordinate clause, very often a subordinate clause introduced by the conjunction "that". Thus as a typical example of KP we might have: Peter knows that the outcome is glorious. The terms in this case are "outcome" and "glorious". The subordinate clause is "that the outcome is glorious" and it is indeed introduced by "that". Of course, it is a proposition that is introduced by this "that" and since it is impossible to know something false, this proposition must, of course, be true. Indeed, it is characteristic of KP that in every case there is some true proposition that is known.

Now although KP is often called "knowledge that" and for the reason that the subordinate clause we have just mentioned is, indeed, often introduced by "that", there are many cases of KP in which this conjunction is absent. There are also many cases of KP in which the true proposition known by the knower is not explicit in the statement attributing this knowledge to him. For example, we might have a case in which A knows which city his aunt is visiting. This city is, say, Tiberias. Now

A has never even seen Tiberias on television much less in real life and thus it is true to say that A has no KA of Tiberias. Nonetheless he knows which city his aunt is visiting. The reason that this is possible, of course, is that in ascribing to A the knowledge of which city his aunt is visiting, what we are really claiming is just that A knows that his aunt is visiting Tiberias. That is, the case in which A knows which city his aunt is visiting is simply a case of KP. The terms are "city", "his aunt" and "visit". The subordinate clause is "which (city) his aunt is visiting" and the true proposition is "his aunt is visiting the city of Tiberias". Note that in this, as in similar cases, the true proposition contains all the terms of the subordinate clause (plus one of its own) and, furthermore, that KP of the true proposition implies the original KP.

As another example, consider a case in which A knows if Tom has decided to believe. Here the terms are "Tom", "decide" and "believe". The subordinate clause is "if Tom has decided to believe". The true proposition is, say, "Tom has not decided to believe". This true proposition contains all the terms of the subordinate clause and, furthermore, knowledge of it implies the original knowledge ascribed to A.

We have just seen that the characteristics of KP are referential opacity, a subordinate clause expressing some interrelation, and a true proposition not necessarily explicit in the knowledge imputation. We have noted in particular that the conjunction "that" need not be mentioned. In this way we can see quite clearly that KP is not rigidly tied down to one particular grammatical form. This will be made even more clear by the next example, an example of KP in which not only the true proposition but also the subordinate clause is not made explicit.

Suppose that A knows the heroine of Middlemarch. Since Middlemarch is fiction we cannot say that A knows the heroine ("Dorothea") by KA --- or we shall have a case of KA of a non-existent object. What, then, is being said when we say that A knows the heroine of Middlemarch? Surely what we are saying is that A knows who the heroine of Middlemarch is, that is, A knows that the heroine of Middlemarch is Dorothea. Here, then, is a case of KP. The mere appearance of a sentence which imputes knowledge to someone does not establish the sort of knowledge imputed.

Thus far we have brought out a few of the minor complexities and difficulties with the KP/KA distinction. Now we shall turn to the real problems.

One might hold the view that among existing singulars are various situations or states of affairs. For example, we might have a state of affairs in Argentina such as the Communists being about to take over. As another example, (one due to Meinong), we might have as a state of affairs in John's living room the cat's being on the mat. Furthermore, as will be shown in the next chapter, the ancient Greeks were among those who would have held this view. Now if a state of affairs counts as an existing singular, there is no reason why it should not be an object of acquaintance. Granted that there is such a thing as a certain situation in Argentina, surely it is possible to know it by KA. However, what precisely is the difference between knowing by KA the situation of the Communists being about to take over and knowing by KP that the Communists are about to take over?

To take another example, suppose that John knows the cat's being on the mat. Does he not have to know that the cat is on the mat? Not necessarily. For suppose John is a two year old child who has not yet learnt

how to talk. Then is it not true that although he is acquainted with the situation of the cat's being on the mat, that he is nonetheless not in possession of the terms and judgements necessary for KP? Or do we say that he has KP that the cat is on the mat even though he has not yet learned how to use the word "cat"? It seems not. Perhaps, then, the child has no KA of the situation but only of the cat and the mat separately. But why should that be? Surely he is acquainted with some situations such as his being hungry. Why should he not know the cat's being on the mat? It seems, then, that we cannot blithely assume that if A knows some situation, that he therefore must know that p where "p" denotes a proposition describing the situation: for A might not be in command of the terms used in p and A might not be in command of the terms used in any proposition equivalent to it for the purposes of describing the situation. Furthermore, what we can assume in a case like the one described is uncertain.

Suppose, however, that John is an adult and that he knows by KA the cat's being on the mat and that he also knows by KP that the cat is on the mat. How does the one knowledge differ from the other? For one thing,

the KA is transparent whereas the KP is opaque. Suppose that John is completely unaware that the cat consistently wins all the beauty prizes for cats. Then although he will still know by KA the situation of the world's most beautiful cat being on the mat, he will not know that that world's most beautiful cat is on the mat. For a second thing, John's KA cannot be transmitted to someone who lives in another city and who has never seen nor heard of the cat, whereas John's KP can be transmitted to such a person. For although there is no way in which the other person can become acquainted with the cat's being on the mat (short of coming to see), this other person can easily come to know that the cat is on the mat: for John can simply telephone him and report the matter. Then, on the basis of John's reliable report, that other person will have KP that the cat is on the mat. It seems, therefore, quite certain that one can have KP about a situation without having KA of it. What is not certain, however, is whether, as in the case of the child, one can have KA of a situation without having any KP about it. What the example of the child has to say about the KP/KA distinction I am not sure.

Another problematic area for the KP/KA distinction is the area of "knowledge as". For example, let us suppose that A knows Aristotle as a bright student. Is

this a case of KP or of KA? At first we are somewhat tempted to say that it is at least partly a case of KA. Perhaps, however, A is not Aristotle's teacher but merely the graduate student who marks Aristotle's papers. Perhaps, moreover, this marker has never met Aristotle but knows him only as a bright student. Surely in this case A can still be said to know Aristotle as a bright student although A has no KA of Aristotle. Perhaps, then, the original case was a case of KP. Perhaps all we were asserting was that A knows that Aristotle is a bright student. However, let us now suppose that A is Aristotle's teacher, that A has been very favourably impressed by Aristotle's class performance, but that A does not in fact know that Aristotle is called "Aristotle". Like most professors, A does not know the names of any of his undergraduate students. Now of course it is still true to say that A knows Aristotle as a bright student. However, given the opacity of KP, it is not true to say that A knows Aristotle is a bright student: A knows only that the red-haired student in the front row is a bright student. Thus it is not true that in ascribing the original "knowledge as" to A, that we were merely saying that he knew that Aristotle was a bright student. As another try, then, we might let 's'

denote some designation which A himself can use to denote or refer to Aristotle. Then we might construe A's knowledge of Aristotle as a bright student as the knowledge that s is a bright student. Thus where A is Aristotle's professor, what we are saying is that A knows that the red-haired student in the front row is a bright student and where A is Aristotle's marker, what we are saying is that A knows that the student who signs himself "Aristotle" is a bright student. However, this will not do either for, returning to the case where A is the marker, we can further suppose that although Aristotle's work made a distinct impression on A, there is no designation which A can use to denote or refer to Aristotle other than "that bright student". We can suppose that A has forgotten everything about Aristotle's work, even the name of its author, except that it was the work of a certain bright student. In answer to the question, "does the marker know Aristotle at all?" I think we would still reply, "he knows Aristotle as a bright student." However, the only possibility for "s" seems to be "that bright student", and on the present analysis A's knowledge of Aristotle as a bright student is then understood as the knowledge that that bright student is a bright student. However, when we say that A knows Aristotle as a bright student, we are not saying that A

has some analytic knowledge. Perhaps, then, we should allow "s" to be nothing more than "that person" in cases like this. But is A's knowledge the knowledge that that person is a bright student? If it were A would have propositional knowledge about a referent for which he can give only one description, a description that is not a definite description, a referent, moreover, with which A is not acquainted. Are we saying that it is possible for A to have knowledge about this referent under these conditions? What are we saying, then? We are not exactly sure. Nor is this the only case of "knowledge as". Even if we could analyze this case in terms of KP, how would we analyze: that child knows the Head of the Philosophy Department as his father? On the one hand, assuming that the child in question is as yet unable to talk, we will have difficulties imputing to the child even the KP that his father is his father (recall our discussion a few pages back), and on the other hand, if we try to understand the case purely in terms of KA, we shall be unable to account for the implied identity of the Head of the Philosophy Department and the father. Indeed, give our contemporary knowledge about KP, KA and the KP/KA distinction, we are simply not in a position to understand A's knowledge as. How can we

account for cases, like the immediately preceding case, which seem to be cases of KA? How can we account for cases that, on the other hand, at least seem to be purely propositional (e.g., he knows electrons as merely theoretical entities)? Finally, how do we deal with cases that seem to sit right in the middle (e.g., Plato's "pure" knowledge of various Forms as related in certain ways to the Good)?

We have now characterized and illustrated the distinction between KP and KA. We have seen some of the difficulties involved in this distinction and we have seen how it has not yet been fully worked out. We have seen, in particular, that there are some cases of "knowledge as" which share features of both KP and KA in a way that is not fully understood. We can conclude, therefore, that the distinction which Runciman has used as a standard against which to judge Plato is a distinction that is not yet properly explicated. We may hope, however, that the work we have just done on the previous pages has improved our knowledge of the KP/KA distinction at least to the point where we will not say anything too foolish in our own evaluation of Plato.

We shall conclude this Introduction by noting a

few miscellaneous points relevant to the proving of my thesis that Plato did make progress towards the discovery of the KP/KA distinction, and by the time he had completed the Republic.

First we must be clear that in fact the KP/KA distinction had not been made when Plato began to do philosophy. The following chapter shows that indeed the ancient Greeks did presuppose that all knowledge was KA.

Second we need not expect or require that Plato have a word for "proposition" as contemporary philosophers now mean the term. One need not have a name for a concept in order to be making progress in searching for that concept.

Third the KP/KA distinction has certain repercussions in language and thought. For example, in ascribing KP to someone, one can always use the "know that" construction whereas in ascribing KA to someone, one cannot. The point to note is that someone can be familiar with the repercussions of a distinction without realizing what it is that gives rise to these repercussions. For example, Plato may correctly use dozens of "know that" constructions¹⁷ and yet still be unable to formulate the

¹⁷ Cf. Ion 537e.

KP/KA distinction.

Fourth the thesis that Plato made progress towards the discovery of the KP/KA distinction is not shown to be false if even throughout his life Plato held that KA was the basic sort of knowledge. If, for example, Plato was consciously trying to explicate or characterize another sort of knowledge that was like KP in terms of KA, then the thesis is shown to be true. For if Plato was consciously trying to understand a second sort of knowledge in terms of KA, then he must have seen that this second sort of knowledge was different from KA, and if it was moreover somewhat like a KP, then Plato had not only made progress towards discovering the KP/KA distinction --- he had also done some work in comparing the two sorts of knowledge and probing their interrelations.

Fifth it is not necessary that Plato show any signs of making a KP/KA distinction with regard to cases of knowledge about sensible particulars. In order that Plato be making progress towards this distinction it is enough if he makes it with regard to cases of knowledge about Forms or classes. To make some version of the KP/KA distinction in connection with Forms or classes is nonetheless progress towards making it in all its proper generality.

Lastly, my thesis about Plato's progress is of course validated if Plato, having in his earlier dialogue characterized knowledge as KA, then decides in his late dialogues to characterize it as some sort of KP --- but given that Plato understands that he has characterized first one, then another sort of knowledge.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF KNOWLEDGE BY ACQUAINTANCE

In order to understand Plato's epistemology, we must first be aware that the ancient Greeks presupposed that all knowledge was KA. Ask one of Plato's contemporaries what knowledge is and he will answer that it is acquaintance with the object of knowledge, immediate apprehension or perception of it.¹⁸

This chapter does not give a complete proof for this assertion. What it does do is to cite some references and authorities and to sketch their opinions on the matter. A full presentation of evidence to support the claim would require a thesis of its own. For our purposes, however, what mainly matters is that of all the ancient Greeks at least the early Plato presupposed that all knowledge was KA and this fact is proved not only by the indications in the present chapter but in the remainder of this work as well.

In his paper, "Heraclitus, Parmenides, and the Naive Metaphysics of Things," Alexander Mourelatos offers as an explanatory backdrop to ancient Greek thought his "Naive Metaphysics of Things (NMT)". He proves that regardless of the historical reality of NMT, it is

¹⁸ Cf. Theaetetus 151e.

certainly helpful to assume that ancient Greek philosophers had it somewhere in the back of their minds as they wrote whatever they did. Using this assumption we can better understand much of what they said.

One tenant of NMT is that all knowledge is direct acquaintance (or else memory of direct acquaintance) with things. These things, moreover, are paradigmatically persons, places, massive bodies or homogeneous substances. Hence someone whose life is lived in terms of NMT can know you and your cousin and your family but he cannot know the proposition that you and your cousin are related by way of having the same grandfather. Furthermore, if someone knows of faraway places or awe-inspiring gods, it is only because he has visited them and had direct contact with them. This implies of course that they exist and, indeed, it is a corollary of NMT's view of knowledge that nothing can be known except existing things.¹⁹

If Mourelatos is right, we should expect this KA to turn up in the Greek philosophers as the only major

¹⁹ A. P. D. Mourelatos, "Heraclitus, Parmenides and the Naive Metaphysics of Things" (In Exegesis and Argument, ed. E. N. Lee; A. P. D. Mourelatos; and R. M. Rorty. Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Comp., 1973) pp. 17-33.

sort of "true" knowledge --- not that they lived their lives in terms of NMT but that in reflecting for the first time on the nature of knowledge, NMT would be the metaphysics with which they would start. In any case the early Greek philosophers do react just as Mourelatos' theory about NMT predicts: they do regard KA as the only true sort of knowledge. Hermann Fränkel has shown of Xenophanes, for example, that he "characterizes as certain and exhaustive only that knowledge that is empirically grounded. He holds only opsis, 'vision', and historiē, 'direct acquaintance', as reliable." ²⁰

Another scholar who has recognized this "tendency to think of knowledge in terms of some sort of direct acquaintance with the objects of knowledge, e.g. in terms of seeing them or of witnessing them" ²¹ is Jaakko Hintikka. Hintikka concludes that for the Greeks only an eyewitness's knowledge counted as genuine knowledge, and he then uses this fact in showing how it was that they thought that the objects of knowledge must be changeless.

²⁰ H. Fränkel, "Xenophanes' Empiricism and His Critique of Knowledge (B34)" (In The Pre-Socrates, ed. A. P. D. Mourelatos. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1974) p. 130.

²¹ J. Hintikka, Time and Necessity (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973) p. 72 ff.

The corollary to all this, that all objects of knowledge are existing things, likewise shows up in the early Greek philosophers. In particular it shows up in the curious fact that the Greeks treated properties as if they were substances in their own right.²² This of course they would have to do if they wanted to claim knowledge of properties within the limitations of the given corollary. Thus evidence that they held that properties were things constitutes evidence that they did indeed construe knowledge as acquaintance. At any rate Parmenides, for example, did think of properties as things and for him predicates were rather like proper names.²³ Plato himself held a similar view in his earlier dialogues. At Charmides 158e-159a, for example, Socrates insists that if Charmides is really temperate (as his admirers claim) then he will have some "temperance" inside him as a perceptible substance:

if you have temperance with you, you can hold an opinion [doxa] about it. For being in you, I presume it must, in that case, afford some perception from which you can form some opinion of what temperance is, and what kind of thing it is And since you understand the Greek tongue... you can tell me, I suppose, your view of this particular thought of yours.... Then in order

²² A. P. D. Mourelatos, op. cit., pp. 18-22.

²³ Ibid., p. 43.

that we may make a guess whether it is in you or not, tell me... what you say of temperance according to your opinion. ²⁴

A little later Socrates persists:

Charmides, attend more closely and look into yourself; reflect on the quality that is given you by the presence of temperance, and what quality it must have to work this effect on you. Take stock of all this and tell me like a good, brave fellow, what it appears to you to be. ²⁵

Further evidence that Plato thought of properties as things is found at Lysis 217c-e where "white" is substantialized and at Phaedo 102-106 where, among other properties, "being taller" is said to be an ingredient of taller persons, one that either "withdraws or perishes" when the taller persons are compared with things yet taller than they.

It should not be surprising that Plato reified properties once it is realized that this follows from the belief that all knowledge is KA of things, for certainly it is not an unknown fact that the early Plato did hold this belief. Of all the texts that might be quoted to support this fact, however, one of the most

²⁴ Charmides 158e-159a, trans. by Lamb.

²⁵ Charmides 160d-e, trans. by Lamb.

interesting sees Plato brush right up against the KP/KA distinction only to reject it in favour of NMT's "KA only" view of knowledge.

About half way through Charmides, Critias decides that temperance is the knowledge or science whose subject matter is sciences.²⁶ Socrates then proceeds to commit him to the view that the temperate man qua temperate man is a scientist of sciences who knows only whether or not a given thing is a science. The science of sciences strictly speaking does not give its possessor any knowledge of the subject matter of any other science but only the knowledge of science per se. In other words, the scientist of sciences qua scientist of sciences will know that chemistry is a science whereas astrology is not (170a) but he will not know any chemicals nor anything about chemistry nor any zodiacal signs nor anything about astrology. He will know medicine (qua medicine) regardless of whether or not he as an individual knows anything of health and disease. Socrates quite properly finds this paradoxical and points out that

he who would inquire into the nature of medicine must test it in health and disease, which are

²⁶ Cf. Charmides 166c.

the sphere of medicine, and not in what is extraneous and is not its sphere.²⁷

Later on, in referring back to this puzzling result, Socrates notes

the impossibility of a man knowing in a sort of way that which he does not know at all. According to our admission, he knows that which he does not know --- than which nothing, as I think, can be more irrational.²⁸

Now to express precisely this paradox, Socrates says at 170c that the scientist of sciences, "will not know what he knows, but only that he knows," this point being immediately elaborated:

Then being temperate, or temperance, will not be this knowledge of what one knows or does not know, but, it would seem merely knowing that one knows or does not know.²⁹

The point is this: qua scientist of sciences, the scientist of sciences is not acquainted with the objects of any science: he merely knows whether or not he or someone else possesses what can properly be called a science. Hence he knows that he or someone else knows something, but something with which he is not acquainted. Here notably seems to be a case of KP which is very

²⁷ Charmides 171a-b, trans. by Jowett.

²⁸ Charmides 175c, trans. by Jowett.

²⁹ Charmides 170c, trans. by Lamb.

definitely not a case of KA. However, it is not as if Plato were saying: "look! here we have two sorts of knowledge." On the contrary, he is pointing to this situation as the absurdum to which Critias' position leads. It is as if he were saying: "stupid Critias! look at the silly distinction to which your science of sciences gives rise. This distinction is absurd and thus your science of sciences is absurd too." In Charmides, then, Plato is seen still very much clinging to the presupposition that all knowledge is KA, and, on the basis of this presupposition, rejecting an assertion that suggests that there is some kind of knowledge that is not KA. Let us call the early Plato's epistemological presupposition the "all K is KA" presupposition.

THE PICTURE WINDOW THEORY OF LANGUAGE

One of the ways in which the KP/KA distinction can be made is in terms of referential opacity. As we noted above, in cases of KA the knower may be said to know the object of knowledge regardless of how it is described whereas in cases of KP this is not so. To know that a is c is not necessarily to know that b is c, even though, in fact, $a = b$. Given this way of making the distinction, however, it will follow that anyone who presupposed that all K is KA will be committed to the view that all knowledge is transparent. For such a person the two statements, "Tom knows 12 is 12" and "Toms knows $5 + 7$ is 12" will either both be true or both be false. What this present chapter attempts to do is to uncover the more general phenomenon which underlies this paradoxical position, to uncover the "transparency of language" required by Mourelatos' NMT. ³⁰

Let us begin by looking at a few texts. At Euthydemus 279a-c we find Socrates making a list of "good things". Having mentioned that wisdom and good fortune are among the good things (279c), Socrates reconsiders what he has said and realizes that:

³⁰ A. P. D. Mourelatos, op. cit., p. 32.

We have almost made ourselves laughing-stocks.... Why after putting good fortune in our former list, we have just been discussing the same thing again.... Surely it is ridiculous, when a thing has been before us all the time, to set it forth again and go over the same ground twice.... Wisdom.... is presumably [a cause or part of] good fortune. ³¹

It is as if Socrates were trying to list entirely different sets of natural numbers and having mentioned "numbers that end in 0" and "numbers that are divisible by 5" suddenly realizes that numbers that end in 0 are numbers that are divisible by 5. "How stupid!" he would think, "surely it is ridiculous, when a thing has been before us all the time, to set it forth again and go over the same ground twice." But why does Socrates find it ridiculous? Even if wisdom is prima facie the same as good fortune, why should it be true generally that if something goes under two names or descriptions, then it is ridiculous to list the two names or descriptions and yet not realize that they refer to or denote the same thing?

Socrates makes a similar remark at Republic 432d-e. He and Glaucon have been "hunting" for justice when suddenly Socrates realizes that they have

³¹ Euthydemus 279d, trans. by Lamb.

unknowingly been speaking of it all the time: it is just the principle that each citizen should "do his own business". Once again Socrates finds it most puzzling that they did not realize that "justice" and "doing one's own business" referred to the same thing.

Socrates says:

the thing apparently was tumbling about our feet from the start and yet we couldn't see it, but were most ludicrous, like people who sometimes hunt for what they hold in their hands. ³²

Finally, Theaetetus 195d-200c provides us with yet another case of Socrates' being incredulous in the face of the fact that a man can know two names or descriptions of the same thing without knowing that both these names or descriptions refer to the same thing. How is it, he wonders, that a man can know "5 + 7" and "12" and yet not know that these are just two designations for the same number? How can he think that 5 + 7 is other than 12, given that he knows both 5 + 7 and 12? An adherent to the KA only view can give no satisfactory answer to this question. He is not in a position to point out that one can know 5, 7, and 12 without neces-

³² Republic 432d-e, trans. by Shorey, with my emphasis. Note the KA imagery of "holding".

sarily knowing that they are interrelated in certain ways.

In each of these three cases, then, Socrates is presupposing (either in Plato's behalf or at least on behalf of those who hold that all K is KA) that: Someone who is in possession of two names or descriptions both of which he knows how to use in ordinary language and both of which refer to or denote the same thing will not only know these two things under two names or descriptions but will also necessarily know that the two names or descriptions refer to the same thing. In other words, someone who is acquainted with a thing under two names or descriptions (e.g., "wisdom" and "good fortune") in the sense that he at least knows how to use or to understand the two names or descriptions will moreover necessarily have what we would call KP that the two names or descriptions refer to the same thing. Thus, for example, he who has met Clark Kent and who has also met Superman and who therefore knows how to use these two names will necessarily know that Clark Kent is Superman. Having met the man in his secret identity as Clark Kent and having met the man in his uniform as Superman, one will necessarily know that the two men are the same man. Let us call this presupposition the

" $Ka \ \& \ Kb \ \& \ a = b \Rightarrow K(a = b)$ " presupposition or "PKab" for short.

Needless to say, PKab is as powerful as it is curious. It implies, for example, that if I know some x , then given any y such that I understand how to use " y " in ordinary language, if $x = y$, then I shall know that $x = y$, and furthermore only if $x \neq y$ shall I not know that $x = y$. However, if in the latter case I reflect that (assuming PKab) my ignorance of $x = y$ can only be due to the fact that they are not identical, I shall come to the knowledge that $x \neq y$. The converse is also true: if to know x is to know for all known y whether $y = x$, then it follows that PKab. \square

1. Let us consider some of the repercussions of presupposing PKab. Firstly, if any two (known) things such as courage and virtue are really the same thing, then one may easily ascertain this fact simply by knowing courage and virtue in a way that is sufficient for being able to talk about them in a given language. Secondly there will be no problem in deciding whether or not a given definition actually defines the term it is meant to define: for example, the principle that each citizen should "do his own business" will immediately be seen to be the same thing as justice. Thirdly, given

any description of a given thing, one will know that that description does describe that thing. This entails, for example, that young children who have just learnt the alphabet will have marvelous spelling abilities. Suppose such a child wishes to spell "mouse". Knowing m and also knowing the first letter in the word "mouse", the child will necessarily know that the two names or descriptions "m" and "the first letter in the word 'mouse'" refer to the same thing. This will enable him to write down the first letter correctly. Similarly he will know what to write down for the second letter, and so on. Another way of looking at this is as follows: if to know x is to know for all known y, whether $y = x$, then to know m is to know whether the first letter in the word "mouse" = m. Hence, if only by methodically going through the alphabet, the child will easily enough come to know which letter to write down first, which to write down second, and so on. In this manner he will be able to spell not only "mouse" but any word written in Roman letters. Needless to say, PKab holds great promise for adults as well. Methodical application of a description such as "the n^{th} letter or punctuation mark in the English paragraph which best summarizes the contents of this book" will enable one to learn the contents

of any book (in any language) without having to read it. It should be noted that, once again, Socrates is very puzzled that such marvelous possibilities are not exploited in everyday life. Why should someone set about reading, he wonders at Theatetus 198e-199a, when they already know all the letters?

Having seen just how curious the presupposition PKab really is, we are rather left wondering how it was that Plato could ever have allowed it to influence his thinking. Why did Plato allow his Socrates to assume the truth of PKab even for a moment? One answer to this question is that Plato was strongly influenced by a view that language somehow mirrors or pictures reality, by a presupposition that: Names, descriptions or statements picture or display what they name, describe or state. We shall call this presupposition the "Picture Window Theory of Language" or "PWTL" for short. I want to say not that Plato held this view but simply that he was influenced by it.

At Cratylus 430b, for example, it is agreed that "the name is an imitation of the thing." Hence one might easily take the view that "as the name is so also is the thing, and... he who knows the one will also know the other (435d)." Similarly in the Phaedo, there is the

passage 99d-100a where Socrates compares (albeit temporarily) the words that make up a theory (logos) to water in which is reflected the realities that the theory studies. At Theaetetus 206d, moreover, Socrates describes speech (logos) as a "stream that flows through the lips" and in which one sees an image of the speaker's thought "like a reflection in a mirror or in water." Again at Sophist 221d, it is insisted that someone's name "must surely express his nature." Finally, along similar lines we are told in Timaeus 29b that

we may assume that words [logos] are akin to the matter which they describe; when they relate to the lasting and permanent and intelligible, they ought to be lasting and unalterable, and, as far as their nature allows, irrefutable and invincible --- nothing less. ³³

On this view, therefore, he who knows the name or description of a thing knows the thing --- just as he who sees a good, genuine, front-view photograph of something sees what it portrays. Of course, if names or descriptions actually display their objects, then in line with PKab it will be obvious when two such names or descriptions refer to or denote the same thing --- just as it is obvious when two good front-view photographs

³³ Timaeus 29b, trans. by Jowett.

picture the same thing. PWTL implies PKab. One knows that Clark Kent is Superman because he sees that each name pictures the one and same man. Each name is like a completely transparent window overlooking the reality that is its referent.

It will be worthwhile at this point to look even more closely at the influence exerted on Plato by PWTL. For insofar as this presupposition insists on a radical transparency of language, it bars the way to the notion of KP, given the latter's implied opacity. One of the ways in which Plato might make progress towards the KP/KA distinction, then, would be to reject this presupposition and for that matter to reject its similarly restricting offspring, PKab. Indeed I hope to show that, precisely, Plato does make progress towards the KP/KA distinction in exactly this way. First, however, we must try to find out exactly how Plato understood PWTL and exactly how he felt its influence.

Throughout the Cratylus Socrates is arguing that names (i.e., nouns, proper names, adjectives, and verbs) are not mere products of convention. A "good" name, at least, is an expression of the nature of the thing to which it refers, just as a good shuttle is an expression of the "true or ideal shuttle" to which the carpenter

looks as he makes the good shuttle (383-390). Sometimes, indeed, the very letters that make up a word can be likened to colours which are used to paint a true-life picture of the referent of that word (424d-425a, 431c). For example, the "ρ" of "ῥοή" (stream) depicts the motion of streams, the tongue being "least at rest in the pronunciation of this letter" (426-e, 434b-c). Always, however, there is some way in which "the correct name indicates the nature of the thing (428e)", in which "the name is an imitation of the thing (430b)."

Up until Cratylus 428e, we find Socrates and Cratylus in basic agreement about all this, as indeed throughout the dialogue they are in agreement against those who argue that names are arbitrary conventions. However, at 429 there erupts a dispute in which Socrates claims that some names are bad imitations of their referents and Cratylus claims that all names (that really name anything) are good imitations of their referents. Both agree that names are like "pictures" of their referents (430b), only Socrates allows that names may sometimes be bad pictures (431c-e) whereas Cratylus does not (431e-432a). In fact it is Cratylus, not Socrates, who takes the position of complete transparency of language that supports PKab. For Socrates' position

allows that in some cases PKab will be false --- for just as it sometimes happens that a man who sees two bad photographs of the same thing does not recognize that they are photographs of the same thing, so it may sometimes happen that a man who knows a thing under two bad names or descriptions does not know that these two names or descriptions refer to the same thing. From Cratylus, then, we can conclude that whenever Plato wrote that dialogue,³⁴ he was already beginning to reject the influence of PWTL and also that of PKab and hence also that of all K is KA. On the other hand, he still took them seriously enough to give long and careful arguments against Cratylus' position.³⁵

Another area in which we can examine the influence of PWTL on Plato is the area of non-being and falsehood. Here we find Plato greatly troubled by a certain paradox that led to the conclusion that no statements are false. Roughly, this paradox argued that to speak falsely was to say something that did not exist and hence to say nothing,

³⁴ Cratylus is not a late dialogue. Cf. David Ross, Platonic Theory of Ideas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953) pp. 1-10..

³⁵ Cf. Charles H. Kahn, "Language and Ontology in the Cratylus" (In Exegesis and Argument) pp. 157-168.

i.e., not to utter a meaningful sentence. Plato brings up this paradox at no less than four places: Euthydemus 283e-284c, Cratylus 429d-430a, Theaetetus 188c-189b and Sophist 236e-241c. It is ostensibly the major problem of the Sophist. However, what lies beneath this paradox and why did Plato take it so to heart?

As David Wiggins has shown in the first section of his excellent article "Sentence Meaning, Negation, and Plato's Problem of Non-Being," ³⁶ one of the reasons that Plato was so enchanted by the paradox was that he believed that anyone who makes a statement must be saying "something", this "something" being a situation or state of affairs. ³⁷

It seems that just as an onoma (name) in the Cratylus is an instrument of teaching and sorting out Reality (... 388 A-C), whose correctness lies in the purpose of showing how things are..., so on the view of sentences which gives the paradox a sentence may be seen as showing, or drawing the hearer's attention to, or displaying for him... some situation in Reality --- a situation in the world of whose existence he will as a result of this act become informed. ³⁸

³⁶ David Wiggins, "Sentence Meaning, Negation, and Plato's Problem of Non-Being" (In Plato I, ed. Gregory Vlastos, Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1971) pp. 268-280.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 270, 278 & 280; cf. Theaetetus 189a and Sophist 237d-e.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 278.

Of course, if it is always the case that the situation displayed by a sentence exists in the world, in Reality, then it is always the case that a sentence is true! ³⁹

To put this in terms of what we said before, since PWTL implies that statements are like good, genuine photographs of what they state (i.e., their referent situations); and since all good, genuine photographs are photographs of existing things; therefore all statements state existing situations as referent situations, and hence all statements state what is true. Indeed, if there were any false statements they would be like photographs of things that do not exist, and just as photographs of things that do not exist are not, properly speaking, photographs, so in the same way false statements would not, properly speaking, be statements. Hence if anything is a statement, then it must be a true statement.

In this way, then, we see that Plato's difficulties with this paradox were caused largely by his sympathies with PWTL. Furthermore his resolving this paradox will show that he has already completely thrown off these sympathies.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 270-271 and cf. Parmenides 161e.

Exactly what point have we now reached in our attempt to show that Plato made progress towards the KP/KA distinction? At this point we are now aware of three NMT presuppositions that did influence Plato and that did stand in the way of his making the KP/KA distinction. These three presuppositions were that all K is KA, PKab, and PWTl. In what follows, we shall see that Plato rejected the influence of each of these, thereby already making some headway towards the KP/KA distinction, and that, moreover, as early as the Republic he had rejected their influence to the point where he was willing and able to accomodate certain cases of what we would call KP.

KNOWLEDGE IN THE REPUBLIC

In order to understand the epistemology of the Republic, it is essential to understand what Plato meant by the "hypotheses" of the Divided Line texts and to understand the way in which he thought they could be known. If he thought that they were simply concepts and that they were known merely by acquaintance, merely by being "seen" with the "eye of the soul", then there is no reason to think that Plato had advanced from his position in the Charmides. If, however, he thought that the hypotheses were propositions and that they were known by means of interrelating various concepts and deducing various conclusions, then there is every reason to think that Plato had gone very far indeed not only in discovering the KP/KA distinction but in establishing it. What I claim is that Plato thought of the "hypotheses" in neither of these ways but in a way that straddled these two ways. I claim that he thought of the hypotheses under a disjunctive concept allowed them to be either concepts or propositions. By a "disjunctive concept" is meant a concept such as "Easter coloured" which covers two or more "ordinary" concepts, e.g. "yellow" and "mauve". Arguments about objects falling under such concepts do not have to make the relevant distinction between the two disjuncts:

e.g. an argument showing that Easter coloured objects need not be red does not have to split the Easter coloured objects into two classes. I also claim that Plato thought that the hypotheses could be known by means of a process that involved both becoming acquainted with certain things and also involved establishing interrelations, coming to what we would call KP of certain concepts. Thus I do not claim that Plato advanced so far that he thought in terms of a purely propositional model with respect to the hypotheses but, on the other hand, I claim that he was no longer forcing all knowledge into a KA only mould, that he thought of the hypotheses and of knowing the hypotheses in a way not appropriate to mere KA but in a way that could accomodate KP. I do not think that Plato was completely clear about what he was doing in every respect but I do think he was quite clear that he was no longer handling knowledge in a way that was appropriate to the KA only model. I claim that he had consciously abandoned his view that all knowledge was simply some sort of "mental seeing or touching" and that he was reformulating his ideas on knowledge in such a way that they could accomodate what we (but not Plato, of course) would call "KP". In particular the Divided Line texts see him arguing to the effect that in some cases a knowledge of

certain interrelationships among Forms is necessary for knowing some given hypothesis and this, of course, is distinctly not in the spirit of a KA only model of knowledge. Indeed, to say that Plato was here handling knowledge in a way appropriate to a KA only model of knowledge would be to say that a KA only model of knowledge should embrace a feature that properly belongs only to KP --- namely, the feature of interrelationships. However, as we saw in the first chapter, KA involves nothing more intricate than an "immediate apprehension" of the single object of knowledge.

Let us now try to prove the assertions I have just made. To begin with let us recall from the Divided Line texts that at 510c Socrates complains about the students of mathematics that they

first postulate the odd and the even and the various figures [e.g., the square] and three kinds of angles and other things akin to these in each branch of science, regard them as known, and treating them as absolute assumptions [hypothesis], do not deign to render any further account [logos] of them to themselves or others, taking it for granted that they are obvious to everybody. They take their start from these, and pursuing the inquiry from this point on consistently, conclude with that for the investigation of which they set out. ⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Republic 510c-d, trans. by Shorey. Cf. Republic 533c.

The complaint against the students of mathematics is not that their "hypotheses" are false, non-existent or in some other way incapable of being properly known but that the students too easily take them for granted and fail to investigate them. As Socrates admits, these students could avoid this defect if only they went "back to the beginning" in their studies --- for the things themselves that these students study "are intelligibles when apprehended in conjunction with a first principle." ⁴¹ Unfortunately the "mental habit" of these students is such that they do not go "back to the beginning" but persist in relying on what they feel is obvious. What, then, should these students do? As is revealed especially at Republic 533, they must be taught to make use of the faculty of dialectic. For dialectic is

the only process of inquiry that advances in this manner, doing away with hypotheses [qua hypotheses], up to the first principle itself [i.e. the Good --- cf. 532a-b] in order to find confirmation there. ⁴²

Thus it is with the help of dialectic that they could

⁴¹ Republic 511d.

⁴² Republic 533c-d, trans. by Shorey.

indeed "go back to the beginning" as required and for the first time apprehend their hypotheses "in conjunction with a first principle". Dialectic will enable them

to rise to that which requires no assumption [hypothesis] and is the starting point of all, and after attaining to that again taking hold of the first dependencies from it, so to proceed downward to the conclusion [i.e. the hypothesis or else something based on the hypothesis], making no use whatever of any object of sense but only of pure ideas [Forms] moving on through ideas to ideas and ending with ideas. ⁴³

Once they have gone through this "progress of thought" they will at last be able to give a logos for the hypothesis and thus their "understanding" will be "converted into true knowledge or science." ⁴⁴ They will no longer fall under the complaint that they "do not deign to render any further logos" ⁴⁵ for their hypotheses.

It should be emphasized in this connection that the reason here that Plato complained that the students of mathematics did not have the "true knowledge or science" which belongs only to the highest section of the

⁴³ Republic 511b-c, trans. by Shorey.

⁴⁴ Republic 533c and cf. also 534b.

⁴⁵ Republic 510c-d.

Divided Line ⁴⁶ was that they did not bother to give a logos for their hypotheses. At the time he was writing the Divided Line texts of the Republic, Plato had come to hold that being able to give a logos was a necessary condition for knowing. The man who cannot give a logos, "in so far as he is incapable of giving a logos to himself and others, does not possess full reason and intelligence about the matter." ⁴⁷ The problem with the "understanding" of the students of mathematics, then, was that it did not require the capacity to give such a logos. ⁴⁸

This much having been said, we can at last begin to answer the questions, "what did Plato think his "hypotheses" were?" and, "how did he think they could be known rather than merely taken for granted?" We should want to know, of course, whether he thought of them as objects (e.g. Forms) or propositions or both, and, correspondingly, whether he thought of the logoi necessary

⁴⁶ Republic 510c-d.

⁴⁷ Republic 534b. Cf. also Republic 510c, 531e-532a, 533b-d. Evidence of Plato's view that knowledge requires a logos can also be found at Phaedo 76b-c and Symposium 202a.

⁴⁸ Cf. Republic 510c & 533b-d.

to their being known as being definitions or proofs or accounts or all these things together.

In chapter X of his Plato's Earlier Dialectic Robinson claimed that "Plato here treats as hypotheses certain propositions which the mathematicians think they know, which they consider 'plain to all.'" ⁴⁹ Without at all arguing for this position he goes on to say that "dialectic, in contrast to mathematics, does not take for granted certain propositions that ought to be merely hypothesized." ⁵⁰ For Robinson the "hypothesis" is a conclusion that must be deduced from other propositions and ultimately from the Good". "Plato surely [??] conceives of the downward path as a proof, a deduction, a demonstration, in which conclusions are drawn from the anhypotheton [the Good] as from an axiom." ⁵¹ This leads him so far as to have Plato thinking not only of the hypotheses but also of the Good as being a proposition or perhaps a set of propositions. ⁵²

⁴⁹ R. Robinson, "Hypothesis in the Republic" (Reprinted in Plato I, ed. Vlastos. New York: Doubleday and Co., 1971) p. 104 with my emphasis.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 108.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 116.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 110-111.

For Robinson, then, the hypotheses are propositions and the way in which they come to be known is by deducing them from the Good. Hence the logos necessary for this knowledge would be a deduction or proof.

Of course if Robinson were right this would more than prove my point that Plato had consciously abandoned the KA only model of knowledge by the time he wrote Republic. Unfortunately there are a number of difficulties with Robinson's interpretation, some of which are brought out by R. M. Hare in his "Plato and the Mathematicians." ⁵³

First there is the fact that the examples of hypotheses that Plato gives at Republic 510c are not examples of propositions but of concepts or, perhaps, Forms. They are "the odd and the even and the various figures [e.g., the square] and three kinds of angles and other things akin to these."

Second there is the fact that the faculty of dialectic is said by Plato to make use not of propositions "but only of pure ideas [Forms] moving on through ideas to ideas and ending with ideas." ⁵⁴ Now presumably

⁵³ R. M. Hare, "Plato and the Mathematicians" (In New Essays on Plato and Aristotle, ed. R. Bambrough. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965).

⁵⁴ Republic 511c.

somewhere along its dialectic journey (perhaps at the end), mind encounters the hypothesis from which it set out.⁵⁵ However, if as Plato says, the journey involves movement only among ideas or Forms, then when mind encounters the hypothesis, it must encounter not a proposition but an idea or Form (e.g., the square itself).

Third --- and this is Hare's point --- the logos that is required for knowledge of the hypothesis is given to be the logos of the essence (ousia) of a thing.⁵⁶ Propositions, however, are not and do not have essences. Only things have essences. Given this, then, the hypotheses would be things having (or perhaps being) essences and the logoi would be not proofs but definitions displaying these essences.⁵⁷

Finally there is the point that it simply seems ridiculous to hold that Plato's imagery was far divorced from his real opinions on the matter that although he consistently and forcefully described the Good as an object to be "seen" that he nonetheless really held that it was an axiom or set of axioms. On Robinson's view it

⁵⁵ Cf. Republic 511b.

⁵⁶ Hare, op. cit., p. 22 and cf. Republic 534b.

⁵⁷ Note that "logos" can be translated as either "definition" or "proof" depending on the context.

seems that in describing the Good in the way in which he did Plato was being deliberately misleading. If Plato had held that the Good was an axiom or set of axioms, surely he would have at least dropped a hint to the effect that his reader should be cautious of the opposite connotations of the imagery.

For these four reasons we must conclude that Robinson has ascribed to Plato a sophistication not found in the text. It is simply too much to assume that "Plato here treats as hypotheses certain propositions." However, what does he treat as hypotheses? Against Robinson, R. M. Hare has argued that the "hypotheses" of the Divided Line texts were for Plato just what he says they were at 510c --- mathematical entities of some sort (which are capable of being properly defined and which actually exist).⁵⁸ On this view, as Hare realizes, "it requires explaining how Plato can here speak of hypotheses as things, whereas elsewhere,⁵⁹ and indeed perhaps elsewhere in the Republic, he seems to speak of them as propositions."⁶⁰ To answer this requirement Hare states that Plato's conception

⁵⁸ Hare, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

⁵⁹ E.g., at Phaedo 99d ff.

⁶⁰ Hare, op. cit., p. 23.

of knowledge was in a state of transition. In fact he was gradually moving from a KA model of knowledge to a KP model of knowledge. Hence for Plato the object of knowledge was gradually changing from a thing to proposition. Because the change had not been completed, he thought of the object of knowledge sometimes in one way, sometimes in another. This then is Hare's explanation. Furthermore, as the reader will have noted, it is an explanation in harmony with my own views on the matter. However, whereas Hare merely states that Plato's conception of knowledge is in a process of transition, this is precisely what most needs to be proved, and whereas Hare is vague about the details of the transition it is necessary to show that it was indeed sometime before he had completed the Republic that Plato had left the KA only model and actually embarked on this transition. Thus as it stands Hare's explanation is weak.

Sitting judgement on Hare's article is C. C. W. Taylor's "Plato and the Mathematicians: An Examination of Professor Hare's Views."⁶¹ Taylor takes exception to Hare's claim that the hypotheses are not propositions and endeavors to show that they are. In fact, Taylor is defending Robinson's position.

⁶¹ C. C. W. Taylor, "Plato and the Mathematicians: An Examination of Professor Hare's Views" (In Philosophical Quarterly 17 (1967) pp. 193-203.

Opening Taylor's paper is a valuable section on the meaning of the Greek word for "hypothesis". Taylor argues vigorously that most of the time the word refers to some sort of proposition. However, he admits on Hare's behalf that it can sometimes mean "postulated entity" (i.e. entity postulated as existing). Furthermore he quotes a passage from a treatise On Ancient Medicine in which, as he argues, the word is used in both senses undifferentiatedly. In other words, the author of the passage from On Ancient Medicine is treating as capable of being "hypotheses" both propositions and postulated entities. With regard to the examples of hypotheses that Plato gives at 510c, then, Taylor concludes that the use of the word "hypotheses" in that passage "should be regarded as an undifferentiated use similar to that in On Ancient Medicine." ⁶² Thus Taylor is in effect arguing on what is in fact my own behalf that (at least in this passage) Plato thought of the hypotheses under a disjunctive concept that included both "propositions assumed" and "entities postulated".

The next section of Taylor's paper is devoted to undermining Hare's interpretation of Republic 533b-c. I

⁶² Ibid., p. 196.

have not mentioned this interpretation and (especially if Taylor is right) there is no need to. However, to get to the crux of Taylor's paper, we turn to page 198 where he asks, "on the traditional assumption that the hypotheses of the Republic are propositions, what propositions are they?" ⁶³ He proceeds to argue that they are propositions of the form: "the square exists"; "the three kinds of angles exist"; etc. and also propositions defining the square, the three kinds of angles, etc. On this view, then, the mathematicians are being accused by Plato of not proving the existence of their objects and, curiously, of not proving the truth of their definitions. ⁶⁴ However, all this is on the assumption that the hypotheses of the Republic are propositions. And although Taylor has argued that these hypotheses are not simply things, he nowhere argues against the possibility that they were in Plato's mind either things (of a special sort) or propositions (of some kind). This possibility is left wide open.

Where then does the Robinson-Hare-Taylor debate leave us? Firstly we still cannot, as Robinson and Taylor

⁶³ Ibid., p. 198.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 199.

do, merely assume that the hypotheses are nothing other than propositions. Besides the four as yet unanswered difficulties with this assumption given above (pp. 56-58) there is now the additional consideration that the Greek word for "hypothesis" could be used undifferentiatedly. Secondly we would find it very difficult to hold, as Hare does, that the hypotheses are simply objects. Besides the fact that the word "hypothesis" has strong connotations to the contrary there is also another fact that for Plato the knowledge of these hypotheses required knowledge about their relationship with the Good. However, knowledge about their relationship with the Good is not simple acquaintance: it is propositional. Yet, if as Hare says, the hypotheses were for Plato simply objects, it is difficult to see why he introduced such new and elaborate methods for knowing them rather than simply saying that they could be "seen" or "recollected". Why, for instance, does Plato exult that the philosopher does not merely "see" the objects of knowledge but "views things in their connection"? ⁶⁵ Why does Plato take such enthusiasm in the fact that the dialectic journey teaches the philosopher about the hypotheses their

⁶⁵ Republic 537c.

"relation and reference to the Good"? ⁶⁶ The answer to these questions must be to the effect that Plato is now handling the objects of knowledge in a way that is suited at least as much to propositions as to things. In the end, then, we find ourselves uneasy about agreeing with Robinson and Taylor and we also find ourselves uneasy about agreeing with Hare.

All uneasiness could be dispelled, however, and all difficulties met if only we held that Plato thought of his hypotheses under a disjunctive concept and that, in harmony with this, he described the epistemology of the Divided Line generally in such a way as could accomodate both things and propositions as objects of knowledge, in other words, as could accomodate both KA and KP. Under this interpretation, for example, the logos necessary for knowledge of the hypothesis could sometimes be a definition --- as required by the fact that at Republic 534b it is said to be the logos of an essence --- or it could also be a proof of some sort --- as seems to be required by the fact that the dialectic journey involves various interconnections and is thus deductive in nature. To make this move, moreover, we

⁶⁶ Republic 506a.

would not have to hold that Plato was himself entirely clear about this matter in the way that we are but simply that he was now handling knowledge in a way that presupposed it. We could hold that whereas in the Charmides he had been forcing all knowledge into a KA only mould, that here in the Republic Plato was advancing what we (but not Plato) would call a "disjunctive analysis of knowledge", one capable of accomodating either KA or KP. This then will be my own interpretation support for which can come not only from the fact that it resolves the Robinson-Hare-Taylor debate but also from an article by Montgomery Furth ⁶⁷ in which he gives a similar interpretation to Republic 476e-480a. We shall turn to this article for just a moment.

Republic 476e-480a is the passage in which Plato distinguishes the objects of knowledge from the objects of belief on the basis of the fact that knowledge and belief are different "faculties" or "abilities". What we, of course, would want to know is whether Plato conceives of the objects of knowledge as being only things, only propositions, or as being either things or propositions. For whatever he holds them to be here he will

⁶⁷ Montgomery Furth, "Elements of Eleatic Ontology" (In The Pre-Socratics) pp. 241-247, especially p. 245.

probably hold them to be in the Divided Line passages not too far away. Now precisely what Furth argues in connection with this passage is that they are in fact either things or propositions, that for Plato they fell under what Furth calls a "fused" notion embracing things and propositions disjunctively. When at 476e Socrates asks of the object of knowledge, "is it something that is or is not?" and Glaucon replies, "that is", Furth comments:

Glaucon's assent is entirely reasonable; for the principle is none other than the fused form of the two theses, axiomatic for knowledge_a [KA] and knowledge_p [KP] on any account, that necessarily if something is known_a, then it exists, and that necessarily if something is known_p, then it is the case or obtains. Thus the truism which Glaucon accepts can be split thus:

(6a) Necessarily, what
is known, is (= is
the case),

(6b) Necessarily, what
is known, is
(= exists).⁶⁸

Hence, just as I want to maintain with respect to the "hypotheses" that are objects of knowledge in the Divided Line texts, so Furth maintains with respect to the objects of knowledge at the end of Book V, that these objects of knowledge are either things or propositions

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 245.

and the knowledge of them is either KA or KP. Of course it is not true that Plato would have seen it just this way --- he would have considered himself to be dealing with knowledge generally and would not have thought that he was either including or omitting a distinction between two sorts of knowledge --- but in effect this is what was going on. On Furth's interpretation Plato has what at least we would call a "fused" or disjunctive analysis of knowledge.⁶⁹ And this is exactly what I want to maintain with respect to the Divided Line texts.

My position, finally, is this: firstly that Plato thought of the Divided Line hypotheses under a disjunctive concept including both objects and propositions. This part of my position is vindicated in the following ways: (1) it can accept the examples of "hypotheses" at 510c at face value; (2) it can allow for the fact that mind is described as moving on its dialectic journey from idea [Form] to idea and not from, say, statement to statement; (3) it allows the hypotheses sometimes to have (or be) definable essences as required by Republic 534b; (4) it allows the Good to be a Form rather than a set of axioms (albeit a Form in virtue of

⁶⁹ The same conclusion is reached by Gosling. Cf. J. C. B. Gosling, Plato (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973) pp. 129-132.

which not just Forms but also propositions can be known); (5) it accords perfectly with the fact of the undifferentiated use of the word "hypothesis"; (6) it explains why Plato develops a quasi-deductive "dialectic journey" rather than sticking to the simple model of knowing as "seeing"; (7) it explains why Plato still uses visual imagery for knowing --- even though on its own this visual imagery is not sufficient for what he wants to say; (8) it accords with Furth's interpretation of another related passage also in the Republic; (9) in doing all the above it makes a definite advance over the Robinson-Hare-Taylor debate. From this it is clear that the hypotheses are indeed either things (e.g. Forms) or propositions (e.g. definitions).

The second part of my position follows immediately from the first part. Insofar as the hypotheses were for Plato objects, the logos necessary to their being known was for Plato a definition of some kind; insofar as the hypotheses were for Plato propositions, the logos necessary to their being known was for Plato a deduction of some kind. Thus just as he viewed the hypotheses under a disjunctive concept so he viewed the logoi under a disjunctive concept. Similarly, of course, he conceived of knowledge under a disjunctive concept: insofar as the

hypotheses were things and the logoi were definitions the knowledge of these hypotheses was by KA; insofar as the hypotheses were propositions and the logoi were deductions the knowledge of these hypotheses was KP. To put it in other words Plato was handling what he thought was a single thing called "knowledge" but in a way that was appropriate to the fact that, as we know, this "knowledge" consists of two disjuncts, KA and KP. Thus just as the Divided Line model of knowledge was able to accomodate both things and propositions as objects of knowledge so it was able to accomodate both KA and KP. Hence whereas before Plato had been entirely closed to the possibility of KP and he had tried to subject all cases of knowing to his all K is KA presupposition, forcing them into a KA mould, now Plato has loosened up and is allowing into his epistemology the propositions, interrelations, etc. that are characteristic of KP. He is no longer thinking about knowledge solely in visual terms: he has now added to his account and imagery of knowledge a dialectic journey that involves mapping out "dependencies", "connections" and "relations". Indeed as Runciman would want to say only about the philosopher described in the Sophist, we would say of the philosopher described in the Republic, that "the

philosopher is now concerned less with contemplation than correlation". ⁷⁰

We can also see the truth of this in some other ways as well. For one thing, regardless of the status of the hypotheses it seems that the logos which the students of mathematics are lacking is some account or expression of the relationship ("R") of the hypotheses and the Good whereby the former is known. Indeed even if the logos were a mere definition of some entity it would seem that it would have to contain a reference to the Good. Thus in knowing the hypothesis one will know it as it is related in some way R to the Good. Now as we noted in the first chapter, "knowledge as" is a sort of knowledge not yet properly understood. Thus in a case like this it might turn out to involve nothing more than KA of, say, the set whose three members are the hypothesis, the Good and R. However, it at least seems much more plausible to hold that knowing an hypothesis as it is related in way R to the Good is just knowing that the hypothesis is related in way R to the Good. And if so, Plato has certainly accomodated KP in the Divided Line epistemology. Unfortunately, of course, we do not ourselves have a clear

⁷⁰ Runciman, op. cit., p. 129 (my emphasis).

idea of what is going on in cases of "knowledge as".

However, as another point, this time clearly in our favour, there is the fact that in the Divided Line texts Plato has implicitly rejected PKab and, a fortiori, PWTL. As we saw in the previous chapter the influence of these two presuppositions was a barrier to Plato's making any progress towards the KP/KA distinction. The fact, then, that they do not exert their influence in the Divided Line texts provides some corroboration for our conclusion just above that here in the Republic Plato has already made some progress towards that distinction.

Suppose then that the Good can be characterized as "that which is related in way R' to the square (or to "the square exists")". Then someone can know how to use the words "that which is related in way R' to the square" and he can also know how to use the word "good" but as is very clear from the Divided Line passages, unless he has travelled the dialectic journey he will by no means know that these two things are one and the same. We have, therefore, a counterexample to PKab and one that no doubt in some way impressed itself on Plato. Indeed it is quite an outstanding and general feature of the Divided Line epistemology that interrelationships among things are hard to learn about, that in fact knowledge is

not easily acquired as PKab would imply it was easily acquired. It is not at all enough simply to look at the word "good" in order to "see" the Good itself. The Divided Line passages, on the contrary, open the doors to the fact of the "referential opacity" of knowledge. The all-embracing transparency implied by PKab and, ultimately, by PWTL is virtually dead: if we see any further traces of these presuppositions we shall see Plato not wrestling with living creatures so much as digging out fossils.

CONCLUSION

In a sense this thesis has already been concluded. Our analysis of the hypotheses in the Divided Line texts has made it quite clear that even in Republic Plato had progressed beyond the KA only model of knowledge. Furthermore it could easily be shown that from then on Plato's epistemology consistently accounted for the fact that knowledge sometimes involves propositional elements such as interrelationships. For as the reader is no doubt aware propositional factors such as interrelationships are essential to the diairesis hierarchies that are introduced in the Phaedrus, and these diairesis hierarchies occupy the centre of the later Plato's thinking on knowledge. Indeed, if space permitted it could even be shown that Plato regarded the making of diairesis hierarchies as a dialectical activity and one that was in many ways foreshadowed by the dialectical activity in the Divided Line passages. ⁷¹

Now while the reader will hopefully accept all this, I can easily imagine that before he gives his

⁷¹ This claim is adopted and defended by Julius Stenzel in his Plato's Method of Dialectic, trans. and ed. by D. J. Allan (New York: Arno Press, 1973). Cf. also J. M. E. Moravcsik, "The Anatomy of Plato's Divisions" (In Exegesis and Argument).

wholehearted assent to my conclusions, that he would like to know what it was that induced Runciman to claim otherwise. In particular, what in the Theaetetus led Runciman to say that "the general impression left by the Theaetetus is that Plato continued to think of knowledge as a sort of mental seeing or touching"? ⁷² Of course the reader will also want to know some good reasons why I think that Runciman's impression was unfounded, why I think that he should therefore have concluded that Plato broke with the KA only model not after writing the Theaetetus but before.

The Theaetetus contains three unsuccessful attempts to define knowledge. The first of these attempts is an attempt to define knowledge as perception. However, as is clear from our first chapter, perception is simply what we called "immediate apprehension" of the thing perceived and as such it is a special sort of KA. Thus in rejecting as he does the view that knowledge is perception, Plato is rejecting a certain KA only model of knowledge. Thus in that part of the Theaetetus where this particular definition of knowledge is being discussed, it would be a little surprising if we could

⁷² Runciman, Plato's Later Epistemology, op. cit., p. 52.

find evidence there that Plato was still presupposing that all K is KA. We should rather expect to find evidence that he was prepared to say that some knowledge was not KA. It is most intriguing, therefore, that the first passage that Runciman cites in support of his ascription of a KA only model to Plato comes from precisely this section of the Theaetetus. In fact it is the very climax of Plato's argument against the knowledge is perception thesis (this at 184b-187a) that Runciman says "offers clear evidence that Plato does not distinguish between intellectual knowledge and knowledge by acquaintance." ⁷³ Of course to say that Plato does not "distinguish" KP from KA might just mean that Plato did not explicitly formulate just that distinction in just those words, and in that case I would agree. However, it seems fairly likely that Runciman's conclusion that Plato did not "distinguish" between KP and KA was influential in giving rise to his "general impression" that Plato did not even allow for the possibility of such a distinction. In any case, if we could, it would be good to show on our own behalf that the passage in question should by all rights give rise to the contrary "general

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

impression" that Plato was allowing for a KP/KA distinction.

The passage in question (184b-187a) is the passage in which Socrates claims that we must have a mind over and above our senses. This is for two reasons: first because we do make judgements which relate sense data peculiar to two or more senses and which therefore could not be made by just one of these senses but only by some faculty which serves as a meeting point for their sense data, this faculty being the mind (185a-b); and second because we do "contemplate" certain "common terms" such as existence and difference that, being intangible, cannot be "contemplated" through the senses and which must therefore be "contemplated" through some other faculty, namely, as it turns out, the mind (185b-e). (Note that the mind does not merely "contemplate" these intangibles but as in the case of the sense data, it makes judgements relating them (186a-b, 187a).) Granted his claim that we do have minds answering these descriptions, Socrates then points out that for corresponding reasons, knowledge cannot be perception: first because "knowledge is not in the sensations but in the process of reasoning about them (186d)"; and second because we can have knowledge of the intangibles although we cannot perceive them

(186e). In other words knowledge cannot be perception because (1) perceptions do not include judgements about sensations whereas knowledge does; and (2) perceptions do not extend to intangibles whereas knowledge does.

Runciman's conclusion with respect to this passage rests solely on the fact that Plato talks about the mind "contemplating" the "common terms".⁷⁴ According to Runciman this "contemplating" is the crux of the whole argument and therefore the whole argument is dominated by considerations concerned only with KA. With respect to Plato's statement that "knowledge is not in the sensations but in the process of reasoning about them"

Runciman comments

this is, of course, true; and it amounts to a virtual statement that intellectual knowledge is propositional. But this is not, unfortunately, the point that Plato wishes to make.⁷⁵

But why is this not "the point that Plato wishes to make"? For Plato certainly takes great care to make it and not just once but several times he talks about the fact that there are knowledge judgements. Indeed when in the face of this refutation Theaetetus withdraws his contention that knowledge is perception, there is no question of

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

his trying out the thesis that knowledge is "contemplation" --- rather he goes straight on into defending the thesis that it is true judgement and this latter thesis implies that it is propositional. Furthermore even if the fact that "intellectual knowledge is propositional" was not the point that Plato wished to make, still he did actually make it and thus on Runciman's own admission, the truth of it must therefore have crossed Plato's mind and if that were so Plato certainly realized that some cases of knowledge were not cases of acquaintance. Thus, regardless of whether Plato "distinguished" KP and KA here, he was certainly not, as even Runciman in the end would have to agree, continuing "to think of knowledge as a sort of mental seeing or touching." ⁷⁶ Thus even for Runciman the "general impression" left by this passage ought to be that Plato had abandoned any view that all K is KA.

We have just seen that the first passage that Runciman cites in connection with his contention that "Plato continued to think of knowledge as a sort of mental seeing or touching" does not in fact support this contention. What other passages, then, does Runciman offer

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 52.

in support of his position? As a basis for further evidence Runciman points first to the argument at 188a-c which opens the discussion of false judgement ⁷⁷ and then to the whole section (from 188 to 200) in which the problem of false judgement is discussed. ⁷⁸ According to Runciman this whole section presupposes what he would call the "assimilation of all types of knowledge to knowledge by acquaintance." ⁷⁹ Furthermore, if we except a very brief and completely unsubstantiated remark in connection with the famous "Dream", the section on false judgement is the only passage other than 184b-187a that Runciman cites as evidence for his view. (The remark in connection with the Dream occurs in a paragraph where Runciman points out that knowing by acquaintance letters or notes is very different from knowing "whether something is true or false". Runciman makes the unjustified comment: "but Plato's discussion of the 'dream' makes clear his unawareness of the difference". ⁸⁰ Then, without further comment, Runciman proceeds to discuss a

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 45.

passage in the Sophist.) Thus if we can show that the section on false judgement does not in fact imply that Plato was maintaining the "assimilation" of which he is accused, then we will have undermined the only support left for Runciman's making this accusation. We will have shown that there is nothing from Runciman that should stop us from accepting the conclusions that were reached in the last chapter.

Let us first look at the argument at 188a-c which Runciman specifically cites in his favour. Does it really depend on a "confusion of knowledge that and knowledge by acquaintance" ⁸¹ as Runciman says or does it, on the contrary, allow for the possibility that some cases of knowledge are not cases of KA? The argument, as the reader will recall, is designed to prove that given certain assumptions, false judgement is impossible. These assumptions are quite explicitly laid out: (1) false judgement is nothing more or less than the misidentification of two things both of which can be known by KA; and (2) cases of becoming acquainted with these things or forgetting them are to be discounted. Given these assumptions there are four possible cases in which a false judgement might be made: the case in which the judger knows by KA

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 29.

each of the things he misidentifies; the case in which he knows by KA neither of these things; the case in which he knows the first thing by KA but not the second; and the case in which he knows the second thing by KA but not the first. The main part of the argument at 188a-c simply sees Socrates and Theaetetus look at each of these four possibilities and discount it. They conclude therefore that there are no possibilities for making a false judgement. Of course, as the reader is also aware, Socrates and Theaetetus were wrong in every case: someone could easily make the mistake of identifying, say, the Russian spy and the Mathematics professor and regardless of whether he was acquainted with both, neither, or just one of them. How, then, did Socrates and Theaetetus come to be wrong? With respect to the first possibility for false judgement, where the judger knows both things by KA, the text makes it quite clear that they discount this possibility on the basis of an assumption to the effect that all knowledge is referentially transparent. Socrates asks, "is the man who thinks what is false supposing that things he knows are not those things but other things he knows, so that, while he knows both, he fails to recognize either?" Theaetetus replies, "no, that is impossible, Socrates".

Clearly Socrates' question contains an implicit rejection of the possibility that knowledge be opaque and clearly it is in accepting this implicit rejection that Theaetetus agrees with Socrates. With respect to the other possibilities for false judgement, the text makes it equally clear that these are discounted on the basis of an assumption that one cannot make any judgements about things with which one is not acquainted. This then is the argument from 188a-c. Does it support Runciman's conclusions? ⁸²

It certainly presupposes that we cannot have KP that one thing is the same as another thing unless we are acquainted with both things and it also presupposes that this KP is referentially transparent. Presuming furthermore that like false judgement, true judgement (which either is or goes into knowledge) is simply an attempt to identify two things, the argument at 188a-c is in effect also presupposing that all KP reduces to knowledge of the sort that a is a, where a is known by KA. Needless to say, KA is here making heavy incursions into the territory of KP. However, as Runciman seems

⁸² A. E. Taylor studied the argument at 188a-c in the light of the KP/KA distinction in his Plato: the Man and His Work (Frome and London: Methuen & Co., 1926) pp. 339-341 and 347-348. Taylor's conclusions agree with mine.

to have forgotten, the fact still remains that the argument is not simply dealing with acquaintance but with a judgement, and a judgement which attempts to assert the truth of a relation, if only the relation of identity. But judgements and interrelations, precisely, have no place whatsoever in a KA only model. Hence if this argument presupposes an "assimilation of all types of knowledge to knowledge by acquaintance", it must be presupposing what can only be called a very bad assimilation of all types of knowledge to KA: the assimilation was a failure. The argument in question simply does accomodate the possibility of a certain type of KP. As much as it talks about knowing the constituents of the judgement by KA, it nowhere insists that the judgement itself be nothing other than an "immediate apprehension" of some single thing. The "immediate apprehension" of some single thing is certainly involved and in the given judgement that thing is related to nothing other than itself, but nonetheless there is a judgement that does assert a relation and this is a feature only of KP. Thus the argument does not support Runciman's contention.

As far as the section on falsehood generally is concerned, we find it even less committed to a KA only model than this particular argument in it. For example

at 192c-d Socrates has retracted his assertion that one cannot misidentify two things with both of which one is acquainted, and he now says: "Take things you know. You can suppose them to be other things which you ... know". He thus correctly denies what is in effect the referential transparency earlier ascribed to judgement making. Hence insofar as he understands that judgement making is essential to some cases of knowledge (i.e. cases of KP), Socrates understands that these cases of knowledge preclude the feature of the substitutivity of identicals, the feature in other words, of transparency.

We can come to the same conclusion if we consider for a moment Socrates' treatment of the example of misidentifying $5 + 7$ and 11.⁸³ For although he fails to give a good explanation of this misidentification, he is nonetheless quite aware that it is possible and he is furthermore aware that this means that it is possible to misidentify two things both of which are known by KA (cf. 196b-c), and hence he must be aware that some sorts of knowing, such as knowing that one number equals another, are not transparent. On a KA only model of knowledge, however, all knowledge is transparent. Precisely, then,

⁸³ Cf. Theaetetus 195e ff.

Socrates is not working with a KA only model of knowledge.

Hence, on the whole, the passage on false judgment does not seem to presuppose that all K is KA. It cannot simply be described as "confusing" KP with KA or "assimilating" KP with KA. Rather it seems to be throwing off just this confusion and just this assimilation. Indeed we find distinct features of a view that allows knowledge to be propositional and, moreover, we find that these latter features are asserted and explored at the expense of a KA only model.

At this stage what can Runciman say? All that there is left to him from his book are a few remarks⁸⁴ to the effect that Plato uses certain terms in a way compatible with either a KA or a KP model of knowledge. Of course, rather than establishing that Plato therefore confused KA and KP, this usage may simply confirm our own opinion that Plato was working with a disjunctive analysis of knowledge. In fact, then, there is really nothing left for Runciman to say. Theaetetus 188-200 simply is not a show of Plato's allegiance to the all K is KA presupposition.

⁸⁴ Runciman, op. cit., p. 34.

Runciman out of the way, let us conclude this account by suggesting our own interpretation of the section on false judgement. As the reader will recall from our third chapter, Plato was influenced by two NMT presuppositions, PKab and PWTL. As we proved in that chapter, the second of these implies the first, and either of them implies the presupposition that all knowledge is transparent. Hence either of them rules out the possibility of KP for KP is opaque. Therefore, as we noted at the time, any progress Plato might make towards the KP/KA distinction would have to go hand in hand with a rejection of these presuppositions. Of course, as we saw in the previous chapter, Plato did make progress towards the KP/KA distinction and, indeed, he did reject PKab and PWTL. However, as we also saw, he rejected PKab and PWTL only indirectly, only implicitly. Nowhere in the Republic did he meet them face on. Now what I claim Plato is doing in the section on false judgement in Theaetetus is trying for the first time to deal directly with these presuppositions, to attack them not implicitly but as explicitly as possible. And, of course, if this is true, Plato is by no means assimilating all knowledge to KA --- rather he is making more secure the progress towards the KP/KA distinction achieved in the Republic.

That PKab is present in Theatetus 188-200 should be perfectly obvious from the fact that one of the three main passages in Plato that led us to discover PKab in the first place was the passage on the Aviary and the difficulties with the misidentification of 5 + 7 and 11. Given PKab, of course, such misidentifications would never occur. The point to make, of course, is that Plato knew perfectly well that such misidentifications do occur. Furthermore, as Plato also realized, such misidentifications constitute knockdown counterexamples to any view that implies otherwise. It is true that Plato did not with his Aviary provide a model adequate for explaining how the misidentifications occur but there is no doubt that he knew that they did occur. Thus although Plato was apparently not in a position to explain the how's and why's of the matter, he was still in a position to refute PKab. Thus regardless of the failure of the Aviary model, we still find in Theaetetus 188-200 an almost completely explicit statement of PKab together with a fatal counterexample to it. Since PKab is a consequence of PWTL we therefore also find a fatal counterexample to PWTL.

As further evidence that Plato was attacking PKab and PWTL in this section, recall from the third chapter

of this thesis that Plato was greatly troubled by a certain paradox which stated that to speak falsely was to say something that did not exist and hence to say nothing, i. e., not to utter a meaningful sentence. As we saw in that chapter the reason Plato was troubled by this paradox was that he was influenced by a view that a statement was like a photograph of a single, existing situation, this being a corollary of PWTL. At Theaetetus 188c-189b we find a paradox exactly like this paradox except that opining falsely is substituted for speaking falsely. This difference, however, is insignificant from Plato's point of view since for Plato an opinion is just a certain sort of statement "pronounced, not aloud to someone else, but silently to oneself".⁸⁵ Thus the only difference between opining falsely and uttering a false statement expressing one's opinion (or "judgement") is the absence or presence of sound. Thus Plato is in fact discussing the very same paradox as before and this paradox is a manifestation of PWTL. Furthermore, Plato is not discussing this manifestation of PWTL in order to pay tribute to it but

⁸⁵ Theaetetus 189e-190a and cf. Sophist 263d-264b.

rather to attack it. He rejects the premiss of the paradox that to opine falsely is to opine something that does not exist. He concludes, "thinking [opining] falsely must be something different from thinking what is not."⁸⁶ He then proceeds to offer a new suggestion, that to opine falsely is to mismatch two existent objects. He suggests that a false judgement is an "inner" statement which affirms of two, different, existing things that they are the same.

We do recognize the existence of false judgement as a sort of misjudgement [allodoxia] that occurs when a person interchanges in his mind two things, both of which are, and asserts that the one is the other.⁸⁷

It is true that this is merely given as a suggestion and that it is at first discarded as being unhelpful (190e) but it is also true that it lies behind the "wax tablet" theory that occupies about half of the section on false judgement (cf. especially 193b-194b) and, ultimately, as we shall see, behind the definitive treatment of falsehood in the Sophist. Thus the suggestion that a falsehood is a mismatch is no mere suggestion but a position that Plato actually came to hold. Precisely, however, this position

⁸⁶ Theaetetus 189b.

⁸⁷ Theaetetus 189b-c, trans. by Cornford.

is in direct opposition to the PWTL position that a statement is simply a pointer to a single existing situation. For Plato to hold that a certain sort of judgement isomismatch is for Plato to hold that a statement expressing that judgement is a statement relating the two things that are thereby mismatched. Such a statement is not at all a pointer to a single existing thing but, if anything, a pointer to two existing things which, moreover, relates those two things. Thus in holding as he did the theory that a judgement can be a mismatch, Plato was holding a theory which contradicts PWTL. Having discounted a paradox that has its basis in PWTL, Plato has postulated a theory that is in opposition to PWTL. He is rejecting a presupposition that challenges the progress he had made towards the KP/KA distinction in the Republic.

Finally, let us look at the analysis of falsehood in the Sophist. There we shall see that Plato is in fact applying a more sophisticated version of the theory that false opinions or statements are mismatches. There we shall see PWTL not only put in a museum but boarded up as well. At Sophist 261-263 Plato characterizes a statement as a string of words, roughly speaking, that "fit together" in such a way as to be meaningful. In particular,

the simplest statement is a combination of one "name" [onoma] and one "verb" or "predicate" [rēma]. Such a statement gives information, it "get you somewhere by weaving together verbs with names".⁸⁸ (Plato apparently failed to think about sentence like Crombie's "Tuesday walks".) Against PWTl which construes a statement as a mere pointer to one single existing entity, Sophist 261-262 construes a statement as a complex combination, its two parts pointing each of them to a single existing entity. The statement as a whole relates these parts and this somehow in accordance with the relations among forms that make discourse possible in the first place (cf. 260a). As is emphasized at Sophist 263b, then, a statement involves two components each of which refers to "things that exist".⁸⁹

Ontologically, the statement (and hence also its mental equivalent the judgement) is no longer supported by a single pillar, viz. the situation it describes, but by twin pillars, one supporting the name, the other the verb. To inquire into the falsity of a statement, we no longer have to smash down the one supporting pil-

⁸⁸ Sophist 262d.

⁸⁹ Cf. Theaetetus 189c.

lar thereby destroying the statement itself: we need now only look to see if, as it were, the pillars are properly matched for length so that the statement "lies true" or whether they are not in which case the statement "lies false" --- without thereby toppling over. Literally speaking, Plato has explicated the notion of statement in such a way that its truth or falsehood depends not on the existence of the (meaningful) statement but on the existence of the asserted relationship between an existing name and an existing verb. To get a statement right is not (only) to refer to existing things but to get the relation between them right. The relevant question is: does the existing subject of the statement actually relate to the existing verb in the way the statement asserts?

To make a false statement, then, is basically to relate two existent objects that are not related in the manner asserted. It is to "mismatch" a name and a verb. At Theaetetus 189b-c a false judgement was said to be

a sort of misjudgement [allodoxia] that occurs when a person interchanges in his mind two things, both of which are, and asserts that the one is the other. In this way he is always thinking of [doxa] something which is, but of one thing in place of [eteron] another, and since he misses the mark he may fairly be said

to be judging falsely. ⁹⁰

At Sophist 263b, (to use Moravcsik's translation ⁹¹), a false statement is said to be one that

expresses things other than [eteron] those that are related to you. (The false one) expresses things which are not as if they were. Namely, it expresses things that are, but are other than [eteron] those things which are related to you. For, as we have said before [at 251a, 256e, 259a-b, in discussing predication], in relation to each thing much is and much is not.

Certainly by Sophist 263b, the mismatched pair are not any mis-equated pair of simple objects but a carefully defined "name" and a carefully defined "verb" whose existence and whose purported interrelation (e.g. predication) is backed by an elaborate metaphysics. Nonetheless the idea of mismatching is still present. Given the uncertainties of the passage, we do not know just exactly what Plato had in mind by this mismatching or misconception --- we cannot be sure what his explication of a true statement was. In spite of this, however, we can say that for Plato a statement or judgement involved some (albeit unknown to us) relation between name and verb which if actually holding gives us a statement that states

⁹⁰ Theaetetus 189b-c, trans. by Cornford.

⁹¹ J. Moravcsik, "Being and Meaning in the Sophist" (Acta Philosophica Fennica Fasc. XIV, 1962), p. 77 and see also the context.

about the named subject "the things that are [exist] as they are" concerning the subject, and if not holding, gives us a statement that states about the subject things that exist but which are somehow "different" [eteron] from the things that are in the case of the subject.

For our purposes, however, it is enough to note that true or false, a statement or judgement is no longer understood as naming a single, existing situation. PWTL has been thrown off. ⁹²

⁹² If it is suggested that in the Sophist Plato thought that knowing, say, that Theaetetus is sitting was just the same as being acquainted with the situation of Theaetetus' sitting, then whoever suggests this will have to account for the fact that Plato to some extent understood, as we have seen, that knowledge can be opaque. For having this understanding, Plato was in a position to make the distinction that we made in the first chapter between knowing a situation (e.g. the cat's being on the mat) and knowing a proposition that describes that situation. Indeed, Plato might have made the distinction just in the ways in which we did!

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