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Episteme and Doxa: Some Reflections on Eleatic and Heraclitean Themes in Plato

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1. It is a truism of Plato interpretation that Plato wants at once a "world" which
is and a "world" which is and is not. It is equally truistic that, if he is to
have those "worlds", he must engage in some rather fancy philosophical footwork.
Or, to shift the metaphor, Plato must build a philosophical house in which both
Parmenides and Heraclitus are comfortably accommodated. Since Plato thinks of
the satisfaction of his wants as requiring of him plausible accounts both of our
knowledge of laws and principles and also of our perceptual experience (and a
relating of them), it will help us in understanding both the desire for two
"worlds" and Plato's philosophical footwork to attend at the same time to his
accounts of episteme and doxa. It is obviously impossible to attempt anything
like exhaustive or definitive accounts of either of these matters in the brief
compass of a single paper. What I wish to point up in the paper are some
unnoticed features of their interrelationships which help to explain some diffi-
cult texts and which I take to be archai for their definitive accounts. I shall
assume that Plato's wants are really philosophical desiderata, and it is part of
my purpose to show that he has means of securing those desiderata which are both
ingenious and of a piece with his general patterns of thinking. Obviously much
is going to turn on how 'is' is to be understood and whether or not it can be
said to have different senses. To give the general orientation which I think
necessary for serious discussion of this matter I turn immediately to summarizing
some interpretation and argument which I published earlier this year.[1]

2. Despite the existence of a number of translations to the contrary, Plato does not
have in Attic Greek any linguistic distinction corresponding to the English one
made by 'is' and 'exists'. He is thus spared some of the tortures of late
medieval and modern philosophy. He does, however, have a distinction between
'is' (eimi) and 'comes to be' (gignomai). Though there is some temptation to

tarry on the parallels between that distinction and the one between 'is' and 'exists', I should like for the time being to ignore 'comes to be' and attend to 'is'. That the mature Plato (at least) links 'is' to the doctrine of forms is beyond question. What is not so universally recognized is that it is less illuminating to say, for Plato, that the forms _are_ than it is to say that _to be is to be a form_ and, for non-forms, to say that _to be is to be informed_. This remark obviously needs expansion, an expansion which will enable us to make a number of important distinctions and clarifications.

Though I shall not offer detailed argument here for the interpretation, I wish to claim that, for the mature Plato (at least), forms are principles of structure. By the use of 'principles' I wish to convey the idea of _structure itself_ as contrasted with something (or things) structured. Thus, the triangle itself, _not_ this golden triangle; the house itself, _not_ this house; courage itself, _not_ courage-in-Achilles. Perhaps the primary reason for so considering forms is that, only by considering them this way can Plato maintain that each form is one or single--and thus fend off the attacks which are put in the mouth of Parmenides in the dialogue of that same name, attacks on the uniqueness or singleness of each form.[2] Any number of things may have the same structure. But structure itself, just by itself, is, in any given case, single. With forms so understood, the much-discussed issue of the "separation" (_chorismos_) of the forms is simply the issue of the intelligibility of holding that there are principles of structure just by themselves, in "separation" from anything structured.

Plato's standard way of referring to a form is by means of expressions like "The _F_ Itself" (_auto to F_). And this contrasts with 'This _F_', 'A certain _F_', and so on. There is, I think, a striking similarity between this contrast and that between abstract singular terms (as in 'The triangle has three sides') and individualized singular terms (as in 'This triangle has three sides' or 'This triangle is made of gold'). The chief interest lies in the fact that sentences with abstract singulars

as their subjects entail universal sentences (as in 'Every triangle has three sides').
With proper development of what I take to be the mature Plato's doctrine of
participation (methexis), Plato has machinery for explaining how it is that, granted
that The F Itself is G, if anything can be referred to by 'This F', that thing will
necessarily be G. There are problems, of course, in interpreting sentences like
'The F Itself is G'. Alexander Nehamas[3] has suggested a way of handling sentences
about forms which frees Plato from the morass of self-predication problems. He would
read 'The F Itself is F' as 'The F Itself is what it is to be F'. Values for 'what
it is to be F' will, of course, look like definitions as, for example, 'to be G which
is H' (or 'which H's). Or 'what it is to be G which is H'. On my view, these would
be ways of getting at or talking about principles of structure. And, obviously,
principles of structure may be internally related in a manner which is perspicuously
displayed by genera-species orderings. Thus, in the hackneyed example, the
relatedness of to be plane figurate with to be triangular and the identity of The
Triangle Itself with to be plane figurate and three sided. Thus, strictly speaking,
'The F Itself is G' is misbegotten. Provided that one's left hand knows what his
right hand is doing in so speaking, however, no harm will be done.

There are two important consequences of all this for my purposes. First, if what it
is to be F includes G (or to be G or what it is to be G), then, if anything has a
share of The F Itself, necessarily (kath auto) it is or has a share of The G Itself.
In such necessities lies, I believe, the serious applicability of Platonic science
(episteme) to the world of structured things or, if you please, the world of becoming.
Second, it is possible that one may have the linguistic or conceptual means of
referring to The F Itself without, by the simple having of that conceptual means,
being able to articulate or express what it is to be F, though he/she may have the
means of so doing somehow "within" himself/herself. There is, therefore, a clear
sense in which one may find out or discover, by dint of effort, method, and, perhaps
native intelligence, what it is to be F. If one who has knowledge (episteme) is one

who is able to express or articulate what it is to be F (or whatever), then his
knowledge, however "definitional" it may be, is a dearly won achievement. And it
is of the forms, not as some sort of peek or glimpse or ineffable vision of them,
but as what, for the moment, I shall call an "articulate awareness" of them.

3. Suppose forms to be principles of structure and articulate awareness of them to
be definitional in character. Whatever it is that I am aware of when I have an
articulate awareness of The F Itself (when I am aware of what it is to be F), it
must be something to which spatial and temporal predicates cannot intelligibly
be applied. F's may lurk in corners, have learned geometry, be about to start a
race, be ten feet tall, come to be, pass away, and so on. But what it is to be
F can hardly be subject to any of these vicissitudes. Indeed, what it is to lurk
in a corner, what it is to learn geometry, and so on are equally immune. Since
it is absurd to think that The F Itself or what it is to be F could "become" G
or what it is to be G or even could have "become" The F Itself or what it is to
be F, there would be no harm in thinking of forms as "eternal" things. If, as I
have claimed, to be is to be a form or, if you please, principles of structure
are principles of being, the "world" which is must be the (interrelated) forms.
And it is that "world" of which we are aware in what I have called "articulate
awareness".

4. We shall return to this matter of definitions and articulate awareness, but I
should like now to turn rather abruptly to look at how "participation" comes out
on this general way of construing Plato. On that way, it seems obvious that, if
anything were to have a share of (metechein) of a form (qua principle of
structure), (a) it would not itself be a principle of structure, (b) it would be,
qua having a "share", structured, and (c) it would not have the form as a part
(either numerically or specifically).

(a) is based, of course, on the idea of the work which having a share or
participating is to do for Plato. And that work is to provide an intelligible

frame for various things' being F, G, or whatever as contrasted with being what it is to be F, G, or whatever. On this view, to be F is to be structured in a certain way--the F way. Thus 'has a share' (metechei) becomes a technical Platonic term for explaining one of the meanings of 'is' in standard usage, viz., that in such sentences as 'This man is tall', 'This triangle is made of gold', and the like. This meaning of 'is', unlike that in sentences about forms, admits of tensed usage. It makes perfect sense to say that something had a share of The F Itself or that it will have a share of The F Itself. (Though, as we have noted, no sense can be attached to saying that The F Itself was or will be what it is to be F.) I hasten to note that, on the interpretation I am pressing for, having a share is not limited to what is expressed by predicates or verbs, as even brief reflection on the difference between The F Itself and This F will show. In the participational use of 'is', a structured thing is said to have (have had, be about to have) some other or some contained or subordinate structure. And Plato, in Parmenides, makes a point of the need for having a share of The This or The This Itself, where The This Itself is, as it were, a syncategorematic form. More will be said on this score later in commenting briefly on some passages in Parmenides and Sophist.

With regard to (c), it is worth underlining the point that things which have a common structure do not have a common part either numerically (as adjacent rooms have a wall in common) or specifically (as bronze contains tin). Yet it is perfectly sensible to say that certain houses, automobiles, statues, triangles, or whatever all have the same structure. Indeed, we commonly say that they are the same house, same automobile, and so on. To add a bit to (c), we may note that Plato is an atomist, with tetrahedral, cubical, octahedral, and icosahedral atoms (omitting, for the present purpose, their construction from triangles). Basic materials (earth, air, fire, and water) thus share structures, and mixtures of them share (mathematical) structures. Indeed, without straining the use of 'mathematical', one may say that Plato's material world, just insofar as it is at all, is through and through

mathematically structured. Thus anything in it which _is_ at all _is_ by virtue of having a share of some structure or other, i.e., by having a share of a form. This simply fleshes out a bit what I claimed early in the paper, viz., that, for non-forms, _to be is to be informed_.

5. All this requires obviously that the "world" of structure_d_ things have--at bottom, as it were--non-something which, in itself, cannot be said to "be" at all. As Plato puts it, since proper inquiry can only get at things which _are_ either in the articulation of principles sense or in the participational sense, non-something can be apprehended only by a kind of "bastard reasoning".[4] By such "bastard reasoning", one may say that "it" (non-something) takes, accepts, or admits structure but, in "itself" neither is nor has structure. In this respect, "it", as been often noted, is like the so-called prime matter of Aristotle. And neither Plato's "receptacle" nor Aristotle's prime matter is ever to be found in its "natural" condition. What we always find _is_ (participationally _is_) something or other, i.e., is in some manner structured. In Plato's case, bedrock seems to the structuring given the receptacle by the demiurge as the elementary atoms of earth, air, fire, and water (or, if you please, elementary triangles). The reasoning (_logismos_) which gets us to the "receptacle", the non-something, is "bastard" (_nothos_) because, as Timaeus puts it, it is without the aid of sensation (_anaisthesis_) and is "irrational" (_alogos_).[5] Properly parented reasoning or apprehension gets us at least to something which _is_, whether in the structure itself sense or in the participational sense. In context Plato suggests that the requirement of the receptacle is all one with the requirement that there "be" space (_chora_) or place.

So much for the arena of participation, multiplicity, and change. I am quite aware proper discussion of this difficult part of the _Timaeus_ would require the sort of treatment given it by, say, Edward Lee,[6] wherein proper attention is given

to random movements, the so-called 'errant cause', the images of nurse and mother, and so on.

6. It seems clear enough that, with the conception of forms as principles of structure, "something" may have a certain structure, F, at one time and have, instead, a different structure, G, at a later time (where F and G are contraries). Given the notion of contrariety which is in Plato as early as Phaedo, we may then say that it is F at a certain time, and, later, is not F. This 'not' I would understand as Sophist suggests, that is, reading the 'is not F' as 'has a share of one of the parts of Different, viz., the Different from F'.

I have intentionally left out any definite subject term (or term filler) in the above paragraph, but now I wish to return to an idea of 4. above, namely, that of having a share of the this, an idea which is obviously linked with the usage, 'This F', to refer to something, as contrasted with saying something about an object or thing referred to. Obviously, in order to refer successfully, there must be something referred to. By which I mean not simply that there must be some structured thing but also that the subject term be one which could be used to refer to a principle of structure or form. Put in terms used in Sophist, there has to be a being to be "said". (But I shall say a bit more about this "saying beings" matter later in the paper). Though Socrates, in Parmenides,[7] is made to express doubt about how to handle "substance" forms, for example, man, ox, fire, and so on, and the idea of their having shares, much later in the same dialogue[8] Plato suggests the idea of having a share of the this and also the idea that something might remain the same while going through a process of change. Put in the terms of this paper, something could be structured in a certain way through a stretch of time during which other sorts of structuring of it were changing. The obvious sort of illustration of this is, of course, the "substance" sort, for example, something's remaining a man while getting larger or smaller, changing location, and so on. In Parmenides terms, remaining in one respect

"in the same" while, in another, being (for the stretch of time involved) "always in a different". Thus there does seem to be a straightforward case to be made for saying that certain structured things, normally gotten at by subject terms, both are and are not in the sense of now having a share of The F Itself and, later, having a share of The G Itself, where F and G are contraries.

In his reply to Zeno in the early part of Parmenides,[9] Socrates calls attention to a sense in which he, Socrates, may both be and not be, when he points out that he may have a share both of The One Itself (as being one man) and The Many Itself (as having many parts) at one and the same time. I am not quite confident about the general manner of handling relatives, that is, the kind of relatives which allow one to say misleadingly that something is, for example, both large and small at the same time. I think that Plato's line, in Phaedo[10] and elsewhere (for example, in the Slave/Master part of Parmenides) is that something structured may be properly called large only relative to something which (in regard to the first thing) may be called small. And even the form The Large Itself is of The Small Itself, in the same way that The Master Itself (in the Parmenides case) is of The Slave Itself. We are not, of course, to think of these relatives as suggesting that Plato has any such doctrine as that made possible by the apparatus of, say, Principia Mathematica and exploited by Russell and others with the idea that relations are simply n-adic functions where n is greater than 1. Plato's idea (as well as Aristotle's[11]) is simply that certain terms may be applied to things only if certain others (their correlatives) may also be applied. They are in that sense of each other.

It may be worth pausing on a correlative matter which is not often attended to in Plato discussions, but is an obvious feature of Aristotle's discussion of pros ti in Categories. Sensation (aisthesis) is of the sensed or sensible and is thus a pros ti term like double, father, large, and so on. There is a special bearing here for our discussion of is and is not in that, in the Theaetetus[12] treatment of aisthesis,

the sensed (in the sense of the sensed thing) may be the same in two cases in which the _aisthesis_ is different. Thus the same wine may be, for Socrates well, sweet and, for Socrates ill, sour. Or the same wind may be, for one person, cold and, for another warm. 'Be' is, of course, misleading, but, in context, Socrates is giving Protagoras a run for his money and only later points out that fully fledged perceptual apprehension involves the soul's _using_ the sense organs or the sensations as proper instruments for apprehending things in the material world. I mention the whole matter only in passing and only for the sake of adding another dimension to the discussion of _is_ and _is not_, a dimension we shall make some use of shortly. For, if Protagoras were to be believed, one and the same thing could be both _F_ and _not F_ without undergoing a process of change.

7. As everyone knows, in _Republic V_,[13] Plato links _doxa_ with _is_ and _is not_ and links _episteme_ with _is_. (And he links _agnoia_ with _is not_.) _Doxa_ as used here and elsewhere (though not uniformly) is some sort of propensity or settled disposition, indeed, a many-track disposition or propensity. I may have _doxa_ in regard to many different parts of what _is_ and _is not_. Given what we have been saying about _is_ and _is not_, it would seem that there could be _doxa_ (now used as an occurrent term) in regard to a particular horse, the sun, an action, or what have you. In _Republic V doxa_ is also linked with sights and sounds and, if I may so use words, the doxastic person is characterized as typically a "lover of sights and sounds." And the doxastic person is contrasted with the _epistemic_ person, the latter being given the name 'philosopher' or 'lover of wisdom'. As such the epistemic person has an ability (_dynamis_) or set of abilities which are connected with _is_ or with the forms. In contrast with the doxastic person, the lover of sights and sounds, who is characterized as asleep and dreaming, the epistemic person is characterized as wide awake.

At many other points Plato associates _doxa_ with persuasion. The doxastic person is fair game for the orator or sophist. _Doxa,_ as something believed or opined, is something which one can be persuaded into, be persuaded to deny, or be persuaded to amend or change. Plato also associates persuasion with pleasure and pain, and he associates both with _aisthesis._ The linkage with pleasure and pain is, I believe, to be found in a doctrine to the effect that human beings tend to have _doxai_ appropriate to what they associate with pleasure (or the avoidance of pain) or what is itself pleasurable. A key theme in _Gorgias_[14] is that, even as a cook panders to people's palates and not to their constitutions, so the orator panders to what it pleases people to believe rather than what is for their good or will make them good.

But _doxai_ seem linked with sensation (_aisthesis_) as well insofar as the latter is caused by or is of the material world via our senses. Thus the _doxastic_ person as attached to sights and sounds. In the celebrated analogy of the line in _Republic_ VI,[15] _doxa_ is taken to encompass both _eikasia_ and _pistis._ The former being some sort of naive perceptual acceptance suggesting the state of mind of someone taken in by "shadow paintings", _i.e._, paintings involving both perspective and the use of shadows to suggest three-dimensionality. The _eikastic_ person seeming to be a prime candidate to be the "lover of sights and sounds" whose attachment to the sights and sounds of naive perceptual consciousness is rather like the dreamer's attachment to his dreams. _Pistis_ seems rather more the confident state of mind of someone who knows his/her way around and is not taken in by mere appearances. The _pistic_ person is, as Plato would have it, someone aware of the causes of the "objects" of _eikasia._ And this interpretation of him/her is pretty well borne out by the clarification provided by the cave. He/she is the released prisoner looking at the (comparatively) "real" objects in all three dimensions, being carried along the parapet. But both the _eikastic_ and the _pistic_ persons are attending to the "world" which _is_ and _is not._

8. I should like now to shift the scene rather abruptly in the interest of getting before us some not-always-noticed features of the doxastic story, features which I think are important as well to the epistemic story and to the "world" which is. However we are to characterize doxa exactly, it is quite clear that doxa is expressed linguistically. I hope, starting with this near-truism, to get a rather sweeping claim concerning Plato's theory of and reliance upon language on the table. In doing so, I shall make rather liberal use of a published paper of my former student, Jeffrey Gold,[16] and shall be articulating some features of some conversations I have had with him concerning Plato's Cratylus.

Cratylus makes a great deal of a mythical name-giver who provides us with "conventional" linguistic resources which are tailored to a remarkable set of Platonic forms, namely, Name forms. And Cratylus suggests that quite different conventional linguistic resources could be and are tailored to that same set of forms, so that there could be and are the same names in quite different conventional languages. Since the Name forms which the name-giver looks to are linked with the remaining forms (in the pros ti or "of" sense discussed in 6.), we may presumably be sure that the conventional names provided by the name-giver are or can be linked with those remaining forms and/or shares of them. In accordance with the scheme outlined earlier in this paper, name forms are principles of structure, and shares of them (the structureds) would seem to be structured patterns of speech qua dispositions manifested in overt and covert utterances of the conventional names given by the name-giver. Thus, at least in communities blessed with appropriate conventional languages, toddlers, in learning to speak their native tongue, are being provided with their chief means of apprehending Platonic forms, though the articulate actual apprehension of them will be a dearly won achievement, and, statistically speaking, they are not likely to achieve it.

They are also being provided with the linguistic means of expressing doxa, indeed with their chief means of apprehension of the many structured things around them. The linkage of this use of language with aisthesis seems obvious enough. When in the presence of an F-thing, the child is conditioned to say or utter, 'F'. And there are, of course, any number of values of 'F' which can be similarly linked with sensation or aisthesis situations. If one were to speak of developmental stages, this appears to be an ideal candidate for the stage of eikasia and the cathexis on sights and sounds. But, of course, the name-giver has given us a rich enough vocabulary to express the learning, so to speak, that things have other sides than the facing side, that receding things look smaller, that the same thing can be touched and seen, and so on. Still that vocabulary is acquired and expressed in linkage with aisthesis. And, even though one by its acquisition and employment reaches the stage of pistis, the familiar objects of the doxastic man are the structured objects of the "world" which, on Plato's view, is and is not.

9. The moral of the tale for Plato's doctrine of doxa is the idea that, in acquiring a native language, one acquires it virtually entirely in a use (or, if you please, object language) context and, given the associations with aisthesis, inevitably comes to the "acceptance" of the objects of aisthesis as "real". A consequence of this sort of "acceptance" is that, unreflectively, one looks for "causes" and interconnections between the structured things in those things. Put even more crudely, one, at least at first, becomes or naturally is an empiric. Add pleasure and pain to this--as obvious features of the linkage with aisthesis--and one can begin to discern pretty clearly the association of doxa with persuasion. Though the name-giver may have been a great benefactor, his unreflective beneficiaries, conscious of a "world" of things only by the associative tie of names with things via aisthesis contexts, are rather easily moved by orators, especially under the influence of pleasure

or pain, to loosen linguistic ties and be led into associations not intended by the name-giver. The rather touching speech of Socrates in _Phaedo_,[17] urging his followers not to become misologists, even if he (Socrates) fails to produce a certain argument, assumes a new significance when seen against this kind of background. As I shall try to show shortly, the search for genuine knowledge, as Plato sees it, is in a tough sense _logistic_. Plato sees its alternative as a return to knacks, routines, and loose association, the sort of thing dealt with so scathingly in _Gorgias_.[18]

9. But let me put the matter a bit differently and bring back the forms-as-being theme. Plato clearly thinks that all of the being and, as well, the interconnections of things in the world of becoming consist in their being shares of the world of forms, _i.e._, in the terms of this paper, things having structure for which the forms are the principles. _Cratylus_ claims that there are name forms, these, in the present view, being principles of structure which parallel the other forms (being _of_ them) and which are properly embodied in or enstructured in linguistic habits and dispositions. The _Cratylus_ fiction of the name-giver is that of an omniscient ancestor who has provided us with a sufficiently articulated set of sounds (and marks) to be the material tokens for linguistic dispositions which are or can embody the structures which name forms are. Young children, as noted before, acquire the linguistic dispositions of the name-giver in contexts involving _aisthesis_ (at least the first ones). Enamored by the sights and sounds and suffering from the illusion that truth is to be found in the objects of perception, they fix their attention on what they are conscious of by way of the sights and sounds.

If they are lucky, they will encounter a Socrates who will invite them to turn away from the sights and sounds, from the F's and G's, and try to state what it is to be F, what it is to be G, and so on. For this purpose the sights and sounds are hindrances; what is needed is attention to the linguistic dispositions by

means of which (with _aisthesis_) they see things. From what has been said in the foregoing, it should be clear that, on the view here being outlined, the inquiry is in a sense linguistic and in another sense _not_. Interestingly, if one were to collect texts of Plato in which he is talking about the forms and the investigation of them, he/she would collect a very large number of uses of linguistic or linguistic-associated terms. Typically: '_Logos_' (especially in uses commonly translated by 'reason'), '_Dialectike_', and '_Dialegesthai_'. Illustrative and typical of several texts is Parmenides' remark to the young Socrates: "When you were just now speaking to him [Zeno], I was impressed that you did not stay simply with visibles nor let your review wander about concerning them, but rather concerning those which one grasps simply by _logos_ and must be thought of as forms (_eide_)."[19]

In the above paragraph I said something about "attention to the linguistic dispositions..." This is, of course, misleading. Explaining how it is misleading will help unpack my remark about the inquiry's being both linguistic and non-linguistic and will, I think, be best done by making some comments about object and metalanguages.

10. We have all grown up on the distinction between object language and metalanguage. And most of us have discovered that it is deceptively simple. In particular, it does not help us to understand how any sort of language manages to be _about_ anything, and it does not help and may hinder our ability for making some distinctions which are crucial for sophisticated talk about language. The _Cratylus_' name-giver would have played a poor joke indeed if all he had bequeathed future language-users were the conditioning of them to utter some sounds and sound-sequences without providing for the linkage of them with _aisthesis_ and their linkage, as well, with any number of activities necessary for the accomplishment of tasks, including those of the state or _polis_. Without that linkage, there would hardly be a language. And, unless that linkage meshed,

as one says, with the way the world is, there would be, to put it mildly, a great deal of trouble. The name-giver has to be a remarkable man indeed, who provides the means of inducing in his language users a set of dispositions and propensities, linked with his conventional marks and noises, which are structured embodiments of the name-forms. The name-forms, in turn, being _of_ the other forms--in all their interconnectedness--reflect them and would, presumably, have to be in some way isomorphic with them. The point I am working towards, of course, is that, given all this, there would be a reason for saying that some appropriate sort of reflection upon or use of language would give one a grip on the forms, the principles of structure, or, if you please, _being_.

Before amplifying upon that point, it may be worth noting that, in stressing the linkage of "names" with _aisthesis_ in language learning, I have failed to stress the linkage of terms with one another which would have to be part of the name-giver's patrimony. If the name-giver has done his job well, his conventional sounds (and marks) will include the panoply of particles, nouns, verbs, inflections, conjugations, singulars, plurals, etc. necessary to get the job done. Here, the analogy, in _Cratylus_,[20] of the shuttle-maker to the name-giver has bite. Plato goes to some lengths to require that the shuttle in any given case be the proper sort of shuttle to get a particular job with a particular sort of fiber done properly.

But the point of getting beyond sounds and marks to structures and procedures is to be able to say something about an object language as a system of _authorized_ structures and procedures. Plato knows perfectly well how to talk about sounds and shapes. And, in _Philebus_,[21] he obviously attaches great importance to Theuth's discovery of means of classifying vowels and consonants (no doubt with a view to a combinatorial ordering of them so as to get pattern into the vast variety of sounds needed to get the linguistic job done). But this is just the classifying of sounds and sound-sequences, obviously something of help to the name-giver, but only

a necessary feature for the embodiment of name-forms. The really important matter is that the embodiments as propensities and dispositions embody or be structured by the name forms and thus be possible instrumentalities for "carving nature at its joints".

11. In an earlier section of this paper I mentioned the possibility of someone's being able to use expressions of the form, 'The _F_ Itself', significantly without, by that very fact, being able to say what it is to be _F_. I think we are now in a position to say how that might be possible and also how one might, by a reflective use of language, find out what it is to be _F_. Any number of early and middle Platonic dialogues are instructive in this regard, involving, as they do, much discussed "What is _X_?" questions. 'What is justice?', 'What is the pious?', 'What is _arete_ (virtue)?'--the list is well known to thousands of college sophomores. Still staying with the myth of the name-giver, we may suppose that he has provided the linguistic resources for asking such questions, in particular, in Greek the ability to link the definite article to a substantive (say, justice) or an adjective (say, pious) both in questions and in sentences expressing generality with abstract singular terms as subjects (as in 'The triangle has three sides'; section 2. above). Of course, Socrates' interlocutors regularly profess ability to answer a "What is _X_" question and with equal regularity start off by giving or alluding to examples of _X_ or listing some kinds of _X_. Socrates, commonly with ironic reference to their pretensions to knowledge, manages to get them somehow to grasp what sort of answer to the question might be relevant, however incorrect it may be.

In _Euthyphro_, Socrates even says to Euthyphro that what he wants, in asking "What is the pious?" is the _eidos_ or the _idea_,[22] using the very terms which Plato, in later dialogues, uses for his separated forms. Whether or not this is good evidence for Plato's holding the separated forms doctrine at the time

of writing _Euthyphro_ does not concern me here. What is relevant for my purpose is Socrates' use of the terms in the effort to jar Euthyphro out of standard object language use of terms (e.g., 'Prosecuting my father is pious') and into what I have been calling _reflective_ use of language. I am also interested in the assumption, often stated, that Socrates' interlocutors, properly questioned, will be able to answer "What is _X_?" questions and the profession of Socrates that he needs only the sufferance of one person in reaching agreement on an answer. At bottom, I think, that assumption is based on the sound idea that someone who has learned the language and can use it properly can be brought round to formulating some of its rules. Almost inevitably, instead of stating a rule or rules in answer, there is resort, as it were, to the material mode of speech. But, of course, that is the way the question was formulated, namely, by 'What is The _F_ Itself?', with its presupposition of making a reference to something, namely, The _F_ Itself.

But, and again of course, Plato is no conventionalist (except for the sounds or marks of language). What he--and, presumably Socrates--is looking for is the rationale for linguistic usage, the _logos_ of it, if you please, not simply some conventional rules. To manage some articulate awareness of the _logos_ is to attend to how we actually use words correctly for the purpose of getting to what structure there must be in the world to warrant that usage or those usages. Whether, as Aristotle testifies, the historical Socrates limited the scope of his inquiries and did not think of that warranting structure as "separated", whereas Plato did, makes no difference to the point that the inquiry proceeds by _logistic_ means and involves what I have been calling the "reflective" use of language. Though extremely important for many other purposes, it also makes no difference for the present purpose that Plato himself manifestly moves from inquiry by dialogue between two persons to inquiry by collection and division (which, presumably, can be carried on all alone). The same resources are being tapped, namely, those provided by _Cratylus_' mythical name-giver. And, to save Plato the embarrassment of

having to postulate a mythical ancestral know-it-all, it might well be argued that the name-giver of <u>Cratylus</u> is simply a picturesque way of claiming that a language, developed and refined through centuries of varied and complex experience, will, when used "reflectively", yield to us the order and inter-connection of the principles of being. But this is speculation.

12.   Some concluding comments. I am aware, of course, that the Plato I have here depicted, manner of expression aside, bears resemblance to W. V. O. Quine, Wilfrid Sellars, and some other contemporaries, the chief point of resemblance being that all of them hold that we bring language or concepts to our encounter with the world and do not abstract or "read off" it or them from sensations, "ideas", sense-data, or what have you. They are rather more conventionist than Plato and would be in differing ways uncomfortable with the Platonic insistence that, in unearthing conceptual necessities via dialectic, one gets at the ordering principles of the world. The Platonic tradition, with the idea that the same principles which order the world inform the human soul in its encounter with the world, has been rich, varied, and attractive. Thinking of it I am less alarmed at a possible charge of reading Sellars and Quine into Plato.

Does this reading make Plato a "linguistic philosopher"? I think not. It leaves plenty of room for Plato's doctrine of the active soul, for the soul's erotic attachment to the forms, and even for his theory of poetic inspiration. And much more. What it does at least attempt to nail down is the distinction between <u>doxa</u> and <u>episteme</u> and the sort of disciplined inquiry which leads to the latter and makes it worth having.

Footnotes

1. "Knowledge and the Forms in the Later Platonic Dialogues," _Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association_, Vol. 51, No. 6, August, 1978, pp. 735-758.

2. _Parmenides_ 130e-133a.

3. In a paper presented to the Ohio State Philosophy Department Colloquium, Spring, 1977, contained in an as-yet unpublished paper entitled "Self-Predication and Plato's Theory of Forms."

4. _Timaeus_ 52b.

5. _Ibid._

6. Edward Lee, "The Receptacle as Nurse and Mother," Paper read at the 1975 meeting of the Metaphysical Society of America, Boston University, unpublished.

7. _Parmenides_ 130b-c.

8. _Parmenides_ 160e.

9. _Parmenides_ 129d.

10. _Phaedo_ 96a ff.

11. _Categories_ 5a 27-8b 24.

12. _Theaetetus_ 155e and ff.

13. _Republic_ 474 b-480a.

14. _Gorgias_ 464a-466a.

15. _Republic_ 509d-511e.

16. Jeffrey Gold, "The Ambiguity of 'Name' in Plato's _Cratylus_," _Philosophical Studies_, Vol. 33, July, 1978.

17. _Phaedo_ 89c-91b.

18. _Gorgias_ 465a.

19. _Parmenides_ 135e.

20. _Cratylus_ 387d-390b.

21. _Philebus_ 18b-e.

22. _Euthyphro_ 6d-e.