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FOREWORD

First a word about the title on the spine. I am not happy with it but can think of no better and so have let it stand. I am not happy with it for fear that it excite the expectation that this thesis is concerned with skill only. It is not; it attempts a more general version of Plato's epistemology and of the Idea of the Good. I was not quite aware that this was my goal when I began and the ways by which I reached it are varied and circuitous. For these reasons I cannot think of a title for the thesis which embraces all of its parts, and have to be satisfied with one for just its beginning and end.

. . . .

PURE AND FAULTLESS SKILL

A study in Socrates' and Plato's conception
of skill and science in some early dialogues,
the Republic, and the Timaeus.

by

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This thesis was submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in the Australian National University.

April, 1974

I wrote this thesis

R/word

INTRODUCTION :

The text of this thesis is six chapters on Plato and an interlude on Parmenides. The six chapters are in two sets, the first three and the last three, and the interlude divides the two sets. The first three chapters are not interdependent: the first does not lead to the second nor the first and second to the third. Instead, each of the first three chapters is an examination of a different aspect of the early dialogues, and the conclusions of each are brought together in the last three chapters. The first three chapters are like the legs of a stool, not contiguous but still joined together in a greater whole. The last three chapters on the Line, the Cave, and the Good in the Republic - are interdependent: the conclusions of the fourth are employed in the fifth, and those of the fourth and fifth in the sixth.

Here is an abstract of the seven parts of the thesis :

Abstract

Chapter I is an examination of three passages in which Socrates discusses skills - with Thrasymachus in the Republic about 'wanting more', the contrast between skill and 'empiric procedure' in the Gorgias, the analysis in the Laches of what a man must know to give good advice. I conclude that Socrates thinks of skill as perfected, as beyond improvement, and that it consists in the fullest understanding of the relations between some set of parts and the good which they combine to effect.

Chapter II compares Socrates' method of argument in part of his discussion with Polemarchus and in his discussion with the slave in the Meno. I conclude that Socrates supposes the two discussions essentially similar, that he thinks both the slave and Polemarchus confused about the proper relations between the terms they employ, and that he believes in a single system of terms, in moral discourse or geometry, which is common to all but variously misunderstood.

Chapter III is an analysis of the discussion about equal sticks and stones in the Phaedo. I argue that equal particulars image the Equals as Simmias' picture does Simmias, and that they fall short in being particulars as well as equal. The chapter continues by examining some difficulties in the theory of recollection, and concludes with a general account of the theory of forms.

The Interlude on Parmenides proposes that in fragments I-VIII Parmenides first illustrates then describes thinking and the experience by which he sees that his thinking is his being and all his thoughts inextricably connected and indivisible.

Chapter IV is about noesis and dianoia on the Line of the Republic. I maintain that the same relations between images and originals hold here as in the Phaedo and that the lower set of intelligible entities on the Line is of visible diagrams. I interpret 'the unhypothesized beginning' as similar to Parmenidean being and noesis as seeing that the

forms are simply intelligibles and make an indivisible whole. The understanding of this single uniform structure of thought, of the proper relations between its parts and the whole, I take to be the descent from 'the unhypothesized beginning'.

Chapter V is about pistis and eikasia on the Line and in the Cave. I propose that eikasia is the ability to predict the sequence of the phenomena called material objects and that pistis is the understanding of the natural kinds which occasion these phenomena. I continue with an examination of Timaeus' intelligible living creatures and conclude by showing how noesis, dianoia, pistis, and eikasia are compatible with a Parmenidean conception of being.

Chapter VI is an analysis of a central passage on the Idea of the Good in Republic VI, and shows how the Good, being, and 'the unhypothesized beginning' are identical. The chapter continues with an account of the Good Craftsman in the Timaeus and his reasons for making intelligent living creatures of all possible kinds. I conclude with a war-story.

All references to the work of Plato and Parmenides are included in the text. They are taken from Burnet's edition of Plato's works published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1954-1957, and from 'Parmenides' by Taran, published by the Princeton University Press, 1965. All other references and some additional remarks may be found at the back, and are indicated in the text by stars. The thesis concludes with a bibliography of works cited.

Since the scheme of this thesis is a little unorthodox, it will perhaps help the reader if I show now how the unconnected first three chapters relate to the last three.

The first chapter examines what Socrates thinks to be a satisfactory account in a skill or science such as medicine, and the kind of knowledge he supposes a doctor must have. I suggest that the Socratic requirements for a skill or science may be satisfied if we suppose him to believe that this kind of knowledge consists in the fullest understanding of the relations between some set of parts and the whole which they combine to form. This theory, I think, underlies most of Socrates' epistemology, re-emerges briefly at the end of the second chapter, is one of two major strands in my account of noesis in the fourth chapter, and appears finally and most clearly in the sixth chapter, in my account of the Good and the good Craftsman.

The second chapter is on the early dialectic. My argument here is that Socrates believes in a structure of thought common to himself and his respondents, though variously misunderstood by them. Socrates himself, I argue, is much better at establishing the relations between the terms of this structure in a consistent manner, but does not believe that his ability counts as true knowledge. Instead, the early discussion with the slave in the Meno, which illustrates that dialectic, is what he later calls dianoia, and this I examine in the fourth chapter. Hence I suppose that the method of the early dialectic is the first stage in the ascent to noesis which is the main theme of the fourth chapter.

The third chapter is on one of the accounts of the theory of forms in the *Phaedo*. In this passage Socrates is no longer interested in relating a series of terms in the manner of the early dialectic, but instead produces a theory to explain the nature of one such term, equality, in itself and in its relation to equal particulars. The focus of his attention has significantly changed - no longer constructing the same kind of arguments, he now provides an unproven analogue of the relation between a form and a particular to help us to see the nature of an intelligible. Almost the same analogue reappears in his initial account of the Line which I examine in the fourth chapter. And this difference in approach to the terms of our thinking is the beginning of the move from dianoia to noesis.

Note. I do not in this thesis discuss the Socratic problem but talk of Socrates and Plato as expounding a single, consistent, albeit developing, world-view.

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