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REMARKS ON PLATO'S DIALOGUE PARMENIDES

BY

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[the Society's seal]

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[3] Plato's *Parmenides* is one of the most disputed of his dialogues. It falls into two sections, each of which presents difficulties of its own for Platonic scholarship.

In the first section Parmenides of Elea develops, before Socrates, who is here portrayed as a young man, various objections that seem to strike the philosophy, the so-called doctrine of Ideas, which Plato has set forth in his most celebrated dialogues, those that all agree in regarding as the high point of his authorship: the *Symposium*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Republic*. If these objections really strike home, which seems to be conceded by Plato himself, in that he leaves Socrates standing without any way out with respect to his continued philosophizing, how then can it be explained that Plato has set them forth? This question has been answered in different ways. A whole series of German scholars (Schaarschmidt, Überweg, and others) supposed that the *Parmenides* was not by Plato at all, because its content was incompatible with the content of the generally recognized Platonic dialogues. Others (Zeller, Jackson, Natorp, Ræder) sought to show that Plato himself, partly in the second section of the dialogue, partly in later dialogues, has answered the objections put forward; but in the content of the answer these scholars then differ among themselves. Still others (Apelt, and recently Wilamowitz-Moellendorff in his biography of Plato)
[4] regard the objections as practice examples, exercises for Plato's disciples, Plato having trusted that for the cleverest of these they would fall away of themselves.

For my own part, after repeated occupation with this remarkable work, I must agree with those who think that the objections made in the first section really strike home. But I think one must go a step further. In these objections — whether they derive from others or from himself — Plato has stood before points of view that are of interest not merely for the criticism of his own philosophy, but are of interest for every attempt at metaphysics (in the sense of a conclusive knowledge of existence). I shall seek to establish this through an analysis of the first part of the dialogue. I remark at once that Plato has thereby grown in my eyes. True, he has not been, and could not well have been, conscious of the range of the objections put forward, and they have not led him to give up the doctrine of Ideas entirely. But within the remarkable mixture of criticism and mysticism that constitutes Plato's peculiarity, the critical element has in the *Parmenides* come forward at moments with such great force that he later proved unable to bend it into his system as a harmonious member, however significant in several respects the new investigations may be that he takes up in later dialogues. One understands how there could issue from Plato's school a critical thinker such as Carneades, the Hume of antiquity, while Plato through the

other element in his philosophy became the progenitor of Neoplatonic and medieval mysticism.

The second section of the dialogue will give a direction for continued philosophizing, even if one concedes the objections to the doctrine of Ideas put forward in the first section. The way that is followed is that of hypothetical inference. Different, mutually *[5]* conflicting presuppositions are examined; their consequences are to be decisive for which points of view one adheres to. But the exposition is in most of its parts so unclear, at the same time so abstract, and what is worse, so sophistical, that people have found difficulty in ascribing it to Plato or in regarding it as seriously meant. Those who reject the authenticity of the dialogue draw mighty weapons from this section. Those who already in the first section saw merely an exercise, think that this holds to a still higher degree of this second section. But there are also scholars who have found here moments for a real answer to the objections of the first section, in any case ways out of getting around them.

For my own part I confess that I am unable to find any significance in the greatest part of the very abstract reasonings, in part built on decided fallacies, that make up the second section of the dialogue. But in the course of the unclear line of thought there appear remarkable flashes of thought, which ought to be brought forward, and which in part gain interest by being compared with other thoughts in Plato. As a whole the section makes a very unfinished impression. There is lacking both formal and real conclusion, and it is not improbable that what we have here is really only a draft or a scheme, which could have been rectified and made clear by actual execution. Perhaps zealous disciples have thoughtlessly published a draft left behind by Plato. —

The conception of the two parts of this remarkable dialogue thus indicated I now attempt to substantiate by a closer review.

[6]

1. Critique of the Doctrine of Ideas.

a. At a meeting in Athens between the Eleatics Parmenides and Zeno on the one side, Socrates (as a Platonist) on the other side, — a meeting that it is very difficult to make historically possible, — there is read aloud first Zeno's famous (unfortunately now lost) work, in which he seeks to demonstrate the contradictions in the assumption that existence consists of diversities, and so is a multiplicity. The famous objections to the possibility of motion, which have especially attracted notice, are only consequences of this criticism: motion presupposes multiplicity in space and

time, and the difficulty then is how one can get across from one part of space and time to another. After the reading Socrates says that Zeno's work contains the same as Parmenides' didactic poem; the difference is only that Parmenides straightforwardly declares that only the One, that which is equal to itself and absolutely uniform, exists, and that plurality and change are illusions, whereas Zeno proceeds indirectly by showing that the assumption of plurality and becoming leads to contradictions. This Zeno concedes, and Socrates then maintains that the contradictions that Parmenides' opponents find in the doctrine of unity, and the contradictions that Zeno finds in the doctrine of plurality, fall away when one assumes that unity and plurality, likeness
[7] and difference, rest and motion are so many Ideas, so many kinds of being, and that the individual particulars (objects of experience) each for itself in certain respects belong under one of these kinds, in certain other respects under another, (p. 127 E—129 E).

In this line of thought the opposition between Eleaticism and Platonism appears clearly. According to Parmenides existence was to be capable of being thought and to be thought through a single thought, the thought of unity, of likeness (identity), and of immobility. Plato's doctrine of Ideas here marks an advance, in that it maintains that existence is understood only through a plurality of thoughts, whose mutual relation it is a matter of determining. The doctrine of Ideas has come into being through the need to form concepts for each individual delimited group of particulars, thus through an ascent from a plurality of particulars to a unity in thought, an ascent that had to be repeated every time one stood before a new group of particulars. And Plato now has Socrates maintain that each particular or each group of particulars can fall under different thoughts or Ideas, there being no contradiction in different Ideas meeting in the same particular. The Eleatic critics do not go further into this side of the matter, important as it is in and of itself. What Plato here asserts can be described by what H. C. Ørsted called multifoldness, by which he understood the way in which different laws of nature in their interplay make up the essence of the individual particular (phenomenon). The fountain, e.g., becomes intelligible to us through the union of the laws of fall, drop formation, light, and sound, etc. Ørsted also uses the expression Idea of such a multifoldness.

The criticism that Parmenides now in what follows directs against Platonism concerns, on the other hand, another main point, namely the relation between Ideas and particulars in general. Plato had maintained that existence cannot be thought
[8] merely by means of the Eleatic One. Now Parmenides examines whether existence

can then be thought by means of the Platonic Ideas.

First he asks whether Plato believes that there is any likeness other than the one we find within our experience among different particulars. To this Plato says yes. — He has indeed, we may interject, in the *Phaedo* (p. 74) made use precisely of the concept of likeness to show how the particulars of experience can present different degrees of one and the same property, and how by following the ascending series of degrees, here thus of more and more complete likenesses, we can arrive at the perfect, absolute concept, here thus the concept of identity, as an ideal, for which experience can present only steps or approximations.

From purely logical concepts, of which likeness is an example, Parmenides passes over to ethical concepts, to the beautiful, the good, and the just. Here too Plato says boldly yes to the question whether there is something that is in itself beautiful, good, etc., so that it is not merely experience that shows us such properties. — He had indeed also in the *Phaedo* (p. 75 C) expressly said that such concepts as the beautiful, the good, the just must be regarded in the same way as the concept of likeness. Experience here too shows us only imperfect examples, but by completing the scale we arrive at absolute Ideas.

Plato (the Platonic Socrates) stands differently when Parmenides asks whether there are also Ideas corresponding to particulars of a concrete or material nature, such as man, fire, water, hair, dirt. Here he does not dare to answer yes at once, although he sees that here too it is a matter of properties of given particulars, properties that can appear in a more or less perfect manner, so that the same line of thought must *[9]* find application here as with the logical and ethical concepts. He stands in doubt on this point, which Parmenides declares to be youthful uncertainty (p. 130 B—E).

This little passage has great interest in casting light on the genesis of the doctrine of Ideas. More sharply than elsewhere (cf. especially the passage cited in the *Phaedo*) a distinction is here made between different classes of Ideas. First the logical, then the ethical fundamental concepts (categories) are set up, and last the concepts of species that correspond to groups of individual particulars. We have presumably hardly here an indication of the order in which the different classes of Ideas dawned on Plato. For it is probable (as also emerges from the dialogues that are generally regarded as the first) that Plato as Socrates' disciple first caught sight of the significance of ethical Ideas as guiding thoughts that had to have eternal and unchangeable significance. Later the significance of the logical (epistemological) Ideas became clear to him. In the *Phaedo* (p. 65 D) he accordingly begins with the ethical Ideas and passes from

them to the logical (the concept of likeness and identity), whereupon it is said quite briefly that what holds for such Ideas also holds for concepts such as magnitude, health, strength, "in one word, for the essence of all things." (Similar utterance p. 75 C). It is now some examples of these "all things" with which Parmenides holds Plato's feet to the fire. The matter seems to be that Plato from the first did not distinguish between such concepts as we form about the content of our own intellectual functions (likeness, magnitude), and such as make themselves felt in our ethical evaluations, on the one side, and on the other side such as serve to order and divide given particulars
[10] (objects, individual beings), thus concepts of species in a narrower sense. All his concepts he has won by analysis and idealizing abstraction; but in the dialogues that precede the *Parmenides* he was not yet attentive to the differing character of the concepts thus won. Only later (in the *Theaetetus* and in the *Sophist*) does he begin to single out a group of concepts that correspond to what one may call fundamental and formal categories, in that they are immediately tied to the activity of thought itself and therefore find application everywhere that we think, no matter what we think about. He thereby laid the foundation of the doctrine of categories[1]. In contrast to concepts that we apply in all thinking, and likewise in contrast to those that we apply in the evaluation of actions and persons, the proper concepts of species had then more and more to take their place, and we see accordingly that Plato in dialogues from the following period (the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*) lays great weight on division and classification of particulars.

In his thorough work, for me very instructive, "Platon's philosophischer Entwickelungsgang," Dr. Hans Ræder thinks that the doctrine of Ideas loses a part of its sublimity through the concession Plato makes in acknowledging that even dirt must have its Idea. The Idea of dirt, says Dr. Ræder, cannot after all have been among the Ideas that gods and men, according to the *Phaedrus*, went out to behold. To this it is to be said that the Idea of dirt is not itself dirty. The concept or Idea of dirt would be the multifoldness of elements and laws (chemical and mechanical laws, as we
[11] now would call them) that conditions what becomes for us the phenomenon of dirt. When Plato himself has felt misgivings about this concept, it is because it is not a purely intellectual concept, but at the same time a concept of evaluation: dirt denotes something that one abhors, turns away from, or gets out of the way. But it can very well be embraced with purely intellectual interest, since one can disregard altogether the point of view of value. This is nothing other than what Plato himself earlier

[1] On Plato's significance for the doctrine of categories see *Den menneskelige Tanke,* p. 140 f.

asserted. In the *Republic* (p. 476 A) it is expressly declared that the true philosophers form concepts not only of justice, but also of injustice, not only of the good, but also of the evil. Thus he has himself here acknowledged an Idea of moral dirt. It is then also from this side an inconsistency when he for a time recoiled from acknowledging the Idea of dirt. He ought consistently to have said with Heraclitus: "Here too are gods!"

b. That Plato has not been clear about the difference between the different kinds of Ideas is due to the fact that he has not distinguished between the different ways by which he arrives at the different Ideas. There are two forms of intellectual work that Plato employs without distinguishing definitely between them.

The one consists in a going back, a regress from given particulars to their presuppositions. It appears clearly in the role that the concept of likeness, especially in its ideal form as identity, plays with him. Parmenides had already seen the fundamental significance of this concept; Parmenides' "One" means that which is in perfect identity with itself, uniform in all respects and therefore continuous (fr. 8. Diels.). This declaration has aptly been called an act by which human reason took possession of itself in that it asserts the supreme law of thought[1]. It was at once a *[12]* protest against the multiplicity in the world of the gods and against the chaos that human experience seemed to present. It sets the sharp difference between the inner coherence of thought, which in the end rests on the principle of identity, and the manifold particulars of experience, which seem to be capable of being connected in so many different ways. But in Parmenides no distinction was yet made between unity, identity, continuity, uniformity, and unchangeability; all these expressions stood as designations for the same thing. Zeno supplemented, as already touched upon, his master's line of thought by his polemic against plurality, discontinuity, and motion. From the mathematical side Zeno is accordingly also now regarded as the one who "with his keen eye has pointed to the difficulties that mathematics had to overcome in order to become an exact science"[2]. It was by virtue of the ideal of identity and continuity, dogmatically held fast, that Zeno with so great energy stressed the impossibility of a rational conception when plurality and discontinuity were presupposed. Against this dogmatic conception Plato has the merit of having

[1] Victor Brochard: *Études de Philosophie ancienne et de Philosophie moderne,* p. 133. — Cf. also my treatise *Parmenides fra Elea* (Mindre Arbejder. Anden Række) p. 141 f. (The contrast between what we now call formal and real science appears for the first time in principled form in Parmenides).

[2] Zeuthen: *Hvorledes Mathematiken i Tiden fra Platon til Euklid blev rationel Videnskab* (Vidensk. Selsk. Skr. 1917) p. 15. See also *Sur les livres arithmétiques d'Euclid* (Vid. Selsk. Overs. 1910), p. 432.

maintained the necessity of more thoughts than the one, if one wishes to understand the world. This is the significance of his setting the world of Ideas in place of the Parmenidean One. And quite a special merit he has in investigating the ways by which we arrive at the thoughts that make existence intelligible to us. Here belongs
[13] the already mentioned line of thought in the *Phaedo*, where it is shown that the measure of likeness lies in approximation to "the Idea of Likeness," pure identity. Here belongs further the line of thought at the end of the sixth book of the *Republic*, where he rises from the multiplicity and changeability of observations, which at most make belief and conjecture possible, to mathematical laws and from them again to the presuppositions on which they, and with them all true science, rest, presuppositions that it is the proper task of philosophy (of dialectic) to bring forward in order to give them a conclusive grounding. Through such analytic or regressive thinking he reaches the stage on which Parmenides from the first had placed himself, and which Zeno had sought to defend through criticism of the opposite stage. But Platonism and Eleaticism agree in the end in this, that the ultimate ground for thinking is something that is, — not merely presuppositions and principles for our knowledge, but the very own essence of existence. The world of Ideas is the highest form of existence, just as Parmenides' "One" was the only form of existence.

The other form under which Plato's intellectual work appears is ordering and division. It is by this way that he — as one sees from the *Parmenides*, after some hesitation — comes to conceive the Ideas as concepts of species, each of which holds for a group of particulars. This way he goes, e.g., in the fourth book of the *Republic*, when he distinguishes between different "parts" of the soul and builds this division of the soul's manifestations of life on their diverse, even opposite or conflicting character. In the *Phaedrus* the definite demand is then made that one shall be able both to draw together what is common to the different particulars and to follow how
[14] this common element appears under different forms. The division built upon this is to be carried through until one halts at the altogether simple, where no characterization is any longer possible. In later dialogues (the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*) he describes through examples from daily life and in broad and copious elaboration the art of division, which both lets likenesses and diversities come into their own. The concepts of species formed in this way were for Plato, like the logical and ethical concepts, ideal existences, eternal and unchangeable beings. And just as all individual likenesses in the world in the end found their explanation in the eternal Idea of Likeness, so too the concepts of species contained the explanation of the particulars for which they hold.

Thereby it is understood that Plato had no reason to distinguish sharply between the different kinds of Ideas. What for him was decisive was that they all contained the ultimate grounds why existence in fact is as it is. If we denote by the word ontology the line of thought according to which the thoughts we form in our work of knowing stand immediately and involuntarily as eternal and presuppositionless beings, then Plato's doctrine of Ideas is ontology just as much as Parmenides' "One."

c. We now return to the dialogue. — The first objection that Parmenides directs against the doctrine of Ideas, after he has got Plato to conceive it in its whole consequence, concerns the relation between Ideas and particulars. This relation Plato had described as a participation in the Ideas on the part of the particulars. All things that resemble one another are thereby participants in the Idea of Likeness; all animals participants in the Idea of Animal, etc. But, asks Parmenides, how can an Idea subsist as the unity it is, when a multiplicity of particulars is to partake of it? Each particular then gets only a part of the whole Idea! But the Idea cannot be cut up into pieces, any *[15]* more than it can be present as a whole in any single particular (p. 131).

Plato concedes the correctness of the objection. And that it really strikes home lies in this, that just as general, eternal, and unchangeable as the Idea is, just so concrete, perishable, and changing are the particulars. This opposition can be overcome only when it is seen that the Idea, the general concept, must appear in a special, individual way in each single particular. There is then no question of external division or of community under the same cover. Justice, likeness, man, fire, and dirt all appear in our experience always in individualized forms. Aristotle was already aware of this, and it was eagerly discussed in the scholasticism of the Middle Ages and in modern philosophy (Spinoza, Leibniz, and Berkeley). It is the problem of individuality that makes itself felt. Plato's great feat was to maintain the general determinations of thought and their significance for our knowledge. The next step, which could be taken only after long ages of discussion, was to put such determinations of thought in the right relation to the particulars for which they are to fit. Plato rises with enthusiasm to his Ideas, but then afterwards does not care how it goes with the particulars he has used as starting points and steps in his ascent. Nowhere, neither in the dialogue *Parmenides* itself nor in other dialogues, does Plato directly answer the objection that has here come to expression, and which at a certain stage of his intellectual life must have presented itself to him. But his thoughts constantly circle around it, and it will become apparent that it dawns on him that logical and mathematical thinking can not only open to us access to the world of the pure Ideas, but can also make it possible

[16] to find thought-expressions for the changing forms of the particulars of experience, their waxing and waning, their oscillations and their changes. At the third objection we shall return to this point.

Parmenides' second objection amounts to this, that if Ideas are to be necessary for the understanding of the particulars, because these otherwise appear as an incoherent multiplicity, then new Ideas are needed for the understanding of the relation between those Ideas and the groups of particulars they correspond to. In place of the incoherent multiplicity of particulars there now meets us the incoherent multiplicity of Ideas and particulars. The difference between Idea and particular must pose the same problem as the difference between particular and particular. We must, e.g., seek an Idea that explains the relation between the Idea of Magnitude and the large things. There must surely be something that is common to Magnitude and the large things. That becomes an Idea in the second power. But with that we are not done, for the question becomes how the relation stands between the Idea in the second power on the one side, the Idea in the first power and the particulars on the other side. We thus enter into an infinite series and never become done (p. 132 A, B).

This objection is often mentioned in Aristotle and has led to a technical expression: "the third man." Aristotle takes for granted that it is known what is meant by this. Just as man, as we know him in experience, presupposes the Idea of Man (the concept of what a man is, which holds for the individual specimens of man), so we must by virtue of the doctrine of Ideas assume a new Idea of Man, which holds for the relation between the first Idea of Man and the specimens of man — thus a third man, and
[17] this can be continued to infinity. This objection is said (according to a scholium of Alexander of Aphrodisias on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*) to have been put forward by the sophist Polyxenus and was probably known to Plato when he wrote the *Parmenides*[1]. Perhaps he has already in the *Republic* X p. 597 C tried to answer it. He says here that God has created only a single Idea for each group of particulars, "whether he did not wish to produce more, or there was a necessity to produce only one." Plato wants to put an end to it, to shut off a line of thought that would be able to continue itself to infinity; but he succeeds only by a theological postulate. As later for Aristotle (and still later for Hegel) the consequence that a conception leads into an infinite series of thoughts is for him a sufficient refutation of such a conception. It is in reality the same line of thought that lies at the base of Zeno's criticism of plurality and motion.

For the theory of knowledge of modern times, by contrast, it stands as a natural

[1]See Baeumker: *Über den Sophisten Polyxenos.* (Rheinisches Museum. N. F. XXXIV).

thing that the work of knowledge cannot be concluded. Even the last presuppositions to which the analysis of our experience leads us back we dare not regard as absolute and "grounded in themselves". There are series of thoughts that can always be continued, and within which more intermediate terms will always be found, however great a connection has so far been found. The possibility of a series' constant continuation, however many terms and intermediate terms are found, involves for us no contradiction and no difficulty. We hold to the law in accordance with which the constant continuation is possible, and in this law we see the goal of knowledge. And when it is a matter of presuppositions that are necessary for gaining understanding, we see in the possibility of constant continuation by virtue of the same law a proof *[18]* that here we stand at one of the peculiarities of the human faculty of thought. The logical principles that are presupposed in every attempt to ground an assumption cannot themselves be grounded, since every attempt at it would presuppose them. In a corresponding way, in the presupposition that what holds for the magnitude n also holds for n + 1, the fundamental peculiarity of mathematical thinking[1] has been found, particularly in its difference from formal logical thinking. — Already from the beginning of modern times great philosophers were clear that in series that can always be continued in accordance with the same law we must see the expression of a fundamental relation for our knowledge, perhaps for existence itself. This appears clearly in Bruno and Spinoza[2].

Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who on the whole does not attribute great importance to the objections to the doctrine of Ideas, holds that the second objection, the one I am discussing here, can easily be dismissed by the following considerations. What several things have in common is found by disregarding the differences between these things and keeping to the points of likeness. The Idea is thus formed by subtraction. But when one then again compares the Idea with the things, there is nothing more to subtract, thus no possibility of a new Idea[3]. To this it must be answered that precisely when there is nothing more to subtract, we stand at just such a chaos of differences as it was the task of the doctrine of Ideas to raise us above. A task would thus in any case remain. But the main point is that it is not in the spirit of Plato to regard the process of thought that leads to Ideas as a mechanical isolating procedure. The *[19]* formation of Ideas is the fruit of a comparative investigation that leads to a synthesis,

[1] Cf. on this *Totalitet som Kategori.* (Vid. Selsk. Skr. 1917), p. 34—36.
[2] See *Spinoza's Ethica.* (Vid. Selsk. Skr. 1918), p. 8—9; 38 f.
[3] *Platon* II, p. 26.

or, as Plato calls it, a synopsis, a seeing together, which leads the manifold scattered phenomena back to one thought. (*Phaedrus* p. 265 C: εἰς μίαν ἰδέαν συνορῶντα ἄγειν τὰ πολλαχῇ διεσπαρμένα). And one will not be able to get around the fact that a new comparison is required with respect to the content between the Idea thus formed and the particulars different from it, just as a comparison was required with respect to the relation among the mutually different particulars.

Jackson[1] is clear that Plato's doctrine of Ideas, as he has presented it in the *Phaedo* and in the *Republic*, is hit by the objection discussed here. But he lays great weight on a way out that Plato himself for a moment tries out, namely, that one conceives the relation between Ideas and particulars in such a way that the former are the eternal types, models for the latter, so that what was called participation in the Idea is in reality likeness to the Idea (p. 132 D). Thereby one escapes, Jackson thinks, the mechanical conception, according to which the Idea would as it were be parceled out among the particulars. Jackson takes up more or less Plato's theological solution from the 10th book of the *Republic*. When, in the production of the particulars, certain eternal and unchangeable types stood as guiding models, then this will make the ordering and classification of the particulars possible, and the study of these will lead us nearer to the knowledge of the Ideas as the perfect expressions of what the particulars present only by approximation.

It is possible that this conception of the Ideas as models was at bottom the one Plato in his innermost self favored. In it, it seems, his philosophical and his poetic
[20] need as well as his religious need could find satisfaction at one and the same time. But Parmenides points out (p. 132 E) with full right that the difficulty returns quite in the same way as before, since the relation of likeness between model and particular just as well must lead to the assumption of an Idea as the relation of likeness between the particulars among themselves. Here too we stand before the infinite series, for which Greek thinking had such great aversion. —

Another way Plato has for a moment taken. There was the possibility that the Ideas are only our thoughts, dwell only in the souls, nowhere else. Then one would, it seems, escape all disquieting consequences with regard to the relation of the content of the Ideas to the particulars. But this possibility Parmenides cuts off at once, and with full and quick assent from Plato's side, in that he maintains that every thought surely must be a thought of something, and of something that has being. A thought that is not a thought of something that is (νόημα ὄντος) is a meaninglessness (132

[1] Journal of Philology X p. 298; 334.

B, C). — It is a highly characteristic statement, which throws light on the doctrine of Ideas and on ancient thinking generally. One sees here how near ontology lay to incipient thinking. Thoughts may come and go, but the content of thought must have an eternal and objective subsistence.

Now it is true that in the most recent times it has been wished to deny that Plato's doctrine of Ideas has this ontological character. It has been asserted that the word "being" in Plato, when it is used of the Ideas, means only the content of a statement[1]. And on the basis of this assertion it has been held that whereas the objection to *[21]* the doctrine of Ideas that was called "the third man" was irrefutable when the Ideas were conceived as beings that stood in opposition to the particulars as other beings, this objection falls away altogether when one realizes that Plato's Ideas are only methodological points of view that lead to valid knowledge.

It is the viewpoint of modern theory of knowledge, founded by Kant, that one wishes by this conception to read into Plato. In a certain sense it is also not wrong that the Ideas mean methodological points of view for Plato. It is from the Ideas that he regards all particulars and passes judgment on them, both as regards their reality and as regards their value. It is — as already indicated above — his significance in the history of thinking to have realized that all our knowledge rests on presuppositions that it is a matter of becoming conscious of. In his doctrine of Ideas he wished in his own way to satisfy his master's demand for self-knowledge. But the point is precisely that the fact that the Ideas were methodological points of view by no means excluded for him that they also were beings that are. There was here for him no Either-Or, but precisely a necessary Both-And. He did not distinguish between validity and being. Therefore interest in the theory of knowledge and ontological dogmatism could go together in him. He stands here at a similar standpoint with regard to his Ideas as the Pythagoreans with regard to their numbers and the Eleatics with regard to their "One". Modern mathematicians too sometimes attribute ontological significance to the fundamental mathematical thoughts, without its hindering them in the application of exact mathematical methods.

For Kant there was here an Either-Or. It led him to the declaration that the proud *[22]* name "ontology" must be replaced by the more modest "Analytic of the Understanding".

[1]"Nie und nirgends bedeutet 'Sein' bei Platon, wenn von der Idee ausgesagt, etwas anderes als den Aussageinhalt". Natorp: *Platon.* (Grosse Denker. Herausg. von Aster. I.) p. 111. — Already in his work *Platon's Ideenlehre* (1903) Natorp expressed this conception, to which J. A. Steward (*Platon's Doctrine of Ideas* p. 77) has adhered.

But even if it were justified to read the viewpoints of critical philosophy into Plato, "the third man" would not disappear. For the question must be raised what the relation really is between our methodological points of view and the particulars to which they are applied. Do the particulars, with all their qualitative and temporal differences, find their perfectly exhaustive expression in the laws and equations to which the application of our methodological points of view can lead? Is there here a relation of identity or merely of analogy? Does there not in any case always remain a problem here, of the same kind as the one that had to go on existing for Plato in the relation between Ideas and particulars? When Natorp denies the presence of this latter problem, it is because he, as a representative of the Marburg school[1], on the decisive point confuses identity and analogy, just as Plato himself already did.

For every world view — theological, philosophical, or scientific — a problem arises here, which always poses itself anew, and which arises from the fact that there is once and for all a difference between observation (lived experience) and interpretation. It may be that observation leads of necessity to a certain interpretation; but as long as one cannot reverse the relation and, starting from the thoughts the interpretation contains, derive precisely the particular observations on which one built, so long it cannot be proved that a relation of identity is present. It is impossible to derive multiplicity from unity, whereas analysis of the multiplicity may very well ground
[23] the assumption of a unity (in the sense of lawlike connection). In theological thinking the problem unity— multiplicity appears in the relation between God and the world; but we thereby get only the same problem again — merely on a larger scale[1]. —

If we return to Parmenides, he has his greatest objection left, — — which will nevertheless prove to be closely connected with the first two, to be as a continuation of them. — When the Ideas are as a world of their own, with their own laws (αὐταὶ πρὸς αὐτὰς τὴν οὐσίαν ἔχουσι), then they cannot be known by human beings, who belong in the world of sensible experience, whose things are likewise determined by their own mutual relations (αὐτὰ πρὸς αὐτά ἐστιν). He who is master stands, e.g., in relation to his slaves, not to the concept (the Idea) slave, and conversely, whereas the concept (the Idea) master and the concept (the Idea) slave stand in relation to each other. And so the concept (the Idea) science relates to the concept truth (the Idea of

[1]Cf. my critique of the Marburg school in *Totalitet som Kategori* p. 46—48. (Vidensk. Selsk. Skr. 1917).

[1]Cf. my *Religionsfilosofi* § 17, where Parmenides' objection is already acknowledged and shown in its significance for theology.

truth)[2], but our science relates to the truth we can attain. The Ideas do not dwell in us, after all, but in their own world, and the world of Ideas cannot make intelligible to us a world different from it. Not even God, who after all must be presupposed to stand in relation to the Idea of science[3], would be able to know the world we live in, and just as little will we from our world be able to ascend to the world of Ideas. Neither *[24]* being an image nor participation can here come into question (p. 133 B—134 B).

That this objection hits the mark can be seen from the theory of knowledge Plato himself developed in the sixth book of the *Republic*. Within the world of thought (τὸ νοητόν) a distinction is made between mathematics, which works with certain presuppositions whose grounds are not given, and dialectic, which uses hypotheses only as steps and springboards to reach the unpresupposed, the principle of everything, and this highest knowledge proceeds from Idea to Idea and ends in Ideas (*Republic* VI p. 511 B). The doctrine of Ideas is thus a closed whole, which does not point beyond itself. Once one has merely found the entrance to it, one goes forward along the path of pure deduction, keeping to what follows from the principle (ἐχόμενος τῶν ἐκείνης [τῆς ἀρχῆς] ἐχομένων), and one ends in Ideas (τελευτᾷ εἰς εἴδη) and does not get out of the world of Ideas. — It stands here as incomprehensible how this pure deduction can acquire any significance for the world of experience, which Plato nevertheless expressly presupposes, since he lays weight on the fact that only those who have attained this highest knowledge are suited to lead human affairs. But he has not shown any possibility that pure deduction could come into any interaction with the knowledge that is won by observation.

Parmenides' third objection now draws precisely only the consequence of the doctrine of Ideas as purely deductive knowledge. But he goes a step further, in that he denies the possibility of reaching the point where this deduction could begin. Not even the steps and springboards mentioned by Plato become possible, since the world of experience too is closed in itself. Where within the world of experience would that point lie that could make an ascent, a leap up into the world of Ideas possible? *[25]* — The line of thought is the same as the one Kierkegaard applied against Hegel[1], in that he demanded that "the dialectic of the beginning" be made clear before one began on the system. How is the transition made from analysis of experience to the

[2]Cf. with this *Phaedrus* p. 247 E (In pre-existence the souls behold absolute science: — τὴν ἐν τῷ ὅ ἐστιν ὄν ὄντως ἐπιστήμην οὖσαν).

[3]That God is God is due to his relation to the Ideas. Cf. *Phaedrus* p. 249 C (What the souls saw in pre-existence, the Ideas, is that, πρὸς οἷσπερ θεὸς ὢν θεῖος ἐστιν).

[1]Cf. "*Søren Kierkegaard som Filosof*"[2] p. 61 f.

deductive synthesis? Kierkegaard draws from this the conclusion that there is no presuppositionless philosophy. —

Already the first two objections touched essential sides of the doctrine of Ideas. But the third objection draws the ground clean away from under it. It redounds to Plato's honor that he has let the radical misgiving about the doctrine of Ideas come so clearly to expression. One may say that he has here come right to the point where Kant in the year 1772 found the foundation of his decisive formulation of the problem. In his letter to Marcus Hertz of 21 Feb. 1772 Kant asks precisely how it can be that the concepts we form by our mental activity can acquire significance for a world we have not ourselves produced[2]. In Plato the question is formed thus: how can human science become divine science? —

Just as little as the first objections does this third objection lead Plato to give up the doctrine of Ideas, and we shall presently see why he does not give it up. But this third objection does lead him to make changes in his philosophy. It is the relation between deduction and induction that is decisive. These two methods go their separate ways in Plato in the great dialogues (*Symposium*, *Phaedo* and *Republic*). The task had to be to find a possibility for a cooperation between them. On such a cooperation modern
[26] science builds from the Renaissance onward, and as we shall see, Plato's later thinking too moves in this direction, even if it does not reach the goal. —

After the three objections have been discussed, Parmenides says that such difficulties are what one comes to when one attributes being to the Ideas. But if on account of these objections one wishes to give up the doctrine of Ideas, then one will be unable to give one's thinking any definite direction (οὐδὲ ὅποι τρέπει τὴν διάνοιαν ἕξει) and the faculty of intellectual discussion (ἥ τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δύναμις) will in the end disappear (p. 135 ABC). — More strongly and more characteristically it could not be expressed that ontology had to be held fast, and why it had to be held fast. Parmenides and Plato are here fully agreed. And Parmenides is in general in this dialogue Plato himself, or a part of him. One can speak of the Platonic Parmenides just as of the Platonic Socrates.

2. The Second Part of the Dialogue.

When the young friend of the Platonic Parmenides (the Platonic Socrates) is in perplexity as to what is now to become of philosophy, the old philosopher first

[2] See *Kontinuiteten i Kant's filosofiske Udviklingsgang* (Vid. Selsk. Skr. 1893) p. 52.

acknowledges his interest in the work of thought, in contrast to those who let thought roam about without law or rule. And thereupon he urges him to exercise his thought by starting from sharply determined presuppositions. In order to find where the problems really lie, one must investigate both what follows from a certain determinate presupposition, and what follows from the opposite one. Now unity and plurality, likeness and unlikeness, rest and motion, coming-to-be and dissolution, being and non-being stand opposed to one another as opposites. We must investigate what the consequence will be of holding to a single term within each of these pairs of opposites. *[27]* Only by such an all-sided discussion can one attain truth and acquire reason (135 C—136 E). Parmenides will then in what follows discuss his own presupposition of the One as presupposition for everything (137 B).

The treatment of the problem proposed by Parmenides has an evident occasion in the preceding investigations. The difficulties of the doctrine of Ideas proved everywhere to rest on the opposition between Idea and particulars. The Eleatics escaped this problem in that they established in advance that only "the One" (corresponding to Plato's world of Ideas) has reality. It is a great concession Plato lets Parmenides make when he lets him go into discussing both the presupposition that "the One" is, and the one that it is not. Yet this second presupposition, that "the One" is not, that thus the manifold is, had already been discussed by Zeno in his famous work, whose line of thought is also traced in many places in what follows. But Plato lets Parmenides introduce new distinctions, which conflict with the Eleatic presuppositions and make the discussion very involved, not to say wholly obscure. First of all we must say that the subject of the proposed method was not happily chosen. It was after all Platonism, not Eleaticism, that was to be examined. True, Plato agreed with Parmenides that the valid content of our thoughts must mean something that is, and also that thought seeks to connect its manifold content as intimately as possible, thus to find unity and coherence in it. But Plato's advance over Parmenides consisted precisely in Plato's with great energy and enthusiasm both demanding and describing the spiritual work that could lead to finding this unity, which Parmenides simply presupposed. In the *Meno*, *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, *Republic* and *Phaedrus* he had depicted *[28]* the development from the sensible absorption in the stream of particulars to the unity and inner coherence of the life of thought. And it had been shown that "unity" means lawlike coherence, rationality or identity. In the *Parmenides* p. 139 D it is expressly said that unity and identity are the same (ἥπερ τοῦ ἑνὸς φύσις, αὕτη δήπου καὶ τοῦ ταὐτοῦ), and with this statements in the *Republic* (p. 533 C; 537 C) and in the *Phaedrus*

(p. 265 DE; 266 B) agree. It would have been both more natural and more fruitful if it had been the concept of identity, and as its opposite the concept of difference, that had become the object of discussion, so that the consequence of laying only the one or the other of these two opposed terms as ground could be brought out. The problem unity-multiplicity is derivative in relation to the problem identity and difference. What Zeno was after in his famous aporias was, as already mentioned, really not motion, but plurality, absolute multiplicity (what I have called the chaotic series of differences), which excludes understanding. It is — as Plato has clearly seen — the possibility of understanding that is the Eleatics' real problem, which Parmenides discusses positively, Zeno negatively. For Plato it would have been most natural to let the discussion turn on the possibility of understanding itself, thus of science. Because the concept of unity is pushed forward before the concept of identity, it becomes more Eleaticism than Platonism that is discussed in what follows, and thereby the discussion becomes both unfruitful and unclear. It is at bottom neither Eleaticism nor Platonism, in general no clear position, that is examined.

After often repeated occupation with the second part of the dialogue I have for my part gained a decided impression of a lack of natural design, and at the same time
[29] of defective execution in the particular and of a lack of natural conclusion. It had after all been announced that a thorough thinking-through of the various possible hypotheses was to help us get going again in our philosophy, when the hope we had cherished for the doctrine of Ideas in its hitherto existing form had to be given up. But there is no indication whatever in this respect.

As already mentioned, here lies one of the reasons why many for a time were inclined to declare the dialogue spurious. The obscurities and fallacies that the second part presented one would not put to Plato's account. Other scholars have conceived the second part as a youthful work composed for polemical purposes, teeming with sophisms; thus Otto Apelt (Beiträge zur Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie p. 59; 66). Wilamowitz in his biography of Plato agrees in part with Apelt. He regards the dialogue as unfinished, produced in a period of Plato's life when, after practical and theoretical disappointments, he tried new paths. For my part I too consider it probable that the final touch has not been put on the second part of the dialogue, which contrasts so strongly with the carefully elaborated and thoughtful first part. I therefore surmise that Plato on closer reflection was led to pose the main problem that now presented itself to him after the severe self-criticism, in a way that was both clearer and better corresponded to his presuppositions. The following dialogues

have, as I shall show in a later section, decided indications in the direction of such an altered formulation of the problem.

With regard to the course of the second part of the dialogue I will refer to the scholars who believe they have found a positive content in it, such as Eduard Zeller (Platonische Studien p. 174—179), Jackson (Journal of Philology XI p. 306— 331) and Ræder (Platon's philosophische Entwickelung p. 309—316). These authors have found *[30]* as the general result of this second part of the dialogue the knowledge that unity and multiplicity constantly presuppose each other, so that one cannot exclusively lay one of the two opposed terms as ground for one's thinking. It is only one of the many examples of the fact that our concepts stand in relations of correlation and therefore serve for mutual illumination and determination of one another. But this truth Plato would certainly, had he worked through his draft, have been able to develop in a clearer and more natural way and in closer connection with his fundamental thoughts.

Only a few individual points shall I bring forward here as a characterization of the second part of the dialogue. It is partly a sharply carried-through thought, partly a wondrous sophism, partly a significant flash of thought.

Parmenides begins by examining his own fundamental thought, the thought of "the One". If the concept "the One" is understood unconditionally, no predicates at all can be attributed to it. It cannot be called whole, since it can have no parts, and when it is no whole, it can have neither beginning nor end, thus cannot be in time and cannot undergo any change. It cannot have any location, since something outside it would then be presupposed. It cannot be in itself, since it would then be both greater and smaller than itself, nor be in anything else, since there would then be something else besides it. It can just as little be at rest ("stand") as be moved, just as little be identical with itself as different from itself. But neither can it be identical with anything else or different from anything else. (It is in this connection that it is betrayed that unity and identity are the same). And if the predicate being means the applicability of one of the concepts mentioned, in particular of temporal determination, then one cannot call *[31]* it that which is. No predicate can thus be applied to it, and therefore it can neither be named, sensed nor thought (137 C—142 A).

Plato here has Parmenides draw the ground away from under his own doctrine. In his didactic poem the historical Parmenides — as already stated above — had attributed to his "One" several predicates: it is One with being; it stands in relations of likeness and continuity to itself; it has circular form. The paradoxical thing is that the concept of unity (identity) was precisely set up by the Eleatics as the principle of

the intelligibility of existence. And now it turns out that it is itself unintelligible! — When this had been shown, there might have been reason to examine the concept of intelligibility itself. That is the way by which Plato has distanced himself from Eleaticism. And it led him to a plurality of Ideas, corresponding to different groups of particulars. In the first part of the dialogue it was after all expressly maintained that there is no contradiction in the fact that the same particular can belong under different Ideas, thus have different predicates. This line of thought Plato could have carried further (and he does so in later dialogues); but it is not alluded to at all in the second part of the dialogue.

With regard to the arrangement within the dialogue one must wonder that the critique of "the One" has not found its place in the first part, as a link in the first objection to the doctrine of Ideas. For the critique of the "One" acquires significance not only with respect to Eleaticism, but also with respect to Platonism, since each single Idea stands as a unity in opposition to the multiplicity of particulars that belongs under it. Moreover Plato (as the *Republic* p. 507 and the Seventh Letter show)
[32] never gave up the hope of being able to lead all Ideas back to a single fundamental Idea, and here the problem unity-multiplicity comes forth again.

But not only with respect to Eleatics and Platonists does this remarkable critique of the concept "the One" have its significance. Again and again, both in the history of religion and in that of thinking, attempts appear to gather everything in one thought or to start from a single thought. All mysticism and romantic speculation is hit to that extent by this critique. Yet consistent mystics will admit its result, in that they maintain that if God is the absolutely One, nothing can be said about him, indeed, he is nothing, i.e. nothing of what one can name or think[1].

Plato himself has paved the way for the right understanding of the mode of operation and task of human thinking, in that he (in the *Republic* and in the *Phaedrus*, and later in the *Theaetetus* and in the *Sophist*) teaches that all thinking is a comprehending through the interaction of connection and separation. He is thereby a predecessor of the modern theory of synthesis in Leibniz, Kant and their successors. —

The next consideration (p. 142 B–155 E) proceeds from a presupposition that really ought to have been rejected, if one trusted the result of the first consideration. For, as we saw, the predicate "being" (οὐσία) had to be rejected if "the One" was to be taken seriously. But the new consideration proceeds precisely from the premise that the One "is." The first consideration proceeded from the premise that what is, is

[1] Cf. *Religionsfilosofi.* § 21. Conclusion.

"one" (εἰ ἕν ἐστιν); the new consideration proceeds from the premise that only "being" can be attributed to the One (ἕν εἰ ἐστιν). There, the starting point was the content of the concept; here, the starting point is that this content has existence, — that ἕν is an ὄν. The discussion of this presupposition leads to results opposite to those of the discussion of the former. That the presupposition is nevertheless taken up and gone *[33]* through at great length is evidence of the provisional and tentative character of this second part of the dialogue. Moreover, the discussion is also, to be sure, evidence of what sort of sophistry Plato could fall into before his thought had attained full clarity.

The line of thought is this. When the One is said to be, we get two concepts, the One and its being. But these concepts must belong closely together and make up a whole. Every whole consists of parts, and each of the parts must in turn have the character both of unity and of being, and these two predicates must in turn form a whole — and so on to infinity by virtue of the line of thought once embarked upon (κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον ὡσαύτως). But it is not merely a duality that thus repeats itself; it is a triad, for the two predicates and their connection make up a triad, — and here too we can go on in the same way, so that we come to need the whole series of numbers. The One then becomes a multiplicity. And as a whole it is complete, has both beginning and end. It is, moreover, both at rest and in motion, advancing through different moments, at each point standing between a "now" and a "thereafter." — Since there is thus the possibility of a whole series of predicates, each of them separately demonstrable, observation and science can now become possible, which they could not after the former consideration. —

Even Zeller and Jackson, who otherwise know how to find deep philosophy in this section of the dialogue, give it up here. There is also an obvious sophism in the manner in which the concept of a whole is introduced here. The fact that a distinction is made between two concepts or predicates (unity and being) shows in a way that there is a whole, since predicates that are attributed to the same particular must stand *[34]* in a certain connection with one another. In the first part of the dialogue Plato has indeed also maintained that there is no contradiction in the same particular falling under several Ideas. It is admittedly an indeterminate whole; it is the one that appears in the third Aristotelian figure of inference (B is A and B is C), where the difficulty is precisely that of finding what connection one has a right to assume between different predicates of the same subject (between A and C). It is in any case a purely logical whole, a connection of thought, and it is unwarranted to transfer to it what holds for wholes in time and space, wholes that are given in actual or possible experience,

— real wholes. And yet it is assumed without further ado that the whole that the concepts unity and being make up must be subject to the categories of space, time, and number. From the standpoint of the historical Parmenides, according to which the "One" is conceived from the outset as a uniform sphere throughout, the category of space is in any case applicable; but its applicability is not reached by inference, but is presupposed. To Plato this line of thought is wholly foreign, apart from the confusion of concepts by which it is justified. —

It is no accident that the line of thought proceeding from the "One" as being (existing) takes on a realistic character. When we ask what we mean by saying that something is, exists, psychological investigation already shows that we thereby rely on observations which prove that this something stands in firm and unbreakable connection with everything else that is present to us. If any of this other is doubted, the same question is simply raised anew. To be (to exist) is to be a member of a lawful connection. When it is therefore to be discussed what lies in the "One's" being, one
[35] must necessarily become clear that one thereby in advance places it in relation to something else, and this is understood to the extent that the line of thought slides over into the application of concepts such as space, time, and number, which are precisely forms of connection. One enters the world of relations as soon as one asks about existence. And even if one confines oneself to the mere content of the concept, as in the purely formal sciences, one does not avoid the relation to something else. Logically and mathematically everything is possible that does not contain self-contradiction; but even this formal criterion of truth presupposes that the "One" can be put in relation to something else; otherwise its logical validity cannot be established.

One might ask whether the view put forward here concerning "being" and existence is not foreign to Plato. To this the answer must be that Plato himself (in the tenth book of the *Republic*) applies the same criterion to being as is put forward here. It is on the occasion of the relation between art and science that Plato comes to this point. Art keeps to the single image as it appears when the object is seen from a single, definite side. Science arrives at the true concept of the object by relying on observations of the object from as many different sides as possible. One and the same table looks different to us, according to the side from which, and the distance at which, we see it. A stick that under ordinary conditions is seen as straight will, when it stands in water, be seen as bent. Under different conditions one and the same thing can appear as soft and as hard. If we want to know the real nature of things, we must count, measure, and weigh; we can then form a concept of them, on the

basis of which, taking the different circumstances into account, we can explain how it comes to look different. Being we attribute to what a concept thus formed contains. *[36]* (*Republic* X p. 598 A; 602 C–603 A. Cf. VII p. 528 AB). — We shall later have occasion to see that Plato in his later writings places great weight on this consideration, which echoes in Galileo's famous exhortation to measure everything that is measurable, and to make measurable what is not yet so. It is very remarkable that Plato has not made use of it in the *Parmenides*. It would have supported the critique of the concept of the "One" that he has given beforehand, and would have led to the result that later works its way forward in the *Philebus* and in the *Timaeus*, namely, that the mystical concept of the "One" acquires rational significance only by being seen as an expression of the formal and real connection of the particulars. Spinoza's "substance" is precisely Parmenides' "One" as the principle of the world's inner, lawful connection[1]. —

The last section of the dialogue (p. 164 B–166 C) is a counter-test of the first consideration (which proceeded from the validity of the One). It proceeds from the premise that the "One" is not, and investigates what the consequence of this will be for the many (τὰ πολλά). The many particulars then stand merely in a relation of difference to one another, and there will be absolutely no connection between them. Even if they apparently form quantities or masses (ὄγκοι), on closer consideration these will dissolve into chaos, into an infinity of different particulars. And in every apparent whole one will find ever new parts within it and ever more extremities at its boundary. In the end multiplicity itself will vanish, since its parts would each of them have to be ones, but no One exists! —

It can be clearly traced here that the meaning of "the One" is that it is the principle *[37]* of lawful connection in the world. If this concept falls away entirely, we arrive at a limit of our knowledge that is the opposite of the one to which the first consideration (137 A–142 A), which discussed the content of "the One," led. Just as impossible as it is to hold fast to the concept "the One" in its full consequence, so impossible is it to give it up entirely. There are thus two mutually opposed presuppositions, each of which taken alone would make knowledge impossible. In my presentation of the theory of knowledge I have called the one "the absolute series of identity," the other "the chaotic series of differences"[1]. Between the two all human knowledge moves, in constant conflict of identity and difference. —

[1] *Spinoza's Ethica* p. 9–11; 14–18. (Vidensk. Selsk. Skrifter 1918).

[1] *Den menneskelige Tanke* p. 162–172. — See also *Totalitet som Kategori* p. 8–11. (Vidensk. Selsk. Skr. 1917).

The dialogue ends suddenly after the discussion last mentioned, without any retrospect, without concluding remarks, without any hint whatever of the interest that the various presuppositions discussed might have for the question dealt with in the first part of the dialogue, that is, without pointing to what might take the place of the so severely criticized doctrine of Ideas. This speaks strongly in favor of the supposition that we have here only a loose sketch. —

I have here discussed only the beginning of the second part (p. 137 C –155 E) and its end (p. 164 B–166 C). The considerations that lie between (p. 156 A–164 A) I do not go into (apart from a single point). I cannot find anything fruitful in them, and the confusions of concepts flourish more luxuriantly there than in other parts of the
[38] dialogue. — The single point I wish to dwell on requires a section of its own.

3. The Concept of the Sudden (τὸ ἐξαίφνης) in Plato's Philosophy.

The investigation of "the One" as being (142 B–155 E) had led to a closer development of a thought that the Platonic Socrates had maintained right at the beginning (129 B), namely that several Ideas may very well at one and the same time hold of the same particular, a piece of knowledge which, moreover, had already been won in earlier dialogues (*Phaedo* 102 C; 103 B. — *Republic* 479 A; 523 C). And in a remarkable passage that concludes the investigation mentioned, Plato (the Platonic Parmenides) now comes to the question of a successive relation to the Ideas that may hold of the same particular, — of the transition from likeness to unlikeness, from rest to motion, from smallness to greatness, etc. And here the concept of the sudden emerges, which presents a special interest in Plato's philosophy.

a. The introduction of this concept itself comes very suddenly. In the demonstration that "the One" as being must be able to have many different predicates, it is particularly emphasized that it must be subject to time; otherwise it could not pass from one state to another. But emphasis is laid — with a certain concession to Zeno — on the point that in every now it must be what it is, the now cannot be passed over, notwithstanding that one must constantly advance from moment to moment, so that the now must at once be let go again and the next now (τὸ ἔπειτα) seized, (152 CDE). Here no serious problem is as yet hinted at. But then, a little later (155 E), the question is taken up again, in that the opposition or contradiction between the various predicates (or the states these indicate) is sharply emphasized. A change (μεταβολή) must take place, a transition from one state to a wholly different state.

The one state must be let go, the other taken over. But when does this transition take place? As long as the earlier state (likeness, rest, smallness, etc.) is there, it does not take place, and when the new state (difference, motion, greatness, etc.) is there, the transition has already taken place. It takes place suddenly. But this sudden (τὸ ἐξαίφνης) is a paradox (ἄτοπον), for it means a transition between two states, and since no time can be given in which a particular is neither at rest (etc.) nor in motion (etc.), the sudden is in no time. Into this sudden the old state passes, and out of this the new state emerges. *[39]*

The solution that is hinted at here consists in acknowledging the reality of the transition, and with it of the sudden, but in placing it outside time. What is outside time and yet has validity must, according to Plato's philosophy, belong to the world of Ideas, and Plato would consistently have had to assume an Idea of suddenness. He would surely have been even more reluctant to do so than to assume an Idea of dirt. For this new Idea would bring unrest into the calm world of the Ideas. In a double sense the sudden then becomes something that has no home anywhere (an ἄτοπον); neither the world of the Ideas nor that of the particulars can house it. But on closer examination Plato's thinking does not entitle him to place the sudden outside time. Though it is not supposed to be a state, it nevertheless fills a link in the series of states, and is thus a particular (a phenomenon, something that is present). The ground for its timelessness rested only on the transition's being neither rest (etc.) nor motion (etc.). But the error of the Platonic Parmenides might precisely lie in his presupposing a contradictory relation between these concepts. When the same particular can well fall under different Ideas, a Both–And is not excluded in advance; likeness and difference, rest and motion, etc., need not be mutually contradictory concepts. It is not necessary that one Idea disappear in order that another may come to hold. The transition can thus take place from a state of likeness with subordinate diversities to a state of diversity with subordinate likeness, — from a restless rest to a uniform motion, etc. In more recent times Descartes still proceeded from a contradictory content between rest and motion, but Leibniz showed the possibility of a transition from rest to motion, when rest was conceived as a state of equilibrium, in which different tendencies of motion held one another in check. But just as the question of "being" (existence) could not be answered by keeping to a single being taken by itself alone, but only by seeing it in relation to other beings, so the transition from one state to another cannot be understood from the single state as isolated; only under certain definite conditions, in particular under the influence of releasing impulses coming from outside, does the *[40]*

transition take place. It is isolation that must be abolished, within the world of Ideas as well as within that of particulars. —

In two modern thinkers Plato's doctrine of the sudden has aroused interest.

Kierkegaard, who in a note to *The Concept of Anxiety* (ch. 3) discusses this doctrine, translates "the sudden" as "the moment" and says that for Plato it is "the non-being under the determination of time." This Plato would surely not concede. He knows no empty time. He expressly maintains, after all, that the sudden is not in any time. But Kierkegaard is right to the extent that Plato cannot consistently place the sudden
[41] outside time, since that to which a state passes over, and from which another state begins, must itself be a link in the series of time. When Kierkegaard without further ado translates (τὸ ἐξαίφνης) as "the moment," he has thereby already corrected Plato; for every moment is a link in the series of time. Moreover, Kierkegaard needed a positive meaning and a definite temporal location for the "sudden" in his doctrine of "the leap." The leap, the absolute act of freedom, is to be a positive action at a definite moment and is to be capable of being observed. But it is not, like other states or moments, to be determined by law; it is not subject to certain definite conditions of release. "The sudden," says Kierkegaard (*The Concept of Anxiety*, p. 137), "knows no law." As I have shown in my book on Kierkegaard as a Philosopher (second edition p. 78–82), Kierkegaard nevertheless locates "the leap" between two moments; in the first it has not yet taken place, in the second it has already taken place. Hereby he again approaches Plato's own conception of the sudden. But then the sudden cannot be called "the moment," if by a moment one understands an independent link in the series of time. The two moments between which the leap, according to Kierkegaard, takes place have no moment between them. Strangely enough, Kierkegaard holds that the leap is nevertheless to be capable of being observed.

Natorp has seen that according to Plato the sudden is not in time, and he finds in this a support for his interpretation of Plato's doctrine of Ideas in analogy with modern theory of knowledge (especially that of the Marburg school). He finds in it, namely, the conception expressed that not sensation, which is bound to time as discontinuous succession, but only thought can maintain continuity, can ground the transition from one predicate to another. Whereas Kierkegaard interprets the
[42] sudden as the leap, Natorp without further ado sets "the transition's continuity" as synonymous with "transition"; that the transition takes place "im Auf-einmal" (Parm. 156 D) is supposed to mean that "the continuity of the transition has its root in a

thinking"[1]. But Plato quite evidently regards the sudden transition as a fact that it is a matter of understanding, and his ground for its not being able to be in any time is purely negative, without any reference to thought, to the world of Ideas. It would likewise be of no use to refer the transition to pure logic, partly because there it becomes continuous transition, whereas the riddle is precisely the discontinuous in the transition from Idea to Idea, partly because a new problem then emerges, namely what the relation is between the logical continuity (which is really identity) and the real (temporal) discontinuity. But this is, to be sure, precisely a question whose significance the Marburg school overlooks[2]. This school here faces the same difficulty as Parmenides and Plato, an absolute opposition between continuity and discontinuity, and it underestimates the constant significance of discontinuity in our knowledge as a spur and as a factor that poses problems.

The fact of discontinuity, the suddenness with which a transition can take place, is closely connected with the fact that every particular stands in relation to other particulars. If we had at our disposal only a single experience, the concept of discontinuity would not have been formed. A single point taken by itself alone cannot be called discontinuous. And suddenness cannot be predicated of any experience that does not stand in qualitative opposition to other experiences. A closer investigation shows that our knowledge develops under constantly renewed conflict between continuity and discontinuity. To this conviction Plato drew near when he put a world of different Ideas in place of Parmenides' "One." Thereby not all difficulties were overcome, but better conditions had been provided for contending with them. And despite all the obscurities of the dialogue *Parmenides*, Plato has here become aware that it is not enough to distinguish between Ideas and particulars, but that the problem of unity and multiplicity also arises within the doctrine of Ideas. The question how a particular, from falling under one Idea, can come to fall under another Idea, leads Plato in his own way to take up Zeno's problem. That he acknowledges it as a real problem, whereas Parmenides and Zeno regard it as the fruit of an illusion, comes from the world of Ideas being for him a multiplicity. Each single Idea is for him a reality; therefore the transition from one Idea to another also had to be a reality. Zeno laid the presupposition of a real multiplicity at the foundation only with a polemical intent. Plato is now, as we have seen, in agreement with Zeno in this, that from an absolute multiplicity (a chaotic series of differences) no knowledge is possible

[43]

[1]The section "Platon" in Aster's "Grosse Denker" I, p. 127.

[2]Cf. *Totalitet som Kategori* p. 46–48. (Vid. Selsk. Skr. 1917).

(Parm. p. 164 B–166 E). But from the very beginning of his philosophizing Plato had, in agreement with Heraclitus, the thought that what is given in experience, the particulars, was caught up in constant becoming and change. Since to each group of the particulars caught up in change there now corresponds an Idea, the problem of the transition of particulars from the domain of one Idea to the domain of another Idea must necessarily come to present itself with quite a different force from when one speaks merely quite hypothetically of motion and change. And here the problem of the sudden then springs forth with force. —

b. Plato has here come upon the concept of the sudden through the opposition
[44] between the sharply distinguished Ideas and the particulars' continuous stream. But this concept has also emerged at a quite different place in Plato's philosophy. Whereas Parmenides and Zeno were not psychologists, psychological interest is a very prominent trait in Plato. It was not merely dialectic and metaphysics that led him beyond the Socratic standpoint; it was quite as much his deep psychological understanding. His doctrine of Eros (in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*) has rightly been called the most important contribution of ancient thinking to psychology. Whereas Socrates once for all presupposed that in human beings there must be both urge and capacity to form thoughts that could be held fast through all changes, and only strove to get them to let the urge for clarity and truth gain influence on their lives, Plato seeks to show how this urge, the intellectual longing, and the corresponding capacity can develop step by step. Eros, which for him in the widest sense designates the whole life of the drives, appears first as an urge for sensible satisfaction, but can nevertheless point beyond this. And the very urge that stirs after sensible satisfaction can prove to serve ends that lie beyond the individuals each taken separately. Through the urge to procreate the single individual works, without knowing it, for the continued existence of the race, and in the parental instinct it appears quite clearly that something stirs here that leads beyond individual self-preservation. The capacity and urge to create and secure life that express themselves in these drives are awakened by beautiful, attractive objects, which come to stand as the aim of the individuals' urge. But from bodily beauty one can pass over to spiritual beauty as the releasing force, there being a relation of likeness or kinship (ἀδελφόν, συγγενές, Symp. 210 B C) between
[45] everything that is beautiful. And by virtue of the same relation one can pass over from practical striving to intellectual striving, striving after truth for its own sake. Through a series of steps the individual can thus raise himself to knowledge, or rather vision, of the highest Ideas. —

The line of thought underlying this Platonic conception has its significance to this day. When for Plato the urge of love, the urge for honor, the poetic urge, and the urge for knowledge can form links in a series of development, it is because they can form a series of what one may call psychological equivalents. It is a series of displacements of motive that he describes in his doctrine of the great Eros. There is ideality in every drive, insofar as it points beyond the given state, beyond what has hitherto been attained, — makes a demand. And in this Plato sees the possibility of a metamorphosis, in that a thought of an end can, by virtue of likeness, replace another. Eros can become the great teacher, in that the drive, once it has been awakened, can gain new, perhaps higher ends[1]. If this is correct, there lies hidden a deep psychological insight in Plato's doctrine of Eros, and it is something other and more than "ein geistreiches Spiel," as Wilamowitz-Moellendorff has recently called it[2].

But whatever one may think of this, it is evident that in the domain of the life of the drives Plato assumes the possibility of a psychological process of development, within which by virtue of definite laws a transition takes place between highly different stages. The moments of life here do not stand, as they would have to on Zeno's presuppositions, with absolute independence over against one another, but form (or can at least form) a series in which the later links ever presuppose the preceding *[46]* ones, so that the links cannot be interchanged; the order of succession is determined; — the order of the summands is not a matter of indifference. At every point the individual is at rest, insofar as his urge, as it has developed through the preceding stages, finds fulfillment; but he is at the same time in motion, insofar as the step attained (ἐπαναβαθμός) forms the presupposition for, or contains an incentive to, going further. Only when one advances in a definite sequence (ἐφεξῆς καὶ ὀρθῶς) is the highest goal a human being can reach attained. Only he reaches this goal who by going through the series of stages has become strengthened and has grown (ῥωσθεὶς καὶ αὔξηθείς) (Symp. 210 D E). But then at last the highest beauty may suddenly (ἐξαίφνης) reveal itself to him (210 E).

Whereas the sudden appeared suddenly and surprisingly from the standpoint of Eleaticism and the doctrine of Ideas, where one went from being to being, from Idea to Idea, the sudden in a way does not come suddenly in the *Symposium*'s doctrine of displacement, which impresses the definite sequence of the preceding stages, concluded by the highest vision. A psychologically motivated preparation precedes

[1] Cf. my treatise on the *Symposium* in the third volume of Mindre Arbejder.
[2] *Platon,* II, p. 172–174.

the last link in the series, which nevertheless also belongs to the series. It is a kind of contrast effect that makes itself felt, and such an effect has the remarkable feature that it both separates, namely through the opposition of quality between the links, and unites, namely in that the quality of the following link is determined precisely by the opposition to the preceding one. The transition from the next-to-last to the last link is determined by the law that holds for the transition between all links in the series. However valuable the last link may be in relation to the preceding ones, — even if it denotes a state in which life first truly acquires value for a human being, —
[47] it nevertheless denotes a definite point of time, which has its definite place within the course of life. (Symp. p. 211 D: ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου, ἐίπερ που ἄλλοθι, βιωτὸν ἀνθρώπῳ). What occurs suddenly comes like a ripe fruit, conditioned by the growth and flowering of the past.

In his interesting study "La théorie platonicienne de l'amour" (Paris 1908) Léon Robin strongly emphasizes the complex, synthetic character of the Platonic Eros. Contrary oppositions make themselves felt in this feeling or drive, and Robin rightly thinks that at this point in Plato's thinking an influence of Heraclitus shows itself; this philosopher indeed laid such great weight on the contrasts that existence presents. And in the fact that through the state, rich in oppositions, that Eros denotes, an intimate relation to the Ideas can be reached, Robin finds an approximation toward mitigating the sharp difference between Ideas and particulars.

Since in this treatise I have come to the doctrine of Eros on the occasion of the concept of the sudden, it is quite naturally the successive contrasts in the psychological process springing from Eros that interest me. It is expressly said, after all, that Eros as the son of Poros and Penia is now rich, now poor, now full of life, now dying, and it is through such opposite phases that a human being grows to attain the great moment when the Highest suddenly reveals itself. It is, so to speak, through a struggle for existence that this high point is reached.

In the fact that through psychological development one can advance from participation in one Idea to participation in another Idea there already lies a hint that the Ideas must stand to one another in an inner relation. That they at the same time
[48] can be united in the same particular already pointed in this direction. But it appears still more clearly in that they (or the relations to them) can denote different stages in a continuous development. Even if they meet here only to part at once, Plato himself maintains in his dialectic that it is both the difference of thoughts and their likeness that brings them into relation to one another. Plato's doctrine of Ideas and

his doctrine of Eros point each in its own direction, in that Eros is unintelligible from the doctrine of Ideas, which contains no possibility of ascribing to striving and development any real significance. But as I have sought to show, the doctrine of Eros nevertheless contains points of view that can lead to a remedy for the difficulties of the doctrine of Ideas. It is the opposition of knowledge from experience to speculation that makes itself felt here. And after Plato in the *Parmenides* had so sharply brought out these difficulties, it was to be expected that he would also by another way than the psychological way he had followed poetically in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* take up the problems that were bound to present themselves here. — Before I go on to examine the new attempts at thought that Plato thus comes upon, I will first bring forward some hints that lead in a similar direction to the doctrine of Eros, in that they depict a spiritual development toward the conception of Ideas as an aim.

Not only in the *Symposium*, but also in the *Phaedo* and in the *Phaedrus*, the sudden is mentioned in the appearance of the highest spiritual state. From the lower world in which we human beings live, it is nevertheless possible, according to the *Phaedo* (p. 109 E), now and then to surface and catch a glimpse of the world of Ideas, just as the fishes now and then can surface from the sea and see something of our world. In the *Phaedrus* (p. 248 A) the charioteer of the human chariot of the soul, in the course of the journey in pre-existence, just manages to get his head up over his accustomed *[49]* horizon, so that he can catch a glimpse of true reality. In these passages the contrast between the highest stage of human existence and the preceding stages, which are nonetheless its necessary presuppositions, is expressed in pictorial form. As the doctrine of Eros shows, it is not a purely theoretical development that reaches its goal at that highest stage. What is presupposed is the development of the whole personality, an appropriation along the way of life. Already in the *Symposium* this is stated, where it is said that there takes place not merely a vision, but also a living together with the Highest (θεᾶσθαι καὶ συνεῖναι p. 212 A). And it is stated still more definitely in the seventh book of the *Republic* and in the Seventh Letter. There it is taught that the Highest is not knowledge, but a relation to something that is raised above all knowledge, and to which we therefore also cannot ascribe existence in the ordinary sense of the word. Although, according to Plato, it is possible only for one who has passed through a rigorous scientific schooling to reach this point, it is nevertheless a personal experience that in the end is decisive, so that only an indirect and pictorial communication to others is possible, and then only after one has been turned not merely with thought, but with the whole soul, in the direction of the

Highest (*Republic* VII p. 518 C D). In the Seventh Letter (p. 341 C; 344 B) both the sudden and the personal experience are sharply emphasized. As a protest against the young Dionysius's priding himself on being initiated into Plato's deepest and most inward thoughts, Plato declares here: "If anyone now or later claims to possess a knowledge of that which my striving really concerns, whether they may have heard it from me or from others, or may have discovered it themselves, then I declare that it is impossible that they can know anything about it. I have written nothing about
[50] it and shall never write anything about it, for it cannot be communicated like other kinds of knowledge. But after work upon it and after one has taken it up into one's life, a fire suddenly (ἐξαίφνης) blazes up, as if a spark had fallen into the soul. Once this fire is kindled, it feeds itself"[1].

Here too the sudden appearance of the new state is an essential feature, together with the fact that spiritual growth and personal immersion are conditions for it. — Psychologically speaking, sudden experiencing and long preparation do not exclude each other.

In the doctrine of Eros emphasis is laid on all the powers of the soul working together in a concentrated manner. But even where Plato is chiefly occupied with the purely intellectual development, there is for him no contradiction in the highest stage, in spite of its contrast to the preceding stages, being nevertheless prepared by them.

In the *Phaedo* (p. 74—79) the development of strictly scientific knowledge is depicted, starting from the connection between representations that is brought about by the association of representations through likeness and by involuntary comparison. Sensible things, such as pieces of wood and stones, resemble one another in certain respects, not in others, and perfect likeness (identity) does not occur in sensible experience. And yet it is by occupying ourselves with those imperfect likenesses that we work our way forward to the Idea of likeness! And as it goes with likeness, so it goes with other thoughts, with the thoughts of justice, beauty and goodness. In what experience shows us there is at most a tendency, a striving toward what the Idea
[51] contains, but experience can nevertheless serve as a preparation for the perfected acquisition of the content of the Idea, which only the highest science bestows. That this is taught in the *Phaedo* is all the more interesting because this dialogue otherwise stands in a certain contrast to the *Symposium* by stressing how great hindrances to

[1] What is emphasized in this statement, the sudden and the unutterable or only indirectly communicable, is also impressed by Plotinus. See *Ennead.* V, 3, 17 (τότε δὲ χρὴ ἑωρακέναι πιστεύειν, ὅταν ἥ ψυχὴ ἐξαίφνης φῶς λάβῃ) and VI, 9, 4 (— κατὰ παρουσίαν ἐπιστήμης) κρείττονα . . . οὔδὲ ῥητὸν οὔδὲ γραπτόν).

true knowledge sensation and sensible impulse can be. Experience for Plato never contains the full explanation of true science. He does not know induction in the modern sense of the word, and does not use the corresponding Greek word either (ἐπαγωγή), which first occurs in Aristotle. What takes place in the course of the intellectual development is for Plato not an introduction to the connection of the particulars, but "an elevation (ἐπαναγωγή) of the best in our soul to the vision of the best in the true being" (*Republic* VII p. 532 C). It is, as has been aptly said, a kind of ascension that Plato here describes[1].

In a more methodical form Plato has, in the sixth book of the *Republic*, depicted the development of knowledge through a series of stages. From sensation one ascends to opinion and conjecture, from there to strict mathematical knowledge and finally to the testing of the presuppositions of this knowledge, which according to Plato leads beyond everything hypothetical to knowledge of what is in itself. There takes place here a progression from stage to stage, in which no stage can be dispensed with if one wishes to reach the highest. —

Plato has thus under various forms maintained that, however high above all sensations, impulses, hypotheses, and inferences the highest knowledge lies, both as regards clarity and as regards value, it is nevertheless reached only through faithful *[52]* striving and work on the lower stages. But when the question is raised how such a course of development, such an ascent, is possible at all, then it indeed stands for Plato as a wonder, which can be explained only by our souls having already in pre-existence (even if only in glimpses) stood face to face with that which must now be acquired amid privation and longing and through earnest work. This mythological explanation sprang from wonder that the result reached along the long ways seems far to surpass what was prepared on the way. Plato's way out here can recall the solution of the problem of knowledge by modern philosophy of evolution, only that there one points back from the experiences of the individuals to the experiences of the race, whereas Plato points back to the very pre-existence of the individuals themselves[1]. —

Before I conclude this section, in which the doctrine of Eros has played an essential role, it must be remarked that this doctrine does not exhaust the whole of Plato's

[1]Teichmüller: *Studien zur Geschichte der Begriffe,* p. 407; 425. Teichmüller conjectures that in the Platonic Epanagoge (elevation) lies the germ of the Aristotelian Epagoge (induction), which is an introduction to the world of the general. With Aristotle the ascension becomes an introduction to the general laws of the particulars.

[1]Cf. my treatise: *Nogle Bemærkninger om Platon's Psykologi.* (Tidsskrift for Filologi og Pædagogik, 1879), p. 209—213.

psychology. One must, as I already set forth in my doctoral dissertation "Den antike Opfattelse af Menneskets Villie" (1870), distinguish three psychological types in Plato. The first is the one that I have in this section brought forward especially, and which prevails in the *Symposium* and in the *Phaedrus*. It is remarkable in taking its starting point in elementary natural want and yet leading up toward an absolute culmination. The movement proceeds along one line. The second psychological type that Plato depicts presents a development from different starting points, in that there is assumed a difference, respectively a conflict, between three different tendencies in the soul, —
[53] toward enjoyment, toward self-assertion in spirit and anger, and toward knowledge. What in Eros welled up with united force, acts here sporadically, and the task becomes that of reaching a harmony between the conflicting tendencies. In the fourth book of the *Republic* this conception is taken as a basis; it is nevertheless also traced in the *Phaedrus*. In the third type all energy is presupposed to be concentrated in the life of thought, which rules over a power that holds the craving for enjoyment and for self-assertion down. In the *Phaedo* this type prevails; but it also appears in the ninth book of the *Republic*.

The difference between the three types can, as is seen especially from the investigations of Dr. Hans Ræder, play a role in the discussion of the chronology of the dialogues. But they pass through various metamorphoses into one another. It is a testimony to the richness of Plato's psychological conception that he has brought them all forward; but their opposition poses great problems. And what in this connection especially interests us is what I already in the work mentioned emphasized[1], that neither the yearning called Eros nor the development toward harmony which the second type conditions can be derived from the doctrine of Ideas itself. The doctrine of Ideas presupposes a life of the soul that is once and for all at the height. How it has got up there it cannot explain, — and, as we have seen, and as Parmenides' third objection establishes, neither how the knowledge that can be won up there can find real application to the world of particulars.

4. Later Dialogues in Relation to the Problems of the *Parmenides*.

The self-criticism which Plato, according to the conception maintained in the
[54] foregoing, exercised in the *Parmenides*, has left effects in his later thinking, although

[1] *Den antike Opfattelse af Menneskets Villie,* p. 64; 74.

he did not refute the objections to the doctrine of Ideas set forth in the *Parmenides*. His later doctrine cannot be regarded as a direct continuation of the doctrine of the *Symposium*, the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, and yet he has by no means given up the doctrine of Ideas, although it recedes somewhat into the background. In order to be able to "do something about philosophy" (Parm. 135 C), that is, in order that his thinking should not come to a standstill, he had to adopt a different formulation of problems from the one he had hitherto employed. Such a new formulation of problems is traced in the whole group of dialogues that lies between the *Parmenides* and the *Laws*, the latter dialogue not treating questions that concern the doctrine of Ideas. This group consists of the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist*, the *Statesman*, the *Philebus*, and the *Timaeus*. Recent scholars (Jackson, Brochard, Ræder, Robin) agree that there is an inner connection among these dialogues with respect to problems and line of thought, even if the chronological relation between them is conceived differently.

I cannot follow Dr. Ræder in placing the *Theaetetus* before the *Parmenides*, since the way in which it takes up the problem of knowledge is intelligible only against the background of the *Parmenides*' thorough critique of the doctrine of Ideas, and since the treatment of problems in the *Theaetetus*, as I shall attempt to show, is a step in the direction that is carried further in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* and concluded in the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus*. Therefore there may well be, as linguistic grounds are thought to argue, some interval of time between the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*.

Already in the *Republic* and in the *Phaedrus* knowledge was described as an interaction of connection and distinction, seeing together (synopsis) and analysis, and in this interaction there came to light what Plato called dialectic. From this it is seen *[55]* that the abstract developments about unity and multiplicity in the second section of the *Parmenides* had by no means been necessary for Plato to be able to continue his philosophizing, after he had acknowledged the objections to the doctrine of Ideas in its original form. The very concept of thinking as a constant interaction of connection and distinction, which he had reached in the two dialogues mentioned, would have been a sufficient starting point, and it is in fact this starting point, not those abstract speculations (or sophisms), that he uses in the following dialogues, which mark a significant change in his philosophy.

In the *Theaetetus* it is maintained, — in criticism of the claim that knowledge should consist in passive and momentary sensation, — that all knowledge presupposes a synthesis, without which all distinction, all analysis would be impossible. The various sensations do not sit inside us like the warriors in the Trojan horse, but are united in

a comprehensive unity, whether one will call this a soul or give it another name (p. 184 D). In the very fact that sense perceptions can be distinguished from one another and come to stand as equal or different, a synthesizing function comes to light (p. 185 A). This consideration then leads on (p. 185 C) to setting up being (position) and non-being (negation), identity and difference, as well as the concept of number as what one might call, with a modern expression, fundamental categories, i.e. concepts with which we work in all our thinking, no matter what it is we are thinking about. That such a special group of concepts or Ideas is brought forward in close connection
[56] with the very activity of knowing marks a continuation of the distinction that was made in the *Parmenides*, more than in earlier dialogues, between different groups of Ideas.

In the *Sophist* Plato goes more closely into the activity of thought itself, in that he takes the significant step of investigating judgment as an expression of thinking. In every judgment different concepts are connected. Judgment is an interweaving of Ideas (διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἀλλήλων τῶν εἰδῶν συμπλοκὴν ὁ λόγος γέγονεν ἡμῖν, p. 259 E). This very connecting thinking, it is said further, is something that is, something that exists, and with the dropping away of which all philosophy would fall away (260 A). Possibly there lies here an answer to the question that at the critical point in the *Parmenides* was put to the young Platonic Socrates: "what will you now do about philosophy?" — and an answer that fully outweighs the series of pseudo-dialectical considerations which make up the second part of the *Parmenides*. It had already in the *Parmenides* itself been maintained against the Eleatics that there was no contradiction in the same particular's being able to fall under different Ideas; already this points to a certain connection among the Ideas themselves. And after the *Theaetetus* has shown synthesis to be the presupposition of the mutual relation of sensations as equal or different, there is now undertaken in the *Sophist*, through an analysis of judgment, a consideration that shows that the different fundamental concepts or categories can no more than the sensations be absolutely separate and independent of one another. Non-being can thus very well be a predicate of a being, when it is a matter of designating the latter's difference from another being (ὄντος πρὸς ὄν ἀντίθεσις 257 E). Likewise one and the same being can stand as like and different, as at rest or in motion (256 B). To the categories mentioned in the *Theaetetus* there are in fact added here rest and motion.

[57] In his doctrine of Eros Plato had already, without being aware of its epistemological significance, given an example of such an interweaving as every judgment means.

For in the constant striving or tendency there is both identity (as regards the goal) and difference (by reason of the distance from the goal), both rest (in the constant direction) and motion (in the restless yearning). And in the concept of soul that is set up in the *Phaedrus* (p. 245 C) as that which moves itself, and which therefore must be in eternal motion[1], there is also presupposed rest and motion at once. —

The circumstance that Plato in the *Sophist* takes an analysis of the function of judgment as a basis recalls Kant's procedure in the "Kritik der reinen Vernunft", and modern Kantians have accordingly also found critical philosophy outright in the last period of Plato's philosophizing. Now Plato and Kant do indeed meet at this point, and it is a meeting of world-historical significance. But they meet in that Plato ends where Kant begins. And a pure epistemologist Plato never became. The problem of knowledge did not become for him properly the fundamental problem, or rather, it was for him solved beforehand in his metaphysics. He holds fast, in spite of everything, to his doctrine of Ideas. A philosopher is and remains for him one who through his thinking relates himself to the Idea of what is (ὁ δὲ γε φιλόσοφος, τῇ τοῦ ὄντος ἀεὶ διὰ λογισμῶν προσκείμενος ἰδέᾳ. Soph. 254 A). That with his analyses in the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* he must consistently come out positively beyond his own doctrine of Ideas, just as he had come out negatively beyond it in the *Parmenides*, he does not notice. There did not present itself to him the problem which, on the basis of similar analyses c. 2000 years later presented itself to Kant: if our categories *[58]* are ultimately forms of our own activity of thought, whence comes then their validity for objects that are not produced by our activity of thought?[1] Even where Plato finds ever so much self-activity and ever so much unrest in our thought, the heaven of Ideas is not touched thereby for him. The question how he then knows that there is such a heaven he does not raise.

Bonitz, in his excellent analysis of the *Sophist*, has already shown[2] that Plato was not aware that he was on the very point of dissolving all metaphysics into logic. One can find in him a first possibility of the significant turn that occurred with Kant's definitive foundation of critical philosophy. But this possibility Plato did not see and did not use, — was neither able nor willing to use it. He remained in agreement with the Eleatics that every true thought must be a thought of something that has its absolute subsistence (Parm. p. 132 B; 135 B). —

[1]The concept αὐτοκίνητον seems to derive from Alcmaeon. See Diels: *Vorsokratiker*', p. 105.
[1]See *Kontinuiteten i Kants filosofiske Udviklingsgang* p. 52.
[2]*Platonische Studien?* p. 195 f.

The dialogue *Statesman* has, as the name indicates, a practical task. But in order to find the "royal science" (p. 292 E) or art (p. 300 E) that must be demanded of the true statesman, a circumstantial division of arts and sciences is undertaken, a division that at the same time — like a corresponding classification in the *Sophist*, — supplies examples of how the place of concepts in the world of thought is determined by their mutual likeness and difference. And on a given occasion the importance is emphasized of a standard of measure for finding the right thing in the individual case. The practical art or science presupposes not merely the ability to compare magnitudes
[59] in general, but especially the ability to find the determinate quantitative proportion between different capacities and impulses, which must be present if the tasks that ethics and political theory set are to be satisfied. It holds for all practical endeavors that they can only lead to what is beautiful and good when the right measure is observed (τὸ μέτριον σώζουσαι πάντ' ἀγαθὰ καὶ καλὰ ἀπεργάζονται. Statesman p. 284 B). — The ethical significance of the art of measurement had already been emphasized in the *Protagoras* (p. 356—357) and in the *Gorgias* (p. 507—508).

This last consideration is carried further in the *Philebus*, which, in connection with the *Timaeus*, gives the epistemological conclusion of the movement of thought that began in the *Parmenides*, and thereby stands as the decisive expression of Plato's later philosophy. Some authors see in this dialogue the *Philosophos* that Plato in the *Sophist* (p. 217 A) had announced as the third member of a trilogy, whose first two members were to be the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*.

In the *Sophist* an inner connection between the Ideas was established by the fact that the basic form of all activity of thought, judgment, is a connection of concepts, a "mixture." In the *Statesman* the necessity was emphasized of a determinate quantitative proportion, a determinate proportion of measure, when it is a matter of the decision of practical value. In the *Philebus* it is now shown how in all understanding and in all evaluation it is a matter of finding a determinate relation between a limit (rule) and an unlimited, which is to be limited. By the unlimited (τὸ ἄπειρον) is thought especially of the incoherent diversities (cf. Statesman p. 273 D: ὁ τῆς ἀνομοιότητος τόπος ἄπειρος ὤν). Plato's struggle for his Ideas is constantly a struggle against chaotic series of differences. Neither in the world of Ideas nor in that of particulars can such series of differences be tolerated. Everything that is consists of unity and multiplicity
[60] and has limit and unlimitedness in its nature. (Philebus p. 16 C). The limit comes to light in that identity, number, and measure rule (25 A). The dialogue's proper subject is psychological = ethical, therefore the standard of measure for evaluation plays

a greater role than the standard of measure for understanding, although there are common presuppositions for both. Whereas mathematics in the *Republic* is conceived as a stage of knowledge that rests on certain presuppositions, whose ground only dialectic reveals, it furnishes in the *Philebus* means and form for the determination of the essence of things, quite especially for the determination of values ("the Good"). The concept of the right measure (τὸ μέτριον) now becomes a central concept. In that "the Good" presupposes a proportion determined by measure and harmonious (μετριότης καὶ συμμετρία), it appears as beautiful (p. 64 E).

Plato here involuntarily comes to hint at the connection between the concept of value and the concept of totality. For if it is asked what then results from the right measure not being maintained, the answer is that it leads to dissolution into an unhappy chaos (p. 64 DE cf. Statesman p. 273 D). In our modern language we can express this by saying that every whole demands certain inner and outer conditions for its subsistence, and that the evaluation we make of the states and actions of personal and social wholes is ultimately grounded in the intervention of these states and actions in the conditions for the subsistence and development of the whole concerned[1]. The possibility of a rational ethics rests on the possibility of exact determination of such conditions of life. In the *Republic* Plato has sought to show that the individual personality and the conditions of life of the state stand in a harmonious relation to each other, when both wholes reach their perfect development. In his later years he seems to have laid the whole weight on the quantitative relations that must *[61]* be fulfilled in order for these conditions of life to be present. It is reported that those who came to hear Plato's lecture on the concept of "the Good" were to a high degree disappointed at hearing only talk of arithmetic and astronomy, of "the limit" and of "the One." On the other hand he has in his statements cited above in the seventh book of the *Republic* and in the Seventh Letter raised "the Idea of the Good" so high above all knowledge that he thereby deprives himself of the rational foundation for ethics and at the same time tears asunder the bond between the Good and the Beautiful that stands firm for him as long as he moves within human experience. The mystical and the rational element in his philosophy here enter into sharp opposition to each other.

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No more than the epistemological line of thought in the *Sophist* does the doctrine of limitation and of the necessity of determinateness of measure for every whole ("mixture") lead Plato to give up the doctrine of Ideas. The highest knowledge is still

[1] Cf. *Totalitet som Kategori*, p. 66—73.

that of "what truly is, that which always conducts itself in the same way" (p. 58 A). The doctrine of Ideas remains in the background, after it had proved necessary to acknowledge the connection which the *Sophist* has demonstrated through analysis of judgment, and the character of mixture (quality of wholeness) which the *Philebus* has demonstrated in everything that subsists and has value. —

In the *Timaeus* it is a main thought that the connection of identity and difference is expressed in the structure of the universe. In the celestial equator identity appears through the uniform movement of the celestial sphere; in the ecliptic the diversities appear through the movements of the sun and the planets. Corresponding to this, identity comes to light in man's thinking, diversity in sensation. The same opposition
[62] makes itself felt in the universe-encompassing world soul, which conditions the mathematical lawfulness of nature. This connection of identity and difference corresponds to the connection of concepts in judgment in the *Sophist* and to the connection of limit and unlimited in the *Philebus*. It was the new doctrine presented in the dialogues mentioned that made it possible for Plato to obtain a framework within which he could order the physical, astronomical, and biological material that he collected in his later years. It has rightly been remarked that it would be a misunderstanding to believe that in the Academy only philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy were cultivated. Biological studies also occupied minds, and perhaps the foundation was already laid here for Aristotle's interest in biology[1]. While in his classical doctrine of Ideas (in the *Symposium*, the *Phaedrus*, the *Republic*) he was content to ascend from particulars to Ideas and to go from Idea to Idea within the world of Ideas, he had now put forward thoughts that made it possible for him to attribute to the particulars another significance than that of merely being a springboard on the journey up to the world of Ideas, and it became a task for him to find a connection among the particulars themselves. Because of the imperfect means available, an attempt in this direction was bound to appear childlike, and Plato makes ample use of mythological representations.

Both from the philosophical and from the philological side it has been shown that in the *Timaeus* an influence of Democritus's thoughts makes itself felt, especially of his atomic doctrine. The strict lawfulness which Plato maintains (although he subordinates it to a teleological point of view) holds not only for the world of sensible particulars, but also for the elements, in themselves non-sensible, of which it ultimately consists. Already Democritus's atoms were non-sensible, and already in antiquity

[1] See Burnét: *Greek Philosophy. I. Thales to Platon,* p. 223.

attention was paid to the likeness between Plato and Democritus, that both, each *[63]* in his own way, explained the sensible qualities by non-sensible causes. Plato goes further back than Democritus, in that the atoms according to him must be assumed to be composed of elements that can only be characterized purely mathematically, and at the basis of these elements there lie again (as a kind of atoms of the third degree) finer elements, which are "known only to God and to him whom he loves" (p. 53 D). In an interesting manner the relativity of the concept of the atom is here hinted at in mythological form[1].

In thus introducing a third world into his philosophy alongside the world of Ideas and the world of sensible particulars, he undertakes in accordance with this a remarkable change in his theory of knowledge. The atoms can neither be thought (in the manner in which the Ideas can be thought) nor be sensed (like the particulars with their qualities). Only the way of analogy then stands open. It is this that Plato points to when he says that that which lies at the basis of the sensible qualities must be grasped "without the help of the senses by a kind of spurious thinking" (p. 52 B). (Even at p. 27 D only thinking and sensation are mentioned, without any hint of a third kind of knowledge)[2].

It is not certain, however, that the triad of Ideas, sensible particulars, and atoms of different degrees, which has called forth a corresponding triad within the theory of *[64]* knowledge, is due merely to the influence of Democritus's doctrine. Léon Robin, who relies especially on the *Timaeus* p. 52 C, has (loc. cit. p. 26) rightly emphasized that, if the particulars could not be derived from the Ideas, a factor had to be presupposed which could make it possible that the particulars, in spite of their likeness to the Ideas, could nevertheless have properties in which they deviated from them. There must be something by which the image is different from the model; — there must accordingly be given something different from the Ideas (ἕτερον τι p. 52 C). If there were given nothing but the Ideas, their images would be inexplicable. It is by a postulate, which is grounded in the difference between Ideas and particulars, that Plato from his earlier doctrine arrives at the principles of his natural philosophy in the *Timaeus*. He here in fact draws the consequence of the third objection in the *Parmenides* against the

[1] Léon Robin (*La Place de la Physique dans la Philosophie de Platon,* Paris 1919), who has strongly drawn attention to the passage cited in the *Timaeus*, seeks to show that by the atoms of the third order one must think of the ideal numbers and ideal figures with which Plato (according to Aristotle) became so much preoccupied in his last, Pythagoreanizing period. — Through Plato's natural philosophy there runs, alongside much that is fantastic, a striving to trace all qualities back to purely quantitative relations — although this too happens in a fantastic manner.

[2] See my treatise *Platon og Demokritos* (Mindre Arbejder. Tredie Række), p. 99.

doctrine of Ideas, — a testimony that he felt himself hit by it. —

If there are in the line of thought that Plato enters upon in the *Timaeus* features that make it intelligible that the natural scientists of the Renaissance, especially Galileo, could find a kindred spirit in him, this is understood still more clearly through the formulation of problems that Plato, according to Simplicius, is said to have assigned to astronomy. He finds its task, namely, in investigating what regular motions must be assumed in the universe, in order that the phenomena present in experience may come into their own. It is a way of asking that presumably stems from the Pythagoreans, but Plato gave it a stricter form, and Plato's friend Eudoxus sought to solve the task that it set. As Duhem, who has especially investigated this point, says: "The method of the physical sciences has been defined by Plato and by the Pythagoreans of his
[65] time with a clarity and an exactness that have not been surpassed"[1]. If this is correct, Plato has through his epistemological demands upon science exercised an indirect influence on the development of natural science, just as according to Zeuthen he has exercised such an influence on the development of mathematics. —

It is a great question whether Plato would have come upon the significant epistemological Ideas that he has developed in his later dialogues, Ideas that give these dialogues a great interest for the history of thought in spite of their artistic imperfection, if he had not with such great force and love of truth thought through the objections that could be raised, and to some extent have been raised, against his doctrine of Ideas. They did not lead him to give up the latter, but they have acted as a spur to renewed intellectual work and have thereby contributed to giving his thinking a greater universality than it would have had if it had dogmatically closed itself around the original doctrine of Ideas as the complete expression of the truth.

[1] *Le Système du Monde. I. De Platon à Copernik.* 1913, p. 129.

CONTENTS

Page

Introduction 1
1. Critique of the Doctrine of Ideas 6
2. The Second Part of the Dialogue 26
3. The Concept of the Sudden in Plato's Philosophy 38
4. Later Dialogues in Relation to the Problems of the *Parmenides* 53

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