

## Recognition, Concept Formation and Knowledge: Preliminary Consideration for the Theory of Recollection in Plato's *Phaedo*

Yasuhira (Yahei) KANAYAMA

In order to clarify the exact relationship between Recollection in the *Meno* and that in the *Phaedo*, and the role of Recollection in Plato's epistemology as a whole, it is necessary to examine in detail what kind of cognition is meant, in the *Phaedo*, by the recollection of the Equal itself and the sense of deficiency we have, concerning equal things striving to be like the Equal itself. As a preliminary consideration for this task, I here focus on the general question of what stage Platonic recollection covers in our cognitive development, the stage of concept formation (the traditional interpretation) or that of higher learning (the interpretation of e.g. D. Scott). Against the latter interpretation, I argue that it is not necessary to limit recollection to Platonists. Even though knowledge (ἐπίστασθαί) of the Equal itself may be attributed only to Platonists, which is represented by “we” in the Recollection argument, its notion (ἐννοεῖν) need not be limited to them alone. Neither am I in agreement with the traditional interpretation, when it limits the core of recollection to the initial stage of concept formation, to the neglect of concept reformulation. I take it that recollection corresponds to each and every stage of the process of improving concepts or notions through constant revision and reformulation, which finally arrives at the knowledge of Forms.

Just as the demonstration of Recollection in the *Meno* was an attempt to make Meno recollect Recollection,<sup>1</sup> the demonstration in the *Phaedo* is an attempt to make Simmias recollect Recollection, as is suggested by his comment that he needs to recollect Recollection (*Phaedo* 73B6–10).<sup>2</sup> Then, some true opinion must have been stirred up in Simmias' mind as if in a dream through the argument in the *Phaedo*, to be bound down with the calculation of the cause (*Meno* 85C, 98A), if this claim in the *Meno* is still maintained in the *Phaedo*. Of course anything can be stirred up in Simmias as if in a dream, and we cannot see inside his mind. But an interpretation that can give a most appropriate explanation concerning his recollection will be certainly to be favoured.

I said just now, “if this claim in the *Meno* is still maintained in the *Phaedo*”. It is because, as will be shown below, several differences have been pointed out between Recollection in the *Meno* and that in the *Phaedo*. Do these apparent differences mean that Plato discarded the *Meno* version of Recollection, when writing the *Phaedo*? However, the way Recollection is introduced in the *Phaedo* suggests that there is no severe discrepancy between the arguments in the *Meno* and in the *Phaedo*, even though there may be some development. For in his

1 I use “Recollection” to refer to the claim that learning is recollection, and “recollection” to the actual event of being reminded.

2 Cf. Huber (1964) 345–6; Dixsaut (1991) 345; Osborne (1995) 216, 219; Robins (1997) 438 n.2.

explanation of what Recollection is, Cebes says people can recollect the truth if they are properly asked questions, especially if they are helped by diagrams and some such things (*Phaedo* 73A–B). This reference to asking questions and to the use of diagrams naturally reminds us of the demonstration conducted by Socrates on the slave boy in the *Meno*. When Plato presents the new demonstration of Recollection, would he dare to change its content without making the fact of change clear? When we closely examine the texts of the *Meno* and the *Phaedo*, it may turn out that things that appear to be differences are not actually so.

In order to clarify the exact relationship between Recollection in the *Meno* and that in the *Phaedo*, and the role of Recollection in Plato's epistemology as a whole, it is necessary to examine in detail what kind of cognition is meant by the recollection of the Equal itself and the sense of deficiency we have, concerning equal things striving to be like the Equal itself. But here we cannot enter this question. Here I would like to focus on the general question of whether recollection corresponds to the stage of concept formation or that of higher learning in our cognitive development. Let us start from summarizing the argument in the *Phaedo*.

## 1. The summary of the demonstration of Recollection in the *Phaedo*

The demonstration proceeds as follows:<sup>3</sup>

[A1] General description of recollection (73C5–D1)

[Soc.] "... If a man, when he has seen or heard or acquired (λαβῶν C8) any other perception, recognizes (γνώ C8) not only that thing, but also gets in mind (ἐννοήσῃ C9) some other thing,<sup>4</sup> whose knowledge (ἐπιστήμη C8) is not the same, but different, then ... he has recollected (ἀνεμνήσθη C10) the thing whose notion he has acquired (τὴν ἔννοιαν ἔλαβεν C10–D1) ..."

[A2] Various cases of recollection (73D2–74A4)

[A2.1] [Soc.] "... Knowledge (ἐπιστήμη D3) of a person is different from knowledge of a lyre. ... [W]hen ever lovers see a lyre or a cloak of their beloved boy, they have this experience (πάσχοῦσι D8). They have both recognized (ἔγνωσαν D8) the lyre and acquired in their thought (ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ ἔλαβον D8–9) the form of the boy to whom the lyre belonged. This is recollection (ἀνάμνησις D10)." (73D3–10)

[A2.2] [Soc.] "It is just as when one sees Simmias, one often recollects (ἀνεμνήσθη

3 The translation is in double quotes. Other parts are my own summaries. "[Soc.]" represents Socrates, and "[Sim.]" Simmias. I have put some Greek expressions for the convenience of later reference.

4 As the translation of ἐννοεῖν, I employ "have in mind". For ἐννοήσῃ (aorist of ἐννοεῖν), I use "get in mind". "If the present of a verb denotes a *continued state*, the aorist commonly expresses the beginning of that state: thus ἐνόσησε he fell ill (pres. νοσῶ am ill)" (the use of incentive or ingressive aorist, Hadley (1884) 268 [841]). Cf. also Smyth (1920) 430 [1924–1925]; Goodwin (1965) 16 [55]. There is also a use called "resultative aorist", according to which "the aorist denotes the result, end or effect of an action"; "The same verb may be a resultative aorist or an ingressive aorist" (Smyth (1920) 430 [1926]). But even if the aorist of ἐννοεῖν in the *Phaedo* is taken to be the resultative aorist, this result will be the result of a simple action of ἐννοεῖν, and not the result of a long process of ἐννοεῖν, which may involve various factors of consideration. As to the noun ἔννοια corresponding to ἐννοεῖν, I translate it as "notion". The aorist ἐνόησεν has the same force as τὴν ἔννοιαν ἔλαβεν (acquired the notion 73C10–D1) or to ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ ἔλαβον (acquired in one's thought 73D8–9).

D11) Cebes ...” (73D10–12)

[A2\*] A comment: Recollection takes place especially when one has got this experience (πάθη E2) concerning things one has forgotten through lapse of time and inattention. (73E1–4)

[A2.3] [Soc.] “It is possible for one to see a drawing of a horse or a lyre, and then to recollect (ἀναμνησθῆναι E6) a person ...” (73E5–6)

[A2.4] [Soc.] “[It is possible] to see a drawing of Simmias, and then to recollect (ἀναμνησθῆναι E7) Cebes.” (73E6–8)

[A2.5] [Soc.] “It is also possible for one to see a drawing of Simmias, and then to recollect (ἀναμνησθῆναι E10) Simmias himself.” (73E9–74A1)

[A3] A general comment (74A2–4) [Soc.] “Thus it turns out that there is recollection (ἀνάμνησιν A2) from similar things as well as from dissimilar things.”

[A4] The sense of deficiency (74A5–8)

[Soc.] “Whenever one is recollecting (or trying to recollect)<sup>5</sup> (ἀναμνησκηται A5) something from similar things, one necessarily has an additional experience (προσπάσχειν A6) of having in mind (ἐννοεῖν A6) whether it is somewhat deficient in being like the thing one has recollected (ἀνεμνήσθη A7), or not deficient.”

[B1] Confirmation of the existence and knowledge of the Equal itself (74A9–B1)

[Soc.] “... We say there is an Equal—I don’t mean a stick equal to a stick, or a stone to a stone, or anything of that sort, but some different thing beyond all those, the Equal itself. Are we to say that there is something or nothing of the sort?” [Sim.] “Let us say, by Zeus, that there is the Form of the Equal, remarkably.”

[B2] Confirmation of our knowledge of the Equal itself (74B2–3)

[Soc.] “And do we know (ἐπιστάμεθα B2) what it is?” [Sim.] “Certainly.”

[B3] The origin of the knowledge of the Equal itself (74B4–C10)

[Soc.] “From where have we acquired the knowledge (λαβόντες ... τὴν ἐπιστήμην B4) of the Equal itself? Isn’t it from the things we just mentioned [equal sticks or stones]? Seeing these equal things, we have got in mind (ἐνενοήσαμεν B6) the Equal itself, which is different from these equal things. ... Equal stones and sticks, while remaining the same, sometimes appear to one<sup>6</sup> equal, but not to another ... But is there time when the Equals themselves appeared to you unequal, or Equality Inequality?” [Sim.] “Never.” ... [Soc.] “It is from these equal things ...

5 The present, ἀναμνησκησθαι, allows both ways of translation.

6 Grube (1997) thus translates τῶ μὲν ... τῶ δ’ ... (74B8) as “to one ... to another ...”; Fowler (1914), on the other hand, translates the phrase as “in one respect ... in another respect ...”. There is a variant reading, τότε μὲν ... τότε δ’ ..., which Sedley (2007) 77–8 adopts, taking into consideration the difficulty the reading, τῶ μὲν ... τῶ δ’ ..., gives rise to. Although I cannot deal with this problem here, I think there is a good way to read τῶ μὲν ... τῶ δ’ ... without incurring the kind of difficulty Sedley points out.

that you [Simmiias] have settled in mind<sup>7</sup> and acquired the knowledge of the Equal itself (αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐννενοήκας τε καὶ εἴληφας C8–9).”

[C1] Recollection of the Equal itself (74C11–D3)

[Soc.] “... It makes no difference [whether the Equal itself is similar to equal things or dissimilar]. As long as you [Simmiias] see something else and from its sight get in mind (ἐννοήσης D1) the Equal, it is recollection (ἀνάμνησιν D2).”

[C2] Deficiency of equal things (74D4–8)

[Soc.] “... We have this experience (πάσχομεν D4)—the instances in equal sticks and other equal things ... don’t seem to us to be equal in the same way as the Equal itself but they are deficient in being like the Equal itself. ...”

[C3] General principle concerning deficiency and prior knowledge (74D9–E5)

[Soc.] “... when anyone, on seeing something, gets in mind (ἐννοήσῃ D9) that ‘This thing that I see now strives to be like some other thing, but is deficient and is unable to be like that thing, but is inferior’, ... we agree that he who has this in mind (τοῦτο ἐννοοῦντα E2) must of necessity have prior knowledge of (προειδότα E3) the thing which he says the other resembles, though it is deficient.”

[C4] Reconfirmation of [C2] (74E6–8)

[Soc.] “Have we also got that kind of experience (πεπόνθαμεν E6) concerning equal things and the Equal itself?” [Sim.] “Indeed we have.”

[C5] Prior knowledge of the Equal itself (which is deduced from [C3] and [C4]) (74E9–75A4)

[Soc.] “Then we must know (προειδέναι E9) the Equal itself prior to the time when we, on seeing equal things, first got in mind (ἐννενοήσαμεν A1) that they strive to be like the Equal itself but are deficient.”

[C6] The origin of getting in mind the deficiency (75A5–B3)

[Soc.] “... we have not settled in mind (ἐννενοηκέναι A6), nor is it possible to get in mind (ἐννοῆσαι A6), it [the sense of deficiency] from anywhere else but seeing or touching or some other of the senses—all these senses, I say, are the same. ... it is from sense-perceptions that one must get in mind (ἐννοῆσαι A11) that all those things of perception are striving to be like the Equal itself ... but are deficient.”

[C7] Acquisition of knowledge prior to birth (75B4–C6)

[Soc.] “Then it must have been before we began to see or hear or have any other sense-perception that we have acquired knowledge (εἴληφότας ἐπιστήμην B5) of the Equal itself ..., if we were going to refer the equals from sense-perceptions to it, thinking that all these things strive to be like the Equal itself but are inferior to it ... Then ... we must have acquired knowledge before we were born.”

[C8] The argument so far applies not only to the Equal, but also to the Larger, the

7 “When the present of a verb denotes a state or condition, the perfect denotes merely a more *settled* condition” (Hadley (1884) 270 [849]), just as *πεφοβῆσθαι* “to be terror-stricken”, *ἦνθηκέναι* “to be in flower”, *πεπιστευκέναι* “to have a settled confidence” (Hadley (1884) 264 [822]), which is why I have adopted “you have settled in mind” as the translation of *ἐννενοήκας*. The perfect of the same verb is also used in 75A6.

Smaller, the Beautiful, the Good, the Just, the Pious, and everything we mark with the seal of “what it is”. (75C7–D6)

- [C9] We are not born with all those pieces of knowledge, for we don’t know them (ἐπίστασθαι 76A5, 9, B5, 76C1; cf. εἰδέναι 75D8, 9 and ἐπιστήμη 75D9, 11, E4, 6, 76B6 too), as is clear from the fact that a person who knows can give an account of what he knows about, whereas we cannot properly give an account of them. (75D7–76C3)
- [C10] We then recollect the things we learnt before but have forgotten later. The time we learnt is before we are born. We forget them at birth, and regain them later. Thus, learning is regaining knowledge, i.e. recollecting. Then if there are those entities we are always talking about, i.e. the Beautiful, the Good, etc., and the argument above is accepted, then the souls must exist earlier before entering human form, apart from bodies, possessing prudence. (76C4–E7)

## 2. Problems surrounding Recollection in the *Phaedo*, in its relation with the *Meno*

Now, this argument for Recollection in the *Phaedo* seems to be apparently different from that in the *Meno*. Gallop summarizes the differences as follows:<sup>8</sup>

- (D1) It [the argument in the *Phaedo* for Recollection] makes no reference to any mathematical problem, but mentions only judgements about the deficiency of sensible things.
- (D2) It is concerned with the understanding of concepts, rather than with the proof of propositions.<sup>9</sup>
- (D3) It does not introduce the Recollection doctrine in the context of a ‘what is *F*?’ inquiry, or to overcome an apparent obstacle to such an inquiry.
- (D4) In the *Meno* no stress is placed upon the use of the senses, whereas Recollection will here be said to be occasioned by their use (74b4–5, 75a11–b2, e3–4).<sup>10</sup>
- (D5) No mention is made in the *Meno* of Forms, whereas in the *Phaedo* they are of central importance.

Before entering the substantial argument, let me make some comments on each point.

- (D1\*) It is true that the argument in the *Phaedo* makes no explicit reference to mathematical problems, whereas the *Meno* refers to the mathematical problem of the duplication of a square. However, the concept employed as the object of Recollection in the *Phaedo* is that of equality, and this concept plays an important role in mathematics, as is shown by its appearance in the common notions of Euclid’s *Elements*. Of course, the *common* notions are so called because they are *commonly*

<sup>8</sup> Gallop (1975) 115.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. also Gulley (1954) 197–8.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Gulley (1954) 194, too.

employed not only in mathematics but also in other fields. But still the crucial role of equality in Euclid suggests that if we put this concept in the framework of mathematics, it may help us better to understand the argument in the *Phaedo*.

- (D2\*) In the *Meno* Socrates says after the experiment of Recollection on the slave boy, “These opinions [the true opinions which the slave boy has obtained, including the opinion that the diagonal is the line on which a square twice as large as the original square can be constructed] have been stirred up in the boy as if in a dream; but if someone asks him the same things many times and in many ways, you know he will come to know as exactly as anyone else” (85C9–D1). This process of coming to know is the process of recollection, and thus Recollection in the *Meno* is specifically concerned with the proof of mathematical propositions, whereas Recollection in the *Phaedo* shows no sign of the same concern. Gallop seems right in his claim of (D2). However, is it appropriate to take the understanding of concepts and the proof of propositions as if they were exclusive alternatives? Rather it often happens that one can gain a better understanding of a concept by proving a proposition related with it, and the concept of equality may be one of such concepts.
- (D3\*) The same thing can be said about the relationship between the concept of  $F$  and the ‘what is  $F$ ?’ inquiry. When one embarks on the ‘what is  $F$ ?’ inquiry, the more diligently one pursues it, the deeper one will be able to understand the concept of  $F$ , even if one cannot give a proper answer to the ‘what is  $F$ ?’ question. Why does Gallop in (D3) exclude Recollection in the *Phaedo* from “the context of a ‘what is  $F$ ?’ inquiry”? It is because what he understands by “a ‘what is  $F$ ?’ inquiry” in (D3) is the quest for the definition of  $F$ . Recollection in the *Meno* was introduced by Socrates in the context of the quest for the definition of virtue, as a reply to the so-called Meno’s paradox, “to overcome an apparent obstacle to such an inquiry”. But Recollection in the *Phaedo* does not appear in such a context. However, because Recollection as such is closely connected with the acquisition of knowledge, it must have some relationship with definition, if the ability to say what  $F$  is an essential feature of the possession of knowledge. How is it related?
- (D4\*) The use of the senses may not be emphasized in the *Meno*. However, it is not excluded there either. On the contrary, in the demonstration of Recollection with the slave boy, Socrates draws diagrams, and the slave boy is certainly helped by the use of sight in his recollection of the answer to the mathematical problem.
- (D5\*) The transcendent status of Forms is not mentioned in the *Meno*, but the fact that one does not explicitly admit the transcendent status of some Form  $F$  does not mean that one does not know what  $F$  is. Even if one is not yet explicitly conscious of the transcendent status of equality as the Form of Equality, one may be described as having knowledge of equality, if one is such an excellent mathematician as Archytas or Theaetetus. One may be made to accept its transcendent status, if one is properly led by arguments, just as guardians in the *Republic* are thus educated, and as Plato himself is led to hypothesize the separate existence of Forms in his development form

the early to the middle period.

For reasons of space I cannot deal here with all of these problems. I rather deal with problems related to (D2) and (D5).

### 3. Concept formation and higher learning: Scott on Recollection

Gallop takes Recollection in the *Phaedo* to explain how our ordinary conceptual thought is possible. However, against this traditional interpretation,<sup>11</sup> Scott raised objection, taking Recollection to be “concerned only with the attainment of hard philosophical knowledge, which most of us never reach”<sup>12</sup>, or “concerned with the movement from beliefs (which presuppose conceptual thought) to knowledge”.<sup>13</sup> According to Scott, “Most people, in fact, do not begin to recollect at all”;<sup>14</sup> “His [Plato’s] interest is merely in accounting for the development of *knowledge*. There are two sources for our ideas, one from without, the other from within, and it is only the second which is Plato’s concern”.<sup>15</sup> In short, while the traditional interpretation claims that Recollection covers the whole process of learning, which includes the first stage of concept formation, the classification of our earliest sense-experience and the formation of judgements, as well as the second stage of questioning, refining and revising these judgements and arriving at the truth, Scott restricts the area covered by Recollection to the second stage, taking Plato to be content with empiricist account as to the first stage.<sup>16</sup>

In support of his interpretation, Scott cites the following points. First from the *Meno*:<sup>17</sup>

(M1) Concerning the situation in which Recollection is presented “Meno raises his objection in his frustration at being encouraged to continue an inquiry in which he feels unable to have any success. The general issue must therefore concern a discovery yet to be made by someone who has nevertheless attained the normal stage of human understanding ... so the theory ... is not going to be *centrally* concerned with mundane concept formation”.<sup>18</sup>

(M2) Concerning the demonstration of Recollection with the slave boy, “It [*anamnesis*] is *not* used to explain how the slave boy acquired the beliefs and concepts necessary to make sense of what Socrates was talking about when the examination began”.<sup>19</sup>

(M3) Concerning Socrates’ remark in 81D4–5, “leaning and research are wholly recollection”, we should not take this statement literally, for then it would follow that

11 Cornford (1935) 108; Gulley (1954) 197–8; Hackforth (1955) 75; Gulley (1962) 28ff.; Ackrill (1973) 177–8, 183 (= Ackrill (1997) 13–14, 19); Bostock (1986) 67–8, 113–114; Kelsey (2000) 94–7. Against this traditional interpretation, Fine ((1992) 225 n.41 and (1993) 137–8) adopts the view that goes along with Scott.

12 Scott (1987) 346.

13 Scott (1987) 349.

14 Scott (1987) 349.

15 Scott (1987) 350.

16 Scott (1987) 350.

17 Scott (1987) 351ff.

18 Scott (1995) 26. Also cf. 29, 31.

19 Scott (1987) 351.

we should take Recollection to cover even “learning how, like leaning how to play the lyre”, as well as “empirical learning and discovery of individual facts”.<sup>20</sup> In order to support his contention that “all learning” should not be taken in such a literal way as to include “learning how” or “empirical learning”, he refers to Socrates’ remark at 85E1–3 that the slave boy can recollect not just about geometry, but also about all the other μαθήματα—i.e. scientific disciplines.<sup>21</sup> He also says, “Socrates generalizes from the slave boy demonstration to say that the boy can recollect not just geometry, but also all the other disciplines (*mathēmata*). Plato is interested in the acquisition of knowledge about such disciplines, of which geometry is a paradigm example”.<sup>22</sup>

(M4) “Leaning and research are wholly recollection” (81D4–5) may be taken to mean that the whole process of learning and research, starting from concept formation are recollection. But, “[why] ... should the phrase have to mean that *all* research and *all* learning are, both of them, always cases of recollection? What about research that ends in the acquisition of false beliefs? ... A more plausible reading of this sentence is to take it as a hendiadys. Learning *via* research is recollection, ‘learning *via* research’ referring to the deliberate efforts of the philosophically earnest”.<sup>23</sup> Also as to Socrates’ remark at 82B6–7, “Pay attention to the question of which he appears to be doing, recollecting or learning from me”, which may suggest that anything the slave boy says after this is something he has recovered in his attempt to recollect, Scott argues that this comment does not need to apply to the immediately following section (up to 82E12).<sup>24</sup> For what Socrates extracts from the slave boy in this section is a false opinion that the line twice as long is the line on which the square twice as large is constructed. It is unlikely that false judgements are the result of recollection.

Concerning the *Phaedo* too, Scott enumerates weaknesses of the traditional interpretation.

(P1) According to [A1], recollection occurs when one recognizes  $p$  (object perceived) and, then get in mind  $r$  (object recollected), or acquire the notion of  $r$ , whose knowledge is different from that of  $p$ . Suppose this process is concept formation. Then, before recollecting  $r$ , we cannot use the concept of  $r$ , because we have not yet formed the concept  $r$ . Then, in the case of the Equal itself ( $r$ ) and equal sticks ( $p$ ), how can we recognize equal sticks as *equal* sticks?<sup>25</sup>

(P2) In [B2] Socrates says, “We know (ἐπιστάμεθα) what it [the Equal itself] is”. But if someone knows about something, that person can give an account of it according to [C9]. Then, unless the meaning of “know” (ἐπίστασθαι) is changed between [B2] and [C9], [B2] should be taken to be referring to the knowledge of Socrates and other

20 Scott (1987) 351–2; (1995) 33–4; also cf. Gallop (1975) 113. Scott adds, “I know of no one who has insisted that ‘all learning’ is to be taken absolutely literally” (Scott (1987) 352; (1995) 34 and n.9).

21 Scott (1987) 352.

22 Scott (1995) 35.

23 Scott (1995) 35.

24 Scott (1987) 352; (1995) 36–7. “82b5–6”, and “82d12” in Scott (1987) 352 should be changed respectively into “82b6–7” (as in Scott (1995)) and “82e12”.

25 Cf. Scott (1987) 354–5; Scott (1995) 57.



philosophers, who can give an account of the Equal itself.<sup>26</sup> “We” in [B2] should be taken to represent philosophers or Platonists.<sup>27</sup> It follows thus that what Recollection is intended to explain cannot be “some mundane cognitive achievement made by everyone but something quite remarkable and achieved, if at all, only by a few”.<sup>28</sup>

- (P3) The same thing can be said about “we” in [C2] and [C4] too, when Socrates says for example in [C2], “We have this experience—the instances in equal sticks and other equal things ... don’t seem to us to be equal in the same way as the Equal itself but they are deficient in being like the Equal itself” (74D4–7). Scott says, “The speaker who makes the comparison is quite clearly committed to the existence of forms that act as standards for the comparison”.<sup>29</sup>
- (P4) Scott argues further that “It is equally clear from a later passage in the dialogue that the majority of people, the non-philosophers, take only the corporeal to be real (81b4–5). They reject the existence of Platonic forms and therefore cannot be those who are making the comparison described at 74d9–e4”.<sup>30</sup>
- (P5) When Socrates says in [C8] that “we” mark the Larger etc. with the seal of “what it is”, and in [C10] that “we” are always talking about the Good etc., “we” here is supposed to refer to philosophers.<sup>31</sup>

#### 4. Recognition that occasions Recollection

I cannot tackle the problems (M1) to (M4), which are raised concerning the arguments in the *Meno*. What I am going to do here is to deal with (P1) to (P5), and to open up a way that will allow us to proceed further in quest for Recollection in the *Phaedo* and still further for Recollection in the *Meno* and also in Plato’s epistemology as a whole.

Let us start from Scott’s contention (P1). What kind of cognition does “recognizing *p*” (γνῶν 73C8, ἔγνωσαν D8) represent? Concerning this question, Robins says as follows.<sup>32</sup>

If perception of *p* is to remind one of *r*, then *p* must be recognized in such a way that it

26 Scott (1995) 66–8; Scott (1987) 357. Cf. Gulley (1954) 198, too.

27 In [B1] and [B2] (74A9–B3) “we” appears four times: (1) as people who say there is an Equal beyond one stick equal to another etc. (74A9); (2) in the question, whether we are to say there is an Equal (74A12); (3) in the positive answer to the question in (2) (74B1); (4) as people who know what the Equal itself is (74B2). “We” in (1) are almost unanimously considered to be Platonists. Then, how about (2)–(4)? Sedley (2007) 74 sees in the fact that the subjunctive of the verb is used with “we” as the subject in (2) the possibility of the expansion of “we” to anybody and everybody, concluding from this that the reference of “we” in (4) is already broadened to include ordinary people. Concerning (4), Bostock (1986) 68 takes it that “when Simmias says at the beginning that ‘we’ know what the equal is, he has in mind the ordinary humdrum knowledge which *everyone* has, simply as a result of being reminded”. Ackrill is of the view that “The following passage, about how we have acquired this knowledge, and particularly the section 74e–75b with its talk of our use of sense perceptions since infancy, are meant to apply to people in general”, but at the same time feels some contradiction between the attribution of knowledge to ordinary people and “the statement later (76b5–c3) that nobody (except perhaps Socrates) has knowledge of the equal, the good, etc.” (Ackrill (1973) 192 (= (1997) 28)).

28 Scott (1995) 60.

29 Scott (1995) 60; cf. Scott (1995) 69–70 and Scott (1987) 356, too.

30 Scott (1995) 60.

31 Scott (1995) 66; cf. Scott (1987) 356 too.

32 Robins (1997) 439–40. Cf. Ackrill (1997) 19–22, whose comment Robins makes use of.

can be a reminder. That means that recognition of  $p$  must be adequate to put one in mind of the link between  $p$  and  $r$ . For it is clear from the examples, although not stated in the conditions, that there is some link between each  $p$  and  $r$  and that awareness of this link is a part of the explanation why someone who perceives  $p$  recollects  $r$  and indeed recollects the particular  $r$  that is linked to this  $p$ . The lyre, horse or cloak that the lovers see, or of which they see drawings, are variously described as things that the beloved boy uses or that belong to the boy (73d5–8). The drawing is a drawing of Simmias (73e9–10).

However, is this really the mechanism of what Plato describes as the general pattern of recollecting something? Robins says, “it is clear ... that there is some link between each  $p$  and  $r$  and that awareness of this link is a part of the explanation why someone who perceives  $p$  recollects  $r$ ”. Now, the cases of [A2.1] (a lyre or a cloak of a beloved boy → the beloved boy) and [A2.5] (a drawing of Simmias → Simmias) may seem to follow this structure. But how about [A2.2] (Simmias → Cebes), [A2.3] (a drawing of a horse or a lyre → a person) and [A2.4] (a drawing of Simmias → Cebes)? The reason why Socrates mentioned the case of someone seeing Simmias and recollecting Cebes may be that Simmias is always seen with Cebes, just like Harmonia and Cadmus, to whom Socrates later compares Simmias and Cebes respectively (95A). So this case may also seem to follow the structure Robins endorses. However, Simmias has links with a huge number of things other than Cebes, and some of them may have been forgotten due to lapse of time and inattention, but according to [A2\*], recollection takes place especially concerning things one has forgotten through lapse of time and inattention. Robins’ remark that “*awareness* (italics mine) of this link [between  $p$  and  $r$ ] is a part of the explanation why someone who perceives  $p$  recollects  $r$ ” may suggest that the link is noticed as soon as  $p$  is perceived, with  $r$  being recovered at the same time. However, out of a huge number of things with which Simmias has links, any seemingly haphazard thing can come back to one’s mind. In such a case there may be some time lag (even if it is less than a second) before one finds the link that connects the recollected thing to Simmias. This kind of situation is not excluded from Recollection. Rather the mention of lapse of time and inattention suggests that this kind of case can be what Socrates has in mind as a typical case of recollection.

Besides, the knowledge of  $r$  is said to be different from that of  $p$  (cf. [A1] and [A2.1]). What is the meaning of this difference? Burnet and Hackforth take this as a reservation that rules out some reminders as irrelevant. What Burnet takes to be excluded by the stipulation that the knowledge of  $r$  should be different from that of  $p$  are e.g. opposites that must be known together or not at all, like odd and even in number or darkness and light,<sup>33</sup> and what Hackforth takes to be such things are e.g. a man’s perceived characters and things that we know about him, which are supposed all alike to be included in our total knowledge of the man, and therefore are objects of the same knowledge.<sup>34</sup> However, what is the point of excluding such things from objects of recollection? As to Burnet’s claim, it seems to me that there can be a case where one is reminded of e.g. light by being surrounded by darkness. As to Hackforth’s claim,

---

<sup>33</sup> Burnet (1911) 54, note on 73C8.

<sup>34</sup> Hackforth (1955) 67 n.4.

the lyre of Cebes may be included in Simmias' total knowledge of Cebes, and then the lyre and Cebes would become, according to Hackforth's interpretation, objects of the same knowledge, contrary to what Socrates says in 73D3–4.<sup>35</sup>

Knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) can be used to represent geometry or the total knowledge of a man, but it can also be used to represent a simple act of knowing, either as an act of ἐπίστασθαι, εἰδέναι or γινώσκειν. For according to the studies by Lyons, ἐπιστήμη holds the following relation with ἐπίστασθαι, εἰδέναι, γινώσκειν, τέχνη, and γνῶσις:<sup>36</sup>

- (i) ἐπίστασθαι : τέχνη = εἰδέναι : ἐπιστήμη = γινώσκειν : γνῶσις
- (ii) ἐπίστασθαι : ἐπιστήμη = εἰδέναι : ἐπιστήμη = γινώσκειν : ἐπιστήμη and
- (iii) εἰδέναι includes both γινώσκειν and ἐπίστασθαι, and ἐπιστήμη includes both τέχνη and γνῶσις.

When we take this use of ἐπιστήμη into account, it seems better to take it that Plato means by the difference between ἐπιστήμη of *p* and ἐπιστήμη of *r* that the recognition of *p* (γινώσκειν or ἐπιστήμη of *p*) does not constitute ἐπιστήμη or εἰδέναι of *r*, which includes both γινώσκειν (γνῶσις) and ἐπίστασθαι (τέχνη) of *r*. Ackrill rejects the readings of Burnet and Hackforth, saying, "I suggest that Plato wants to exclude, as *not* a case of being reminded of something, a situation where thinking of *y* is already necessarily involved in perceiving and recognizing *x*". This suggestion seems to me to strike at the heart of Plato's stipulation.<sup>37</sup>

Then, how about [A2.1] (a lyre or a cloak of a beloved boy → the beloved boy), and [A2.5] (a drawing of Simmias → Simmias)? Is Socrates thinking of the case where the lovers who see the lyre already know that it is the lyre of their beloved boy, and the case where one sees a drawing as that of Simmias? Concerning [A2.5], Robins says, "The Greek expression for the picture of Simmias, Σιμμιάς γεγραμμένον, makes it even clearer that in recognizing Simmias drawn, one has some thought of Simmias. So, in recognizing the picture one necessarily has some thought of Simmias".<sup>38</sup> However, when Socrates asks Simmias whether it is possible to see the picture of Simmias and to be reminded of Simmias himself, the description of the picture as the picture of Simmias does not need to be one by the person who sees it. It can be the description by the third person, and the person who sees it may not know that it is the drawing of Simmias.

Gosling presents a supposed case where he visits Glaucon's house, and then seeing a portrait of Socrates, remembers his promise to meet Socrates at the Peiraues; so he rushes off to meet Socrates, and tells him that he had forgotten about him until he was reminded of Socrates by the picture at Glaucon's house; Socrates then tells him that if he had not thought about the deficiency of the portrait, he would not be regarded as having had the experience of

35 Gallop (1975) 117.

36 Lyons (1963) 177–178.

37 Ackrill (1973) 184 (= (1997) 21); Nehamas (1975) 112 (= (1999) 148); Franklin (2005) 292.

38 Robins (1997) 440.

being reminded.<sup>39</sup> Mentioning this example, Gosling tries to point out the absurdity of what is presented as a necessary condition in the *Phaedo*, i.e. that “the person who is reminded must also consider whether or not it is a perfect likeness of that of which he is reminded”. However, the alleged absurdity rather suggests that it is more reasonable to take Gosling’s example not to be a case of recollection Socrates has in mind. As I have just pointed out above, recollection takes place especially when one is reminded of something which one has forgotten through lapse of time and inattention. This suggests that the drawing of Simmias is seen by someone whose memory of Simmias is stored and hidden deep in his or her mind so that it cannot be as easily retrieved as Gosling’s memory of his promise to meet Socrates. Besides, what is seen is not a photograph of Simmias but his drawing or painting. A drawing or painting well produced of a person may remind his acquaintances of him. But the similarity is not perfect, as long as it is similarity in this world of sense-perception. Socrates says that equal stones and sticks sometimes, while remaining the same, appear to one equal to each other<sup>40</sup> and to another not equal (74B7–10). As to the drawing resembling Simmias too, even though it is intended to be that of Simmias, it may be judged to be similar or dissimilar to him, according to the quality of the drawing and to the discerning ability of observers. Then, if observers do not know in advance whether the drawing is that of Simmias, and if the drawing reminds them of Simmias, they will necessarily (ἀναγκασίον 74A6) have an additional experience of wondering whether it is really his drawing, and thus of considering whether it is deficient in being like Simmias or not. If, on the other hand, observers know that the drawing represents Simmias, they will not have such an additional experience.

Thus, I cannot agree with Robins when he says that recognition of *p* must be adequate to put one in mind of the link between *p* and *r*. I don’t deny that there are cases where one, on seeing the drawing of a person, immediately feels sure that it represents the person. But even in this case the recognition of the drawing with its details is an event distinct from entertaining the idea that it may represent the person. Plato distinguishes these two events by using different expressions: for the former γνῶναι ([A1] [A2.1]), and for the latter ἐννοῆσαι ([A1]), ἐννοῖαν λαβεῖν ([A1]), ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ λαβεῖν ([A2.1]). In [A2.2]–[A2.5] Plato mentions, concerning *p*, only sense-perception (ἰδῶν 73D10, ἰδόντα E5, 7, 9), and concerning *r* only recollection (ἀνεμνήσθη 73D11, ἀναμνησθῆναι E6, 7, 10), but concerning *p* γνῶναι can be easily supplied from [A2.1], as the cognition implied in the sense-perception, while recollection of *r* in [A2.2]–[A2.5] is naturally taken to consist in the act of ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ λαβεῖν, ἐννοῆσαι, or ἐννοῖαν λαβεῖν.

## 5. Recollection and concept formation

In (P1) Scott argued that if the act of getting *r* (the Equal itself) in mind is a case of concept formation, the concept of equality must be unavailable before recollection starts, and then we will not be able to recognize equal sticks as *equal* sticks. Of course, if the concept formation

<sup>39</sup> Gosling (1965) 155.

<sup>40</sup> “Equal” here should be understood as “equal to each other”, not as “equal to some further item” (cf. Sedley (2007) 76).

in question is the one from scratch, then Scott may be right. But there can be more developed kinds of concept formation. The concepts Recollection has to do with cannot be concepts of fictional kinds, such as that of hippocentaur,<sup>41</sup> but must be concepts whose standards exist as Platonic intelligible Forms. So they are not arbitrary, but they can be plastic and malleable; concepts originally entertained can be improved through revision and reformation.

For example, according to Carey, “the preschool child’s concepts *animal* and *baby* differ from our adult concepts”; “4- and 5-year-olds typically do not realize that all animals have babies, indicating a concept *animal* without reproduction as a core property, and a concept *baby* not tied to the young of each animal species”. Thus, according to a 4-year-old son of Barbara Doshier, from whom Carey received a letter, “dogs have baby dogs; cows have baby cows; cats have baby cats ...”, but worms do not have baby worms; “worms have short worms”, because “babies are small, helpless, versions of bigger creatures, who because of their behavioural limitations, require the bigger ones to take care of them”, while “worms are so behaviourally bankrupt that there is no way for the small ones to have a limited repertoire relative to the bigger ones”.<sup>42</sup> “At the core of preschool children’s conception of animals is the capacity of animals to act. An animal’s action is explained in terms of intentional causation; i.e. an animal’s behaviors are understood in terms of its wants and beliefs”.<sup>43</sup> The preschool child’s theory of animals is a “naive psychology” because of its focus on action, or “vitalist biology” because of its focus on internally generated activity, but conceptual change occurs between the age of 4 and 10, and 10-year-olds come to hold the “mechanistic biology”.<sup>44</sup> The concepts preschool children entertain about animal are not arbitrary, but they are plastic and malleable so as to be improved through revision and reformulation.

Even such simple concepts as that of equality can be revised and reformed, and this conceptual change is not restricted to philosophers. According to Vygotsky,<sup>45</sup> “a concept is not an isolated, ossified, and changeless formation, but an active part of the intellectual process, constantly engaged in serving communication, understanding, and problem solving”. Even ordinary people engage in communication, understanding and problem solving, and they try, through this process, to improve concepts they entertain, by finding some new link and changing their conceptual system. Thus though I cannot agree with the traditional interpretation, which detects the core of recollection in the initial concept formation, I cannot agree with Scott’s interpretation either. I don’t think that Plato restricts recollection to philosophers, unless babies are also regarded as philosophers, as the title of Gopnik’s book suggests.<sup>46</sup>

---

41 Fine (1993) 137.

42 Carey (1988) 167.

43 Carey (1988) 175.

44 Carey (1988) 176.

45 Vygotsky (1986), 98.

46 Gopnik (2009).

## 6. Who are “we” who get in mind the Equal itself?

However, my claim that even babies should be regarded as recollecting seems to be in conflict with (P2)–(P5), all of which seem to suggest that only Platonists who admit the existence of Forms can engage in recollection. Here, then, we enter the question of who “we” in [B2], [C2] and [C4] are. Scott is inclined to limit “we” to people who are committed to the existence of Forms and to take Recollection to cover higher learning. However, supporters of the traditional interpretation may argue against Scott that Recollection is presented to demonstrate the immortality of all human souls, and claim that it must, therefore, cover learning of all the people.<sup>47</sup> However, this claim is not enough to make us reject Scott’s interpretation. For even if recollection is limited to philosophers, and most people do not recollect, there is no problem about demonstrating the immortality of all human souls, as long as it is shown that philosophers do recollect and have actually such latent knowledge. If it is possible for anyone to become a philosopher, by working hard, then it is possible to generalize the results of the argument so that they may be applicable to all the people.<sup>48</sup>

I also agree with Scott that “we” in [B2], who claim to know what the Equal itself is, should be taken to represent philosophers or Platonists (cf. (P2)), and that “we” in [C8], who mark the Larger etc. with the seal of “what it is”, and “we” in [C10], who are always talking about the Good, are also Platonists (cf. (P5)). The knowledge they have must be expert knowledge of geometry. As to (P3) too, “we” (74D4, 6) may refer to Socrates, Simmias and their circle, as is indicated by “you” (74D1), i.e. Simmias, as the subject of “get in mind” (ἐννοήσῃς).

But even so, I don’t think that what Recollection is intended to explain should be limited to “something quite remarkable and achieved, if at all, only by a few” (against the last part of (P2)), nor that the majority of people cannot make the kind of comparison that is accompanied by the sense of equal things being deficient in being like the Equal itself (cf. 74D9–E4) (against (P4)).

## 7. Ordinary people and Platonic Forms

Scott refers to 81B4–5 in (P4), and says, “the majority of people, the non-philosophers, take only the corporeal to be real”, adding “They reject the existence of Platonic forms and therefore cannot be those who are making the comparison described at 74d9–e4”.<sup>49</sup> The same kind of view is expressed by Bostock,<sup>50</sup> who says, “Most ordinary people, one imagines, pay no particular attention to forms. Indeed Plato says elsewhere (notably in *Republic* v. 475d–476d) that ordinary people do not recognize that there are such things as forms, so they certainly would not agree that there is such a thing as ‘equal itself’”.

However, as to *Republic* 475D–476D, people whom Socrates criticizes as not real

47 Franklin (2005) 289–90. Cf. also Gallop (1975) 120; Bostock (1986) 67.

48 Cf. Scott (1995) 66, 69, 70; Scott (1987) 356–7.

49 Scott (1995) 60.

50 Bostock (1986) 67.

philosophers are lovers of sights, lovers of crafts, and practical people. There Socrates does not say that they deny the existence of the Equal itself. He describes a lover of sights as “a person who believes in (νομίζων) beautiful things, but doesn’t believe in (νομίζων) the Beautiful itself and is not able to follow anyone who could lead him to the knowledge of it” (476C1–3). It is to be noted that the verb, “believe in” (νομίζειν), is often used with gods as its object, and in such a case it can have even the sense of “worshipping”, meaning “a great deal more than ‘believing in’, for it refers primarily to religious ‘practice’ rather than to religious belief”.<sup>51</sup> In *Against Eratosthenes* (9) Lysias says οὐτε θεοῦς οὐτ’ ἀνθρώπους νομίζει, and there “he can only mean ‘has no fear of God or man’”.<sup>52</sup> In the *Republic* too, Socrates seems to mean not just that they do not recognize that there is the Beautiful itself apart from beautiful things. They will rather admit that there is some common character shared by beautiful things. But they have no fear for the Beautiful itself, and they are thus prevented from searching for it by their love of sights: “Although they delight in beautiful sounds, colours, shapes and in everything fashioned out of them, their thought is unable to see and delight in the nature of the Beautiful itself” (476B4–7). Even if they admit that there is something that can be called “the Beautiful itself”, they act every time as if there were nothing to be perseveringly sought for, beyond what they actually delight in.

Against Scott’s claim that “the majority of people ... take only the corporeal to be real”, the context of 81B4–5 clearly shows that those who take only the corporeal to be real are not actually the majority of people, but rather the kind of people whose souls have always been associated with the body so that they wander around graves after death (81C11–D1), due to the pollution of the souls caused through bewitchment by physical desires and pleasures (81A1–4). The majority of people may not be able to rid themselves of ignorance, with the result that they cannot arrive at the divine and immortal and wise, and spend the rest of time with the gods (cf. 81A), but neither do they roam around graves.

Now, concerning the comparison described at 74D9–E4, Scott says in (P3), “The speaker who makes the comparison is quite clearly committed to the existence of forms that act as standards for the comparison”.<sup>53</sup> This may suggest that because the majority of people are not committed to the existence of forms, they don’t make the comparison. However, “to be committed to the existence of forms” can be understood in two ways: it means either for one to become consciously a follower of Plato, or for one to admit, for example, the existence of equality which is something beyond one stick being equal to another (74A9–12).<sup>54</sup> If the former, the majority of people are certainly not committed to the existence of forms. But if the latter, they may be said to be committed to the existence of forms, because they are not so bewitched by physical things as to reject the existence of equality.

Sedley draws attention to the fact that “Plato apparently has no qualms about attributing knowledge of Forms even to those who do not understand their transcendent status—such

51 Burnet (1924) 15 note on 3b3.

52 Burnet (1924) 104 note on 24C1.

53 Scott (1995) 60.

54 We will be able to express this distinction as the distinction between *de dicto* beliefs about Forms and *de re* beliefs about Forms. For this distinction cf. Fine (1993) 315 n.62.

as the carpenter who looks to the Form of Table or Couch in *Republic X*.<sup>55</sup> The carpenters can be regarded as experts with knowledge of the Forms of Table and Coach, even if they do not understand their transcendent status. Now, the majority of people may not recognize the existence of paradigms of Table and Coach. However, concerning the Form of the Equal the situation seems to be different. The majority of people seem easily to notice that there must be some perfect equality beyond perceptible equal things, if they have it pointed out.

Concerning two references to “we” in 74A9–12 (in [B1]), first as the subject of the indicative mood of the verb φάναι (say) (A9) and second as the subject of the subjunctive mood of the same verb (A12), Sedley admits that when Socrates says in the first reference, “we say that there is a Form of Equal” (φάμεν πού τι εἶναι ἴσον 74A9–10), the reference is to the Socratic circle, but as to “we” in the second reference (74a12), where Socrates says, “Are we to say that there is such a Form? (φῶμεν τι εἶναι ἢ μηδέν; 74A12), he takes him to be expanding the reference of “we”, by quickly switching from the indicative to the subjunctive, so as potentially to include anybody and everybody.<sup>56</sup> However, it seems to me that there is no necessity to suppose such an expansion. Or rather the third reference to “we” in [B1] through Simmias’ remark (74B1) makes us reject the expansion. For Simmias says there, “Let us say, by Zeus, that there is the Form of the Equal, remarkably”, and seems to be representing the position of the Socratic circle rather than that of the majority of people. The emphasis with “remarkably” or “amazingly” (θαυμαστῶς γε)<sup>57</sup> seems to come from Simmias’ self-awareness of the difference of their circle from ordinary people, and not from his intention to include anybody and everybody among the group of people that admit the existence of the Equal itself.

But having said that, I don’t think that Simmias’ remark excludes ordinary people from those who admit the existence of the Equal itself, for the use of “remarkably” or “amazingly” rather suggests that Simmias tried to make it clear that he and Socrates admit its existence in a way *remarkably* different from the majority of people, who also admit the existence of the Equal in a non-remarkable way. The former think that it exists, in their philosophical framework of Platonic theory of Forms, while the majority of people admit its existence just as those who begin to learn geometry admit the existence of perfect equality.

However, is this reading possible in the context of the argument from [B1] to [B3], where Socrates and Simmias agree first that (1) “We say that there is the Form of the Equal”, then (2) “We know (ἐπιστάμεθα 74B2) what it is”, and then ask (3) “From where have we acquired the knowledge (λαβόντες ... τὴν ἐπιστήμην B4) of the Equal itself?”, and proceeds to agree that (4) “We have got the Equal itself in mind (ἐνενοήσαμεν B6) from equal things”, and finally affirm that (5) “It is from these equal things that you [Simmias] have settled in mind and acquired the knowledge of the Equal itself (αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐνενοήκας τε καὶ εἴληφας)”. Concerning the use of the verb ἐννοεῖν in Socrates’ argument for Recollection, specifically concerning its use at 73C9, Dancy says as follows, referring to the

55 Sedley (2007) 75.

56 Sedley (2007) 74.

57 Scott (1995) 56; Grube (1997) translates the adverb as “most definitely”, and Sedley (2007) 68 as “with a vengeance”.



argument of 74B4–6 ([B2] to [B3]):

73c9 ἐννοήση: the word ἐννοεῖν covers a broad range, from “understand” to “form a notion of”; LSJ suggest the latter for the translation here and in the sequel. But it is clear from the present context and from the sequel that the verb is a replacement for “know”; cf. esp. 74b4–6.<sup>58</sup>

If ἐννοεῖν should be taken to be a replacement for “know”, as Dancy claims, it may be difficult to read here the possibility of attributing the notion of the Equal itself to ordinary people, because then it follows that “we” in (4), who have got in mind (ἐνενοήσαμεν) the Equal itself, know the Equal itself, and that ordinary people are thus excluded from the people who are described as having got in mind the Equal itself.

However, as far as the basic meanings of ἐννοεῖν and ἐπίστασθαι are concerned, they are certainly different, and it seems unnatural to me that Plato should employ both to represent the identical stage of cognition. I think LSJ are right to say that ἐννοεῖν here means “form a notion of”. We can obtain an appropriate understanding of the flow of argument from (1) to (5), by taking each verb in its own sense. After having established in (1) that Platonists say that there is the Form of the Equal, and in (2) that they know what it is, Socrates then asks in (3) from where the knowledge is acquired. But in order to acquire the knowledge, it is necessary beforehand to acquire its notion, because we need notions to be led to knowledge. That is why Socrates says in (4), “We have got the Equal itself in mind (ἐνενοήσαμεν) from equal things”, detecting the source of the notion of the Equal itself in equal things. So it is ultimately from equal things that Platonists reach the stage where they are described in (5) as having settled in mind and acquired the knowledge of the Equal itself (αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐννενοήκας τε καὶ εἴληφας).

The cognitive state represented by ἐννοεῖν of the Equal itself is not the final stage of cognitive development, represented by ἐπίστασθαι, or by αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐννενοήκας τε καὶ εἴληφας, where ἐννοεῖν is employed in the perfect tense accompanied by the word ἐπιστήμη, with the perfect denoting “a more settled condition”.<sup>59</sup> In contrast to the perfect, the aorist of ἐννοεῖν represents either the beginning of the continued state represented by ἐννοεῖν,<sup>60</sup> or the result of the each act of ἐννοεῖν,<sup>61</sup> and this represents the state of people who may reach knowledge in the future. And if one succeeds in this enquiry, one will attain the goal where one has acquired knowledge (λαβόντες (τὴν ἐπιστήμην), 75C7, D7, 9, E2, τὰς ἐπιστήμας or ἐπιστήμην εἴληφέναι 75D4–5, 76B2) concerning the Equal, the Larger, the Smaller, the Beautiful, the Good, the Just and the Pious. This stage can be represented by ἐπίστασθαι (75C8, 76A5, 9, B5, C1) as well as by εἰδέναι (D8–9). Those who are in this state are now able to give an account of each thing, though no one except Socrates may be able appropriately to do so.

Thus, to return to (P1)–(P5) to see whether they are cogent enough against our

58 Dancy (2004) 256 n.4

59 Cf. Hadley (1884) 270 [849].

60 The use of incentive or ingressive aorist (cf. Hadley (1884) 268 [841]).

61 The use of resultative aorist (cf. Smyth (1920) 430 [1926]).

interpretation, which takes recollection to cover concept formation in its broad sense, including its further improvement and revision, even if (P1) may have some effect against concept formation from scratch, which is necessary for the identification of some perceived thing, it has no effect at all against concept formation in its broad sense. As to (P2) and (P5), even if “we” in [B2], [C8], [C9] and [C10] represents Platonists, that does not exclude the possibility that ordinary people, who may become Platonists in the future, acquire the notion of the Equal itself (*or* come to have it in mind) through recollection. Then, how about (P3) and (P4)? The cognitive state focused on in [C1]–[C6] (74C11–75B3) is represented by ἐννοεῖν. If our interpretation of ἐννοεῖν is correct, it follows *pace* Scott that it is not extraordinary for ordinary people to get in mind (ἐννοῦσθαι) or to have in mind (ἐννοεῖν) that equal things strive to be like the Equal itself without being perfectly like it.

Now, people who take only the corporeal to be real (81B4–5), i.e. people Scott refers to in (P4), may not be able to make the comparison in question, because they are the kind of people whose souls are so corrupted that they wander about graves after death (81C11–D1). Ordinary people, on the other hand, are supposed to be able to make the comparison. In fact, the argument in [C6]–[C7] rather suggests that even babies are capable of that comparison. For it is from sense-perceptions that one comes to have in mind that all perceptible equals are striving to be like the Equal itself without successfully doing so, and from this fact Socrates deduces that it must be before we begin to see or hear or have any other sense-perception that we have acquired knowledge of the Equal itself. Then, suppose that babies cannot make the comparison in question and that they become able to do so after some period *t* after being born. But during period *t* they are certainly able to see, hear, and have other kinds of sense-perception. Then, the possibility is opened that it may not be before our birth that we acquire knowledge of the Equal itself, but during period *t*, through perceiving various equal things. This is devastating for Recollection. For example Ackrill says as follows:<sup>62</sup>

One could admit that we saw and heard from birth, and that referring what one sees and hears to standards implies prior knowledge of the standards, and one could still deny that we had prenatal knowledge of standards. For we may have done a good deal of infantile seeing and hearing before we began to refer what we saw and heard to any standards (in fact we certainly did).

Did Plato neglect this possibility, and left the argument defective? Most of interpreters recognize here a weak point in Plato’s argument for Recollection, including Cornford, Gallop, Bostock and Rowe. They all take it that the comparative judgements in question are highly reflective and beyond the ability of infants.<sup>63</sup> This trend of negating the high ability to infants is of course very convenient for Scott, who rather considers Recollection to be the process that is concerned only with the attainment of philosophical knowledge. He says as follows:<sup>64</sup>

[I]t should be clear that Plato is in no way committed to the extraordinary claim that

<sup>62</sup> Ackrill (1958) 108.

<sup>63</sup> Cornford (1935) 108, (1952) 51–2; Gallop (1975) 129; Bostock (1986) 101; Rowe (1993) 172.

<sup>64</sup> Scott (1995) 63. Cf. Robins (1997) 445 too.

everyone has been comparing equal particulars with the form since birth. (This claim would be doubly weird. Not only is it false that everyone makes the comparison, as we have already noted, but it is even more outrageous to say that they have been doing this since birth).

However, *pace* all these interpreters, we should not shun the possibility of what Scott claims to be “the extraordinary claim”. Otherwise it would follow that the argument for Recollection does not guarantee the pre-natal acquisition of the Equal itself. And it may not be so outrageous to attribute to babies some concept that can be called “perfect equality” as well as the sensitivity to the deficiency of perceptible equals in being like the Equal itself. Thus our enquiry needs two further considerations. First, in terms of child psychology, will there be any intelligible way of taking infants to be capable of comparing since birth equal particulars with perfect equality? Second, even if there are some such ways, are they such that Plato accepts himself? I think that we can reply to both in the affirmative. But our investigation on these two points must be postponed for another occasion because of the limitations of space here.

### Bibliography

- J. L. Ackrill (1958), “Book Review on Plato’s *Phaedo* by R. Hackforth”, *Philosophical Review*, 67, 106–10.
- J. L. Ackrill (1973), “Anamnesis in the *Phaedo*: Remarks on 73C–75C”, in E. N. Lee, M. P. D. Mourelatos and R. M. Rorty (ed.), *Exegesis and Argument. Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos*, Assen, 177–95 (= J. L. Ackrill (1997), *Essays on Plato and Aristotle*, Oxford, 13–32).
- D. Bostock (1986), *Plato’s Phaedo*, Oxford.
- J. Burnet (1911), *Plato’s Phaedo*, Oxford.
- J. Burnet (1924), *Plato’s Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates and Crito*, Oxford.
- S. Carey (1988), “Conceptual Differences between Children and Adults”, *Mind & Language*, 3, 167–81.
- F. M. Cornford (1935), *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, London.
- F. M. Cornford (1952), *Principium Sapientiae. The Origin of Greek Philosophical Thought*, Cambridge.
- R. M. Dancy (2004), *Plato’s Introduction of Forms*, Cambridge.
- M. Dixsaut (1991), *Platon*, Phédon, Paris.
- G. Fine (1992), “Inquiry in the *Meno*”, in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, Cambridge, 200–26.
- G. Fine (1993), *On Ideas. Aristotle’s Criticism of Plato’s Theory of Forms*, Oxford.
- H. N. Fowler (1914), *Plato, Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, Cambridge, Massachusetts/ London (The Loeb Classical Library).
- L. Franklin (2005), “Recollection and Philosophical Reflection in Plato’s *Phaedo*”, *Phronesis*, 50, 289–314.
- D. Gallop (1975), *Plato, Phaedo*, Oxford.
- W. W. Goodwin (1965), *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb*, New York.
- A. Gopnik (2009), *The Philosophical Baby: What Children’s Minds Tell Us About Truth, Love, and the Meaning of Life*, New York.
- J. Gosling (1965), “Similarity in *Phaedo* 73b. seq.”, *Phronesis*, 10, 151–61.
- G. M. A. Grube (1997), Translation of the *Phaedo*, J. M. Cooper (ed.), *Plato: Complete Works*, Indianapolis.
- N. Gulley (1954), “Plato’s Theory of Recollection”, *Classical Quarterly*, NS 4, 194–213.
- N. Gulley (1962), *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, London.
- R. Hackforth (1955), *Plato’s Phaedo*, Cambridge.
- J. Hadley (1884), *A Greek Grammar for Schools and College*, revised and in part rewritten by Frederic de Forrest Allen, London.
- C. E. Huber (1964), *Anamnesis bei Plato*, München.
- S. Kelsey (2000), “Recollection in the *Phaedo*”, in J. Cleary (ed.), *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium on Ancient Philosophy*, 16, 91–120.
- J. Lyons (1963), *Structural Semantics: An Analysis of Part of the Vocabulary of Plato*, Oxford.
- A. Nehamas (1975), “Plato on the Imperfection of the Sensible World”, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 12, 105–17 (= A. Nehamas (1999), *Virtues of Authenticity*, Princeton, 138–58).

- C. Osborne (1995), "Perceiving Particulars and Recollecting the Forms in the *Phaedo*", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, NS 95, 211–33.
- I. N. Robins (1997), "Recollection and Self-Understanding in the *Phaedo*", *Classical Quarterly*, NS 47, 438–45.
- C. J. Rowe (1993), *Plato Phaedo*, Cambridge.
- D. Scott (1987), "Platonic Anamnesis Revisited", *Classical Quarterly*, NS 37, 346–66.
- D. Scott (1995), *Recollection and Experience: Plato's Theory of Learning and its Successors*, Cambridge.
- D. Scott (2006), *Plato's Meno*, Cambridge.
- D. N. Sedley (2007), "Equal Sticks and Stones", in D. Scott (ed.), *Maieusis. Essays on Ancient Philosophy in Honour of Myles Burnyeat*, Oxford, 68–86.
- H. W. Smyth (1920), *Greek Grammar*, revised by G. M. Messing, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- L. S. Vygotsky (1986), *Thought and Language*, newly revised and edited by A. Kozulin, New York.