



The Relationship of Idea and Particulars in Plato: Episteme versus Doxa

ABDULLAH DEMİR
Iğdır University

Research Article

Submitted: 23.09.2017 Accepted: 17.11.2017

Abstract: In this study, the epistemological approach of Plato is examined through his distinction between episteme and doxa. In this investigation, it is aimed to explain the theory of ideas, which is the concept that whenever a scholar studies on Plato, and their relations with the particulars. In our research, without ignoring the role and the place of the theory of ideas, we tried to understand the concept of doxa in his epistemology. In *Theaitetos*, which is one of his later dialogues. Plato attempted to answer the question of what knowledge is without using the theory of ideas. By using these data, we could say that Plato shows us what knowledge is not rather than what it is..

Keywords: Plato, episteme, doxa, knowledge, ideas, particulars.

Introduction

In this study, we are going to try to comprehend the question of what is knowledge in the context of Plato's dialogues on the basis of the *episteme-doxa* distinction. In addition, as a result of this distinction, we will try to reveal the hierarchies of the states of the mind and the objects which is subject to the mind in terms of knowledge. But in the case of Plato, it is the problem of ideas that should be dealt with first. Because Plato tried to grasp the totality (universal) of things mentally, and determined the ultimate basis of all existence in an idea. To this must be added the imagination of the combination of the mental and the corporeal, which leads us to think of the world as a hierarchical structure. This process must be understood from beginning to end in a necessary connection with the idea of the Absolute mind or the good. Plato identifies this idea of good with God, both in its first form and in later forms. It consists of a philosophical monotheism that identifies God with the idea of goodness, the belief that the world is the work of reason and a copy of the world of ideas.

From this point on, it can be seen that Plato, as a different approach in the Greek mindset, adheres not only to the theory of immortality, but also to the eternity of the soul, which is logically correct in itself. In addition, remembrance is a necessary consequence of this commitment. As a matter of fact, when it comes to knowledge for Plato, it is understood that the basic basis is the immortality of the soul and the teaching of remembering besides the ideas.

The most important problem in Plato's theory of knowledge, which he put forward in the first two periods, stems from his view of the universe. His point of view shows a dualistic structure. The metaphysical aspect of Plato's philosophy in the first two periods, on the one hand, and the epistemological aspect on the other, reveals to this dualistic structure. This duality was reflected in his theory of knowledge, leading to the emergence of

the distinction between *knowledge* (episteme) and *belief* (doxa).¹ The distinction between knowledge and conjecture has been treated not only as two states of the mind, but also as the same objects that satisfy these two states.

Two important reasons can be mentioned that lead Plato to this duality: the first one is that he was under the influence of Protagoras' relativity and Heraclitus' theory of flux and considered these two teachings valid for this world. The second is that, under the influence of Pythagoreanism and Socrates, he saw that mathematical objects and Socratic definitions are immutable.

The perceived triangle is relative and variable in the relativity of Protagoras and Heraclitus's doctrine of flux. Therefore, perceptible objects cannot be the subject of knowledge. The subject of knowledge is only the ideal, competent, unchanging and real triangular knowledge. Thus, Plato distinguishes between objects and the universe to which they belong: Ideas are abstract or conceptual, but real, the universe of ideas; Imagination is the universe of tangible or perceptible semi-real objects. While the first of these meets the true knowledge (episteme), the second meets belief (doxa).²

1. Ideas as Absolute Reality

In Plato's thought, the ideas that exist on their own and constitute an eternal, unchanging world are expressed with the words *eidos*³ and *idea* in ancient Greek language.

¹ There are some researchers offer that *doxa* in Plato's approach is very different from *belief*, for more information: Jessica Mosses, *Plato's Doxa, Analytic Philosophy*, 6/1, 2020, p. 193.

² "If mind and true opinion are two distinct classes, then I say that there certainly are these self-existent ideas unperceived by sense, and apprehended only by the mind ; if, however, as some say, true opinion differs in no respect from mind, then everything that we perceive through the body is to be regarded as most real and certain. But we must affirm that to be distinct, for they have a distinct origin and are of a different nature..." (*Timaeus*, 51d-e.)

³ *Eidos* means image, appearance, shape, form, form, formative nature, type, species, see: F.E. Peters, *Greek philosophical Terms A Historical Lexion*, Newyork University Press, 1967.

Plato uses the same terms without ignoring the philosophical terminology of the preceding tradition, but in a unique context. In this usage, the meanings of some concepts may show parallelism with the previous usages. Plato clearly uses *eidos* and *idea*, literally interchangeably. Thus, instead of talking about the "beautiful itself", etc., he will speak of the "beautiful *eidos*" or "idea of the beautiful".

The *Idea* or *eidos* of beauty is another way for Plato to refer to *beauty* itself. According to Plato, it is Beauty itself, which is literally truth and the object of knowledge. Whatever thoughts we may have of beauty, there is a true and unchanging *Beauty* that we can grasp and which is whatever it is quite independently of our thoughts.

Although a serious criticism of the Ideas will be made by Plato himself in the role of the Elean Stranger in *Parmenides*, the Ideas, which are presented as the final stop of moral inquiry in the so-called first dialogues, are clearly mentioned in the so-called middle dialogues as the objects of the soul's deep and conscious thought when it withdraws from the senses.⁴

With the *Republic*, Plato paves the way for separating the sphere of existence of the Ideas from the sensible world, and from there he allocate a separate sphere of being, especially as stated in *Timaeus*, in the dialogues that follow. At various points in the dialogues, it appears that Plato gave priority to one or the other of the Ideas. In this way, if we do not mention the famous hypotheses about the One mentioned in *Parmenides*, both Good and Beautiful are brought to the fore. But the problem of the interdependence of the Ideas with each other, or the "participation" or "coexistence" (*koinoia*) as Plato put it, "connection", "interconnection", "gathering", "matching", "commonness", and thus the problem of the subordinate-super-super-subordination hierarchy of the Ideas, is not dealt with formally until *Sophist*. Again,

⁴ See: Cornford, F.M., *Plato's Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and the Sophist*, Courier Dover Publications, 2003.

on the basis of predicate, a consensus is reached that some Ideas will be blended with others and others will not, and that it is the duty of dialectics to select and separate the various groupings, especially through the divariative method known as *diairesis*.⁵

There is not much problem with the transcendence of ideas.⁶ But Plato's use of methexis also brings to mind immanence to some extent. So where do we have to place Ideas? This is where analogy comes into play. Just as aistheta (sensibility) resides in a kind of organic unity – which is the cosmos – so do Ideas exist in a certain “intelligible place” located “beyond the heavens”.

At first glance it seems that there is a Platonic idea for each class of things. So there are *ethical Ideas*⁷, there are Ideas of natural things⁸, and even Ideas of trivia that are not worth mentioning.⁹ It is perhaps even more surprising to realize that even artificial things, correlations, and negatives have Ideas. Are Ideas, then, just ideas or concepts? This question is actually asked in dialogues, but only to be denied.¹⁰

2. A Review of Ideas and Their Relation to Particulars

Plato never answers the main question about the scope of the world of ideas – in the context of the Parmenides dialogue.¹¹ Because the dual origin of the theory of ideas makes it difficult to

⁵ R. Robinson, after stating in which meanings Plato uses dialectic in his dialogues (strong speech, art of discussion, the way followed in discussion), states that in the middle period, Plato believed that dialectic was not only the noblest but also the most useful method. Robinson further argues that this method is used in language (Kratylos 390), mathematics (State 510-511), Rhetoric and Psychology (Phaedrus, 269-73), and all ethnic and political sciences. Thus, Robinson says, everything related to each other is clarified by this method. (Robinson, Richard: *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1996, p.69)

⁶ Plato, *Timaeus* 51b-52d.

⁷ Plato, *Phaedo* 101b-c.

⁸ Plato, *Timaeus* 51b; Sophist 266b.

⁹ Plato, *Parmenides* 130c.

¹⁰ Plato, *Parmenides* 132b-c, 134b.

¹¹ If VII letter (342a) is to be regarded as a genuine Platonic text, Plato at the end of his life had acknowledged the existence of mathematical objects, moral terms, natural and artificial objects, every species of living creature, every moral quality, and forms of all actions and passions.

answer this question. As a matter of fact, as Aristotle told us while explaining Platonism¹² a root was Socrates' research to define *universals*. Unconcerned with any system of nature, Socrates limited himself to attempting to define moral terms such as the *Just*.

By accepting the Heraclitus doctrine of flux as a theory applied to sensuous things, Plato saw that the subject of a Socratic definition could not be the sensuous thing. For sensuous things are unknowable, being in a constant state of change; therefore, he said that the subject of the Socratic definition must be a separate entity, which he calls the idea, and that the group of sensuous things that have the same name as the idea has a share of this idea. The assumption behind this is that any noun must have a fixed meaning that we think of when we hear it spoken of: The speaker and the listener thus think of the same object in their minds. Only in this way can they understand each other and conversation is possible. In this series all genus nouns nevertheless have the same right to have a form for their meaning; and hence we arrive at the expression: "We are accustomed to accepting a single form (or character, *eidos*) for all the group of things we call the same name."¹³ We can say that this is hot, this is dirty, this is humanitarian, this is just, etc. If all such expressions are in the same position, we must assume a common character or form/idea for an existing genus. The world of ideas must outnumber the vocabulary of any language.¹⁴

But how do ideas look if we start from the other root of Platonism—Pythagorean number theory as the true being of all things? According to Aristotle, Plato understood the relationship between things and ideas exactly as the Pythagoreans understood the relationship between things and Numbers: When he said that things share in the Forms, he was merely making a verbal change to the Pythagorean wording that things represent (or

¹² Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A, 6.

¹³ Plato, *Republic* 596a.

¹⁴ Cornford, *ibid*, p.16-17.

embody) numbers. Form has now become more than the meaning of a genus name—an entity whose metaphysical position Socrates probably never explored. Socrates never had “a system of nature”; but Plato gives Ideas a separate existence, in a world of intelligible, real being, fulfilled by the Pythagorean Numbers, as the reality that appearances represent in one way or another, or to a certain extent. There is no difficulty with mathematical Forms, which are absolutely separate from visible and tangible bodies and constitute a field of eternal truth (truth). Again, moral ideas remain as ideals that are never materialized or realized in human action and character. The forms of both classes in question can be expressed as eternal things that the soul can know without any recourse to the bodily senses.

In fact, in the *Parmenides*, Plato decisively goes against Socrates through Parmenides. Are warmth or coldness or redness the types of objects that can be known by an disembodied soul independently of all sensory experience? Is redness or warmth an eternal and real form that explains the occurrence of red or hot things in the physical world? Do objects share Redness when no one sees them, or Warmth when no one hears their warmth? These may be questions that have plunged Plato into the indecision and uncertainty that Socrates admits in the dialogue. The most important and most notable consequence of accepting an Idea for each kind of noun was that it then became impossible to set a limit to the world of Ideas. The infinite is unknowable, and if the Ideas are unknowable, their reason for existence vanishes. However, Plato leaves this question unanswered. Parmenides then turns to Plato's second line of criticism: What is the relation between the separate Ideas and the things that share them?¹⁵

If we force the natural meaning of taking or sharing, will we assume that the Idea is contained in each of the things as a whole, or that everything receives a part of the Idea? This dilemma can actually be taken as an objection to some of the mis-

¹⁵ Plato, *Parmenides*, 131a.

leading connotations of the word take part. Many things can share in an Idea in the sense that they all have the same relation to it. However, the question of what the relationship might be remains unanswered.

The suggestion that the Idea can only be a thought in our minds is firmly denied. The Idea is not a mental entity; it must be an object of thought, whatever its number, which the human mind may or may not think.¹⁶

Finally, it has been argued that while the Idea has a separate existence, what is here in this world is not the Idea but a copy or image of the Idea. There can be multiple copies of something original. If the relationship is, then in this case there would be similarity. But it will lead to an endless regression. If the original and the copy are similar, they have a common character; however, in this case, our reasons for putting forward another Idea for the original thing and the copy to share are no less than the reasons leading to an original Idea for all copies to share. It follows from this that the shareholding relationship cannot be reduced to similarity, so we must seek an explanation for the shareholding relationship. So one might reason on this point that it may be true that the copy resembles the original, at least to some extent; but it is not all that is meant to be told. There is a similarity between both copies.¹⁷

The result of all these criticisms is that until now no intelligible explanation has been given about the relation between Ideas and things; metaphors will not be subjected to serious scrutiny. Parmenides ends with a picture of an ideal world drawn beyond the reach of human knowledge. A God may know Ideas, but can we humans know something outside of the things in our world? Parmenides himself, on the other hand, concedes that Ideas are a necessity for thought; Without ideas, philosophical discourse or speech of any kind would be impossible. This result simply

¹⁶ Plato, *Parmenides*, 133c-d.

¹⁷ Cornford, *ibid*, p.20.

means that existing difficulties cannot be overcome.

So, Plato's purpose in writing *Parmenides* may have been to show that he was as conscious of the difficulties that exist as his critic, and to expose them for reflection by his students and friends.¹⁸ Besides, what we mean by the difficulty here is a difficulty related to the nature of the relationship between ideas and particulars.

3. The Hierarchy of Mind and Objects in Plato's Epistemology

It should be noted that for Plato, ultimately, knowledge or reality, even truth, cannot be in the world of becoming. Plato constantly stresses the impossibility of making a definition of knowledge on the reliability of the data provided by our senses perceiving a world of particulars that is changing and in constant flux.¹⁹ In addition to this, Plato still does not neglect to make a detailed investigation of whether a definition of knowledge can be made based on particulars. And yet, as always, he ultimately concludes his investigation, leaving us with a picture of what knowledge is rather than what it is not.

In *The Republic*, Plato uses the following expressions in the dashed line analogy that he uses to explain the main elements of his metaphysical view, his understanding of degrees of being:

SOCRATES: Represent them, then, by a line divided into two unequal sections. Then divide each section—that of the visible kind and that of the intelligible—in the same proportion as the line.³⁹ In terms now of relative clarity and opacity, you will have as one subsection of the visible, images. By images I mean, first, shadows, then reflections in bodies of water and in all close-packed, smooth, and shiny materials, and everything of that sort. Do you understand?

GLAUCON: I do understand.

¹⁸ Cornford, *ibid*, p.20.

¹⁹ See: Plato, *Theaitetos* 185.; W.F.R. Hardie, *A Study in Plato*, Oxford At The Clarendon Press, 1936, pp.,29.; Zeev Perelmutter, *Doxa versus Episteme: A Study in Aristotle's Epistemology and Scientific Thought*, University of Toronto, 2002, pp.,30.

SOCRATES: Then, in the other subsection of the visible, put the originals of these images—that is, the animals around us, every plant, and the whole class of manufactured things

GLAUCON: I will.

SOCRATES: Would you also be willing to say, then, that, as regards truth and untruth, the division is in this ratio: as what is believed is to what is known, so the likeness is to the thing it is like?

GLAUCON: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Next, consider how the section of the intelligible is to be divided.

GLAUCON: How?

SOCRATES: As follows: in one subsection, the soul, using as images the things that were imitated before, is forced to base its inquiry on hypotheses, proceeding not to a first principle, but to a conclusion. In the other subsection, by contrast, it makes its way to an unhypothetical first principle, proceeding from a hypothesis, but without the images used in the previous subsection, using forms themselves and making its investigation through them...²⁰

As seen in the above text, a line is taken and divided into two. The lower one of the sections obtained at the end of the division shows the sensory world consisting of individual objects that we live in and perceive with our sense organs. The upper section, on the other hand, represents the world of intelligible universals or intellectually intelligible ideas consisting of essences, species and genera. In terms of existence, the world of ideas consisting of the first examples, archetypes/prototypes of everything, the objects in the sensory world shown by the section below, come into existence by taking a share from their first examples and archetypes.

In the same line, the sections obtained as a result of the division are divided into two again, according to the ratio observed during the initial division of the line. In this case, four separate

²⁰ Plato, *The Republic* 509-510a.

sections are obtained. This last division serves Plato's purpose of showing the ontological basis of mathematics and the arts such as sophism, painting, and tragedy. Accordingly, the objects of mathematics are located in the second part of the upper section. The objects of mathematics are also intelligible objects, but they differ from ideas in that where every idea is one, they are many. On the other hand, sophism and arts such as painting, tragedy are shown with the fourth section at the bottom, because the Sophist and the painter's products are things that are at least two degrees away from reality, a shadow of a shadow.²¹

In the divided line, while there is a downward descent in terms of existence, that is, the upper sections are the reason for the existence of the next section, there is an upward movement in terms of knowledge, because real knowledge is the knowledge of unchanging, intelligible entities and real causes.

In the context of the Republic's *dashed line*, *sun analogy* and *cave metaphor*, we can show the states of mind in Plato's epistemology and the objects that meet these situations in four stages.

Plato talks about four different types of knowledge. Two of these four types of knowledge are the sensory world; that is, the world of individual sensory beings that change, come into existence and disappear, whereas the remaining two are related to the world of unchanging, general and eternal beings.

Plato considers estimation (eikasia) to be the least important of these types of knowledge. What is in question in this type of knowledge is to guess the original from the shadow of a shadowy being.

The second type of knowledge is knowledge of sensory objects, which Plato called belief (pistis). The source of the information here is sense-perception, and although it may be a more reliable way of cognition than guesswork, it is still only probabilistic knowledge, not actual knowledge. According to Plato, there

²¹ See: İlyas Altuner, "Ontological Bases of the Universe in Plato's and Aristotle's Cosmologies", *Iğdır University Journal of Social Sciences*, 3, 2013, p. 3-4..

are two main reasons that prevent it from being real knowledge. First, the senses are sources of information that cannot be trusted in any way, due to sensory illusions. Second, the sensory objects, which are the objects of such knowledge, are changing. For, according to Plato, knowledge is not always particular, but general; it is not the knowledge of the changing, but of the unchanging. Therefore, here we have knowledge only of appearances, not of realities. These two types of inferior knowledge are classified together as sensory knowledge as conjecture or conviction (*doxa*).²²

The first two types of knowledge are the types of knowledge, which are the subject of phenomena entirely by Plato. We cannot speak of knowledge in Plato's sense. Here, we would like to refer to the field of knowledge that Plato accepted as reality, which Plato himself had already mentioned, especially in the example of the dashed line.

When it comes to the field of thought, Plato speaks of two types of knowledge, just as in the world of sense. The first of these is mathematical knowledge, which is not sensory entities, but mathematical objects such as numbers, lines, planes and triangles. He also speaks of a second type of knowledge when it comes to Plato and the intellectual field, which is nous, which no longer has anything to do with the sensory world. this knowledge is a rational understanding based on direct acquaintance with the ideas and a rational pure knowledge of general concepts. Here is the dialectical method. Plato's dialectical method consists of a kind of addition and division. Accordingly, the particulars scattered around are grasped by gathering in an Idea, and then the Idea is divided into types. That is, the dialectical method that leads to knowledge of general concepts is first of all a generalization and then a classification. According to Plato, only in this way, that is, by moving from one general concept to another from top to bottom, by generalizing and specializing our con-

²² Plato, *The Republic* 509-511e.

cepts, combining and dividing, synthesising and analyzing, can we achieve clear and coherent thought.

The dashed line, the sun analogy and the metaphor of the cave of the *Republic* aim to separate the visible universe from the universe of ideas. It is to indicate that there can be knowledge of the universe of ideas, but that the visible universe cannot, and to show us how dialectical reasoning is possible. In other words, we cannot obtain knowledge through the senses. Because not only the objects of knowledge (episteme) but also the mental level is very different. We cannot see the authority of everything in the sensible universe. We even see it with some paradoxes. For example, again according to the passage in *The Republic*, when we look at our hand, the third finger can be both long and short, compared to what the senses give us, compared to the fingers on the side. Our knowledge of this situation can be paradoxical.²³ Again, according to the passage in the *Phaedo*, we cannot obtain knowledge with the senses. Because objects do not appear to us as they are.²⁴ If we take two rods that look equal according to the given example, the perceivers do not appear equal to some and not equal to others. The idea of equality or equality has an independent existence. This is an objective equality that does not change according to the perceivers, and it exists in everyone, it is universal. We do not derive this idea from external experience. Pure (absolute) equality is in the universe of ideas. When a person who can grasp the ideas dialectically looks at the seemingly equal things in the outside world, he sees that they are not equal.

The episteme-doxa distinction is based on the ontological status of things specific to sense perception that cannot be the subjects of true knowledge because they are excluded from the realm of true being (to on). Although this position had hitherto been supported and sustained by the Sophists' persistent attack on aisthesis as it is relative, in *The Republic* Plato establishes Parmenides' distinction as a series of epistemological and onto-

²³ Plato, *The Republic* 523c.

²⁴ Plato, *The Phaedo* 73b-c.

logical connections: true knowledge is about true reality, i.e., Ideas, whereas ignorance is all about non-truth. Between these two there is an intermediate stage: a half-knowledge about half-being. This intermediate faculty (dynamis) is doxa, and its subjects are sensible things (aistheta) and opinions commonly believed by humanity. The consequences of this are further refined by dividing the domain of doxa into belief (pistis), the subjects of which are sensible things, and "knowledge of appearances" (eikasias), a category of cognition that includes Plato's view of the nature of productive activity.

Here, perhaps, with an appropriate question, we can ask what was the reason that pushed Plato to this difficulty. As far as we understand, the main reason here is Plato's conviction that the audible or perceptible universe changes and is not reliable. This distrust is, in a way, based on Protagoras' relativity and Heraclitus' theory of flux, as we have already stated. Plato accepts the validity of these two theories for the perceptible universe (not only at the level of perception, but also at the level of opinion). On the other hand, Plato, following Pythagoreanism and Socrates, believed that there is an unchanging and reliable universe (the universe of ideas) beyond this changing and unreliable universe. This universe is beyond, superior and reality, and even more accurately, reality is the universe itself. This dual worldview of Plato seems to be an extension of his great distinction between knowledge and opinion. We should also underline that the most fundamental characteristic of this distinction itself is the result of Plato's reaction to the sophists.²⁵

What is this distinction between knowledge and belief (doxa)? A person who has knowledge has knowledge of something that exists. Because we cannot talk about the knowledge of

²⁵ For details see: Donald, Rutherford, *The Cambridge Companion To Early Modern Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 2007. A.E., Taylor, *Plato The Man and His Work*, Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London, 1966. C.C.W. Taylor, *History of Philosophy From The Beginning to Plato*, Routledge Press, New York, 1997.

“nothingness”. Ideas exist and are real, and even in the case of Plato they are literally the only reality. So only their knowledge is in question. Therefore, there is no error in the information. This is logically impossible. Because it has objects and is real. As long as the mind is at that level, it can comprehend them. But there is an error in the assumption. Something that does not exist cannot be conjecture; but an existing thing cannot be a conjecture either. For Plato, if there is belief/opinion, this is not belief, but knowledge. Therefore, belief, doxa, are both existing and non-existent or semi-existent perceptible particulars. Plato, in the Republic, Phaedo and other dialogues, gives these particulars a place between the existing or the real (ideas), the non-existent or the unreal, and says the particulars are quasi-real. The cave had developed the line and sun analogies for this. Things that have semi-real existence, that is, perceptible particulars, have not knowledge but belief. Based on the relativity of Protagoras and the flux theory of Heraclitus, Plato considers particulars not only relative and variable, but also contradictory.

Just as Plato looks at knowledge and opinion as two separate states of mind, he also looks at the objects that meet these two states in two different situations (hierarchically). In knowledge, there is no question of knowing little or knowing much for Plato. Plato states that there is certainty in knowledge that something or a situation can either be known or not. And he states that there must be sufficient and compulsory conditions for this situation, otherwise, there would be no information situation. As a matter of fact, episteme cannot be mentioned in the nature of Plato's dualism at the level of belief/opinion; likewise, belief/opinion cannot be mentioned at the level of ideas.

Conclusion

In this study, the episteme-doxa distinction in Plato's philosophy was decisive for us. For Plato, when it comes to absolute reality and knowledge, only ideas are real. But especially in Theaitetus, which is one of the last period dialogues, "What is

knowledge?" We can say that the question is handled without resorting to ideas.

State of knowledge, only "what is knowledge?" It is not only the difficulty in answering the question, but also the complexity of the idea about whether we have knowledge of something. For this reason, skeptics have put forward to appear to be known rather than to know since Ancient Greece. How much do we know about something we think we really know? Or is it fragmentary information that is all we know? Can we explain how we know something we think we know?

In the Meno, Socrates says that there is a distinction between correct opinion and knowledge, and that he does not guess but knows. Accordingly, there is a clear distinction between correct opinion and knowledge. If a person has knowledge of something, he also has the right opinion. But a person may not have knowledge of that thing, even though he has the correct opinion.

The question of "what is knowledge" asked in this recent period is very different from the question of "what is knowledge" in the first and middle period. In the first period, the aim was to find a general definition gathered in a concept or idea. However, the question of "what is knowledge", which has been asked in the Theaitetus recently, is asked in terms of perception, opinion and knowledge (knowledge of the outside world). All kinds of answers to these questions are expected. Undoubtedly, there is no single answer to this question, and various assumptions and definitions are tried.

Although these assumptions and definitions are eventually rejected, they actually constitute an aspect of knowledge. Questions such as "what are the criteria for knowing something", "are there such criteria", "how much of something can we know" are of the nature of being the basic questions of Plato's theory of knowledge.

Plato's knowledge-belief distinction may have led him to a two-world metaphysics view. In other words, Plato's epistemo-

logical view led him to an ontology with two worlds. When Plato states that knowledge is knowledge of the real, we can say that he means a different meaning than what we really mean. For example, if we characterize tables and chairs as real, Plato here wants to understand something different from "reality". He seems to want to say that, as a particular sensory, the table is only half real. And Plato will also state that there can never be knowledge about the table, that we can only have belief about the table. Only ideas have knowledge, and only ideas are wholly real.

Although for Plato, only the knowledge of ideas is in question, in one of his recent dialogues, *Theaitetus*, he investigates "what is knowledge" based on particulars, and ultimately what he reaches is not what it is, but what it is not.

References

- Altuner, İlyas. "Ontological Bases of the Universe in Plato's and Aristotle's Cosmologies." *Iğdır University Journal of Social Sciences* 3 (2013): 1-10.
- Cornford, Francis M. *Plato's Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and The Sophist*. New York: Dover Publications, 2003.
- Hardie, W. F. Ross. *A Study in Plato*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.
- Mosses, Jessica. "Plato's Doxa." *Analytic Philosophy* 61, no. 3 (2020): 193-217.
- Perelmuter, Zeev. *Doxa versus Episteme: A Study in Aristotle's Epistemology and Scientific Thought*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.
- Peters, Francis E. *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon*. New York: New York University Press, 1967.
- Plato. *Cratylus*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. I. London: Oxford University Press, 1892.
- Plato. *Laws*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. V. London: Oxford University Press, 1892.
- Plato. *Meno*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. II. Lon-

don: Oxford University Press, 1892.

Plato. *Phaedo*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. II. London: Oxford University Press, 1892.

Plato. *Phaedrus*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. I. London: Oxford University Press, 1892.

Plato. *Sophist*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. IV. London: Oxford University Press, 1892.

Plato. *The Republic*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. III. London: Oxford University Press, 1892.

Plato. *Theaetetus*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. IV. London: Oxford University Press, 1892.

Plato. *Timaeus*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. III. London: Oxford University Press, 1892.

Robinson, Richard. *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Rutherford, Donald. *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Taylor, Alfred Edward. *Plato: The Man and His Work*. London: Butler and Tanner, 1966.

Taylor, C. C. Whiston. *History of Philosophy from the Beginning to Plato*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.