

Assignment 1

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Annotated Bibliography

1. Nickolas Pappas: ‘Metaphysics and Epistemology’ in:
Pappas, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Plato and The Republic*, 2nd edn.
(London: Routledge, 2003) (first published 1995) pp.93-115
(accessible online as an e-book via LRC)

In one of a series of philosophy guidebooks, Nickolas Pappas, a Professor of Philosophy at the City University of New York, provides an introduction to *The Republic* while also undertaking a more thorough exposition of selected topics. Chapter 7, concerning Books 5-7, explores claims that metaphysics and epistemology, which have been largely kept distinct since the time of Descartes, were interwoven in *The Republic*. Plato unified philosophical inquiries into the respective natures of reality and knowledge on the grounds that the kind of reality or being of an object corresponds to the mode of cognition one can have of reality or being.

Pappas introduces the theory of Forms by noting that Plato applies the concept without any argument for their existence and asks whether his readers already knew the theory?¹ Was the theory reserved for initiates? Or did Plato posit the Forms for the purpose of the remainder of the theory? He argues that, lacking an explanation, we may only understand the Forms by determining what he - Plato - expected them to accomplish. After a survey of the properties of the Forms, Pappas identifies Plato’s principal goal to be a demonstration of the failings of ordinary experience, that the latter cannot lead to knowledge which, if it is to exist, must take the Forms for its objects: knowledge of individual things is not possible, only opinions. It is feasible, though, in Plato’s schema, to progress - slowly - from a state of ignorance, via opinion (a mixture of fact and conjecture) to acquire ‘true’ knowledge offered by the Forms. The Forms are not too perfect for humans to know; ignorance can be pruned away by education, opinions transformed.

In Pappas’s view, Plato’s most powerful argument rests on the impermanence of things, a world of generation and destruction, which contrasts with the unchanging Forms. Plato does not clarify the meaning of the highest level of the Forms, that causes other Forms to be, the “supreme principle of metaphysics”, viz. the Form of the Good, but uses myth, images, allegories to explain the ideal life. The ‘Divided Line’ and the allegory of ‘The Cave’ are analyzed by Pappas, who thinks that Plato uses them as pathways towards the Form of the Good; the stages of the Cave allegory correspond to those of cognition in the Divided Line, translating the static imagery of the latter into a process of education and governance. Pappas warns that the allegory implies that, even in the best political institution, citizens mill around poets and demagogues, that the Platonic city is full of an ignorant rabble with an unquestioning acceptance of visible things.

¹ “...the forms of things are intelligible but abstract shared features [...] accessible only to the intellect...”. Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (3rd edition; Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2016) p.184.

Reviewing his chapter, Pappas opines that the interplay between political and metaphysical discussions in Books 5-7 renders summary difficult - that much in the Books lies outside the main argument of *The Republic*, relegating consideration of Justice to a secondary position. Was *The Republic* intended as a “philosophical primer” for those unable to grasp the Form of the Good? Yet the content of Books 5-7 is essential to the plan for a ‘good state’, a model for political change that unifies the theoretical pursuits of philosophers with the moral expertise required of rulers. Pappas concludes that the concept of Forms may be compared to the endeavours of science, in which every theory contains entities (black holes, atoms) that are not available to ordinary experience and have been hypothesized on the basis of more direct observations. The theory of Forms describes external entities that stand apart from the world of ordinary experience, permitting discussion of Justice and Beauty.

A critique of a single chapter may mislead, misrepresenting the contents and balance of the book. In itself, the chapter demands some prior knowledge of Plato’s work, and of philosophical terminology and concepts. Pappas is not alone in surmising that Plato melded metaphysics and epistemology in his attempt to unify knowledge, being, and ethical conduct.² Curiously, Pappas omits a crucial aspect of Plato’s thinking, namely that we have immortal souls which, in their disembodied state before birth, occupy the Realm of Being in direct contact with the Forms. The soul has just one activity - reasoning - which is employed, when embodied, to rediscover the Forms.³ For Plato, the Forms already existed for the natural world, objectively prior to ‘god’.⁴ The Forms are thus central to Plato’s interpretation of metaphysics, a deterministic view, perhaps, that Pappas overlooks.

Pappas offers a helpful analysis of Books 5-7, but one that is weakened by failure to fully consider the breadth of Plato’s thinking, and excludes the historical context, barely mentioning PreSocratic influence. Finally, Pappas does not address important problems identified in Plato’s theory, such as whether there can be a ‘negative’ Form (e.g. Evil) infinite regress (the Third Man argument) and how unchanging Forms relate to changing particulars.

(802 words excluding title and footnotes.)

² See, for example: Frederick Copleston, ‘Theory of Knowledge’ in: *A History of Philosophy, Vol. I : Greece and Rome* (London; Burns Oats, 1946: Image edition, published 1993) pp. 142-162; Anthony Gottlieb, *The Dream of Reason: A History of Western Philosophy from the Greeks to the Renaissance* (New York; Norton, 2002) (first published 2000) pp. 218-219.

³ A.C. Grayling, *The History of Philosophy* (London; Viking, 2019) pp.69-70; Plato, *The Republic*, trsl. Desmond Lee (London; Penguin Classics, 2007) Book XI, pp.354-368 and Appendix 1, p.371.

⁴ Gottlieb, *ibid.*, pp. 208-209.

2. Simon Blackburn, *Think: A compelling introduction to philosophy* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2001) (first published 1999)

Designed as an introductory text, the author, who has sought to make philosophy more accessible to the general public, addresses readers who wish to think about the 'big themes': knowledge, reason, truth, mind, freedom, destiny, God, goodness and justice. The chapters broadly correspond to these themes. There are no footnotes or references and sources of quotations are recorded in notes at the end of the volume. The bibliography lists the works of notable philosophers and a few academic commentaries.

A preface emphasizes the role of self-reflection in human thinking, which is identified as the root of philosophical endeavour. Rather than asking 'how is philosophy learned', Blackburn, a retired Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge, contends that it is better to consider how thinking skills may be acquired. He is forthright in his advocacy of critical self-reflection, decrying some current academic trends that question the notions of truth, reason, or disinterested reflection. The author's style is light-hearted rather than lightweight, intended to appeal to anyone interested in the themes and does not presuppose specialist knowledge. After ruling out discussion of medieval or ancient Greek philosophy, on the grounds that the imaginative effort required to think 'in their shoes' is probably too great, Blackburn quickly immerses the reader in challenging material, viz. the question of knowledge and the differing explanations for the foundations of our systems of belief. The rational thought-experiments of Descartes, and the empirical scepticism of his critic, Hume, discussed in the first chapter, continue to be used as reference points in the remaining sections of the book, as Blackburn guides the reader through exploration of the concepts of Mind, the Self, God, Reasoning, the World, and What to Do, the latter consisting of a discussion of ethics and morality. Although the work of other philosophers is considered - Aquinas, Locke, Berkeley, Leibniz, Kant, Spinoza, and Wittgenstein, for example - Blackburn returns repeatedly to the philosophical problems identified by Descartes and Hume.⁵ It is Hume who emerges as a major influence upon the author's own thinking.

Blackburn stresses the evolutionary success of our senses and reasoning capacities, asserting that they would not have been selected had they not worked. That assertion

⁵ Curiously Blackburn misses the opportunity to illustrate Berkeley's denial of the existence of matter with the wonderful limerick by Ronald Knox:

There was a young man who said, 'God
Must think it exceedingly odd
If he finds that this tree
Continues to be
When there's no one about in the Quad'.

Reply

Dear Sir:

Your astonishment's odd:

I am always about in the Quad.

And that's why the tree

Will continue to be

Since observed by

Yours faithfully,

GOD

quoted in: Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy and its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961) (first published 1946) p.623.

reappears at different points in the themes, applied as a moderating counter-argument to some of the more extreme conclusions emerging from the various philosophical strands of thinking that he considers. At the finish, urging us to 'think through our values', Blackburn cites the importance of our history of practical reasoning, which incorporates the lengthy sequence of adjustments and solutions, embodied in an inherited form of life, that have survived the test of time. He believes that we should adopt Hume's 'mitigated scepticism', exercising a 'decent modesty' in our intellectual speculations as we search for meanings and solutions.

Does the book warrant the claim to be a compelling introduction to philosophy? The author certainly addresses a wide range of the 'big questions' and introduces the reader to challenging, interesting material. The contents include discussion of some well-known philosophical problems, such as dualism, 'Real Me', reality, scepticism, universals, and the theological 'proofs' for 'God'. Of these Blackburn argues that universals are the 'deepest, most profound problem of philosophy' but does not trace the lineage of the concept and its variations that run from Plato, through medieval Scholasticism, to the modern interpretations that he discusses. The focus of the book is mainly upon epistemology and metaphysics, although - in the section on Reasoning - there is a discussion of logic. Starting with basic concepts, the author quickly wraps the reader in the web of formal logic; for the novice, the summary is surely too brief and intimidating. In contrast, while equally brief, the explanations of inductive reasoning and scientific hypothesizing are clear and more convincingly in harmony with the construction of the rest of the book. His account of individual philosophers, necessarily truncated, should be augmented with the reading of a history of philosophy.⁶ In the book's final chapter, on the ethics of living in the world that we think that we may know, the discussion borders on the psycho-social, rather than on the more traditional aspects of moral choice and action; that may be helpful to readers familiar with cognitive theory and relativism, but frustrating for those anticipating a more direct exploration of the concepts of duty, justice, and good.

In presenting the story of philosophical exploration of mind and body, of self, of 'God', or reasoning, and of the way in which we may live, Blackburn's moderate humanism shines through.⁷ There is no doubt that he has produced a noteworthy introductory text that is compelling and that, indeed, does make you *think*.

On a practical note, the paperback version of the book is so tightly bound as to be awkward to read. A hardcover version is still available.

801 words without title & footnotes.

⁶ For example: Grayling, *The History*.

⁷ Simon Blackburn is Vice President of Humanists UK and a member of the Humanist Philosophers Group. humanism.org.uk/about/our-people/patrons/Professor-Simon-Blackburn/ (consulted 09.11.2020).

3. Justin E.H. Smith, 'The History of Philosophy as Past and Process' in: M. Lærke, J. E. Smith & E. Schliesser (eds.): *Philosophy and Its History: Aims and Methods in the Study of Early Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) pp.30-49

The editors of the book contend that almost all philosophers agree that it is necessary to know either the historical development of the discipline or to have some familiarity with the work of canonical figures. However, the relationship of the study of history to contemporary philosophy is unclear, with two broad schools of thought: the 'appropriationists', who take historical thinking and utilize it in contemporary philosophy; and the 'contextualists', who study the history of philosophy for its own sake, even if the ideas are now redundant. Smith seeks to reconcile the schools by arguing that philosophers should adopt the aims and methods of archaeology, viz. 'the project of comprehensively reconstructing the human historical past through the totality of its material traces'. He criticizes philosophers for their unquestioning reliance on secondary material, the published editions and translations of historical ideas, stressing the irony of specialists in 'the very reality of the past' assuming that they are working with 'a timeless repository'. Unlike philosophers of science and metaphysicians, historians of philosophy have ignored questions about the reality and knowability of the past. Historiography has been neglected, as philosophers have assumed that historic ideas are 'frozen in time', through linguistic inscription, declining to attempt explicit reconstruction of the past.

Using archaeology as his model, Smith proposes that textual traces should be viewed in the context of the materials of entire cultural systems. He provides an overview of recent developments in archaeology, which has experienced division between those arguing that all human intention and culture is manifest in material remains (the logical positivists of New Archaeology) and the more cautious approach of traditionalists, who believe that we can but speculate about the intentions of those who produced such materials. While noting that a middle way is emerging in archaeology, between the positivism of processualism - the explanatory understanding of cultural processes - and the narrative of the traditionalists, Smith suggests that philosophers may need to adopt the extreme position initially, to ignite change. By acknowledging that they are working with a rare variety of material trace - 'projections of mental activity in what we take to be its purest expression' - that was conditioned by the social, economic and political forces prevailing at the time of its constitution, philosophers should obtain clearer understanding of past thinkers' intentions. Philosophers should not simply accept past ideas because they appear proximate to contemporary thinking. Such absorption is a particular danger when considering the ideas of early modern philosophers (Descartes to Kant) which seem part of the present age, 'less foreign' than (say) ancient Greek cosmology.

Smith's schema for an archaeology of knowledge, fundamentally oriented towards 'the real, historical past' is intended to provide contemporary philosophers with perspective: reconstructing the totality of past philosophy will yield '...a convergence on the truth about the range and bounds of human philosophical reflection'. Four case studies illustrate how greater knowledge of historical circumstances provide more accurate understanding of the work of Leibniz, Locke, and the cultural processes of chemistry and calendrical measurement. He concludes with a summary of how the past is currently conceptualized by philosophers, with its attendant dangers of transforming history into myth - 'Plato-who-always-just exists.'

Has Smith produced convincing arguments for a transformation of the history of philosophy? His exposure of its weaknesses is plausible, and his call for a refined, more accurate reconstruction of the contexts in which the textual traces are located needs serious consideration. Unfortunately, his arguments are undermined by a lack of clarity about historiography and a failure to define the boundaries of the history of philosophy. His sweeping assertions that historians have ignored the structure and dynamics of cultural systems and only examine texts are grave errors of fact: the flood of social and cultural studies that commenced in the 1960s continues apace, and includes wide-ranging attention to material factors other than texts. The claim that there has been no sudden and total semantic shift in philosophy overlooks the deliberate eradication of ancient (Western) philosophy by an imperially-approved Christianity, in the fourth century CE, and its replacement by theology and scholasticism that dominated for centuries.⁸

He offers no account of the many problems of textual transmission of ideas and ignores the impact upon that process of the invention of printing. His case studies are all drawn from the nebulous interface between science and philosophy whence, it could be argued, historians of science have established the material facts with which philosophers may engage if they choose. His use of many German phrases seems an unnecessary imposition. Above all, the lack of analysis of the meaning of history injures his cause. Notwithstanding the necessary exposition of context, the question of whether ideas may survive independently of their historical framework remains an active philosophical problem; the author's 'processural turn' is not a sufficient solution.

799 words excluding title and footnotes

⁸ Grayling, *The History*, pp. 3-8; 195-196. Gordon Leff, *Medieval Thought: St. Augustine to Ockham* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958) pp.16-17 and *passim*.

4. G.S. Kirk, 'Sources for Presocratic Philosophy' in:
G.S. Kirk *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a
J.E. Raven & Selection of Texts*, 2nd edn. ⁹
M. Schofield (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1983) pp.1-6

(The abbreviations 2nd CE, 4th BCE *etc* are used to avoid repetition of the full phrase 2nd century CE, 4th century BCE).

The PreSocratic philosophers are conventionally dated to the historical period c. 600 -c.400 BCE, ranging from Thales to the atomists, Leucippus and Democritus, with the Sophists sometimes included in the grouping.¹⁰ The philosophers in question lived in a variety of locations in the Mediterranean area now termed 'Ancient Greece', which included colonies in Italy and Sicily. Some moved or travelled within the Greek world - several, perhaps, further afield; groups of followers may have coalesced around individual philosophers but no single centre for the study of philosophy existed at this time.¹¹

Kirk, formerly Professor of Greek at the University of Cambridge, in his discussion of the sources for the PreSocratic philosophers, presumably assumed that readers would be familiar with the historical context, briefly sketched above, because he makes no mention of it. Instead, he commences with a discussion of the sources for 'actual fragments' from PreSocratic philosophy, preserved as quotations in the work of later writers, from Plato, in the 4th BCE to Simplicius in the 6th CE. Plato is said to be lax in his quotations, mixing them with paraphrase; Aristotle provided few direct quotations, mainly summarizing and critiquing; Simplicius is thought to have been more accurate. Other, notable, *verbatim* sources are to be found in later writers such as Plutarch (2nd CE), Sextus 'Empiricus' (late 2nd CE) and Hippolytus (3rd CE). In some cases (especially Plutarch) quotes were expanded, or reworded; others relied on intermediate sources (e.g. Hellenic); the Christian bishop, Hippolytus, used quotes in theological disputes with heretics. Kirk notes that writers using supposedly direct quotations may not have seen the original work but copied from a summary, anthology, or compendium - which were commonly available in the three centuries following the foundation of Alexandria in late 4th BCE.

Direct quotations are distinguished from *testimonia*. Kirk does not provide a definition of the latter, but seems to mean commentaries by other writers, including Plato, Aristotle, and his successor at Athens, Theophrastus (4th BCE) who undertook a history of philosophy from Thales to Plato.¹² Theophrastus is thought to have derived his judgements from Aristotle but added new criticism.

⁹ Some authors use the term 'Presocratic', as in this case, and I have reproduced it in their book titles and quotes but otherwise have preferred 'PreSocratic'.

¹⁰ Grayling, *The History*, pp.3-51; Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary*, p.378. See also 'Chronology' in: C.C. Taylor (ed.) *From the Beginning to Plato: Routledge History of Philosophy Vol.I* (London; Routledge, 2003) (first published 1997) pp.xiii-xxiii; 'Timeline' in: Robin Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and Sophists* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2000) pp.xliii-xlvi.

¹¹ A Pythagorean order appears to have flourished in Greek cities in southern Italy in the late 6th century BCE but may have been primarily religious or semi-mystical.

¹² The only definition of *testimonia* in the books cited in this assignment is that of Grayling, viz. '...reports, paraphrases or summaries given by later writers'. *op.cit.*, p.5

A third category of sources listed by Kirk is the doxographical tradition. Again, he assumes that there is no need to define this term.¹³ Although much of his work is lost, Theophrastus appears to have been the original source of most subsequent collections of opinions, such as that of Aetius (2nd CE ?). Biographical doxography, accounts of philosophical successions arranged by schools, and chronography, add to the available sources but are often of questionable value.

Kirk concludes with the statement that ‘...it is legitimate to feel complete confidence in our understanding of a Presocratic thinker only when the Aristotelian or Theophrastean interpretation, even if it can be accurately reconstructed, is confirmed by relevant and well-authenticated extracts from the philosopher himself’.

As an introduction to the names and dates of writers from the ancient, western world, who quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise adapted extracts from the earlier work of PreSocratics, Kirk’s short survey is useful. Crucially he does not indicate whether any actual fragments survive and we are left to surmise that our knowledge of the fragments has been obtained solely through secondary sources.¹⁴ However, he fails to explain how we have secured information from the secondary sources. Do the works that he describes survive? If so, in what form? And where are they to be found? Museums? Archives? Kirk’s survey is a prime example of how ‘...the discipline that proposes to question everything, ‘... *assumes* that the sources are extant and reliable, ‘...preserved in texts that directly reveal the intended meanings of their authors...’.¹⁵

As I have indicated, Kirk is far from alone in his assumption. Digging through the references reveals that modern philosophers, or historians of philosophy, who are concerned with the thinking of the PreSocratics, largely draw their information from a German work, originally published in the 19th century, by Herman Diels, who was Professor of Classical Philology in Berlin from 1886.¹⁶ His work has been republished in a number of editions and evidently remains the best collection of the fragments. Scholars such as Francis Copleston and Karl Popper have relied heavily on Diels, and even a recent translation is largely based upon that collection.¹⁷

¹³ A doxographer is defined by Grayling as ‘...an individual in ancient times who preserved scraps of the Presocratics’ writings or views by quoting or reporting them.’ That should be contrasted with his definition of ‘doxography’ as ‘...the scholarly task of identifying and collating this evidence...’ (i.e. fragments and *testimonia*). *The History*, p. 5. Blackburn notes that the term doxography stems from the work of the classicist Hermann Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (1879). *The Oxford Dictionary*, p.140.

¹⁴ Grayling indicates that the latter is the case and offers a fuller account of the sources : *The History*, pp.1-8. Taylor offers only a list: *From the Beginning*, pp.xxiv-xxvi. Waterfield addresses the problems of the sources briefly, as well as providing an extensive timeline of the sources: *The First Philosophers*, pp. xiii-xv; xliii-xlvi. Gottleib does not discuss the sources: *Dream of Reason*, *passim*.

¹⁵ Smith, ‘The History of Philosophy as Past’, p.30. (My emphasis).

¹⁶ see above, n.5 - Blackburn.

¹⁷ Copleston, *A History Vol.I*; Karl Popper, *The World of Parmenides: Essays on the Presocratic Enlightenment* (Abingdon; Routledge Classics, 2012) (first published 1998); Waterfield, *The First Philosophers*.

Does the provenance of the sources for the PreSocratics matter? Certainly the historian of philosophy *ought* to be locating primary source material and, furthermore, anchoring that material in its social, economic and cultural context.¹⁸ Kirk leaves us none the wiser about those ‘well-authenticated extracts’. Philosophers, however, may argue that it is the ideas that matter, no matter the problems associated with their transmission across the centuries.

796 words, excluding title and footnotes.

¹⁸ Described by Copleston as ‘...the need for seeing any philosophical system in its historical setting and connections’. *A History, Vol.I*, p. 8.

5. Frederick Copleston, 'Theory of Knowledge' in:
F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy, Vol. 1: Greece and Rome*
(London: Burns Oats, 1946) (Image edn., 1993) pp.142-162
(Access to all volumes of *A History* is available on a variety of internet sites).

The eleven-volume *History of Philosophy*, written by Frederick Copleston, a Jesuit priest and philosopher, between 1946-1975, remains a respected account of the subject, and this chapter, concerning Plato's theory of knowledge, is but a tiny part of a monumental project.

Acknowledging that Plato's theory of knowledge is scattered across his extant works, and that it is difficult to separate his epistemology from ontology, Copleston stresses that Plato assumed that such a hypothesis was accessible, that knowledge must be both infallible and *real*. Plato, we are informed, inherited the conviction that there can be objective, universally true knowledge from his 'Master', Socrates. He describes how Plato explained that perception was not the whole of knowledge and that neither was it simply true judgement nor true belief. Copleston employs anachronisms - 'scientific definition' and 'scientific knowledge' - attributing them to Socrates when describing precise, unambiguous knowledge. Again, utilizing a term that Plato did not, he states that Socrates defined true knowledge as knowledge of the 'universal'.¹⁹ Immediately thereafter, Plato's 'doctrine of Forms or Ideas' is introduced without further discussion, implying that the doctrine has the same meaning as 'universal realities'. That equation established to Copleston's satisfaction, if not the reader's, he discusses Plato's simile of the Line, which distinguishes levels of knowledge, devoting a considerable part of the chapter to analysing how mathematical entities constitute a separate degree of knowledge; below 'real' knowledge - the Forms - but above the opinions obtained through sensory data. A brief discussion of the famous Cave allegory follows, to emphasize Plato's idea of 'ascent' of the Line, the progress towards true knowledge. Here, Copleston cites Plato's belief that education was vital to enable citizens to progress and gradually 'behold eternal and absolute truths and values', that such ascent was necessary for proper conduct, care of the soul, and the good of the State.

He completes the chapter by noting that Plato himself may not have associated the progress with a religious journey, albeit that some later thinkers - the Neo-Platonists - added 'a religious colouring' to the conception. This difficult question, Copleston concludes, cannot be explored until the ontological nature of Plato's supreme Form, 'the Good', is considered, and that topic is subjected to scrutiny in his following chapter, 'The Doctrine of Forms'.

Does Copleston provide a clear account of Plato's theory of knowledge? Does his own theological disposition distort the presentation? In his Introduction to this volume, Copleston defends the originality of ancient Greek philosophy, warning against assuming that the opinion of every thinker is borrowed from a predecessor.²⁰ That viewpoint may explain the absence of a contextual framework in this chapter. Some of the views of other thinkers - Heraclitus, the Sophist Protagoras, and Socrates - are acknowledged,

¹⁹ 'Plato himself did not use any word that could be translated by 'universal'. The Greek terms normally used in the middle dialogues' "classical" Theory of Forms are *eidos* and *idea*, which mean shape or form'. Robert Heinaman, 'Plato: metaphysics and epistemology' in: Taylor (ed.) *From the Beginning*, p.356

²⁰ Copleston, 'Introduction', *A History, Vol. 1*, p.11

and the criticisms of Aristotle are mentioned. However Copleston's rendition of Plato's theory is not primarily an historian's account but that of a philosopher who assumes that an exposition from a 'timeless repository' of ideas is sufficient.²¹ In his use of Greek words in the text, Copleston also assumes that the reader possesses knowledge of the language, ensuring that the chapter requires additional effort from those who do not.²² Yet he does not argue that the Greek words convey a clearer understanding of Plato's meanings.

Surprisingly in an account of Plato's theory of knowledge, his accompanying hypothesis of recollection that underpins the concept of the Forms is not mentioned:- that, in this life, we can only progress towards true knowledge, the Forms, because we knew them before entrance into this world. That knowledge, lost at birth, 'remains latent in the soul' and is reawakened by the ascent of the Line.²³ However, Copleston is not alone in that omission.²⁴

In reviewing one small part of Copleston's *magnum opus*, it is not possible to judge whether his account is skewed by Jesuitical theism; in that respect, the chapter seems neutral. The work, though, is dated, and does not meet the standards now expected in historiography. Neither does the account provide a sufficient explanation of Plato's theory of knowledge, resting as it does on assumptions, requiring considerable trust in the author's convictions, and omitting the hypothesis of recollection. Of the other, primarily philosophical interpretations mentioned in this review, a comparable account by Pappas is clearer, albeit similarly limited in scope; Heinaman, although demanding of the reader, offers an explanation that is much more textually sensitive. The primarily historical accounts mentioned here are not strictly comparable with Copleston's work, since these compress the story of philosophy into single volumes and do not attempt an extensive analysis of Plato's theories. Gottlieb provides a wide-ranging overview but doesn't specifically focus on the development of Plato's theory of knowledge; Grayling, in fewer pages, supplies an excellent summary, better preparing the student for an engagement with the more detailed explorations of the philosophers.

795 words, excluding title and footnotes

²¹ Smith, 'The History of Philosophy', p. 31 and *passim*. To be entirely fair, Copleston was writing before the advent of the 'new history', when social and economic historians opened up the subject, and well before the 'cultural turn' of the late 20th century.

²² Copleston wrote at a time when the majority of university students had received grounding in the classics in public schools and may have assumed that they would form his readership.

²³ For a succinct explanation of Plato's Recollection Theory, see: Robert Heinaman, 'Plato: metaphysics and epistemology' in: C.C. Taylor, *From the Beginning*, pp.373-376

²⁴ It is ignored by Pappas, 'Metaphysics'. And doesn't feature in the lengthy discussion of Plato's thinking in Gottlieb's history, although he does consider the Pythagorean idea of the purification of the soul during its time on earth, and its influence upon Plato's ideas: *The Dream of Reason*, pp. 29-30; 118. A more precise historical account of the theory of knowledge, including a discussion of Plato's arguments about our immortal souls, is provided by Grayling: *The History*, pp.65-79

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