PARADOX IN PLATO'S 'PHAEDRUS'

A paradox is like a pun. It is also like a Delphic oracle. For in all three cases, we escape puzzlement, or spoil the joke, when we interpret, when we follow the tracks of the words and disentangle their meaning. So paradoxes are about words - either about the relation between one word and another, or about the relation between words and the world; and the punch of the paradox is delivered by its verbal content. Thus it is characteristic of a good paradox that its verbal content is vicious: paradoxes are very often self-referential, such as 'Please ignore this notice'.[1]

Paradoxes may be classified according to two main types. Firstly, there are the innocuous paradoxes which tell - or point the way to - a surprising truth. The Socratic Paradoxes, for example, are paradoxical because to say 'No-one does wrong willingly' is to contradict the phenomena.[2] But deeper reflection upon Socrates' moral psychology and his account of the good life, might make us concede the truth of his dictum. Certainly it is Socrates' view that we all hold beliefs that entail his thesis. Similarly Heracleitus tells the truth that we cannot step into the same (in all respects) river twice; although if we concede that the waters may flow without damaging the identity of the river, what he says is false. Thus ordinary paradoxes tend to have two faces - their initial, paradoxical one, where they appear false, and their truth, apparent upon reflection.

Second comes a more threatening group, which I shall call 'antinomy'. Here we have paradoxical propositions where reflection does not reveal their truth; but nor does it defuse the paradox. Here - provided the antinomy is a good one - the difficulty cannot be resolved by uncovering a simple logical error, or an equivocation. For example: 'I am lying'[3] is an antinomy: if it is true, it is false, if it is false, it is true. Its venom is its self-referential nature - paradox is generated internally. To deal with an antinomy we need to face the contradiction it forces upon us and incorporate it, somehow, into our theoretical system.

Moreover, antinomies may be paired into dilemmas. Here two lines of argument are run in tandem. Of a disjunctive proposition (best of all, an exhaustive disjunction), first one disjunct is reduced to absurdity, and repudiated. But then the same procedure is repeated on the alternative, and impasse is reached. Obviously enough, there is an affinity between single antinomy and dilemma: antinomies exploit alternatives such as true and false, while dilemmas are usually complexes of antinomies. In either case, the effect can be devastating.

Either superficially, then, or at a deeper level, paradoxes conflict with the other

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opinions that we hold. So they run counter to common sense, or to theoretical beliefs. The more vicious antinomies actively flout our theoretical structure, and force us into contradiction. Our immediate reaction is to look for a 'solution', to juggle ἔνδοξα and παράδοξα until they fall consistent. Sometimes, however, that cannot be done on a single level. Then, the theoretical basis of the belief must be reviewed, and the paradox solved from the perspective of a metatheory. By kicking the paradox upstairs, its threat is diminished and the first level theory saved.[4]

But 'solution' is only one aspect of the treatment of paradoxes. In this paper, I investigate a philosophical method where the attempt to solve it, rather than the solution itself, is the focus of a paradox's activity. For paradoxes are active, and dilemmas pinch. The liar moves with you - as you take one line of retreat, it alters, and attacks you from the opposite flank; or we are tossed from one horn of the dilemma only to be impaled on the other.

At *Phaedrus* 274c–277a Plato tells us for the first time[5] the story of Theuth, the legendary inventor of writing. When Theuth reveals his invention to Thamus, the king of Egypt, Thamus is unexpectedly pessimistic about the usefulness of this new method of recording ideas. Instead of being a φάρμακον μνήμης[6] the written word will produce forgetfulness,[7] and inertia[8] among its users, for instead of recovering knowledge by themselves from within themselves (ἀνάμνησις)[9] they will rely on external stimulus, and men will become, not wise, but apparent-wise, untaught and indiscriminate listeners. In the old days, men in their simple-mindedness[10] used to pay attention to trees and rocks at the shrine at Dodona, careless of everything but the truth. Now it is simple-minded to credit λόγοι[11] with more than the mere ability to remind us of the thing about which they are written.[12] Like paintings, books give the appearance of life, but if you ask them a question, they cannot answer, but loftily[13] continue to say the same thing. They roll about,[14] accessible to anyone, wise or foolish, but unable to defend themselves. In contrast, the idea written on the soul of the wise man is alive;[15] this is the original, the written word but a copy.[16]

It has long been recognised that this passage is odd.[17] Here is Plato, writing a book which repudiates the writing of books. Material such as this has, of course, prompted talk of esoteric doctrines;[18] or it has been ignored with an uncomfortable shrug - 'how like Plato to be so disconcerting...'. This is, however, a full-blooded antinomy - and consequently hard to shrug off. At 277e7 Socrates says 'No λόγος has ever been written, whether in verse or in prose, which is worthy of great attention...'. 'Socrates' says it; but Plato writes it.[19] If he writes to convince, he writes that writing should not convince us; if what he writes does convince us, it convinces us that it should not convince us.

Here we have, then, a typically self-referential antinomy, where the medium of the proposition is in conflict with the proposition itself.[20] The dialogue itself is an imitation of a spoken exchange, and within that conceit is not at risk of the antinomy. But the work as a whole is; and that Plato saw it so is perhaps reinforced

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by his graphic description of the methods and processes of writing at 276c. The content of the antinomy has two notable features. Firstly, it is about *coming to know,* not about being in a state of knowledge.[21] Secondly, it rests on a contrast between the apparent fixity of a book which, in truth, rolls around indiscriminately, and the living security of the idea in the wise man's soul. There is, therefore, a formal emphasis upon the relation between stability and change, and the truth.

From a literary point of view, the passage is carefully composed, with complex allusions to other works - indeed this allusiveness is typical of the literary tone of the *Phaedrus* as a whole. This baroque style forces the philosophical reader to concentrate still further upon the content of the passage - content which, as a paradox, is highly verbal. The passage contains a radical *volte-face* from 271c where we are falsely secure of the art of writing; here there is traditional irony as that security is collapsed.

Let us, then, suppose that Plato means what he says. Why on earth did he say it?

Apart from its antinomy, the *Phaedrus* is an odd dialogue,[22] too often dismissed, I suspect, on the grounds that it is soft-centred. The myth is a quarry for material on Plato's moral psychology, but still much of a muchness with the *Republic.*[23] Alternatively the work shows affinity with the critical period by outlining the method of collection and division (265–70).[24] Either the myth, then, or the short passage on dialectic, would be the high-spots of the work, and the surrounding material, including the antinomy described above, would be of little account.

Such views implicitly attack the structure of the *Phaedrus,* presenting it as either top- or bottom-heavy, and certainly ill-unified. But is such inept composition likely here? One of the major themes is literary criticism,[25] whereby Plato encourages us to think about both structure and the interpretation of meaning. A λόγος (264c) must be alive, it must have a beginning, a middle, and an end, it must be an organic whole. We may ask ourselves whether, as it stands on the traditional view, the *Phaedrus* is an organic whole, or a mis-shapen muddle.

Running through the work is the motif of madness and possession. Socrates' first, and blasphemous (242d), position appears to recommend temperance and rationality (237–241d). Here we have the old Platonic/Socratic diatribe against intemperance, and the exhortation towards the better life of reason, of 'divine' philosophy. Yet the rational asceticism espoused here, which completely repudiates desire, seems at odds with *Symp.* 210, where the crass desires of the body for beauty are utilised as the means whereby reason may reach the truth.[26] So we are not surprised when Socrates repudiates rational asceticism, on the grounds that it is blasphemous.[27] We expect, perhaps, that he will revert to the rational erotics of the *Symposium.*[28] But Plato does surprise us. For Socrates embarks upon a long analysis of madness, and it becomes clear that it is the irrational element of love that he is now pressing. Are we to suppose that irrational erotics will take us to the truth?

Madness is divided into four types. The second and third are traditional - the

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madness that is caused by family pollution, and which is expiated by prophecy (Cassandra); and the madness of artistic inspiration. The first type is the madness of prophets who utter many splendid things, projecting their minds into the future under the influence of their madness, although they say little of import when they are sane.[29] The fourth is the madness of the lover[30] which is of great benefit to lover and beloved alike. The first and fourth type continue to reappear in the dialogue. The mad lover, of course, is the philosopher whose methods come under scrutiny from 261. The first mad priests and priestesses, on the other hand, were, at the earliest, those simple-minded people who look to trees and rocks at Dodona for the truth (275b); but they also include the maddened priestesses of 244b. So this pairing of philosophers and oracles becomes an established idea.

There follows the myth (246–56) where Socrates appears to be reasserting the life of temperance. But the theme of madness perseveres in the imagery of cult and possession.[31] When reminded of true beauty by an instance of it, the madman tries to fly.... This then, is a version of the *Symposium* ascent of love - but one which emphasises the irrational drive[32] of the soul towards the truth. Why?

The *Symposium* doctrine may be seen as an answer to the problem posed in the *Meno* and the *Phaedo* - how do we find things out? The *Meno* (80c–81d) preserves the possibility of knowledge by proposing the theory of ἀνάμνησις; we find things out by recalling ideas latent in our souls. The *Phaedo* offers the same theory to account for the origin of certain concepts, notably those that are not 'directly perceptible', such as 'equal' or 'beautiful'. For it is not clear, Plato suggests, how relational terms become accessible to us, since they are not perceptible. They must, he concludes, be innate to our minds. The theme of recollection turns up again in the *Phaedrus* myth. The *Symposium*, on the other hand, explains both our use of the term 'beautiful' and our coming to know 'the beautiful' in terms of desire - rational erotics drive us to ascend towards knowledge of the Forms.

Two problems, then, lie behind the mention of ἀνάμνησις in the *Phaedrus* myth: firstly the use of vexed terms, and secondly the problem of how we come to know.

The relational and evaluative terms retain their irritant quality in the middle stage of Plato's thought. Thus at *Rep.* 523 he contrasts those perceptible items which do not summon the mind to reflection, such as 'finger', and those which drag the soul to οὐσία by confronting it with contradiction. Faced with such terms, the soul is at a loss, and forced to inquire (*Rep.* 524e). Similarly *Phaedrus* 261–3 contrasts 'iron' or 'silver' with those deceivers 'just' or 'good'. At *Theaet.* 185, Plato distinguishes the directly perceptible terms - 'white' - from the 'common' terms - 'likeness', 'unlikeness', 'truth' and 'reality'. However, all these paradoxical terms are reduced to 'one' and 'infinite' at *Rep. 525a*–e, and 'one-many' at *Philebus* 15d (taking τὰ ἀμφισβητούμενα at d2 to refer *forwards* to the puzzles that follow). *Phaedrus* 262a characterises them by the antithesis 'same-different', which parallels the 'is–is-not', 'both', version of *Theaet.* 185c. *Parmenides* 129a, finally, connects 'one-many' with 'same-different' and locates the puzzles they generate with Zeno -

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the significance of which will shortly appear. Amid all this systematisation, however, we have as yet no account of how such terms are acquired, or how philosophical or conceptual inquiry gets off the ground at all.

Phaedrus 261d characterises true rhetoric as an art of ψυχαγωγὴ διὰ λόγων, a leading the soul on through words,[33] which may take place either publicly or privately. There follows a list of possible claimants to the craft of rhetoric - Nestor, Odysseus and Palamedes; Gorgias, Thrasymachus and Theodorus; and finally the Eleatic Palamedes - Zeno (261d).[34] These men all used ἀντιλογία - playing one argument off against another, δισσοὶ λόγοι. Zeno makes his hearers see the same thing as both the same and different, one and many, moving and at rest - all in all, a clever piece of deception, ἀπάτη, 261e6. This art, if it is one, of ἀντιλογία works by conflating and confusing same and different; working, perhaps, by making tiny moves from one to its opposite - a *sorites* effect.[35] However, the practitioner of such deceptions must know what he is doing - he himself must understand sameness and difference, the key terms in antilogic (262b). For if he did not know the truth about the sameness and difference of things, he would not be able to liken one thing to another which he did not know[36] (262a). So it is a requirement for all skilled antilogicians that they should know each thing what it is (262b8).

The reappearance of this classic formula for definite knowledge here[37] allows that there could be a knowledgeable practitioner of antilogic. So while Socrates might say that sophists like Thrasymachus do not possess an *art* of antilogic, he need not deny that Zeno, inasmuch as he is skilled (261b7), knows 'sameness' and 'difference' when he exploits them in his paradoxes (*Parm.* 127e). So far, therefore, ἀντιλογία is neutral - it may be practised either by an ignorant man, or by a knower. But Zeno, it is suggested, is the latter.

The distinction that is implied here - between the skilled use of rhetoric and its muddled practice by sophists - is a familiar Platonic theme. If the technique of ἀντιλογία is neutral, the distinction between dialectic and eristic is heavily value-laden (*Rep.* 454a).[38] For sophists oppose arguments in a contentious spirit, whereas dialecticians operate as legitimate philosophers (*Rep.* 534b).[39] It is not at all clear, however, what dialectic is. Both Plato and Aristotle define and describe it, on various occasions; but to find a consensus among these texts appears impossible. To add to the difficulty, Plato's view of dialectic, according to one standard line of interpretation,[40] changes from his use of the method of hypothesis in the early and middle periods, to his advocacy of the method of collection and division in the late works - any continuity is hard to discern.

At one level, dialectic is simply the question-and-answer treatment of philosophical issues[41] (*Crat.* 390 c). This was the method of Socrates (*Apol.* 33a; *Theaet.* 146a, 161e), which is exemplified in the Platonic dialogues. We may be pardoned, then, for supposing that the method is merely a literary device, a palatable way of putting across to us, the reader, the philosophical truths that Plato knows. But to take this view of the dialogues is to beg an important question - that

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Plato sees his works as the vehicle for dogma, that on every occasion he has a doctrine up his sleeve which it is up to us to ferret out.[42] So Plato belies the claim of Socrates not to know, not to teach but only to converse... Or does he?

The literary device of presenting Socrates in conversation with an interlocutor conceals - far too successfully - the real interlocutor, the reader (hearer) of the work. Theaetetus and Protarchus may be dummies; but our very reaction to their vacuity demonstrates our own involvement in the argument. Plato is doing dialectic with us, not with the dummies. Thus he uses puzzles and paradox to pose questions *to us.* It does not follow from this that on every occasion Plato has a dogma up his sleeve - nor does it follow that he has no opinions at all. But, especially since we are the targets, we should be wary of supposing that every question is closed, every line of argument merely an aniseed trail towards the revealed truth of Platonism. For dialectic is peirastic, in both the senses outlined by Aristotle. Firstly, it assays us, scrutinises us for false opinions and deflates our hubristic claims to knowledge.[43] Secondly, it is aporetic, essaying the truth, not knowing it.[44] So dialectic is the method of Socrates; and in this he differs from the sophists, who arrogantly give but the appearance of such tentativeness.[45] Thus eristic is mere seeming, dialectic the reality. So the question is the thing, both because the question is asked of someone (us),[46] and because the question is prior to, and does not presuppose the answer. This sort of dialectic is practised by Socrates, the midwife (*Theaet.* 150b). Now Plato sometimes treats dialectic as knowledge (*Rep.* 534b), thus assimilating it to dogma. But more often, it is associated with the method of Socrates. Hence, in the critical period, for Plato, too, peirastic has a central function.

Obviously, the dialogues were written to be read or heard. And it is banal to emphasise that they proceed by asking questions of the interlocutor. How can a dialogue, or a treatise, directly question its reader? It may ask a series of direct questions. But then the opinions of the reader are not engaged. How may the dialogue incorporate the views of an unknown reader?

Classical dialectic has the answer to this difficulty. The exercises of the sophists proceeded by pitting argument against argument, and so covering all aspects of a case. This use of double arguments, δισσοὶ λόγοι, finds its best exponent in Zeno's dilemmas. Here a proposition and its contradictory is exhaustively explored (for example, 'either there is, or there is not, some extended body'....'If there is some extended body, that must be either one or many' etc.), so that all options are exhausted. And if, moreover, each arm of the dilemma concludes as an antinomy, the reader is suspended between the arms, and forced to question the very structure of the argument - or else let reason slide into contradiction. So this method of ἀντιλογία triggers speculation - about the logic of the dilemma, about its content, and about its theoretical underpinnings. Whether he solves the dilemma or not, its victim finds himself doing metaphysics, searching for the account of being, the λόγος οὐσίας.[47] That *activity,* I suggest, is what the *Phaedrus* tries to provoke. The book antinomy is self-referential, which provides the paradox. And because it is

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self-referential, the antinomy displays the flexibility that ordinary treatises lack. Like a statue by Daedalus, it changes shape, twists about and alters its meaning - all without budging an inch.

So the programme of ἀντιλογία laid down at *Phaedrus* 261–4 is carried out in the book antinomy at 275. And the programme carries over into other dialogues (e.g. *Parm., Theaet.*). So dialectic is a co-operation between Plato and his reader. What, then, of the explicit account of dialectic as collection and division of *Phaedrus* 265, which reappears at *Soph.* 253d, *Pol.* 262d and *Phil.* 16? If ἀντιλογία is dialectic, what is collection and division?[48]

The method of collection and division is introduced to enable us to define and make clear (265d4) the disputed terms - 'just', 'fine' - of 263. The characterisation of this method is one that has roused much controversy - what kind of analysis is it?[49] Over and above that issue, arises a difficulty that is more fundamental. For collection and division is a method of analysis. But in order to analyse, we must know what we are doing - we must know, not only the specific topic, but also the rules for combining and dividing. But combining and dividing are dominated by those terms which are the most vexed of all - sameness and difference.[50] How do we grasp those terms? Certainly not by means of collection and division, which exploits them. Indeed, several passages suggest that collection and division is not a method of acquiring knowledge at all, but rather a means of setting it out.[51] Hence *Phaedrus* 265d1 describes it as subordinate to a further skill - and *that* must be no mean thing. The skill, as 266b5 makes clear, is that of being able to discriminate ones and manies - but *is* that collection and division? Does not Socrates in his madness follow in the tracks of *any* one-many dialectician[52] who might have the skill to wield the tool of collection and division?

This, perhaps, gives us a clearer view of Plato' notion of dialectic. On the one hand, the dialectician is the philosopher who is able to use demonstration and classification in a knowledgeable way: this is the complete philosopher of *Rep.* 534. On the other hand, the dialectic of ones and manies can help us towards a grasp of the truth, by using the provocative method of ἀντιλογία. This, as it proceeds, may analyse along the way - as Plato himself does - using collection and division. The exponents of dilemma, if they are to avoid being deceived themselves, must know what they are doing[53] - in this sense, Plato's Socrates, in using antinomy, is disingenuous. But the victims of paradox are doing dialectic too, in the sense that they are forced to think by the dialectician. So collection and division is both the mark and the method of the dialectician;[54] but dialectic in its truly peirastic sense lies in the arguments of antilogic.

Perhaps the most important corroborative evidence comes from *Philebus* 15d–17a. Here the theory of collection and division - easy to describe, hard to use, is introduced by means of the one-many puzzles. These are much beloved by young men, Socrates tells us, who enjoy the running about of talk - a constant (pun) πάθος of λόγοι. When young men first come across this paradoxical phenomenon they are

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fired with enthusiasm, and they make the words flux-ridden, by bringing them together and separating them. The inevitable result is ἀπορία. So far this is just the effect Zeno has on us; and it is also the effect of the Socratic elenchus. How can we avoid such confusion, asks Protarchus. Socrates doesn't answer, but in almost a direct echo of *Phdr.* 266b he announces his love-affair with collection and division - which have often escaped him and left him in ἀπορία. Now here we have not only the themes of madness and collection and division tied together with 'one-many' puzzles, but we find them located within the Socratic elenchus and its aporetic effect. Moreover, the *Philebus,* like the *Phaedrus,* exploits the relation of stability and change, a relation which becomes paradoxical and maddening when we attempt inquiry (16e, 17a). So the *Philebus* passage points to the connection between the *Phaedrus* book antinomy and the passage about ἀντιλογία. Throughout there is emphasis on the erotic element in dialectic; and whereas collection and division may provide a sane method of analysing what we have found out - at whatever stage in our inquiry - the inquiry itself is provoked by the maddening effect of paradox. Thus the resonances both within the *Phaedrus* and in other dialogues of the later period suggest that 274–6, coming as it does at the end of the dialogue, where ἀπορία belongs, was meant to be antinomic. It is a practical piece of ἀντιλογία which exploits the confusion generated - in us - by paradox.

So the *Phaedrus* proposes that inquiry is stimulated by paradox; and practises what it preaches by putting forward a radical antinomy about learning and becoming convinced. Might it not be objected, however, that the problem of inquiry already has a solution, in the doctrine of ἀνάμνησις which is recalled in the myth? But then the myth is allegory - truth-telling (247c5) indeed, but still shrouded in the trappings of a story (257a). Suppose that the myth gives us the assurance that knowledge is possible, rebutting Meno's lazy argument.[55] The allegory still needs to be cashed, we still need to be told in clear *how* knowledge may be acquired. Only after that may we come to understand how it is deployed. Hence the serious stuff is affirmed at 265c–d - not only collection and division, but the method of their deployment. The structured arguments of the second part of the *Phaedrus* answer these requirements. If we concentrate on λόγοι, they will lead our souls to the truth (261a8; 271c10). They do so, however, by exploiting the madness of paradox and disputed terms, not by means of sane fixity. For fixed terms - sticks or stones - will get us only a short way towards the truth, just like books which, with their insistent uniformity, cannot move around to suit an inquiry. But disputed terms and arguments (λόγοι) not only tolerate shifts from one meaning to the polar opposite, but they are as if alive, able to move with us, perhaps, and to alter to suit the inquiry. What is more, some can actually provoke inquiry - the λόγοι of Zeno, for example, by deceiving us, and then making us aware that we are deceived,[56] not only change as we consider them, but are themselves provocative *de novo.* I might write a theory, a dogma in a book - and that would never be able to help itself, or to adapt to changing objections, altering perspectives, different requirements on the part of the

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reader. Consequently, my book would be no means of teaching,[57] merely a reminder. But a book - like Zeno's - that contains paradoxes is another matter, for the paradoxes take on a life of their own (*Phaedrus* 264c, 276a), and simply by standing still, are capable of adapting to change in the reader. They do so when the reader falls in love with them, maddened and enthusiastic, follows their tracks.[58]

I have argued that the *Phaedrus* is a highly literary work, in the sense that it possesses a resonant quality even greater than is normal in a Platonic dialogue. This resonance, connecting as it does the three sections of the work, suggests that, after all, the dialogue is well, not badly, structured. Firstly the myth which by its very nature, needs interpreting, offers us the allegory of recollection, and reminds us of the issues that recollection was first introduced to solve. Then those very issues - the vexed terms and the problem of inquiry - are presented in clear, and solved by the programme of paradox - the irrational erotics of antilogic. Then, in the third section of the work, the programme of paradox is put into practice in the book antinomy.

However, that structural skeleton fails to do justice to the depth of the book antinomy and thereby to its connection with the theme of dialectic in the whole work. The dialogue is resonant - and that is a verbal matter. The book antinomy is self-referential - and that is a verbal matter. But the book antinomy is self-referential inasmuch as it is written words about the written word, repudiating the very literary context in which it appears. So this is the supreme antinomy, since it functions not only as a paradox, but as an attack upon its own medium. Thus it is not simply, but multiply and pragmatically self-referential, and thus a paradox of great depth. Its influence does not end there. For were we to consider the book antinomy within the dramatic context of the dialogue - that is as part of an oral conversation between two interlocutors - there would be no paradox, since the antinomy is exclusively about the written word. And so the true nature of the dialogue - that it is a piece of literary composition - is brought home to us just because we, the readers, are outraged by the antinomy. So the function of dialectic through writing is both denied and, by virtue of our reaction, affirmed. For, of course, any reaction we may have, confirms the power of the written word. If we simply dismiss the antinomy then we have not thought about it at all, and so we justify it. But so long as we react - whether we affirm or deny it - our reaction itself, being dialectical, refutes the antinomy.[59] In so doing, it confirms the programme of paradox, and redeems the promise of the recollection allegory. And by doing that, it brings together the whole dialogue, allowing it a beginning, a middle and an end, and endowing it with the dynamic quality that Plato demands from the well-structured composition. The paradox then embraces the entire work, and demonstrates that the written word is unequivocally alive.

NEW HALL, CAMBRIDGE MARY MARGARET MACKENZIE

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NOTES

1. Cf. e.g. W. V. O. Quine, 'Ways of Paradox', in *Ways of paradox and other essays* (1966); J. L. Mackie, *Truth, probability and paradox* (1973).

2. Aristotle's reaction is, typically, to *save* the phenomena, and deny the paradox (*E.N.* 1145b27–8). Cf. J. R. Bambrough, 'Socratic Paradox', *Ph.Q.* 10 (1960) 229–300.

3. The classic ψευδόμενον of Euboulides the Dialectician, Diogenes Laertius 2.108. Cf. D. N. Sedley, 'Diodorus Cronus and Hellenistic Philosophy', *PCPS* n.s. 23 (1977) 74–120, on Euboulides' title; the term 'dialectician' will be discussed further below.

4. This is the mathematicians' favoured method of dealing with the threat of Russell's paradox: What about the class of all classes which are not members of themselves - is it a member of itself? The hypothesis generally is that there is eventually some answer, although we may not find it (cf. Bambrough, 'Unanswerable Questions', *Ar. Soc. Suppl.* 40 (1966) 151–86). The paradoxes themselves, however, leave it open whether there is a solution, and perhaps even invite the supposition that there is not.

5. Theuth appears again at *Phil.* 18b, again credited with a grammatical discovery.

6. 'Magic for the memory'? It is typical of this work that φάρμακον may mean either a beneficial drug, or a poison - and the resonance of the word is exploited within the dialogue - cf. e.g. 230d6; 242e1. On the significance of such literary resonance in philosophical works, cf. C. F. Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus* (1979). This literary aspect of philosophical analysis is particularly important in the discussion of paradox; cf. J. Derrida, 'La Pharmacie de Platon', in *La Dissémination* (1972) 79–191.

7. λήθη is connected with δόξα - unreliable belief - and contrasted with ἀλήθεια at 275a6 - there is strong epistemological stress here.

8. Cf. the 'lazy' argument at *Meno* 81d.

9. Recalled from 249d.

10. This word should pull us up short. Plato describes one formulation of the theory of Forms as 'simple-minded' at *Phaedo* 100d. The term resounds even within this passage, cf. 275c7, and compare 242d7.

11. 'Words'? 'Names'? 'Sentences'? Λόγος is a large portmanteau for anything uttered or written down - it can even mean 'book', as we shall see...

12. Cf. e.g. *Crat.* 439: there is some crude correspondence between λόγοι and what they are about - words and the world - urged in several places in late Plato. That is not to say that such an account of truth is all he has to say on the matter - cf. G. Fine, 'Plato on Naming', *Ph.Q.* 27 (1977) 289–301.

13. σεμνῶς; this idea reappears at *Soph.* 249a1 to describe the obstinate immutability of the objects of knowledge. Cf. σεμνός used abusively at Ar. *Frogs* 178: the equivalent of the ὕβρις of the ignorant who think they know?

14. Κυλινδεῖσθαι (275e1) is used of νόμιμα in the sensible world at *Rep.* 479d5 and refers, apparently, to the inability of belief about the sensible world to be fixedly true or false. It reappears at *Theaet.* 172c to describe habitual visitors to the law-courts, in contrast to philosophers - again the epistemological connotations are obvious.

15. Cf. 264c, which will be discussed further below. Compare also *Phil.* 39a and *Pol.* 277c, where the image/original motif reappears in a discussion of painting, ζωγραφία.

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16. It is, I take it, standard that to be a copy is small beer compared to being the original; cf. G. J. de Vries, *A commentary on the Phaedrus of Plato* (1969) *ad loc.*

17. Cf. e.g. J. E. Thomas, *Musings on the Meno* (1980) 7.

18. Cf. G. Vlastos, *Gnomon* 35 (1963) 641–56; de Vries, *Commentary* 21.

19. Cf. below on the artifice of the dialogue style.

20. Cf. J. L. Mackie, 'Self-refutation - a Formal Analysis', *Ph.Q.* 14 (1964) 193–203, on pragmatically self-refuting propositions.

21. Thus it is about 'convincing' - cf. the ideas of learning and teaching at 275a.

22. Some comment on the chronological order of the Platonic dialogues is perhaps in order here. The suggestion has recently been revived that the *Phaedrus* is a middle period dialogue, but earlier than *Symposium* (J. M. Moore, 'The Relation between Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*' in J. Moravcsik, *Patterns in Plato's thought* (1973) 52–71). de Vries, *Commentary,* 9–11, marshalls others of the learned arguments and concludes that the *Phaedrus* was written between the *Republic* and the *Parmenides.* Since Thomas' arguments are unconvincing, such a traditional dating seems acceptable. However, from the philosophical point of view, my present argument suggests that the *Phaedrus* leans further towards the critical period than is generally allowed.

23. M. F. Burnyeat, 'The Passion of Reason in Plato's *Phaedrus*', (unpublished) argues that the *Phaedrus* myth solves problems set in the *Republic.* It is important for the interpretation that I offer here, that the myth is an allegory, as Burnyeat stresses. Moreover, it is striking that here the myth comes towards the beginning of the dialogue, instead of being the coda characteristic of other middle period works, *Gorgias, Phaedo, Republic.*

24. Cf. R. Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus* (1952) 134–7.

25. Lysias is the fall-guy here, cf. e.g. 234e; 266d.

26. Though cf. Moore, 'Relation' here.

27. Socrates is stopped in his tracks by the δαιμόνιον which he interprets (as if he were a soothsayer, μάντις, 242c) as telling him he is blasphemous, treating love as an evil, which it cannot be if it is a god.

28. Cf. e.g. 227c, Socrates is an expert in erotics. But beware, this too is a paradox, that Socrates the satyr-face could be an expert in erotics.

29. Hence the etymological connection between madness, μανική, and prophecy, μαντική. This etymology was not, apparently, an invention of Plato, cf. Euripides, *Bacchae* 299. That the prophets and prophetesses are mere instruments of the gods presumably accounts for their low ranking in the choice of lives at 248d. J. Fontenrose, *The Delphic oracle* (1978) 204 points out that the inspired prophets need not be *raving.*

30. This is confirmed at 265a.

31. 248b4; the mysterious nature of some knowledge, 248a; the wingedness of the soul, 249c–d - cf. again that *locus classicus* of madness, Euripides' *Bacchae* (332).

32. Contrast the dim view taken of madness at *Meno* 99d–e.

33. Cf. above, n.11 - surely we have a significant equivocation between 'word' and 'argument' here.

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34. Zeno is not mentioned by name, and it has been contended (by Friedländer, cf. de Vries, *Commentary, ad loc.*) that Parmenides is meant here. However, the explicit association of Zeno with ἀντιλογία at *Parm.* 127e seems to confirm that he is the Eleatic referred to here.

35. Prof. G. E. L. Owen reminded me that Zeno's use of the *sorites* effect is, at best, dubious.

36. Echoes of Meno's paradox; and see *Theaet.* 188a ff.

37. Cf. e.g. *Euthyphro* 11a; *Meno* 72a–e.

38. Here again, antilogic is presented as neutral - its purpose loads the dice.

39. Cf. G. E. L. Owen, 'Dialectic and Eristic in the Treatment of the Forms' in Owen (ed.), *Aristotle on dialectic* (1968) 103–24.

40. Cf. e.g. F. M. Cornford, *Plato's theory of knowledge* (1960) 184–7.

41. Hence its derivation from διαλέγεσθαι.

42. This view, that we can somehow divine 'what Plato really meant', that we can discover doctrines behind all the ἀπορίαι, is over-psychologising. It is as mistaken as supposing that we can know the intentions of the author of a piece of literature from the work itself. Cf. G. Vlastos, 'An Ambiguity in the *Sophist*' in *Platonic studies* (1973) 283.

43. *Soph. El.* 169b123–25.

44. *Metaphysics* 1004b25.

45. *Met.* 1004b26. Tentativeness is the connecting link between Aristotle's two senses of peirastic (*pace* G. Ryle, *Plato's progress* (1966) 107, who sees only one).

46. That the conversation occurs between Plato and us lessens the likelihood that he might practise eristic on *us* (as opposed to on the apparent interlocutors) since, by his own admission, a written work is defenceless and *scrutable.*

47. *Rep.* 534b; cf. Arist. *Met.* 1003a20.

48. Cf. J. R. Trevaskis, 'Division and its relation to Dialectic and Ontology in Plato', *Phron.* 12 (1967) 118–29.

49. Cf. e.g. Moravcsik, 'Plato's Method of Division' in *Patterns* 158–80, Ryle, *Plato's progress* 136. Does the method analyse biological kinds, or classes, or meaning?

50. Cf. e.g. *Soph.* 253d5–e1; *Pol.* 262e2–263a4; 278b6–c6.

51. Cf. e.g. *Soph.* 253b11. Compare J. Barnes, 'Aristotle's Theory of Demonstration' in J. Barnes, M. Schofield, R. Sorabji (eds.), *Articles on Aristotle* I (1975) 65–87.

52. They do indeed need tracking and interpreting - cf. *Parm.* 128c1; *Pol.* 263b1; cf. ones and manies without collection and division at *Parm.* 129d–e.

53. Cf. e.g. *Pol.* 281a12.

54. Cf. *Soph.* 219, collection and division is the means to an end.

55. Cf. *Meno* 80a.

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56. Hence the prominence of the problem of falsehood in the late period - we must understand what it is to be deceived.

57. See my 'Education, Empiricism and Paradox' in G. Simmons (ed.) *Plato's theory of education* (*Paideia* special volume; forthcoming). There I discuss the function of paradox in the *Parmenides*.

58. Cf. the theme of life, mantic and manic at *Phdr.* 274; the mad love of the philosopher, *Phdr.* 278d, 266b, *Phil.* 16b; the use of deception and falsehood in the elenchus; Daidalus at *Euth.* 15b; the sting-ray (*pathological*) at *Meno* 79, the τέρας of paradox at *Parm.* 129b; the irrationality and irresistibility of childish play, *Phdr.* 265c; *Soph.* 249; the tracking of the word written in play *Phdr.* 276d; and the close relation of seriousness and play, *Phdr.* 276d–e. In short, serious dialectic and play may be two sides of the same coin: contrast the bastard and the true, 276a.

59. See my 'Parmenides' dilemma', *Phronesis* 27 (1982) 1–13.

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