



DICCIONARIO
GRIEGO-ESPAÑOL



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The Truth of Antiphon

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IN A PAPER published in the Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society: 1960-61¹ I tried to show that there lived in Athens in the fifth century an Antiphon who was a teacher of rhetoric and the author of books called *Truth* and *About Concord*, who wrote about the interpretation of dreams, competed for pupils with Socrates, and set himself up in contrast to him; who was the teacher, or at any rate the friend, of Thucydides; and was active in organising the revolution of the Four Hundred. The present article assumes the conclusions of that paper, and will discuss: I. the text and meaning of the first of the fragments cited by Galen from the first book of the *Truth*, II. the argument of the *Truth*, and its place in the debate about the knowability of τὰ ὄντα, which attracted all the thinkers of the time. A final section, III, will consider the survey of this debate given by Plato in the *Cratylus*.

One point should be made at the outset. The *Truth*, even if we had the whole of it in front of us, would have been difficult to understand. Hermogenes, who appears to have enjoyed that advantage, wrote: „the author is not a bit the politician (πολιτικός μὲν ἤκιστα ἐστίν)² but is grand and verbose, particularly in his habit of treating every subject by means of categorical assertions, characteristic of a style which is pompous and aims at grandeur. His diction is elevated and rugged, not to say harsh, and employs amplification without achieving clarity, with the result that he confuses the argument and is usually obscure. But he is painstaking as well in his composition and takes delight in the even balancing of clauses. I should not however say that the author has any special character or even real style of his own: nor would I allow him cleverness, except of a superficial kind which is not real cleverness at all.” We should bear this criticism in mind as we attempt to extract a meaning from the fragments.

I

Galen on Hippocrates *de med. off* XVIII B 656 K:

καὶ ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ δὲ τῶν ὀμιλιῶν ἀντιδιαίρων ταῖς αἰσθήσεσι τὴν γνώμην πολλακίς εἴρηκεν (sc. Κριτίας), ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ Ἀντιφῶν ...

¹ No. 187 (N.S., No. 7) 1961 pp. 49-58.

² περὶ ἰδέων τομ.: B: Sp. Rh. Gr. II p. 414.

The words which follow are corrupt. Diels-Kranz⁵ gives the reading of the 14th century Parisinus gr. 1849 as follows: ἐν τῷ προτέρῳ (so!) τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ λέγον (λεγ Marcianus gr. 279 xv century) τοῦ τάδε (so!) γνούς εἰς ἐν τε οὐδὲν αὐτῷ οὐτέων ὄψει (oder ὄψι) ὄρᾶν μακροττ' (so!) οὐτέων γνώμη γινώσκει ὁ μακροττ' γινώσκων.

and emends:

ἐν τῷ προτέρῳ τῆς Ἀληθείας οὕτω λέγων· ταῦτα δὲ γνούς εἴσηι ἐν τι οὐδὲν <ὄν> αὐτῷ οὔτε ὄν ὄψει ὄρᾶι <ὁ ὄρῶν> μακρότατα οὔτε ὄν γνώμη γινώσκει ὁ μακρότατα γινώσκων.

and translates: Hast du aber diese Dinge erkannt, so wirst du wissen dass nichts für ihn (den Geist?) etwas Einzelnes ist (?) weder von dem, was der weitest "Schauende" mit dem Auge schaut, noch von dem, was mit Erkenntniskraft erkennt der weitest Erkennende.

The earlier texts of Charterius, Sauppe, Bernays, and Gomperz are given in Diels-Kranz's apparatus together with suggestions from A. Diès Bignone and Wilamowitz. All these are more or less drastic alterations of the tradition, and stem from a mere assumption, presumably from the occurrence of the word ἐν, that Antiphon is expressing an exclusively Eleatic point of view. I shall try to approach the fragment more cautiously, and see what meaning can be extracted before serious emendation is attempted.

Since the most serious textual difficulty lies at the beginning of the passage, it will be prudent to take the last section (ἐν τε οὐδὲν κ.τ.λ.) first:

(1) the repeated μακροττ' was first read as μακρότητα (by Charterius, Sauppe, Bernays and Gomperz), and Bernays compared the famous conversation between Plato and Diogenes¹ when the latter declared that he could see cup and table but not cupness and tableness. Diels's μακρότατα is undoubtedly better. Seeing and apprehending μακρότης is an expression which would occur only in the more advanced stages of a theory of universals. There is no reason to believe that such a stage had been reached in the last half of the fifth century. On the other hand, we find, in that century, Empedocles (DK B 129) praising a wise man, almost certainly Pythagoras, as one who "when he concentrated with all his mind would see easily each of all the things which exist (ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων πάντων)." The nature of reality was regarded as something which required a special effort of the specially gifted to discern.

(2) the corrupt οὐτέων suggests οὔτε οὔν, but a repeated οὔτε οὔν

¹ ap. Diogenes Laertius VI 53.

is most unlikely, and the corruption has little probability. ὦν in both places after οὔτε seems natural as a contraction of τούτων & since there is ἐν οὐδέν on which τούτων can depend.

(3) ὀρᾶν seems likely to be corrupt by haplography since the two clauses appear to balance, and we can confidently accept ὀρᾶ (parallel to γινώσκει) <ὀ ὀρᾶ> (parallel to ὀ γινώσκων). Hermogenes has told us that the author “is painstaking in his composition and takes delight in the even balancing of his clauses.”

If then we accept these emendations, the latter part of the fragment is reasonably clear: ἐν τε οὐδὲν αὐτῷ οὔτε ὦν ὄψει ὀρᾶ <ὀ ὀρᾶ> μακρότατα οὔτε ὦν γνώμη γινώσκει ὀ μακρότατα γινώσκων.

We may translate literally as follows: “And there is no single thing¹ for him either of those things which the most powerful seer sees with his sight or of those things which the most powerful knower knows with his mind.”

Whatever his main contention may be, Antiphon, like Critias as Galen observes, is here making a distinction between the senses and the mind as means of reaching truth. Γνώμη appears to have a special meaning which it is difficult to render in English. It means mind in its cognitive aspect. Antiphon’s contemporary Democritus is to be compared: (DK B 11) “there are two kinds of mind (γνώμη) one genuine, the other obscure. To the obscure belong all the following: sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch. The other is genuine and is quite distinct from this ... When the obscure kind can no longer see more minutely nor hear nor smell nor taste nor perceive through touch, but finer...’. The genuine kind of mind takes over at the point where the senses fail, when what is to be apprehended is too minute for their coarser faculties. It is presumably γνώμη γνησίη which apprehends atoms and the void.² So for Antiphon γνώμη is a cognitive organ, parallel to, and presumably more sensitive than, the senses. We shall see³ that the author of the *Science*, who shares Antiphon’s problems and is almost certainly his contemporary, makes a similar distinction, and says (11): (after describing the internal physiology of the body) “Without doubt no man who sees only with his eyes can know anything of what has here been described. It is for this reason that I have called them obscure even as they have been

¹ For ἐν οὐδέν = no single thing cf. Hdt. I 32 εἷς οὐδεὶς.

² It is true that in other fragments, DK B 6-10, Democritus speaks of the impossibility of true knowledge for man, but it is probable that in these contexts he is speaking of knowledge through the senses alone.

³ below pp. 40-41.

judged to be by the science . . . More pains, in fact, and quite as much time, are required to know them as if they were seen with the eyes; for what escapes the eyesight is mastered by the eye of the mind (ὅσα γὰρ τὴν τῶν ὀμμάτων ὄψιν ἐκφεύγει, ταῦτα τῇ τῆς γνώμης ὄψει κεκράτῃται).¹

Antiphon's main assertion concerns certain things which are only cognised by the most powerful exercise of the eye of sense or of mind. Light on his meaning will clearly come, if it is to come at all, from an exploration of the contemporary discussion of the senses and the mind as a means of getting to know τὰ ὄντα. On the one side we find Zeno and Melissus defending the rigid Parmenidean separation of what is from what appears, and, on the other, Anaxagoras, Protagoras, Philolaus and Democritus in their different ways explaining how the changing world of appearance can yet be known as exhibiting in some degree the things which are. Melissus (frg. 8) sets out very clearly the facts of experience which the theorists of the time felt bound to take into account: 'as things are we think we see and hear and know aright, but our senses report that the hot becomes cold and the cold hot, and the hard soft and the soft hard, and that the living dies and is born out of what is not living, and that all these things are changing, and that what was and what is now is in no way alike, but that iron which is hard is abraded by the constant touch of the finger, and so is gold and stone and everything else which appears to be tough, while out of water there comes earth and stone. The conclusion must then be that reality is not the object of sight or knowledge (ὥστε συμβαίνει μήτε ὄρᾶν μήτε τὰ ὄντα γινώσκειν).²' For Melissus the multiplicity and changing nature of the world revealed by the senses discharged it from the category of being and truth (frg. 8 οὐ γὰρ ἂν μετέπιπτεν, εἰ ἀληθῆ ἦν). Real existence must be looked for elsewhere and by thought alone. Anaxagoras, starting from the same facts as Melissus, does not reject the senses completely. They are weak and inadequate. 'Because of their weakness we are unable to discern the truth,'³ 'appearances are a glimpse of the obscure,'⁴ but still they are a glimpse of it. Change is explained by the fact that 'there is everything in everything.'⁵ 'Nothing comes to be or perishes but is the result of the mixture and separation of ἐόντα χρήματα.'⁶ How can we have cognition of ἐόντα χρήματα? Only, surely,

¹ Tr. W. H. S. Jones (Loeb ed.), except that I render τέχνη as 'science' not 'art'.

² Frg. 8.

³ Frg. 21: ὑπ' ἀμαυρότητος αὐτῶν οὐ δυνατοὶ ἐσμεν κρίνειν τὰληθές.

⁴ Frg. 21a: ὄψις γὰρ ἀδήλων τὰ φαινόμενα.

⁵ Frg. 11.

⁶ Frg. 17.

through some supreme effort of the senses or the cognitive mind. An ἐὸν χρῆμα can be described accurately in Antiphon's words as 'a single thing of those which the most powerful seer sees or the most powerful knower knows.' For Democritus those real things, which lurk obscurely behind the conventional reports of the senses, are atoms and void, discernible presumably by γνώμη γνησίη, the eye of the mind.¹ The followers of Protagoras, as in the doctrine attributed to him in the *Theaetetus*, concluded: (157A) ὥστε οὐδὲν εἶναι ἐν αὐτὸ καθ'αὐτό, ἀλλά τινα ἀεὶ γίνεσθαι; i.e. there are no ἐόντα χρήματα, the hot, the cold, the good, the bad, come to be in relation to a person. What appears to each man is for him. This survey has shown us the sort of thing Antiphon is likely to be talking about in the second part of fragment 1, and suggests that he is putting forward a viewpoint nearer to Anaxagoras than to Melissus or Protagoras. The seriously corrupt section of the fragment must now be tackled in the hope that it may give some clue to the identity of the αὐτῷ.

The words ἐν τῷ προτέρῳ τῆς Ἀληθείας can be accepted without difficulty, with the iotas subscript² restored, to mean 'in the first of the two books of the *Truth*.' The remaining letters are more difficult:

ΕΝΤΩΙΑΕΓΟΝΤΟΥΤΑΔΕΓΝΟΥΣΕΙΣ

Diels-Kranz's text reads ΕΝΤΩΙ as οὕτω, ignores the iota and the marks of abbreviation over the Γ of ΑΕΓΟΝ in the Marcianus, alters ΤΟΥΤΑ to ΤΑΥΤΑ, adds ΗΙ to ΕΙΣ, alters ΤΕ to ΤΙ², and when all is done leaves the sense to be derived from an unknowable previous sentence. It seems rather unlikely that Galen should have given us, without a word of explanation, a quotation whose sense is undiscoverable. And the alterations are too massive.

The first clue to the true text is, I believe, provided by the ΕΝ which follows the words τῆς Ἀληθείας. It is natural to suppose that this ΕΝ like the previous one is a preposition and that the phrase ἐν τῷ λέγοντι is a rather inelegant addition to what has gone before. But it is equally possible that the quotation begins with ΕΝΤΩΙ and that the first word is not the preposition ἐν but ἐν. The first words may then be ἐν τῷ λέγοντι "for the man who says a single thing..." The natural thing to attribute or deny to 'a man who says a single thing' is 'a single meaning;' and it seems a confirmation of the reading proposed that 'a single meaning' is exactly what we find in the last seven letters of the passage, νοῦς εἷς. The region of corruption may now be narrowed to

¹ See above p. 37 n. 2.

² In the following sentence.

the eight letters in the middle ΟΥΤΑΔΕΓΕ. We can chose between οὔτε γε, οὐδέ γε, οὔτε δὴ γε, even οὐ τοι δὴ γε. In any case the sense is much the same. My own preference is for οὐδέ γε¹ regarding τα as intrusive.

A literal translation of the whole passage is then:

“And in the second book of the *Homilies* Critias has often spoken opposing the (cognitive) mind to the senses as Antiphon does in the first of the two books on *Truth*: ‘when a man says a single thing there is no corresponding single meaning, nor is the subject of his speech any single thing either of those things which the most powerful seer sees with his sight or of those things which the most powerful knower knows with his mind.’

The restored text of Antiphon’s fragment is as follows:

ἐν τῷ² λέγοντι οὔδε γε νοῦς εἷς, ἐν τε οὐδὲν αὐτῷ οὔτε ὧν ὄψει ὀρᾶ <ὁ ὀρῶ> μακρότατα οὔτε ὧν γνώμη γινώσκει ὁ μακρότατα γινώσκων.

The writer appears to be saying that the concepts we use in speech (i.e. the single thing we say or name, the great, the small, the just etc) have no single meaning in the sense that the ultimate constituents of nature, which may be discerned by the most powerful effort of sense or mind, are single things.

II

The next task is to enquire how the restored fragment fits into what may have been the subject of the first book of Antiphon’s *Truth*.

Diels-Kranz quotes a passage from the Hippocratic treatise, *Science*, to illustrate the distinction between ὄψις and γνώμη which Galen himself is illustrating by the citation of Critias and of our fragment of Antiphon. The passage, which comes from a section where the author is dealing with the concept of science (τέχνη) in general before embarking upon the defence of the particular science of medicine, has a wider application to the fragment of Antiphon as now restored since it introduces naming into the context of seeing and knowing. The author begins by attacking squarely the Eleatic position that the objects of sight and

¹ See Denniston *Greek Particles* p. 156.

² I am inclined to think that τοι was the original reading, but the emendation is unnecessary for the sense.

of the cognitive mind are non-existent, and hence that a science which deals with them has no reality. He says:

(ch. ii)¹ Δοκεῖ δὴ μοι τὸ μὲν σύμπαν τέχνη εἶναι οὐδεμία οὐκ ἐοῦσα· καὶ γὰρ ἄλογον τῶν ἐόντων τι ἡγεῖσθαι μὴ ἐόν· ἐπεὶ τῶν γε μὴ ἐόντων τίνα ἂν τις οὐσίην θεησάμενος ἀπαγγείλειεν ὡς ἔστιν; εἰ γὰρ δὴ ἔστι γ' ἰδεῖν τὰ μὴ ἐόντα, ὥσπερ τὰ ἐόντα, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ἂν τις αὐτὰ νομίσειε μὴ ἐόντα, ἃ γε εἶη καὶ ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδεῖν καὶ γνώμῃ νοῆσαι ὡς ἔστιν· ἀλλ' ὅπως μὴ οὐκ ἦ τοῦτο τοιοῦτον· ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ἐόντα αἰεὶ ὁρᾶται τε καὶ γινώσκεται, τὰ δὲ μὴ ἐόντα οὔτε ὁρᾶται οὔτε γινώσκεται· γινώσκεται τοίνυν δεδειγμένων ἤδη τῶν τεχνέων, καὶ οὐδεμία ἐστὶν ἣ γε ἕκ τινος εἶδεος οὐχ ὁρᾶται. οἴμαι δ' ἔγωγε καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα αὐτὰς διὰ τὰ εἶδεα λαβεῖν· ἄλογον γὰρ ἀπὸ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἡγεῖσθαι τὰ εἶδεα βλαστάνειν, καὶ ἀδύνατον· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ὀνόματα φύσιος νομοθετήματά ἐστι, τὰ δὲ εἶδεα οὐ νομοθετήματα, ἀλλὰ βλαστήματα.

The passage may be rendered: 'I think, generally speaking, that there is no such thing as a non-existent science; in fact it is absurd to think of one of the things which exist as non-existent. If some things actually did not exist how could someone look at them as existing and say that they did exist. Indeed if you can actually see what does not exist, just as much as what does exist, I cannot see how any one could believe they do not exist, particularly if you can see them with your eyes and know them with your (cognitive) mind as existent. No, this cannot be so.' The writer having thus refuted the Eleatic doctrine of the unreality of appearances by an appeal to common sense proceeds to put forward his own theory of how knowledge is possible. Fragment 8 of Melissus showed very clearly how the impossibility of knowledge of a changing world was the chief reason for regarding the objects of sense as 'non-existent.' 'On the contrary things which exist are always seen and known, while things which do not exist are neither seen nor known. Things which exist are known then as soon as the sciences have been discovered, and there is no science which is not recognised as the result of some visible kind of thing.² I think that the sciences take their names too, (i.e., presumably not only the names of the sciences but the names the sciences employ)' 'from the visible kinds of things. For it is ridiculous to think that the visible kinds of things spring from their names, and

¹ DK 87 B 1. I read W. H. S. Jones's text (Loeb ed. II p. 192) except that at line 16 I read φύσιος after ὀνόματα with the mss. As Jones says "possibly the transposition" (proposed by Gomperz) "is unnecessary as φύσιος is easily understood after βλαστήματα".

² It is tempting to translate εἶδος as Form, in view of the later history of the word: but even in Plato it often means "visible kind of thing" in a non-technical sense. Jones renders 'real essence'.

impossible too. For names are conventional restrictions of nature, but the visible kinds of things are not conventional restrictions but the offspring of nature.'

The author of the *Science*, whom Jones places "with some confidence in the great sophistic period" in the last half of the fifth century, approaches the contemporary question about the relationship of naming to the knowing of 'things which exist' in an original way. Sight and cognition are the means of knowing 'existent things,' but not mere undisciplined cognition, rather cognition systematised in the sciences which are themselves recognised as a result of certain kinds of thing obvious to the senses. These sciences are, e.g. arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, music.¹ They get the names they employ from the visible kinds and not *vice-versa*. The visible kinds are 'the offspring of nature.' The step from the cognition of 'existent things' to naming them is through science and visible kind. The man who has been trained in a science will bestow names according to the visible kinds. The distinction between names, which are conventional restrictions on nature, and the kinds, which are the offspring of nature, is presumably that the former are subjective descriptions which may not take into account natural divisions while the latter are the objectively existent visible kinds of thing, inherent in nature and not depending upon subjective description.² It is the kinds which, in a changing world, make knowledge possible. Another theory, that names are natural, is rejected as ridiculous and impossible. Names are merely the recognition of the visible kinds by the scientist. It is interesting to observe that a contemporary, Philolaus, appears to have asserted that number plays the same part in cognition as the visible kind does for the author of the *Science*; it is that by which things are known.³

The Hippocratic writer's theory of the visible kinds which the scientist recognises is close to the "second procedure" of dialectic which Plato describes in the *Phaedrus* (265 C ff): 'that whereby we are enabled to divide into visible kinds, following the objective articulation' (τὸ πάλιν κατ'εἶδη δύνασθαι διατέμνειν κατ'ἄρθρα ἢ πέφυκεν) and which appears again in the *Sophist* (253 D) and *Statesman* (287 C). It is

¹ See Plato *Protagoras* 318 D.

² Compare Plato *Republic* 454 A where eristic is contrasted with dialectic as κατ' αὐτὸ τὸ ὄνομα διώκειν τοῦ λεχθέντος τὴν ἐναντίωσιν in contrast with the procedure of κατ' εἶδη διαιρούμενοι τὸ λεγόμενον ἐπισκοπεῖν, which is dialectic.

³ Frg. 4: καὶ πάντα γὰρ μὰν τὰ γινωσκόμενα ἀριθμὸν ἔχοντι· οὐ γὰρ οἶόν τε οὐδὲν οὔτε νοηθῆμεν οὔτε γνωσθῆμεν ἄνευ τούτου. See additional note, p 49.

generally asserted, e.g. by Hackforth *Phaedrus* p. 134, or at any rate assumed, that the "second procedure" is a new discovery of Plato's announced for the first time in the *Phaedrus*, and I have not seen this belief questioned. But there are strong reasons for thinking that the procedure belongs to the fifth century. In the first place there is the passage in the *Science* which we have noticed. In the second place there is the passage in Aristophanes *Clouds* (740 f.) where Socrates, giving his new pupil instruction in silent meditation, bids him wrap his head in a blanket:

ἴθι νῦν καλύπτου καὶ σχάσας τὴν φροντίδα
λεπτὴν κατὰ μικρὸν περιφρόνει τὰ πράγματα
ὀρθῶς διαιρῶν καὶ σκοπῶν.

The correspondence in terminology between the final phrase and Plato *Republic* 454 A where the procedure of dialectic is described as κατ' εἶδη διαιρούμενοι τὸ λεγόμενον ἐπισκοπεῖν suggests that examination (σκοπεῖν, ἐπισκοπεῖν) and division (διαιρεῖν, -εἶσθαι) were already in the fifth century recognised as techniques of reasoning. Examination is probably to be assimilated to what Plato in the *Phaedrus* (265 D) calls "the first procedure:" εἰς μίαν τε ιδέαν συνορῶντα ἄγειν τὰ πολλαχῆ διεσπαρμένα, ἵνα ἕκαστον ὀριζόμενος δῆλον ποιῆ περὶ οὗ ἂν αἰεὶ διδάσκειν ἐθέλῃ. It seems that Plato, when his interests turned in the Academy to the examination and classification of the external world, had recourse to methods which had already been explored by the contemporaries of Socrates, if not by Socrates himself. W.H.S. Jones¹ notes that the author of the *Science* distinguishes himself from medical men: "the two most striking characteristics of the work are an attenuated logic and a fondness for sophistic rhetoric. The rhetorical character of the whole book is so striking that without doubt it must be attributed to a sophist. The elaborate parallels, verbal antitheses, and balancing of phrase with phrase, can have no other explanation." Jones thought the writer might be Hippias. Precise identification is plainly impossible, but it seems clear that the writer shares the literary and stylistic as well as the philosophical climate in which Antiphon worked.

The subject of fragment 1 of Antiphon, as of chapter II of the *Science*, is cognition and name-giving and their relation to the knowledge of the things that exist. The *Science* boldly claims that τὰ ὄντα are always the subject of cognition and shows how this can come about by means of εἶδη, permanent visible kinds which are the offspring of nature and are the only true basis for names. In general practice however names

¹ Loeb. ed. II p. 187.

are mere convention and have no correspondence with the visible kinds. Antiphon, for his part, declares that there is no single meaning to the name you give to a thing, no single real thing corresponding to the name. If we turn to the rest of book I of the *Truth* we find this claim exemplified in the very varied subject matter.

There are two fragments of apparently fifth-century sophistic writing in one papyrus, and one similar fragment in another, which are identified as belonging to Antiphon's *Truth* (DK B 44). The fragments from the first papyrus are certainly Antiphon's, since a phrase in the first is quoted by Harpocration as from the *Truth*. Although the third fragment is from a different papyrus and in a different hand the ascription to the *Truth* is generally accepted. In the first fragment the purpose of the argument, which concerns the concept of justice as "obeying the laws of the city," is declared as follows: ἔστι δὲ πάν<τως> τῶνδε ἔνεκα τούτων ἢ σκέψις ὅτι τὰ πολλὰ τῶν κατὰ νόμον δικαίων πολεμίως τῇ φύσει κείται. The second, shorter, fragment argues that certain conventional distinctions of birth and race, about which the writer's fellow-countrymen make a fuss, are not based on any natural distinctions.¹ Both these arguments can be seen to be illustrations of the claim that to the name 'justice,' 'Greek,' 'barbarian,' there is no single corresponding thing, no natural division. Against these conventional names Antiphon sets, in the case of justice, τὰ τῇ φύσει ζυμφέροντα, and in the case of Greek and barbarian, the concept of man. In the third fragment the writer is examining another of the requirements of the common conception of justice, to bear true witness, and shows that this requirement on occasion causes a man to injure someone who never injured him, i.e. to be unjust. This argument, again, tends to the rejection of common names, which have no single meaning, and adopting instead concepts which are based on nature. In the phraseology of the *Science* Antiphon is arguing that the current concept of justice is a νομοθέτημα φύσιος, a conventional restriction on nature, whereas the true concept of justice should be an εἶδος,, a natural kind, a scion of nature. What Antiphon in fact says is pretty close to this: τὰ δὲ ζυμφέροντα τὰ μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν νόμων κείμενα δεσμὰ τῆς φύσεως ἔστι, τὰ δὲ ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως ἐλεύθερα.

A fragment attributed to the first book of the *Truth* by Harpocration and quoted in a more extended form by Aristotle in the *Physics* (B i 193 a 9) seems to be pointing to the contrast between names that are by

¹ cf. *Statesman* 262 D. Division of mankind into Greek and barbarian is given as an example of a bad division.

nature and those that are by convention: “Now some hold that the nature and substantive existence of natural products resides in their material on the analogy of the wood of a bedstead or the bronze of a statue. (Antiphon took it as an indication of this that if a man buried a bedstead and the putrefaction became alive and it threw out a shoot, it would not be bedstead that grew but wood).”¹ Antiphon’s argument here comes out clearly. And it can be seen to be the same as that which we saw in the papyrus fragments. The name which does not reflect the natural category or true visible kind is contrasted with the name which does. If you say one thing (bed), this is a name which has no natural meaning, i.e. reflects no single natural kind.²

With these passages from the *Truth* we may perhaps compare the famous fragment of Democritus (9): “by convention (νόμῳ) are sweet and bitter, hot and cold, by convention is colour; in truth (ἐτεῆ) are atoms and void . . . In reality we apprehend nothing exactly, but only as it changes according to the condition of our body and of the things that impinge and press upon the body.”³ Antiphon, so far as we know, had no elaborate theory of sensation or of physical matter like the atomists, but he starts along the same road seeking behind names for what exists in truth. The word ἀληθεία in Antiphon’s title is likely to have had the same overtones as Democritus’s ἐτεῆ. Behind a wide variety of names he seeks for those kinds of things which are based on nature, not convention. Galen, who on three occasions cites from Antiphon’s *Truth* tells us on another occasion⁴ that Antiphon taught “the right way of coining names.” This remark may, perhaps, be taken as confirmation that the *Truth*, or at any rate the first book of it,⁵ was concerned with the question of names and the conventional and natural divisions of τὰ ὄντα. What has always been puzzling about the *Truth*

¹ εἴ τις κατορύξει κλίνην καὶ ἡ σηπεδῶν τοῦ ξύλου ἔμβιος γένοιτο, οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο κλίνη ἀλλὰ ξύλον.

² The method attributed to Antiphon (DK B 13) of ‘squaring the circle’ by constructing within it a polygon with sides of infinite number and smallness, may belong to the argument of the first book of the *Truth*. The sides of the polygon διὰ σμικρότητα ἐφαρμόσουσι τῆ τοῦ κύκλου περιφέρειᾳ. We have something like the bed/tree which by being two things at once illustrates the failure of names to reach the single ultimate reality of existing things.

³ Trans. Kirk and Raven. op. cit. 589.

⁴ Hippocratis proem. V 706 B XVIII 66 7 K.

⁵ The second book, to judge from the various single words cited from it by the lexicographers and in particular a longer passage quoted by Galen which concerns the formation of hail in the atmosphere, seems to have been concerned with the more normal topics of περι φύσεως ἱστορία.

is how it can have embraced in the argument of a single work explanations of physical nature, and investigations of concepts like justice, Greek and barbarian.¹ Fragment I now seems to give us the clue. What is striking is that the list of ὄντα which, e.g. in Melissus comprised physical attributes (hot and cold), and natural substances (iron, gold), now comes to include also moral and sociological attributes e.g. just, Greek, barbarian. There is a parallel to this extension in the theory which another fifth-century thinker appears to have put forward. Plato tells us in the *Cratylus* that Euthydemus claimed: πᾶσι πάντα ὁμοίως εἶναι ἄμα καὶ ἀεί, and that everyone is accordingly both good and bad. In the *Euthydemus* (294 A) he actually declares that he, like Dionysodorus and Socrates, knows everything. This theory appears to be an extension of the Anaxagorean doctrine that "there is everything in everything" to moral and intellectual attributes. The list of ὄντα includes for Euthydemus the good, the bad and the ἐπιστῆμαι. It seems to be the case that the interest in ethics developed by thus including ethical attributes in the list of ὄντα, and that the way in which they thought about these new ὄντα was conditioned by the ways in which the old ὄντα had been envisaged. If this is to be accepted as a historical fact, it has important bearings on the development of Socrates's philosophy, which began with an interest in physics and ended in λόγοι.

III

The problem of the correctness of names, whether names were natural or merely conventional, engaged the attention of a number of thinkers in the fifth century, Protagoras (Plato *Cratylus* 391 C), Prodicus (id. ib. 384 B and *Euthydemus* 277 E), Hippias (probably, Plato *Hippias Major* 285 B), the author of the *Science*, and Antiphon. Plato's *Cratylus* provides an epilogue to this discussion, and shows how Plato saw the connexion between it and the theory of εἶδη which he was developing.

After an introductory passage, the first section (385 B-391 A) is given to an examination of the theory put forward by Hermogenes that whatever name you give to a thing is the right name. This is opposed to Cratylus's theory that there is for each of τὰ ὄντα a certain natural correctness of name (ὀνόματος ὀρθότητα εἶναι ἐκάστω τῶν ὄντων φύσει πεφυκυῖαν). Socrates says that Hermogenes's theory involves acceptance either of Protagoras's or Euthydemus's doctrine of τὰ ὄντα, the

¹ Hence Bignone's scarcely acceptable conclusion (*Studi sul Pensiero Antico*: Naples 1938, p. 79) that the *Truth* was 'una specie di enciclopedia.'

former that as things seem to me so they are to me, and as they seem to you so they are to you; the latter that all things belong equally to all men at the same time and perpetually, and hence goodness and badness are always equally possessed by all. If both are to be rejected then “it is clear that things have some fixed reality of their own... they exist of themselves in relation to their own reality imposed by nature”. It is agreed that things (πράγματα), having a certain definite nature of their own, must be named in a way proper to their inherent nature and with the right name. The name is a tool for teaching about, and for separating the various parts of, reality (388 B)¹ The craftsman who makes the tool is the skilled name-giver. This name-giver is compared to the shuttle-maker. Both “look at” an ideal paradigm (αὐτὸ δ' ἔστιν κερκίς, αὐτὸ δ' ἔστιν ὄνομα) although in making the particular name of shuttle they may not use the same materials as the next name-giver or shuttle-maker, and although there are hundreds of different kinds of shuttles or names. The user of the name is the διαλεκτικός ἀνὴρ, and he is able to judge whether the names are well made or not. At 390 E Socrates states a conclusion which is very like the doctrine of chapter II of the *Science*: Cratylus is right in saying that names belong to things by nature; and that the maker of names is not just anyone, but “he who keeps in view the name which belongs by nature to each particular thing and is able to embody its εἶδος in the letters and syllables.”

The second section of the dialogue (391 B-427 E) is an examination, by διαλεκτικοὶ ἄνδρες, of a certain number of names to see if they do in fact reveal the nature of the things to which they are applied. At first a number of names are explained by analysis into elements (στοιχεῖα) “This examination will stop when we reach those names which are themselves elements (422 A).” These elements are the earliest names. What underlies their correctness? The answer is imitation – imitation of οὐσία, which is effected by means of letters, syllables and rhythms. Socrates explains his theory of how letters imitate οὐσία by means of a kind of phonetic resemblance: and there is a pretty broad hint that Socrates is here reproducing a contemporary theory.²

In a final section (427 E-440 D) Socrates appears to give what are his own comments on the conclusion of the previous section, i.e., that “correctness of a name is the quality of showing the nature of the thing

¹ ὄνομα ἄρα διδασκαλικόν τι ἔστιν ὄργανον καὶ διακριτικὸν τῆς οὐσίας.

² 428 C (Cratylus is speaking) “And so, Socrates, your oracular utterance seem to me to be much to my mind, whether you are inspired by Euthyphro or some other Muse has dwelt within you all along without our knowing it”.

named". Name-giving, being a science (τέχνη), has practitioners who are of varying quality. The contention that all names are correctly given cannot be right. The theory that letters and syllables imitate things will not explain all the names we have. Convention must be the explanation of some. And are names the only means of discovering the true nature of τὰ ὄντα? If this were so, it would be a very unsatisfactory way. We should be at the mercy of the name-giver, who does in actual fact often seem to contradict himself, some names indicating, as Socrates believes to be right, that it is the essential nature of things to be in motion, others indicating that their essential nature is to be at rest. And it would be quite obscure how the name-giver himself came to know this essential nature.

There follows the well known conclusion: (439 B) "how τὰ ὄντα are to be known or discovered is perhaps too great a question for you or me to determine; but it is worth while to have reached even this conclusion that they are to be learned and sought for, not from names but much better through themselves (αὐτὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν) than through names." That this is the usual Socratic irony is shown by the immediately following suggestion, to which Cratylus agrees: "consider, my good Cratylus, a question about which I often dream, shall we assert that there is any absolute beauty or good or any other absolute existence or not (πότερον φῶμέν τι εἶναι αὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἐν ἑκάστων τῶν ὄντων οὕτω, ἢ μή;)"

Thus, with a proper Socratic tentativeness, the Platonic Socrates gives his answer to the problem of knowing τὰ ὄντα, viz. the proposition that there are "ὄντα themselves." In the Phaedo (65E) we are told that "the clearest knowledge will be obtained by one who . . . sets himself to track down each constituent of reality purely and simply as it is (αὐτὸ καθ'αὐτὸ εἰλικρινῆς ἑκάστων ἐπιχειροῖ θηρέειν τῶν ὄντων) by means of thought pure and simple: one who gets rid, as far as possible, of eyes and ears and, broadly speaking, of the body altogether." It is not, however, possible to get rid of the senses altogether; the "ὄντα themselves" are in some way connected with the objects of the senses. As an answer to the problem of knowledge the Forms are a compromise between the Eleatic position "that reality is not the object of sight or of the (cognitive) mind" and the Protagorean, that reality is only relative to you and me. In this the Platonic Forms resemble the ἐόντα χρέματα of Anaxagoras which are present in all sensible things but are discernible only by the eye of the mind. Both are open to the *reductio ad absurdum* that there must be Forms of, and

ἔόντα χρήματα representing, every conceivable thing. Another compromise is provided by Democritus's atoms, which are discernible by γνώμη γνησίη, and escape the *reductio ad absurdum* at the price of leaving it obscure how atoms can be the material of the varied objects of sense. Antiphon's *Truth*, the Hippocratic *Science* and Plato's *Cratylus* do at least illustrate the importance of the debate on names in the wider investigation of the problem of how ὄντα are to be known. The point is to be made in passing that we are wrong in putting into different categories, e.g. Anaxagoras, Protagoras, Plato as scientist, sophist, philosopher, since all were concerned equally seriously with the same central problem.

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Additional note to page 42:

See Kirk and Raven *op. cit.* p. 311 for the arguments in favour of rejecting as spurious the fragments of Philolaus which are concerned with epistemology. I am not convinced by Aristotle's silence that Philolaus was not drawn into a debate which engaged all contemporary thinkers. It seems inconceivable that the Pythagoreans of the time could have been "concerned only with physical phenomena" and not also with how things can be known. Compare the special insight attributed to Pythagoras by Empedocles (DK B 129, p. 36 *supra*).