

The Evolution in Plato's Forms

Abstract

“The rule for attaining the third grade of clearness of apprehension is as follows: Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object.”

(Charles Sanders Peirce, 1878, How to Make Our Ideas Clear).

Plato's theory of ideas states that if something exists, then it can be proven by the idea. Plato's method in the *Phaedo* is to provide a context that shows how a priori ideas come into existence through proof. But he does not give empirical reason a place to combine the utilities of objects with ideas. Since the forms exist in an eternal world, science cannot change semantic contexts to isolate the variables that contain them in actual reality, such as through names, classes, and types. Peirces' pragmatism suggests that the Platonic form can be employed as a practical entity when it unites distinctness with an abstract definition of the real. The nature of these relations is known through action and must say why reflection ultimately proves that the existence of the forms depends on the universal concept soul. In the *Argument of Recollection*, the separation of the soul with the body generates a priori definitions such as justice, temperance, and courage. These ideas are portrayed as mental entities to provide a foundation for the reality of knowledge in relation to belief and opinion.

Plato's Forms: Universal Quantifiers: Existence of the Soul

Plato's concept of a form signifies "an eternal object in the mind" but cannot be named by a thing that is not a concept. This suggests that in all possible worlds, ideas are produced by the sun, which allows us to identify truths versus falsehoods, and escape the Cartesian method that theoretically permits skepticism and looks to authority as the ultimate source of truth. Plato's theory of ideas prevails in the long run since it supposes that all a priori ideas are separate from experience, and do not need authority to guide their principles.

Since it is undecided what a form "is", then it cannot be a posteriori because it cannot be produced from existence. Thus, the form shares an abstract relation with a first principle that guides the mind into action. Peirce calls the outcome of this process a habit and believes that the concept of soul is produced from the relation between the first and second categories of reality. That is, firstness is the spontaneous arising of the idea which causes the mind to secondness or acting in some particular way that defines qualities when making deductions. Thus, 'knowing how' there is separation of the soul is analogous to 'believing that something is true' on the grounds that being is necessarily asserted into existence through self-awareness. The essence of the term 'existence' is to understand that evolution is implied when we refer to cognitive actions such as thinking, choice, harmony, and morality. ¹ If the mind did not conceive of the word, 'there', it would be impossible to understand how appearance and reality are distinct items in terms of perception, logic, and possibility. In short, all knowledge must have an intimate relationship with names since they denote a type of idea that contains 'belonging to' a species that shares family resemblance patterns, such as a body, mind, and individual or cultural habits.

¹ Plato (360 BCE) *The Dialogues of Plato*, Phaedo. Wisdom (sophistēs) is knowledge of the virtues and how forms exist as universal concepts about quality, quantity, and distribution.

The term ‘humanity’ has a particular function in the sense that evolution brings ideas into unity in order to preserve the species in time.

Plato’s Dialogues represent this early stage of evolutionary mechanisms that must come into being through language and dialectical inquiry in order to show that certainty is known when words stimulate thought into action. In the *Phaedo*, Cebes and Simmias question Socrates’ past actions about educating the youth and desire to know certain truths that show why Socrates’ rhetoric is valid. Socrates gives three arguments for the Soul’s Immortality (69e-84b) that suggest how ordinary language concepts change through inductive processes.¹ Cebes’ objects (70a-b) to those who believe that the soul is destroyed when a person dies but wants to know how this can be proven if the immortal soul is known through an uncommon belief and how the soul continues to exist after death and possess intelligence. In response to the first objection, Socrates refers to a theory that states living souls come back from the dead (70c-d). He supports this statement by referring to Heraclitus’ theory that explains that all things come to be from their opposite states (70e-71a). Every pair of opposites contains two opposite processes, which are intermediate and evolve into their final natures (71b). Since there is balance between each state, things exist as particulars and do not change into other natures. “Opposites” indicates that “comparatives” and “contraries” are more useful for knowing how something is true rather than knowing that “contradictories” imply something else about their universal natures. Plato’s method rejects Parmenides’ position that a word must mean what something implies, such as when we say, “Hot means not cold.” This is false in a sense because it does not define hot for what it “means.” Plato thinks that we can know what a thing isn’t by virtue of its form or else is self-contradictory to suppose that a thing can be both characters. Thus, Cebes believes that the proof is half valid because Socrates’ existence depends on the ‘whole’ soul, which is simple, and

as a result, complexity is not part of it. Leibniz identifies extension as a thing that separates the soul from the body, which means that soul is an immaterial substance. Identity is a concept that contains everything that can happen to us a priori. There is a pre-established harmony that makes us unlike other creatures and have knowledge of eternal and necessary truths relating to mathematics.²

The nature of a priori ideas must be investigated through knowledge by acquaintance and description because these two actions cause the conceptions of the primary qualities in things and how we construct universal relations about valid deductions. These inferences lay the grounds for the inductions about the forms to evolve since there is intellectual desire to understand what particular ideas mean when they are put to conceptual testing. Acquaintance is used in deductive argument to show how necessary reasoning must be true. As a result, it is false if the premises do not support the conclusion. For instance, the equation, $2 + 2 = 4$ is a deductive argument because it shows that whenever we add two things together of a similar resemblance or simultaneity, the total idea of those two objects will be four. On the other hand, the description about the numbers two and four will be different when it is used in inductive arguments because it will refer to distinct items in experience, such as two cats or two dogs. In either case, four things prove how probabilistic reasoning about two things of the same type causes the mind to put them together as performing a certain behavior. Hence, a type is a class description about a particular thing because it causes the same idea of the thing itself when it is compared to others. For example, a cat (is one thing) and has the same characteristics that make it part of its species (the type) but there are properties about one certain cat that make it unique and separate from the other cats. This is the foundation for how we identify what a thing is based on its name and know that

² See Leibniz, Gottfried (1686) *Discourse on Metaphysics, The Monadology*, 139-140. The principle of sufficient reason and the principle of contradiction reason about necessary things and particular facts.

certain qualities are known through the objects of perception, such as its relative nature. While a cat is an animal that belongs to a general class, the one cat does not represent the ideas of all other cats.

Classes must contain inherent variables that are true separate from their qualities since physical attributes denote identities through descriptions. While acquaintance is valid to proving the relations between things, descriptions contain evidence that shows there are possible ways to know how particular ideas will cause logical actions.

In the Argument from Recollection (72e-78b), learning proves the immortality of the soul when it is demonstrated by the slave-boy who is asked a series of questions by Socrates that aim to guide him towards the answers. The reason why Socrates thinks that recollection occurs in the present is through the past, which contains truths that are revealed through geometry. Socrates supports this idea with the notion that recollection includes sense-perception about similar and different things (73c). Some scholars like Russell object that this is impossible because if the slave boy was present at past times, he could not know if his memory is accurate. Plato makes a hasty generalization that all knowledge is recollection. This conclusion is unclear since it is true that the form of equality is different from visible things.

Socrates explains that the concept, “equality” is an ambiguous term because its object and concept do not have precise definitions, such as two sticks (74b, d-e). While two appear equal, if one is compared with a third stick, they are not equal. The Equal itself” (74c) is represented by recollection and shows that there is a prior knowledge of the Equal itself and proves that the soul must have existed before birth (74d-e). Simmias wants to know if it is true that the soul exists after death and this brings Socrates to combine the argument from recollection with the cyclic argument (from opposites) and explains that reincarnation proves that the existence of the soul is

shown in the Affinity Argument, which proves that the soul only exists in a higher metaphysical realm. The world of the senses is distinct from the world of the forms, and this causes two kinds of existences, which are changing and only in the mind (78c-79a, 80b). The soul exists in the world of the forms while the body is in the world of the senses (79b-e). The soul escapes the world of the senses and enters the world of the forms through philosophy and the pursuit of wisdom. This process from deduction to interpretation is a function of behavior that shows the mind chooses to ascertain what is real for the purpose of self-preservation. The mind cannot know if constant conjunction will occur in all future experiences. Thus, induction is a model that pushes us to use probability in order to understand the nature of change in the present. The past contains the mind's perceptions in total reality but does not contain a purpose in how we think. But since it is supposed that there are items that existed in the past, there is no argument that solidifies the gap between what contents in experience can be proved or disproved as coherent meta-structures that determine the a priori correspondence theory of truth.

An idea must exist between the truth percipient and external world when it is caused by representation-independent facts to which that truth bearer responds since it is generated from possibility and totality. Hasan attributes possibility with justification and instantiation in order to explain the teleological relationships between acquaintance with facts and the design argument, which contains an infinite regress of justification. Noninferential knowledge becomes justified true belief through acquaintance, which does not consist in forming any judgment or thought about it, or in a concept or representation of it (Hasan, 2020, Knowledge by Acquaintance vs. Description, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

The Principle of Induction: Knowledge by Acquaintance and Description

The composition of the soul is different from matter in the world, and Kant thought that this could be given by the intuition. But this opinion does not hold on the grounds of the validity of the past and how it changes our concept of the present. It is clear that the correspondence theory of truth makes sense of the world through description since the quality and quantity of the contents in particular and universal propositions have limits. The words “all” and “no” are contrasted from “some” and “not.”

All existent things that manifest in thought are related to the soul. Since time causes all changes that occur in the mind, such as conceiving space and time, then objects are separate realities from ideas. Consciousness of the evolution of potential forms to actual forms shows that knowing what is true is separate from what does not exist. For example, an acorn becomes an oak tree and has different appearances but remains the same thing despite how phenomena change in reality. This means that there are processes in the mind that know what something is based on what it appears to be, and in terms of its final cause.

Aristotle’s Conception of Substance: The Categories

While a substance refers to a particular “thing,” a universal is a “such” that indicates the nature of the particular thing. There are particular and universal ends, which are subordinate to the end of the universe, or truth. In God, essence and existence are one, but cannot be proven without faith and the use of reason. This makes deduction impossible to use in the ontological argument. There are certain impossibilities that make reality inconceivable unless there is immediate contact with objects.

In the Posterior Analytics, Aristotle’s Third Man states how the senses are the only valid sources for reliable truths. Hasan (2020) thinks that acquaintance is both a nonjudgmental and

nonconceptual form of awareness.³ The British Empiricists thought that things exist only as ideas because sense-data are dependent on perception of the self.⁴ This implies that the contents of the senses create independent relations from consciousness.

Kant's Critique of Pure Reason states that a priori cognitions are representations of objects as they are being perceived in space and time. A priori ideas exist as separate entities from the laws of identity, excluded middle, and contradiction since their unity occurs only if there are combinations of relations that the mind judges the ideas to have. This process is inherently driven and shows that space and time are phenomena that change because of the antinomies, which are cognitions that manifest through the inadequate relations between experience and logic.⁵ Kant's four transcendental ideas implies that phenomena are given, and reason requires the absolute completeness of the conditions of their possibility, in so far as these conditions constitute a series so that there is an absolutely complete synthesis so that a phenomenon can be explained according to the laws of the understanding. This point is significant because it shows that reason is part of unconditioned contexts that cause it to regressively conduct the synthesis of conditions.

Kant's goal is to unite the manifold (relations between objects that exist from intuition) by representing existence in thought by means of pure conceptions of the understanding, without any conditions of sensuous intuition (Kant, Critique, 257). Kant says, "The absolute totality of the series of conditions to a given conditioned is always unconditioned; because beyond it there exist no other conditions." (Critique, 257). Thus, the possibility in relation to the mode in which

³ See Hasan (2020). Judgments, thoughts and concepts are essentially *intentional or representational* in nature since they are *about* or *represent* other things.

⁴ See Russell (1945) *Problems of Philosophy*. Idealism.

⁵ See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. The antinomies stand in relation to the four transcendental ideas, which are the absolute completeness of the composition and division of the given totality of all phenomena. Also, the origination of a phenomenon and the dependence of the existence of what is changeable in a phenomenon.

the unconditioned as the transcendental idea must be investigated. Kant's "antinomy" suggests that universals are denoted by a transcendental concept that describes how particular things share unconditioned attributes. This process is the total of all phenomenon that make the composition of the soul but makes the division of its ideas into pure relations, which are not known without logical classification.

Russell's Theory of Descriptions: On Names

Russell says, "Every complete sentence must contain at least one word which stands for a universal, since all verbs have a meaning which is universal." (Problems, 34). For example, there are ambiguous descriptions that contain the phrase, "a so and so" and definite descriptions that use the phrase, "the so and so." Hence, the collections of particular qualities exist in matter and cause space and time to appear as necessary conditions of existence since they have truth values, but the mind's reality perceives it through reason, which is a problem to understanding totality since there are existential statements that describe the facts about properties which belong to "an" object or "the" person in the description, but do not have one totality that represents all other things in the same class.

Aristotle offers a logical solution to the Problem of Universals as apparently innate ideas. He explains that universals are the characteristics or qualities that ordinary objects or things have in common. He invents four categorical propositions called the universal, particular, affirmative, and negative to show that universal ideas have a teleology. Since universals are expressed by the symbols that connote their usage, they have concrete instantiations to the empirical world that can be seen as assertions in the square of opposition.⁶ Particular ideas are deductions in the soul,

⁶ Bronstein (2019), *Critique of Plato's Theory of Innate Knowledge*. The Aristotelian demonstration is essential to establishing the relationships between first principles and knowledge.

which leads to the universal ideas that are inductions about experience. The evolution of the form occurs when individual attributes become pragmatic identities.

Kant's A priori Structure: Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis

In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant's thesis is that the world has a beginning in time and is also limited in regard to space. Kant thinks that space contains properties that are inclusive of the atomic structure of matter. There are evolving mental processes that show how the self is a constructed object that knows the physical world through the laws of the understanding. This is how the forms evolve in terms of their qualities that are ordered through particular series, namely, how they refer to the boundaries that exist between a priori and a posteriori ideas. John Locke's term 'primary' denotes the first interpretation about the nature of the object through its immediate effects. The senses are responsible for creating the pragmatic virtues concerning the ways that we produce thought through the streams of consciousness. Locke's metaphysics explained that there were various actions of the mind that supported the existence of the primary qualities. But since Hume's theory of the mind put subjectivism at odds with particular cognitive habits, the outcomes of cause could not be shown as being possible because there would always be limits to induction. Since there are particular limits in time and space, the cause of things is inconceivable without an empirical conception. Thus, the antithesis states that the world has no limits in space, but is, in relation both to time and space, infinite. Locke must be right about the nature of matter and Kant helps this idea because laws exist as mental phenomenon when ideas are known a priori. Even if all ideas are falsifiable through scientific testing, it is unclear whether the soul has the relation to the body to put theoretical contents into actual perceptions of experience.

Logic is the atomic representation of linguistic phenomenon that is distributed in time and space while a priori ideas are concepts that balance the particular minds of the individual with relations to the society and universe as a whole. Peirce regarded Hegel's philosophy as changing the path of philosophy from logic to ideas. Absolute knowledge of the whole could exist insofar as existential items had some practical utility within the boundaries of experience. All logical thinking could be understood according to belief and the reasons for science as an enterprise. These truths lead to a brief discussion about Saint Thomas Aquinas's Five Proofs for the Existence of God in order to formulate a context for the acquisition of pragmatic ideas by an appeal to universal doubt.

Aquinas' Five Proofs for God's existence show that a priori truths must have a pragmatic relation to cause. Aristotle's unmoved mover attempts to reconcile certain chains of causes by attributing a first cause with something other than the agent, but this leads to 57 unmoved movers (Russell). Thus, Aquinas aims to solve this surplus in quantity by asserting that all subsequent motions that appear in a series are put in motion by a first cause, God, who causes all things to come into existence and have efficient causes that impact how other things enter the cycle of existence. Thus, God is a necessary being since all things in the world have a fleeting nature that shows something must exist through time.

Four of Aquinas' arguments abide by the Aristotelian Philosophy. The fifth argument about Gradation has Platonic and Kantian connotations because it explains that there are different degrees of complexity, which follow the Great Chain of Being and can be observed when simple creatures evolve into complex species. Aquinas' final argument aims to prove that since all things are part of a series that has a definite order, there is some design and purpose that causes actions to occur, which means that God is an intelligent Being. Thus, ontological truths

are the sound basis for asserting the existence of an a priori soul and mind that exist as contingent beings that become one through the internal relation between induction and expectation. Since theoretical ideas evolve in the contexts of induction, this suggests that the Platonic forms are dependent phenomenon in sensation. This process leads to the acquisition of knowledge through description since words change the truths of propositions. The pragmatist values assertive statements that cause the mind to determine the reality of events in the present.

It is clear that there must be a solid foundation in the body for the development of the forms to occur. This process is dependent on the separation of the mind's beliefs from logical assertions about the totality of existence. Hence, the reality of objective phenomenon cannot equal the collections of subjective phenomena that appear in the evolution of space and time. Therefore, a priori ideas are only known when there is immediate contact with the senses and reference to some form of history that confirms the belief is true. Without an appeal to history, the mind conceives of illusions and imagines that all perception must be separate from the mental processes that occur such as interpretation, enumeration, reasoning, and justification. In other words, "I know nothing" is a statement that Socrates uttered to show that all of reality could exist dependently on the knowledge of experience. Consequently, the unification of the mind and body shows that there is a third and fourth semantic operation that occur after there is awareness and identification with a thing. These actions are denoting names and reference to a class of a thing, which contains possibility, or the capacity to change the conditions.

Peirce and Hegel's Theory of Definitions

Since more than one conclusion can be drawn in an argument, this shows that there are new definitions in a logic of necessary and probable inference that can be used in the logic of relatives to make connections between the premises and conclusion [Peirce, On Hegel, from CP

6.287-90, 1893]. This process entails a formal relationship between the individual, reason, and reality. Plato and Aristotle's terms "form" and "substance" hold as being compatible non-relative terms that make Hegelian concepts such as the "whole" contain existence in the future since coherence is made by understanding how mind precedes matter and evolution follows from chance, law, and habits. Peirce believes that the origin of things must contain an idea of spontaneity in order to exist freely from other things and have a relative reaction with something. In this way, the knowledge of mediation occurs so that the first and second principles are brought into unity.

In order to know if something is true, philosophers such as Descartes, Berkeley, Leibniz, and Kant followed nominalism and declared that 'thought' could indicate 'existence.' The link between 'mind' and 'body' evolved out of the principle that 'one' could become associated with 'many' in the form of the thing itself. For example, there could be no perception of the cogito unless there was a form with extension, namely, a human with two arms and two legs. The Cartesian school aimed to denominate the world of things with a subjective criticism towards its ability to exist independently from the mind. In another case, a table could not have qualities without a mind that labeled it with certain characteristics, such as color, shape, size, and form. These attributes cause a 'judgment' of the thing in the mind, but it is unknown if they contain some physical existence that is separate and unique from the body. The 'corporeal' nature of an inanimate object cannot contain a cognition but the 'meaning' of what it is must only come in the stream of consciousness because there are causal processes between the parts of the mind and totality of the conception of the object when it is immediately presented to the senses.

The form of a form is the cognition of the meaning that defines the idea. For example, suppose I go to a store and want to buy a white table, so I ask the clerk if there are any available

items in the store. My assertion, “I need a table” causes other ideas to appear such as ‘rectangle,’ ‘flat,’ ‘three dimensional,’ and ‘has four legs.’ The clerk recognizes the idea of the table without knowing ‘what’ table it is in reality and makes his path towards possible options. The tables that are in the store will influence his ideas, but while we are both searching for the table that is not ‘that’ one in particular, we arrive at the conclusion that ‘this’ must be the table that I want to buy. Reason shows that in the absence of the thing itself, the mind infers that it must exist because of speech which randomly causes particular ways of seeing it. At the same time, the experiences with past tables bring the mind to understand its disposition based on habit. Thus, the table is essentially an idea in the mind because it does not have an existence separate from our choice. Yet, all tables must only exist for one common purpose which is to read, write, and take part in activities that are universal. In other words, the teleology of a table is constant because it causes only certain habits that do not change due to its limits.

The form is subject to the fallacy of weak induction because mathematics cannot show how linguistic phenomenon come into being. For example, the description of a thing varies according to the intentions of the observer, and this changes the essence which implies that a thing comes into being from cognition.

Boole’s Logic

The concrete relationships between logic and language are separate from a priori cognitions. A priori knowledge occurs because there is a transformation of perception to language, which represents the true nature of the form. In the Aristotelian logic, all the subjects in the categorical proposition are related to the predicate but their existences do not follow non-real things (i.e. imaginary things). Therefore, Peirce followed Boole’s logic since it does not imply the existence of the universals because they do not have existential import. Thus, the three

laws of logic do not contain universal intentions, and this makes the method of science arbitrary. The Boolean standpoint is unreceptive to existence and holds that even when things exist, logic cannot recognize their existence. This suggests that abstract concepts must be used in order to understand the forms.

For example, the subject of any type of thing in the proposition is not classified as 'human' unless there is a name that belongs to the description. That is, determining the substance of a human requires reference to the context in the time that he or she lived in. "Socrates" is "mortal" and "the Greek teacher that believed reminiscence was the source of knowledge." Locke's theory of the identity considers the possibility that because Socrates is not the same man through space and time, this implies that somebody else could occupy his body, such as King Nestor. The Essay Concerning Human Understanding aims to illustrate the reality of ideas based on the notion that the soul is known as being independent from the form of the body. This implies that the categorical proposition must contain some kind of substance that can be distributed external to space and time, such as when we say that "All Greeks are included in the class, 'human' and "Some Greeks are excluded in this class," such as Zeus, since he was a God. Words are the foundations of truth but mislead the mind into believing that there are unitary ways of viewing names that cannot change the truth values of propositions. The names, "Socrates" and "Zeus" must contain the same kind of substance that is used in the predicate so that the contents of the soul do not change according to division and composition.

Peirces' Law

The Phaedo explains that reminiscence is the primary action that causes "mind" to arrive at a priori truths through introspection. Peirce's Law states that there is no actual relation between "A" and "B" unless it is possible that there is a 'non-standard' way of interpreting the

truth functions and values that interprets meaning in the third category as long as it unites the first and second. Thus, it is necessary to show that all classes of the universal concept ‘mind’ are ‘subjects’ in propositions and are denoted as particulars through the rule of implication. The ideas of a priori phenomenon are determined by the logic of discovery. There is a map that classifies the sciences (CP 1.180-202, 1903; see Brent 1987), which is a “ladder-like scheme” (MS 328, p. 20. 1905), that places the superordinate sciences including mathematics and physics above the subordinate sciences like biology and psychology. In this sense, philosophy is the foundation of the ways that we reason to explain how phenomenon are related by existence.

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