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Two views of conceptual realism

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TWO VIEWS OF CONCEPTUAL REALISM

by

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1. The Problem of the Thesis.

The problem of this thesis is to compare critically the major ontological questions which serve to distinguish two outstanding schools of philosophy that represent the realistic development of thought. These two schools which developed nearly two millennia apart are referred to as Platonic Realism and Neo-Realism. However, these schools were related to one another more than in name due to a mutual ontological bias, so that taken together they represent two of the foremost attempts to defend a realistic position.

Although the problems dealt with by each of the realistic schools were neither unique nor original, the answers which these realists gave to these problems contained both uniqueness and originality. Some of these problems related to such matters as ontological extensity, novelty, linguistics, the subordinate position of epistemology, and the nature of error—for each of which distinct explanations are offered by both realistic schools. More precisely, these problems became prominent as a consequence of the latter-day Neo-Realist’s refusal to accept the ontological limitations imposed by the theory of the earlier Platonic realists. In light of this refusal, ontological speculation
stands as a decisive cleavage between the Platonic Realists and the Neo-Realists. Accordingly, the particular theory of ontology held by each of these schools must come under examination for purposes of evaluating their claims. Although Plato believed in the existence of a separate world of Ideas, these Ideas that he believed ought to enjoy existence were selective, generally based upon moral and mathematical qualities of excellence. The Neo-Realists accepted the basic Platonic position concerning a separate existence of Ideas, but found no good reason to limit the extent of such treatment. Moreover, the Neo-Realists believed that the prevailing view of relations among recent logicians would uphold their extension of Plato's original doctrine. For these and other reasons the ontological presuppositions as held by each of the realistic schools must be examined in order that they may be understood. That the problems dealt with by the realists have, in varying forms, been recurrent throughout the history of philosophy lends attention as well as importance to the nature of this thesis as a matter for current investigation.

2. Definitions and Limitations.

The term "realism" is fraught with complexities, thus tending to make its use in modern idiom undesirably loose and ambiguous, unless specifically designated. Hence, in dealing with the present subject, a general description
is first necessary in order to avoid misinterpretation. The description given here applies to those areas of realism that come within the scope of this thesis.

a. **Naive Realism**, often referred to as the belief of the man in the street, expresses the broad, uncritical view that mind can know something other than itself; that this something else is known directly; and, that what is known directly is all that can be known.

b. **Platonic Realism**: the view expressed by Plato asserting a metaphysical dualism, dividing reality into a world of immaterial, permanent, and unchanging Ideas, and a world of physical, transitory, and mutable things. The Ideas are ontologically independent of physical reality. Knowledge for the Platonist is a highly structured, rational process whereby the Ideas are apprehended as the ultimate being.

c. **Neo-Realism** is the view held by a group known as the Six Realists who believed in a metaphysical pluralism, epistemological monism, and a relational theory of consciousness. For the Neo-Realists, the content of knowledge, that which lies in or before the mind when knowledge takes place, is numerically identical with the thing known. Knowledge by intermediaries is not denied, but is made subordinate to direct or presentative knowledge. There is no special class of entities, qualitatively or substantially distinguished from all other entities, as a media of knowledge.¹

¹ Holt *et al.*, NR, 34-35. This and all subsequent footnotes are made by citing the author's name, the initials of the important words of the title, and the page number from which the reference is taken. A complete bibliography appears at the end of the thesis, alphabetically arranged by author.
Critical Realism: a view which arose as a reaction to Neo-Realism and which forwards the belief that physical things exist independently of being known; that they may be our objects, but that they are never our mental content; that they differ in some respects from the quality-groups of our perceptions (e.g. in not possessing the secondary qualities which we find in our percepts); but that they stand in some causal relation to our percepts; that it is possible for science to investigate some of these relations and some of the relations between physical things, and thus gain trustworthy knowledge concerning the laws of their actions.

The terms "realism" and "Realistic" will be used throughout the thesis to refer to the movement or school under consideration; the actual designation will be clear from the context.

The thesis will limit itself generally to the ontological nature of realism, with an account of the epistemological theory subsumed by each school. No attempt will be made to account for the other major philosophical areas of inquiry as they relate to realism, namely, logic, history, ethics, axiology, and aesthetics. No reference will be made to other recent developments or movements that might be called "realistic" in nature, such as the current revival of Thomistic doctrine by Professor Wild and his colleagues who refer to themselves as "realists." A second and more problematic limitation is imposed in treating the modern realistic school as a corporate unity, instead of considering

each author individually. Actually, a variety of writers formed this modern school of realism, and the agreement among them concerning the primary tenets of Neo-Realism was often more apparent than real. This situation was later brought out since serious discrepancies became evident when these writers extended their views beyond a relatively superficial statement. In keeping with such a limitation, the dialogues of Plato and the cooperative volume, *The New Realism*, published by the American realists, will serve as the central statement of their respective views.


The method to be used will be descriptive, comparative, critical, and summary, in that order. The descriptive chapters, II and III, will deal with the basic ontological position of each of the realistic schools, giving attention to the important tenets of each school such that these may later be pinpointed for a more detailed treatment. The fourth chapter attempts to show the outstanding similarities and dissimilarities which arise in both views of conceptual realism, pointing out where the implications arising from these differences become the basis for important issues. Chapter V directs itself to the task of examining the adequacy of the realistic position in terms of both the internal structure of each school and of their mutual reliance upon an extra world of universals. The principle of possi-
bility offered by the modern realists as a modification to the more restricted ontology of early, Platonic realism is reviewed with attention given to the important objections created by such an explanation. Finally, the conclusions of the thesis are briefly summarized.

This method, it is believed, offers sufficient scope to the questions raised by conceptual realism to allow a critical appraisal based upon documented material. The emphasis, however, is given over to some of the more important qualifying conditions which tend to limit the application and value of conceptual realism. In the last analysis, the thesis is designed to highlight these qualifying conditions.
CHAPTER II

PLATO'S DOCTRINE OF IDEAS

1. The Basic Doctrine.

The impact of Plato's teachings upon modern thought is perhaps best summarized by Whitehead in the vivid and often quoted statement that "European philosophical tradition ... consists of a series of footnotes to Plato." Armed with this generalization, one may venture to say further that the doctrine of Ideas lies at the heart of every dialogue which Plato wrote and has, therefore, had major influence. This influence, however, itself requires much footnoting. Plato's many critics have supplied these footnotes in abundance, and have, with certain qualifications, treated the doctrine of Ideas as the central point of departure to all other elements of his philosophy: mathematical, ethical, political, aesthetic, epistemological, and metaphysical. It is with the last of these, the ontological aspect, that this chapter will deal.

Historically speaking, the germ of the theory of Ideas had been expressed long before the writing of the dialogues. On the one hand, the view was already popular that nothing in the universe was abiding; everything was in a state of flux. Reality was spoken of by Heraclitus as being like a

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1. Whitehead, PR, 63.
river which constantly flows, never ceasing in its movement. One "could not step twice in the same rivers; for other and yet other waters are ever flowing on." ¹ On the other hand, the contrary of this view was expressed by Parmenides with equal vigor and certitude, according to which fixity of being was the ultimate category in the universe. Change on this view was an illusion since real being is incapable of differentiation. These antinomous views, each claiming to express the most fundamental truth about reality, continued to influence, if not dominate, early Greek thought, until the advent of Plato.

When faced with the problem of deciding which, if either, or both, of these opposing views best explained reality,² Plato found what he believed a satisfactory answer through seizing, as it were, both horns of the dilemma. Beginning with the universe as a whole, Plato "bifurcates the universe into two departments. The first is a flux of change, Heracleitus's world; the second a changeless reality, Parmenides's."³ Broadly speaking, Plato conceived of the Heraclitean explanation as sufficient to understand the nature of phenomenal experience, yet the Parmenidean explanation was both necessary and sufficient to discern the identically recurring characteristics peculiar to conceptual ex-

¹. Nahm, SEGP, 91.
². Taylor, PMW, 352.
³. Joad, GTP, 271.
perience. It is this second explanation, this changeless reality, which becomes the basis for the Platonic doctrine of Ideas; a world, moreover, which is membered by these very Ideas or Forms.¹

This world of Ideas, Plato tells us, is where there abides all true being with which Knowledge is concerned;² a world that is membered by Ideas which are colorless, formless, intangible essences visible only to the mind.³ Justice, beauty, good, greatness, and "the essence or true nature of everything" abide in this world—all pure and absolute in their being.⁴ Plato defines these essences as "always what they are, having the same simple self existent and unchanging Forms, not admitting of variation at all, or in any way, or at any time."⁵ They are, "as it were, patterns fixed in nature, and other things are like them, and resemblances of them."⁶ On at least one occasion, Plato assumes that there exists a "single essential nature or Form for every set of things which we call by the same name,"⁷ yet on another occasion, he denies that there are Forms corresponding to such vile things as hair, mud, and dirt.⁸ Upon the basis of this

¹. Shorey, PAM, 99. "In Plato ... idea and form are synonyms."
³. Ibid.
⁴. Jowett, DOP, II, 204 (Phaedo 65).
⁵. Jowett, DOP, II, 221 (Phaedo 78).
⁶. Jowett, DOP, IV, 52 (Parmenides 132).
⁷. Cornford, RP, 325 (Republic 596). References to Plato's The Republic will be taken from this work; all other references will be taken from the Jowett translations.
⁸. Jowett, DOP, IV, 49 (Parmenides 130).
partial description an ontology evolved which has persisted to the present day, both in several modified versions, and in Plato's original presentation. To give an adequate account of this ontology, and hence a more complete understanding of the Platonic doctrine, it is important to make clear even further those characteristics by which the Ideas may be identified.

First among such characteristics which may be ascribed to the Ideas is the notion of abstractness, or incorporeality.¹ On Plato's view the Forms are not physical objects, rather, the "Forms are objects of thought."² Because these Ideas "transcend time and are not in space"³ this feature is a property common to all the Ideas. The abstract feature here incontrovertibly sets the Ideas apart from any particular exemplification of them. Any spoken language is to a large extent based upon the persistent meaning which these abstract terms express. The properties designated by such terms as "justice," "beauty," and "good" are but three examples of this incorporeal being. Yet incorporeality does not imply not having a reality. The Ideas are quite real and are, in fact, always considered to be more real than the particulars in which they manifest themselves,⁴ and upon which particulars are dependent for their form. It becomes evident that because of the

¹ Windelband, HP, 117-118.
² Cornford, RP, 218 (Republic 507).
³ Ross, PTI, 232.
⁴ Demos, POP, 178. Also see: Burnet, Pla., 41.
dependence of the particular upon the Idea, some sort of interaction between the two must take place. This interaction will be treated more fully later, but for the present it is of critical importance never to confuse the abstract character of the Ideas with the concrete character of phenomenal entities. For example,

take blueness. Blueness as conceived is one thing, and blueness as perceived is another; the perceived blueness varies with each perception, but the conceived blueness remains the same. The perceived quality is not only unique, it is also impure; the blue of the water is mixed with other colors. Moreover, the embodied quality falls short of the quality as conceived. The ideal line is completely straight; the actual line never. Thus universals may be called abstractions, if the word abstraction be used neutrally, without derogation as to realness.

From such a view, any attempt at a phenomenalistic or physicalistic account of the Ideas would be entirely contrary to the spirit of Plato’s intention. Whether or not Plato fully escapes this indictment will be brought out later; however, in keeping with the intended meaning of the Ideas in terms of their intrinsic nature, it may be said that particular space-time objects are but clue-givers to this nature. No less important to understand is that the Ideas help structure, so to speak, our interpretation of such objects, and thus provide a kind of ideational or ontological cement for our physicalistic bricks.

Another characteristic which may be predicated of each participating member of the Realm of Ideas is that of

1. Demos, POP, 179.
individualization, whereby each Idea may be thought of as a distinct, unique individual.¹ Plato tells us that there exists a "single essential nature or Form for every set of things which we call by the same name."² Moreover, if the Ideas have this characteristic, then they are to be "taken in self-identity, in isolation, ἔναρσις. The one has no parts, and the exclusion of the parts is found to shut out all predicates that imply multiplicity, space, time, or number."³ The Idea according to such a feature bears with it a notion of "selfhood" whereby it has an intrinsic content,⁴ and it is due to this intrinsic character that one may go a step further to say that the Ideas function as things-in-themselves. Both the self-identical and separate aspects ascribed to the Ideas invoke, then, an individuating character necessary to understand them properly. Yet an ambivalence is involved here, for such an understanding does not mean in vacuo. "Each Form in itself is one; but they manifest themselves in a great variety of combinations, with actions, with material things, and with one another."⁵ However, even when the "Forms commune with one another ... each Form is one. Communion is not fusion; in their mutual interrelations, the Forms preserve their self-identity."⁶

¹. Stewart, PDI, 112-113.
². Cornford, RP, 325 (Republic 596), italics mine.
³. Shorey, WPS, 292.
⁴. Demos, POP, 191.
⁵. Cornford, RP, 183 (Republic 476).
⁶. Demos, POP, 191.
A third characteristic important in a description of the Ideas is that of eternity. This reference is to that of *in perpetuum*, meaning that the Ideas are eternal in that they transcend time and, as a corollary, last throughout it. The Ideas which Plato designated as timeless more often than not were class concepts which, while having members or instances, were never completely exhibited in their space-time counterpart. This becomes increasingly apparent when speaking of perishables, for "it is certain that at no time would Plato have said that there is a separate Idea answering to each perishable individual."¹ Subsumed under this reference is a further descriptive quality: changelessness. The Idea retains its selfhood because of its individual quality, but does so without changing in any way. "A beautiful face changes, but Beauty itself is unchangeable. If it were not unchangeable, we could not think it, or give it a name."² In short, Ideas are not subject to the laws of time and of change as are phenomena; they are eternal and changeless.

Due in part to their abstract character and in part to the timelessness of the Ideas, latter day critics of Plato began referring to the Ideas as *universals*. Not only does the term "universal" satisfy the descriptive meaning of a distinct class of entities,³ but further aids in making

¹. Ross, PTI, 170.
². Stewart, PDI, 38.
³. Ross, PTI, 225.
clear one's meaning when alluding to the complementary, but distinct, Realm of Particulars. In this second sense, the universals are both descriptive of particulars and serve as principles "by virtue of which the actual world is criticized and evaluated; thus a universal is prescriptive of particulars." It is to be seen, then, that the Ideas have a dual function: they are both classes and characteristics. This may be illustrated when invoking the notion that two plus two make four. Not only may this notion be prescriptive in that it characterizes certain pairs of particulars; but, too, it retains as autonomy, a "selfhood" as a universal, which allows us to "perceive from the nature of the system of numbers this must be so; and what is true of '2 and 2 make 4' is true of the most advanced mathematical propositions."

To summarize those important features that may be attributed to the Ideas: "the essence of the theory of Ideas lay ... in the recognition of the fact that there is a class of entities, for which the best name is probably 'universals', that are entirely different from sensible things." And since the Realm of Ideas was, according to Plato, unaffected by transitory and mutable things, or by becoming, the Ideas themselves may best be characterized as "eternal and immut-

1. Demos, POP, 177.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 117.
5. Ibid., 117.
able, present always and everywhere, self-identical, self-existent, absolute, separate, simple, without beginning or end, 1 denoted by a significant universal term. 2

2. Membership in the Realm of Ideas.

In attempting to specify precisely what entities on Plato's view were recognized as Ideas and those which were not, one is faced with the evolutionary character of Plato's writings. 3 Inconveniently, for his readers, Plato made no record or listing of precisely those Ideas which he held to be necessary to his system—to do so would have been out of character with his considered intent as a philosopher. Nor, we are told, "is there in the dialogues any intimation that he had attempted to announce a definite criterion for the selection of those class-concepts that were to be regarded as Ideas." 4 Moreover, one discovers that it is not the case that even the examples which he adduces permit such a principle to be recognized; we can only say that it seems as if in the course of time he continually emphasized more strongly the attributes expressing worth (as in the good and the beautiful), the mathematical

1. Fuller, HP, I, 130.
2. Taylor, PI, 34.
3. It is important to mention that the evolutionary character of Plato's writings brought about a shift of emphasis with respect to the Ideas which he recognized, and not a rejection of such Ideas. One critic points to this in saying that "there is no real evidence that there was a later theory of Ideas in which Plato denied the existence of Ideas which he had earlier recognized." See Ross, PTI, 175.
4. Windelband, HP, 121.
relations (greatness and smallness, numerical determinations, etc.), and the types of species in the organic world.

Despite the vagueness suggested in Plato's method by this passage, there are certain classes, or categories, of Ideas which best incorporate the vast body of Ideas about which Plato wrote. Three general categories stand out: Ideas of qualities and relations, Ideas of negative notions, and Ideas of sensible objects.  

1. Ideas of Qualities and Relations.

The evidence present in the dialogues gives overwhelming testimony to the fact that qualities and relations make up a considerable portion of the Realm of Ideas. To substantiate this in part, one need only to recall that the dialectical technique used by Plato directs itself to a definitive description of certain mathematical or moral qualities in many, if not most, of the dialogues. The cardinal virtues mentioned in The Republic are a case in point. A general rule which governs the area of both mathematical and moral qualities may be stated: there is "a Form for each of the qualities which may be possessed of a number of things in common."  

This may suggest that the Ideas, rather than having a "simple" character, try to support a complexity beyond their

1. Windelband, HP, 121.
2. Such a division is not arbitrary. Ritter, for example, classifies the Ideas as logical categories, concepts of moral and aesthetic qualities, concepts of concrete objects.
3. Joad, GTP, 281.
means to do so. Such is misleading. That an Idea may coalesce with other Ideas, that is to say, "commune" or interrelate with other Ideas, is patent without becoming or fusing with that Idea, or complex of Ideas, to which it is related. ¹ Thus it is admissible to conceive of certain Ideas in a relational complex, or bound by some compound relational characteristic, since ultimately the terms of the relation, or complex, would be quality Ideas. The Idea of Sunhood may designate the compound relational characteristic of yellow-round-bright-hot, but such a characteristic is amenable to a partial reduction, at least to the extent that the terms "yellow," "round," "bright," and "hot" describe its simple qualities. In such a case the ultimate terms so treated may be considered as "simples." From this view it is suggested that simples form a strong basis in determining the number of Ideas which would populate Plato's Realm. Just how many such simples there are, however, is yet to be discovered.

Whereas it may be impracticable to circumscribe arbitrarily, and thus limit the possible Ideas of qualities that may justly be recognized under Plato's view, a listing of such Ideas of qualities could not be extended indefinitely for at least two reasons. The first of these becomes evident if one accepts Windelband's conjecture that Plato seemed to restrict through emphasis the designation of those Ideas expressing attributes of worth. The second: the point at which Ideas of

¹ Demos, POP, 191.
qualities end and Ideas of relations begin is at best vague. As one finds in reading the Phaedo, the Ideas of equality and inequality are primary examples of Ideas that may be called relative.¹ These and others, such as sameness and difference, must be admitted to membership in the Realm; and this inclusion not only introduces additional constituents, thus increasing the population of the Realm, but further serves to suggest a distinct class of Ideas, namely, that of purely relative terms of which Plato "seems never to have denied the existence."²

11. Ideas of Negative Notions.

A second and considerably more complex category of Ideas is encountered when dealing with negative notions. Under this category many distinct views worthy of mention have been advanced by the critics, particularly those by Ross. The first of these views is that "not-being (which is identified with difference) is a genuine Form, indeed one of the greatest Forms."³ At once several possible interpretations arise concerning this view, none of which find conclusive support in the dialogues. It is possible, on the one hand, to say that "purely negative terms like 'not-beautiful,' 'not good' stand for specific Ideas embraced under the generic Idea of not-being or difference."⁴

¹ Jowett, DOP, II, 215-217 (Phaedo 74, 75).
² Ross, PTI, 281.
³ Ibid., 168.
⁴ Ibid.
On the other hand, it is quite possible to interpret the idea of not-being, or difference, as being "parcelled out among all individual things that are not beautiful or are not good."\(^1\) Perhaps some combination or synthesis of the two interpretations just mentioned might better describe the intended meaning of the original view, since the Ideas function both as classes and characteristics. Nevertheless, the important qualifying conditions of abstractness, individuation, and eternity must, by earlier definition, be exhibited in the interpretation that seems most accurate. When several interpretations fulfill these criteria, it then remains to support each competing view by documentation and exhaustive interrelation with corollary views. Both of the above interpretations fulfill the necessary criteria with regard to eternity and abstraction, but only through a synthesis of these interpretations is the requirement of individuation satisfied.

The second of these views about negative notions expresses the belief that "there are terms negative in form but in fact have a positive as well as a negative meaning."\(^2\) Here Ross believes that because Plato refers to such terms as "the Idea of Impiety" and the "Idea of Injustice," ipso facto Plato was committed to believe in the existence of such Ideas. Moreover, argued Ross, "such words clearly stand

1. Ross, PTI, 168.
2. Ibid.
not only for the absence of a quality—since not everything that is not just is unjust—but also for the presence of another positive quality."¹ Were this view to be extended, it would in effect seem to commit Plato to the position of saying essentially that the contraries of all the qualities and all relations are admissible for membership within the Realm of Ideas. Although documentation is not available to support this view, such an hypothetical extension again raises the questions: (1) do logical considerations determine the boundaries of the ontological system, and (2) how is this view affected by the evolving character of Plato's thought?

The last view mentioned by Ross states that "there are terms not negative in form, but definitely suggesting the absence of some desireable quality—terms such as 'sickness,' 'evil,' 'ugly.'"² Whatever else may or may not be said about this view, the Ideas which it describes answer to two of the necessary criteria of qualification, namely, abstractness and individuation. By implication, eternality may also be added. Further support for this view may be taken from a passage in the dialogues which is definitive and precise; for in The Republic Socrates says

that since beauty and ugliness are opposite, they are two things; and consequently each of them is one. The same holds of justice and injustice, good and bad, and all the essential Forms."³

1. Ross, PTI, 168.
2. Ibid.
3. Cornford, RP, 183 (Republic 476).
This passage would leave small doubt as to the recognition made by Plato of many essential Forms, negative in quality, each of which was distinct. Despite this recognition, the reader is again faced with a question as to the extent to which this treatment may be carried, since the term "essential" carries some special, but not explicit, meaning which would have an important bearing in answering such a question.

A possible answer to the question of extent and to yet a second question which is the complement to it lies within the frame of epistemology. This second question arises with respect to what significant meaning, if any, may be given to "that which completely is not," namely, anything which might be classed as non-being? This question presents a rather formidable problem that may be stated in the following way:

Plato himself has told us that all knowledge is of, and is directed upon, something; that we cannot in fact know nothing; that which is not must, therefore, presumably have some sort of being, in order that we may be able to speak of it significantly at all.¹

The importance of such questioning becomes even more evident when trying to conceive of the description Plato might have given of such contradictory entities as square circles, or, improbable entities, such as ghosts. A solution to this problem, although a controversial one, for sake of consistency is one which derives its force from epistemology, namely, that

¹. Joad, GTP, 281.
when Plato talked of the world of non-being, of that which completely is not, what he in fact meant was that which has no discernible qualities or properties, and cannot therefore be an object for the mind's knowledge.  

This view would suggest a kind of existence without adding further predication; in such a case existence would be sheer and primitive. And if we are to start somewhere in an ontology set in the Platonic framework, the question of thatness seems more fundamental than that of whatness, in that the Ideas are the sine qua non of all that is or is not. Although such Ideas may spill over from a Parmenidean world into the Heraclitean world of changing things (in a relation that is described by Plato as "manifestation"), such a relation does not prejudice their ontological priority from a Platonic point of view.

iii. Ideas of Sensible Objects.

A third category of Ideas, quite unlike the other two, is next met in treating of the populated Realm. The point of departure here is more a matter of emphasis, since the criteria of Ideas, qua Ideas, are still met. The unlikeness comes in the nature of the sensible objects which participate in the Ideas. Here the time-space objects in which the Ideas manifest themselves are of necessity phenomenal, rather than purely ideational as might be the case with qualities, their relations, and negative notions; now the subject matter of the Idea is found only in the world of existent things. In both

1. Joaδ, GTP, 281.
the Cratylus and The Republic, for example, Plato refers to entities that may by rights be termed "artifacts." These entities draw upon the Ideas for the possibility of their existence, however fleeting and subject to change. The bed, table, auger, and shuttle are specifically recognized. These certainly do not exhaust the references, nor could they from the standpoint of consistency; all physical entities must have their counterparts among the Ideas which are expressed by class terms.

In connection with this matter there arises the speculative possibility of creating entities of such complexity, as the UNIVAC for example, that the Realm of Ideas would be strained to produce a likely counterpart. This is the problem of novelty. The problem is a serious one for Plato since, depending upon interpretation, novel phenomena must be explained either by complex Ideas, that is, by complex relational characteristics such as UNIVAC, or by simple Ideas, such as redness; or yet some, more involved combination of these. In as much as it would restrict the explanatory value of the theory of

1. Ritter, EPP, 159.
2. Demos, POP, 172. "Every entity enters into a relationship with the totality of the forms, accepting some and rejecting the rest, except for the categories which accept all the forms. The relationship of entities with forms constitutes complexes .... Everything that is real enters into some complex or other; and the complexes, in their totality, exhaust the real. The terms in a complex are held together or separated by the categories. Thus, a complex consists (a) of terms, which may be forms alone, or forms and things, (b) related together positively or negatively, (c) through the intermediation of the categories operating as causes of the relatedness."
Ideas to conceive of them as being a limited set of complex Ideas, the alternative interpretation regarding simple Ideas bears an explanatory value which is superior with respect to accounting for novelty. But what is purchased with novelty is paid for with extensity. For at this point one is led to say that whenever two or three data of sense are gathered together under a common name, there is a Form present also. Hence there must be as many Forms as there are possibilities of grouping things under headings and applying to them a common term.

On the one hand, any attempt to circumscribe membership of simple Ideas would seem to fail; but, on the other hand, there is no conclusive evidence in Plato's writings as to where, if at all, boundaries should be set. It remained for the 20th century realists to remove all boundaries.

3. The Relation of Universals to Particulars.

Corollary to the subject of simple Ideas is the vital question as to how such Ideas enter into relation with space-time objects. The question is one of the most difficult for Plato, since to say that the Ideas are abstract, eternal, and changeless seems to preclude their presence in space-time objects which are patently characterized by concreteness, transitivity, and mutation. The relation, if there were one, would seem to be that of mutual exclusiveness. This, however, is not so. The explanation which Plato in fact gives seems to 1. Fuller, HP, I, 131.
be aimed at an ambivalence in that the "forms are immanent in things and also transcend them,"¹ the latter being a matter of definition since the Ideas are characterized by their transcendence.² On the other hand, "the doctrine of the immanence of the forms is hard to reconcile with the doctrine of the absoluteness of the forms,"³ since this violates the terms of the definition of the Idea.

To explain the doctrine of immanence several accounts have been offered. Foremost among these, both in publicity and in importance, is the theory of participation. This theory may be stated in either of two ways: first, "that individual things but partake of the universal essence of the Idea;"⁴ second, the Ideas manifest themselves in the particulars.⁵ Critics often seek to explain this theory to be one of causal connection, suggesting that the Ideas are formal causes of the essence of things,⁶ which is to say that "the sensible world owes its being to the presence in it of the Forms."⁷

Besides the causal theory, two major attempts by Plato to explain participation are outstanding. The first of these occurs in The Republic when a somewhat metaphorical

1. Demos, POP, 182.
2. Ibid., 21.
3. Ibid., 184.
4. Windelband, HP, 120.
5. Taylor, PI, 35.
7. Joad, GTP, 279.
description is given of the way in which the particular partakes of the universal. In his discussion of the Divided Line Socrates suggests that actual things have a relation to their Form-counterpart which is of the same sort that the shadows on the walls, and the images in the water, have with their actual visible figures. This relationship may be described as "reflection," "representation," or "substitutivity." But in each case the relationship is only partly descriptive in the same way that any analogy only suggests and never defines. Nor can the analogies be pressed, since the figures of speech that would result would be of a phenomenal or physicalistic nature, and thus fail at the very point at which an ontological rather than an epistemic explanation was needed. Hence, the problem is not met with satisfaction; namely, to describe adequately, or define, the mediate relation between the Idea and the particular.

In the Parmenides a more extended treatment of participation is offered; however, in the actual attempt at clarification there is a further lapse into analogy. This time Socrates is saying:

In my opinion, the ideas are, as it were, patterns fixed in nature, and other things are like them, and resemblances of them—what is meant by the participation of other things in the ideas, is really assimilation to them.  

2. Jowett, DOP, IV, 52 (Parmenides 132).
3. Ibid.
Here again the relationship between the universal and the particular, described as "patterning," implies a copy or imitation, but does not account for the actual linking process. The problem then is to state clearly just exactly how any or all beds, for example, participate in the Idea of Bedness, or how the beds are patterned by Bedness--at the ontologic level. To attempt an answer to this by way of epistemology exclusively would beg the original question. Sponsored in part by this dilemma, the debate which has ranged through the centuries has, paradoxically, like the whirlwind, a lacuna at its center. The problem is real enough; but it is questionable whether Plato's answers, if they may be so called, did much more than create the storm. ¹

4. Plato's Ontology.

In his description of the Ideas, there arises the question as to which of the several types of being Plato used as a jumping off point. And although it is clear that Plato granted precedence to the Ideas, there is much in favor of the view that his method was empirical.² The most forceful reason for saying this is that of all the Ideas mentioned in the dialogues, none can be found which do not

¹. Ritter, EFP, 226. "How this participation or this being affected is to be understood, what the relation of the Idea to the sensible objects or to the content of the ideation process is, remains inexplicable for Plato, i.e., he does not know how to substantiate it any further, nor how to deduce it from anything else."

². Demos, POP, 18.
somehow have a counterpart "in the given, from the actual world, from 'this which is called the universe.""¹ This is at once a critical point in Platonic procedure since the description of the Ideas comes to depend largely upon perceptual acquaintance. The dynamic aspect of this procedure is even more challenging because after perceptual acquaintance has functioned to illustrate the nature of a transitory and mutable reality, this acquaintance then serves as the basis for a description of the persistent characteristics of things, that is, the Ideas.

Granting, for sake of argument, this empirical procedure in conceiving of the Ideas to correspond in some sense to the particulars or their exemplifications, the next step is to justify what has been conceived. Further evidence for the empirical nature of Plato's method is seen by way of the proofs, so called, for the transcendence of the Ideas in that such proofs are epistemological in nature. The allegory of the cave is typical. The function of "verification" of the Ideas proceeds all too often from analogy, and aside from certain mystical indulgences² remain centered about the Realm of Particulars. Thus a two-way empirical method is employed: the first is in his initial description in that Plato adduces the Ideas from what may be called their empirical or existential counterparts; second, in support of the Ideas he argues for

¹. Demos, POP, 18.
². Such as in the Meno with reference to the theory of the soul.
their ontological priority by using examples from empiricism. "In this it becomes evident how closely logic for him is bound up in ontology and epistemology." ¹

But the logico-metaphysical interest which Plato grafted upon the Socratic doctrine of knowledge carried him far beyond the master as regards the content of this doctrine. The general characteristics which he developed for the essence of the Ideas applied to all class-concepts, and the immaterial world was therefore peopled with the archetypes of the entire world of experience. ... In so far criticism was right in saying that Plato's world of Ideas was the world of perception thought over again in conception.²

A final general statement concerning Plato's ontology must be considered. Although the Ideas maintain an undisputed precedence in Plato's ontology, such a precedence is seen in relation to the phenomenal world. Yet ultimate priority must be given to another ontologic level, namely, that of Being, qua Being. This may be seen since all the Ideas have or share Being. Plato argued that since being is an attribute of the forms, it is something other than they. The forms are exemplifications of being—in fact, its completest exemplifications; but they are not being itself. Now since the notion of being is prior to that of the forms, Plato's philosophy cannot be summed up in the theory of the forms. The realm of the forms occupies a subordinate position in the metaphysical situation, and is a derivative of being .... In studying the forms we are concerning ourselves with the real but not with the ultimate. Being is beyond any one of its exemplifications; therefore any doctrine which defines being in terms of specific being, be it process or form, is inadequate.³

¹. Ritter, EPP, 253.
². Windelband, HP, 121.
³. Demos, POP, 135-136; Jowett, DOP, IV, 246 (Theaetetus 186), "Being or essence ... of all our notions is the most universal." For a discussion of universal classes see also: Jowett, DOP, IV, 386 (Sophist 253).
Then for sake of gaining a cross-section picture of the Realm, it is to be seen that there are three primary levels of existence implicit in Plato's ontology: Being as such, Ideas or Forms, and phenomena. To omit any one of these in a description of Plato's view would do violence to his ontology. This is particularly so since Plato's arguments in defense of one ontologic level cut across, and draw support from, the other two levels. Thus to see the broad scope of Plato's position the acceptance of each of the above levels is vital. To gain recognition of the dimensions circumscribed by the Realm of Ideas as part of the total ontologic picture, both Being and phenomena must share the mutual relation as major complements of the Ideas. Taken collective, Being, The Ideas, and phenomena exhaust the content of the Platonic universe.¹

¹. Strictly speaking, the demiurge constitutes a separate category distinct from any of these three. The demiurge served a cosmological function (a world-forming god), one which ordered the chaotic universe under the telic guide of the Ideas.
CHAPTER III.

NEO-REALISM

1. The Realistic Polemic.

The American Neo-Realistic movement that emerged in 1912 with the publication of a co-operative volume entitled The New Realism, had its genesis as a reaction both to Josiah Royce's idealism and to the subjectivism that had penetrated so deeply into philosophic thought since the time of Locke.\(^1\) As a reaction the early phase of Neo-Realism was polemical,\(^2\) seeking to show the weaknesses of Roycean idealism and of subjectivism rather than present any positive program of its own. Since most of the six Neo-Realists\(^3\) who comprised this movement had been at one time under the tutelage of William James, the tenor of their argument often followed the same pattern as that which James voiced in the now-famous debates that took place between himself and Royce. Indeed, the Neo-Realistic movement has been spoken of as the god-child of James's radical empiricism,\(^4\) since the Neo-Realists applauded James's attack on Royce's views.

The dissatisfactions the Neo-Realists found with idealisms generally concerned the epistemological aspect "according to which the world in which we live is conceived

\(^1\) Werkmeister, PIA, 372.
\(^2\) Holt et al., NR, 11.
\(^4\) Werkmeister, PIA, 371.
as a product fashioned by consciousness from the raw materials of its own states."¹ One result of such dissatisfaction was to commit the Neo-Realists to defend a positive view in contradistinction to those which they attacked. From this early defense such a view soon appeared in an article entitled "The Program and First Platform of the New Realists,"² published in 1910, in which was set forth a definitive outline of the new movement. But the reactionary character of the movement which began as an attack upon Roycean idealism continued as a polemic until the Neo-Realistic position came to appear most clearly "in its relations with 'naïve realism,' 'dualism,' and 'subjectivism.'"³ It was the express purpose of the six realists not only to criticize these doctrines, but, moreover, "to profit by the errors as well as the discoveries for which the doctrines have been responsible."⁴

Their main objection to naïve realism, the Neo-Realists urged, was that this doctrine made "no distinction between seeming and being; things are just what they seem,"⁵ that is, the world outside the mind, or consciousness, is thought of just as it appears to be. Such a theory was called a "searchlight" theory since "consciousness is thought of as analogous to a light which shines out through the

¹. Montague, Art. (1912), 251.
². Printed in Jour. Phil., 7 (1910), 393-401.
³. Holt et al., NR, 2.
⁴. Ibid.
⁵. Ibid.
sense organs, illuminating the world outside the knower."¹ According to such a theory, the Neo-Realists argued, "there was no such thing as error,"² as in the case of the seemingly bent stick partially immersed in water, or the seemingly convergent railroad tracks. In short, naïve realism failed to account for aberrations in perception because that which is perceived depends not only upon the nature of the object, but on the medium through which its energies have passed on their way to our organism; and also upon the condition of our sense organs and brain.³

The objection to this second doctrine, namely to dualism, "which is exemplified in the philosophies of Descartes and Locke, was that the mind never perceives anything external to itself. It perceives only its own ideas or states."⁴ This theory of perception the Neo-Realists called the "picture" theory since consciousness may be thought of "as a painter's canvas or a photographic plate on which objects in themselves imperceptible are represented."⁵ However well such a theory may account for error and illusion, said the Neo-Realists, it "appears to account for nothing else."⁶ The real object was forever lost to discovery.

Finally, the doctrines of subjectivists like Berkeley came under violent attack since they, according to the

1. Holt et al., NR, 2.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 4.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 5.
Neo-Realists' account, sought to maintain that "there can be no object without a subject, no existence without a consciousness of it." The Neo-Realists leveled their heaviest verbal artillery on the Berkeleian form of subjectivism, charging that Berkeley refused to recognize

(1) that the relations between ideas or the order in which they are given us, and (2) the other minds that are known, are quite as relative to the knower as are the primary and secondary qualities for the physical world.

Furthermore, Berkeley's intuitional argument (esse est percipi) commits what the Neo-Realists call the fallacy of psychophysical metonomy; a charge that took essentially the same form as G.E. Moore's. The intuitional argument has two forms:

The first consists of a confused identification of a truism and an absurdity. The truism: We can only know that objects exist when they are known. The absurdity: We know that objects can only exist when they are known. The second form of the argument derives its force from a play upon the word 'idea', as follows: Every 'idea' (meaning a mental process or state) is incapable of existing apart from a mind; every known entity is an 'idea' (meaning an object of thought); therefore, every known entity is incapable of existing apart from a mind. It is to the failure to perceive these fallacies that idealism owes its supposed axiomatic character.

The upshot of Berkeley's position, the Neo-Realists point out, commits him to either a solipsism or a complete relativism. This is to say, subjectivism holds that either the individual and his ideas are the only existing enti-

1. Holt et al., NR, 5.
2. Ibid., 6.
ties in the universe; or, that knowledge is completely relative to the knowing mind, and varies from one individual to another. Both alternatives are immediately rejected by the Neo-Realists as being either unintelligible or fruitless. Thus an escape from subjectivism on the one hand, and on the other hand "the formation of an alternative that shall be both remedial and positively fruitful, constitutes the central preeminent issue for any realistic protagonist." 1


"The grounds upon which realism rejects subjectivism determines to some extent the superstructure which is to be reared in its place." 2 And with respect to the constructive side of the Neo-Realistic thesis, the theory of cognition is fundamental. In a theory of cognition, however, "if there is going to be knowledge, there must be something there to be known, and something there to know; 'there' meaning the field in which the relations obtain." 3 The knower and the known cannot be analyzed separately; "they must be brought into one field of study, and observed in their mutual transactions." 4 But this is not to say that the transaction determines the nature of the known,

1. Holt et al., NR, 10.
2. Ibid., 31.
3. Ibid., 34.
4. Ibid.
rather, the Neo-Realist "believes that he thus discovers that the interaction in question is not responsible for the characters of the thing known."¹ Two reasons can be given for this: first, "being known" implies a pre-existing something to be known; second, the knower and the known are for the most part undisturbed when knowing takes place.² This description of the knowing relation refers to the theory of independence, a primary doctrine in the Neo-Realistic thesis. More precisely, this theory means that the entities existing in the so-called external world are independent of, not to be correlated with, unaffected by, and are free from influence by the knower when the knowing relation takes place. "The being and the nature of these entities are in no sense conditioned by their being known."³

A second tenet essential to a constructive Neo-Realistic thesis is that all knowledge is presentative or direct.⁴ This is the doctrine called epistemological monism, asserting that experience is a single phenomenon, possessing the neutrality of being interpretable either from the standpoint of mind or matter. Matter is not regarded as more fundamental than mind, nor is mind, on the other hand, considered prior to matter. In stuff experience is neither physical nor mental. Its character as material or psychical depends not upon its inherent nature, but upon the relations which it bears to the contexts of experience at large.⁵

¹ Holt et al., NR, 34.
² Ibid.
³ Holt, Art.(1910), 394.
⁴ Holt et al., NR, 35.
⁵ Evans, NROR, 117.
At the onset this thesis rejects the dualistic notion that
the mind and its object are numerically distinct in the act
of knowing. When consciousness is had of things, these "be-
come themselves the content of consciousness."\(^1\) This is to
say, "that which lies before the mind when knowledge takes
place, is numerically identical with the thing known."\(^2\)
This doctrine is quite compatible with a theory of independ-
ence, since according to such a theory the mind may or may
not mediate knowledge of the thing itself; but since it is
the case that knowledge is not mediated, the Neo-Realists
contend, then in the cognitive relationship the independent
entity which becomes known in consciousness is in fact part
of the perceiver's consciousness in a one-to-one relation.
This explanation, the Neo-Realists believe, best describes
the relational aspect of the known.

The third feature of the Neo-Realistic thesis is one
vitaly related to the other two. This is that "the world
is of an articulate structure ... consisting of complexes,
like bodies, persons and societies, as well as simples."\(^3\)
These simples are the constituents of the world that take
the form of sensible qualities and of logical constants.
"Both enter into the tissue of fact."\(^4\) The Neo-Realist,
however, gives recognition to

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1. Holt et al., NR, 35.
2. Ibid., 34 (italics mine).
3. Ibid., 35.
4. Ibid.
not only concrete, particular entities, that is, existents, but also abstract entities, known as subsistents, /that/ are objective to and independent of the knowing mind for their being.  

"Existents" denote actual objects such as chairs and tables; "we can say that the real universe consists of the space-time system of existents, together with all that is presupposed by that system." That which is presupposed by such a system is yet another system of subsistent entities which make up an "absolute summum genus." The term "subsistent" denotes here "any one of the actual and possible objects of thought." The notion of the subsistent is much broader than the theory of Ideas of which Plato spoke, although both share the qualities of abstractness, eternality, and individuation. The Neo-Realist carries the notion of possibility to its logical extreme to include all possible subsistents. The recognition of such manifold entities took the Neo-Realists beyond the orbit of epistemological considerations alone, committing them to an ontology which may be called pluralistic. Such a theory of ontology explained most completely the inalienable character of the relations that obtain in the world's articulate structure and had, the Neo-Realists felt, the full support of a logic of relations, if not modern science.

The fourth outstanding element of the Neo-Realist

1. Evans, NROR, 73.
3. Ibid., 253.
4. Ibid.
position was the method by which they sought to explain the rapport which takes place among such relationships implied by a theory of subsistents. This was the method of logical analysis. This means the careful, "systematic and exhaustive examination of any topic of discourse." The actual subject matter of analysis is the totality of manifold entities and relations that exist in the world of things and subsist in the world of thought. In using the method of analysis it is a necessary condition that the entities and relations are in no way changed in terms of their structure or components. However, it may be shown by this method that such entities and relations are often unanalyzable or that they may be further reduced. If they turn out to be unanalyzable, it can only be because they exhibit no complexity or structure, no plurality of necessary factors. If they turn out to be reducible, then they must be identical with the totality of their components.

The major job of the analyst is to understand the arrangement of the parts in any complex structure, not, it may be added, to attempt to substitute a collection of parts. The furtherance of the analytic method is best achieved in two ways: first, by a scrupulous use of words, since in philosophy such a use is the surest proof of a sensitive scientific conscience.

1. Holt et al., NR, 35.
2. Ibid., 24.
5. Ibid., 25.
6. Ibid., 21.
and second, by a regard for logical form. But in keeping with the theory of independence,

the logical categories of unity, such as homogeneity, consistency, coherence, interrelation, etc., do not in any case imply a determinate degree of unity. Hence the degree of unity which the world possesses cannot be determined logically, but only by assembling the results of the special branches of knowledge.

From this it will be seen that the whole-part and part-whole relationships involving analysis subsume the view that entities are "in some sense formed or composed of parts," and that a special view concerning the nature of these relations is intrinsically necessary to an analysis based upon the Neo-Realistic contentions.

"An entity possessing some relations independently of another; and the ignorance or discovery of further relations does not invalidate a limited knowledge of relations." This doctrine, the fifth in the Neo-Realist's thesis, implies an external view of relations, asserting

(1) that both a term and a relation are (unchangeable) elements or entities; (2) that a term may stand in one or in many relations to one or many other terms; and (3) that any of these terms and that some of these relations could be absent or that other terms and relations could be present without there being any resulting modification, etc., of the remaining or already present terms or relations.

The relations that the Neo-Realist endeavors to examine in cognition have an objectivity that is just the same as any

1. Holt et al., NR, 25.
3. Spaulding, Art.(1912), 156.
5. Spaulding, Art.(1910), 400.
other investigation would discover them to be. As in the case of the sciences, "the relation between things and between the properties of things are not only noticed but become the chief and even the sole subject matter." Throughout their discussion of the nature of cognition, the Neo-Realists emphasized not only the existent and subsistent entities in the universe, but also "the relations between them, which are as truly parts of the entity analysed as are the elementary terms." If any essential aspects of such relations are ignored by analysis, the result would be a falsification which the Neo-Realist is committed to reject by virtue of his stated aim to examine exhaustively any topic of discourse.

Each aspect of Neo-Realism discussed thus far, both polemical and constructive, is ingrained within the Neo-Realist's theory of perception to be discussed next. It is from this discussion that the Neo-Realistic ontological presuppositions will become even more evident.


It has been stated already that the Neo-Realists hold to an epistemological monism. Yet, the place of object and of consciousness, together with the relations between them, are featured quite uniquely in this application.

2. Marvin, FBM, 175.
3. Ibid., 83.
4. Ibid.
of this perceptual theory, and each needs to be enlarged upon to make the import of this vital aspect of Neo-Realism fully explicit. First, however, a few general comments about the nature of knowledge as it is conceived by the Neo-Realist are necessary. The Neo-Realists hold to the doctrine that "epistemology does not give but presupposes, a theory of reality."¹ This reality is a pluralistic universe composed of Being, which in turn incorporates a duality of realms, one of existents as mentioned above, and a second, of subsistents. The Neo-Realists treat of the realm of subsistents as identical to that of the all-inclusive universe of logical and conceptual entities. It is such a universe that

is composed of neutral, conceptual entities, of terms and propositions. All its component parts as well as the wholes composed are objective, having their own being and being open to the gaze of all. Real and unreal, matter and mind, sensation and perception, memory, imagination, thought, volitions and unity of consciousness, as well as illusions, hallucinations, dreams, fancies, error and contradictions, all are such.²

Such a theory supposes a kind of objectivity for all objects of thought, both actual and possible, even to include its own theory, that is, itself, as objective. This kind of objectivity implies that any object of perception becomes a logical analogue with respect to the state of consciousness that perceives it.

¹. Marvin, Art. (1912), 75.
1. The Relational Theory of Consciousness.

The Neo-Realistic theory of consciousness in effect eliminates the existence of mind, at least to the degree that whatever function the mind might otherwise have, this function is identified with consciousness.\(^1\) Although making such an identification, this theory does not go on to identify the locus of consciousness as being fixed, as when it is said that the location of mind is in the brain. To the contrary, the Neo-Realist seeks to show that consciousness is "out there" where the objects exist in the so-called external world. What consciousness has of this external world is that which makes up the content of the organism's experience. This content is then described as the "cross section" of being;\(^2\) this is to say, the existent entities of the spatio-temporal world enter into a certain noetic relation with the organism's consciousness, so that when sensation takes place the entities which are sensed become themselves a part of consciousness. The "cross section" which consciousness has of these entities is, in point of fact, of absolute and numerical identity, a complete correspondence. When the Neo-Realist has a consciousness, say, of the color blue as sensation, the quality blue that becomes a part of the organism's consciousness simply is. To this extent, blue is both neutral and simple; it is

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\(^1\) Evans, NROR, 121.

\(^2\) Holt, CC, 182.
neutral because in its correspondence with the logico-sub-
sistent object there is both qualitative and numerical iden-
tity; it is a simple because blue, quae blue, is not analyz-
able into further components or into more simple entities.
Blue in this instance, that is as an existent entity in
sensation, is an existent primitive about which the thatness
is an ultimate category.

In the case of conception the Neo-Realist's explana-
tion of consciousness is a somewhat more involved recapit-
ulation of the same principles that were seen to apply in
sensation. That is, with respect to conceptual entities the
notion of the object is retained so that when the Neo-Real-
ist may speak about objects of memory, or of reflection, or
of imagination, he does so with much the same meaning he
ascribed in speaking of sensed objects. However, when enter-
ing into such relations, the consciousness had of these con-
ceptual objects, whether they are genuine objects or not,
usually consists of complexes of entities rather than sim-
ples as in the case of the sensation blue. "Consciousness
does not confer existence upon its real objects and still
less does it confer existence upon its unreal objects."¹

The conceptual object, whether this be a memory of the red-
ness in the apple seen on a previous day, or whether it is
a reflection upon the value of redness in a certain aesthet-
ic object, or whether redness is imaginatively conceived of

¹ Montague, Art. (1914), 49.
as a symbol for certain experiences—all such conceptual objects have a counterpart in the all-inclusive Realm of Possibility, even though momentarily subsisting in the organism's consciousness at the moment of awareness. This is to say, the conceptual object discovered in consciousness and the logico-ontological object that eternally subsists are one and the same in every respect.

Consciousness, then, is thought of by the Neo-Realist as "the potential or implicative presence of a thing at a space or time in which that thing is not present." The thing or object becomes a part of the organism's consciousness in actuality through the interaction of consciousness and the object when both are present at a common space-time co-ordinate. At such a co-ordinate "consciousness selects [its object] from a field of entities which it does not create," and to this degree consciousness is an active agent, rather than a passive mold upon which impressions are stamped. The only modification with which consciousness endows its perceived entities is that such entities acquire a function as content at the moment when the organism's perception takes place. It is in this way that consciousness becomes a relating factor which unites the living organism and the universe; and, in its dependence upon the living organism,

3. Perry, Art. (1912), 139.
4. Ibid.
consciousness

is the sum total of all the neutral entities to which the living organism responds, and it is the system of these entities in just such and such quantity and just such spatial and temporal arrangement as the environment and the responses themselves define.\(^1\)

ii. The Neutral Mosaic.

"If consciousness is a relation, objects of consciousness must be real independently of their standing in that relation."\(^2\) The nature of such objects or entities, according to the Neo-Realist, is neutral in that these objects or entities are the non-reducible simples of experience. They cannot be explained in terms of physical or psychical things. In fact, they are indefinable. Definition demands a predication, ascription of attributes. The only quality which neutral entities possess is the one which even analysis cannot dissipate, namely, being, pure being, or mere is-ness.\(^3\)

In sensation the entity blue simply is, and cannot be further reduced; in conception the complex structure of the entities may be analysed into their simples, but once this state is reached all that can be said of them is that they in fact are. Because of this indefinable aspect, the is-ness or the thatness must suffice as being the unassailable character of such entities.

In matters of the organisms affective experiences as

3. Evans, NROR, 97.
emotions, pleasures, pain, and the like, "in so far as we know about them at all they are in the same way neutral;"\(^1\) in theory and practice these phenomena "are as amenable to communication and logical handling as are the concepts of acceleration and \(\pi\)."\(^2\) The atomistic pluralism which is being asserted here is not limited merely to the neutral entities which its diverse forms of mind and matter may take, but also to those neutral entities \(\text{that}\) are marvelously compacted in a united system such that the simple develop without break or discontinuity into the more and more complex, even down to the infinite diversity of concrete being.\(^3\)

The logical character of such a pluralistic ontology establishes the priority of metaphysics over epistemology which, if accepted, provides the Neo-Realists with the ready-made stuff for which their theory of perception need only to account in terms of a relational view of consciousness. Moreover, the Neo-Realists would argue, their theory of ontology is in keeping with the latest developments of mathematics and the natural sciences.\(^4\) Both in the Neo-Realist's method and in the scientific method the

object is viewed under the category of Relation. This method of correlating every phenomenon with a conditioning relation subsisting between other phenomena enables us to pass from one part of reality to another, and to bring all discrete objects into the substitutional continuum of knowledge.\(^5\)

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1. Holt, CC, 111.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 164.
Indeed, say the Neo-Realists, this universe is an infinite mosaic of being,\(^1\) one which is neither subjective nor objective in substance, but is neutral, that it is ordered, that it develops unceasingly of its own motion, and that as our knowledge advances we have more and more reason to believe that its unity is complete.\(^2\)

iii. Perception.

Perception for the Neo-Realist is in many ways analogous to the naïve realist's "searchlight theory" of perception. In point of fact the perceptual act is referred to as the "mariner's searchlight which is the nervous system, and the totality of objects that are illuminated is the cross-section, or consciousness.\(^3\) The cross-section is that part of the organism's environment with which he is brought into contact in perception, and since this contact is direct so it is that the environment is presented immediately to the organism's consciousness. What the cross-section is in consciousness is the content of knowledge; the act of acquiring this content, that is, bringing the consciousness into a certain relation with the environment, is the act of perception.

A distinction is to be made at this point between sensation, conception, and perception, one which involves the notion of complexity in terms of the structure of each.

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1. Holt; CC, 164.
2. Ibid., 165.
3. Ibid., 209.
In both sensation and conception there presides a factor of simplicity that permits the entry into consciousness of qualities called "simples" which have a character that is not in the least complex.\(^1\) The sensation of the color blue, \textit{qua} blue, is a case in point;\(^2\) the conception of a sinking ship, \textit{qua} sinking ship, is also a case in point.\(^3\) These entities are simples just "so long as the mass of qualities that enter together has within itself little or no logical structure or unity, no internal relationship."\(^4\) Perception, on the other hand, is distinguished by the fact that both sensations and conceptions as we ordinarily experience them enter into the perceptual act in complexes or highly structured groups. A second distinction is that "in perception the groups have some logical coherence;"\(^5\) there is no precise dividing line where sensation ends and perception begins. When there is an occurrence of sensation in consciousness, not only so these pass in and out of consciousness, but

while there they are said to change; a red colour is said to turn yellow, a small object to grow larger. But since red is not yellow, it is scarcely true of the red that it becomes yellow. We speak of it as changing because the qualities that successively supersede one another, generally in a given position, are similar to the next. Now similarity is partial identity, and hence the successive colours have something in common as well as something of difference. Therefore the red that seemed to be a simple quality is not simple but compound.\(^6\)

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2. Ibid., 212-213.
3. Ibid., 81.
4. Ibid., 210.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 212.
This phenomenon of change which takes place in sensation accounts in part for the diversity which introspection often finds difficult to explain; this is to say, the fact that sensations are subject to change,

one quality seeming to become another that resembles it, points to a variety of parts within the quality that to introspection seem simple; these simpler parts not resembling one another but being combined in varying propositions, and the parts or psychic atoms themselves, so far as we know, not changing. 1

In the final analysis, all sensations and perceptions are reducible to these simples, which are expressible in something akin to the scientific terminology that describes the behavior of atoms. Even the most complexly structured contents of consciousness such as those of space and time are ultimately reducible, since "only the space and time in which we can locate the causes of our perceiving is the space and time revealed in perception." 2

Summarizing, then, the world of objects which the Neo-Realist perceives, he does so directly. 3 Yet, there is no correspondence here between these objects and the perceiver's consciousness. In fact

there are not sensations or perceptions and their objects. There are objects, and when these are included in the manifold called consciousness they are called sensations and perceptions. Sensations and perceptions are objects in the hierarchy of being, and they are in the psychic cross-section when the nervous system specifically responds to them. 4

3. Ibid., 49.
The objects of the real world that are quantitatively and qualitatively enveloped when perception takes place are not by necessity real or actual, rather, such a world is a virtual or potential reprojection of the effects which the world projects upon us. And just as the virtual images that appear behind the mirror may be (but need not be) identical in quality and position with the objects that cause them, so the objects we perceive may be (but need not be) exactly identical with the existing objects that cause our perceptions. 1 This theory, in effect, asserts the identity of indiscernibles, 2 maintaining that in and through the act of perception objects and consciousness are qualitatively neutral and numerically identical. Here the Neo-Realists finally arrive at the position of asserting that the atomic pluralities of the world acquire, when occurring in perception, a monistic character.


The Neo-Realist's argument for the knowability of an object both presupposes and hinges upon the ultimate subsistence of that object. 3 To support this point of view the Neo-Realists developed an ontology that made knowledge possible by first positing a Realm of Possibility which at once included in it all the possibles that in any way may become known, or for that matter, may even remain unknown. This is to say, the Realm of Possibility is all-inclusive, embracing

within its scope all possible objects of thought. The objects of thought include not only such things as dreams, imaginings, reflections, memories, and the like, but objects of pure thought as well. All possible logical propositions, together with both their contradictions and their contraries, in part make up these objects of pure thought. Logical relations also compose this class of objects since "all relations presuppose the existence of terms between which they subsist."¹ In brief, the Neo-Realists acclaim

a general universe of being in which all things physical, mental, and logical, propositions and terms, existent and non-existent, false and true, good and evil, real and unreal subsist.²

"'All that is object is,' and is independent of mind; and

'Nothing is that is not object.'"³

The elaborate character of this ontology was such that it guaranteed being to everything, and, in the strictest sense, even to the possibility of its own falsehood, since the possibility of all propositions, their terms and relations, has been admitted. From the preeminence of this logical basis, one may describe the conceptual character of the Neo-Realist's universe as an all-pervasive and highly penetrating logical atomism. These logical atoms, aside from their pure being, enjoy a freedom assured to them under the doctrine of independence; they further enjoy a neutrality that involves fix-

¹ Montague, Art. (1905), 313.
² Hasan, Rea., 165.
³ Ibid.
ity and objectivity rather than a subjective feature; each atom remains "what it is in and out of relation to any other entity, be it an apprehending mind or anything else."¹ Summarily, the Realm of Possibility exhausts the content of the universe of being.

The subsistent character of the logical atom, as well as those of conceptual and material entities, bring to bear all the features mentioned earlier as they relate to the Neo-Realist's doctrine of possibility. The presupposition of such a Realm of Possibility has the force, if accepted, to make the Neo-Realist's conclusions in epistemology completely tenable. It remains merely to be said that the Neo-Realist's epistemological argument rests entirely upon the truth or falsity of their ontological commitment, which in effect is the identification of being with subsistence, i.e. with the mode of being of concepts or universals; and on the identification of concepts with the abstract elements of existence, i.e. with what has the mode of being of percepts or particulars. That being and subsistence are regarded as identical is shown by the fact that no difference is made between them, and the universe of being is freely spoken of as the universe of "logical" or conceptual entities.²

Any criticism of Neo-Realism with respect to its general theory of ontology, and particularly with respect to its thesis concerning the objectivity of error, may best begin with an examination of this identification in order to de-

¹. Hasan, Rel., 170.
². Ibid., 178.
termine whether their fundamental presupposition is warranted. Met in its most elementary argument form, this presupposition asserts:

All is being,
All being is conceptual,
All that is conceptual is object and objective,

Therefore: All (being) is object and objective.¹

This is bedrock for the Neo-Realists, the axiomatic foundation upon which their system stands or falls.

¹. Hasan, Reg., 199.
CHAPTER IV

PLATONISM AND NEO-REALISM COMPARED

1. Ontological Extensity.

From the description offered in the preceding two chapters, it is seen that both Platonism and Neo-Realism award a separate reality to those entities which constitute their respective realms. It was also seen that these entities have a being independent of the space-time world inhabited by particular things. Straightaway, the extent to which Plato carried his treatment of the Realm of Ideas and the extent to which the Neo-Realists went in espousing a Realm of Possibility lie at the very heart of the contrast between the two doctrines. Plato's Realm of Ideas tended to be a realm of ideals, containing only the beautiful, the best, the most important; in the Neo-Realist's Realm of Possibility, on the other hand, everything that might be, however ugly, bad, or trivial, had its eternal niche.

The Platonic view is given its most complete expression in the Parmenides. Plato is put in the position of positively committing himself to the belief that there are forms corresponding to the fundamental notions of ethics—Right (σωτήρ), Good (ἀγαθόν), Noble (καλόν); he is doubtful about forms of organisms and physical things (Man, Fire, Water); in the case of such things as mud, dirt, hair—i.e. sensible things which do not appear to have a recognizable type of structure—he is inclined to think that there are no forms. But he is not quite sure that consistency would not demand forms of these too, though he is afraid that the admission
might lead him into "abyssal nonsense." The question to be raised here is already suggested by Plato's apprehensiveness in the preceding passage, since he realized that the demand for consistency is far more crucial than the demand for preference. The importance of this demand for consistency is further stressed in the censure issued by Parmenides, and which Taylor interpolates as meaning "a man who is going to admit any kind of reality in sensible things ought to be prepared to 'go the whole hog.'" In addition to this limitation, the content of Plato's realm is even further restricted, according to Windelband, in that the evolutionary character of Plato's writings placed a stress on certain types of Ideas rather than others formerly recognized. Again, stress upon certain classes of Ideas does not mean denial of other Ideas. However, the effect of the above limitations suggests either of two conclusions concerning the content of the Realm of Ideas; that is to say, either Plato left the question unanswered, or the answer he suggested led him to inconsistency.

The Neo-Realistic doctrine, on the other hand, has the virtue of specificity. They believed that the "real universe consists of the space-time system of existents.

1. Taylor, PMW, 353-354. References are to Parmenides 130.
2. Ibid., 351.
4. Plato's denial of Forms to things such as mud, dirt, and hair must be taken into consideration when remembering that he affirms existence to such Forms as the table and bed.
together with all that is presupposed by that system. It is the all that is presupposed by that system which, taken together with the system of existents, constitutes the Neo-Realist's Realm of Possibility. This realm was believed to be the sumnum rerum, the content of which "whether terms or propositions, real or unreal, subsists of its own right in the all-inclusive universe of being." The kind of being was the same sort as that of mathematical terms or propositions which are of an objective order.

The contrast between Platonism and Neo-Realism with regard to the ontological content of their respective systems thus devolves upon the extent to which each accepts or rejects the possible entities that inhere in the total ontological universe. The Neo-Realist accords full ontological status to the things of thought as well as to the things of sense, to logical entities as well as physical entities, or to subsistents as well as existents. Whereas for the Neo-Realist the Realm of Possibility was the world of sensation, conception, logic, plus possibility—all recapitulated in an eternal sense—the Platonic Realm of Ideas was more exclusively devoted to mathematical and moral qualities, aesthetic values, and types of species in the organic world. From such exclusive devotion the

1. Holt et al., NR, 255.
2. Ibid., 366.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 35.
5. Windelband, HP, 121.
content of the Platonic Realm of Ideas may be thought of as the very acme of aristocracy, whereas the Neo-Realistic Realm of Possibility was democratic in the extreme, otherwise, however, expressing the very apotheosis of the basic Platonic position concerning Ideas. The upshot is that whereas Plato would drastically limit the membership of his realm, the Neo-Realist would "go the whole hog" by allowing a democratic universality in its membership.

2. Novelty.

The question as to the nature of novelty under Plato's system is in one sense corollary to the question concerning the extent of the realm itself, since novelty implies both the coming into being and the factor of change. The difficulty of the question is compounded if the alternative be made, on the one hand, to explain the Ideas as fixed hypostatized entities which function as members of a closed system; or, on the other hand, to attribute an open-textured quality to the Ideas which would permit a flexibility in accounting for any so-called newly created Ideas. And in as much as the Ideas have been endowed with the characteristics of individuality, abstractness, eternality, and immutability, any interpretation must both consider and account for these characteristics.

A strict interpretation is possible in accounting for both the Ideas of quality and relation and for Ideas of
phenomenal objects with regard to novelty, and to do so within the framework of the characteristics imputed to the Ideas. In so doing the condition must be made that there are no new Ideas as such. Strictly speaking, changelessness and eternity prohibit this possibility. Nevertheless, newly developed relations may be created out of the manifestations that take place among the Ideas at the level of the phenomenal world, and the product of these manifestations may be regarded as novel. Hence, one may say that each Idea as a definite Idea differs from other definite Ideas and stands in a definite relation to them. For that reason the Idea may be apprehended and described not only through its own characteristics, but also from the point of view of other Ideas, i.e., by the similarities and differences in their characteristics.

Novelty here does not mean coming into being, since the Ideas are, in one sense, already predetermined. It means, rather, a new synthesis taking place among or between the Ideas which are manifested at the phenomenal level and which continue to be sustained in their individuality, abstractness, eternality, and immutability. Moreover, in so far as the qualities of the whole are true also of the parts of that whole, these characteristics are inherent in the newly synthesized Idea. A man who becomes a political figure ideally would possess the qualities of knowledge, maturity, decisiveness, honesty, tact, far-sightedness,

1. Ritter, EPP, 165.
etc. Should this happy combination of qualities be acquired by some individual, then it is conceivable that he might further manifest the quality of leadership. Or, to use Plato's own example in The Republic, justice is the quality which makes it possible for the three we have already considered, wisdom, courage, and temperance, to take their place in the commonwealth, and so long as it remains present secures their continuance, must be the remaining one.¹

What has been said of the Ideas of qualities and relations may in general be said also of Ideas of phenomenal objects. The UNIVAC may be considered to exhibit the product of manifold relations created by a complex combination of simples. The earlier analogy of the simples hot-round-bright-yellow that combine to create the Idea of Sunhood is also a case in point. Again, it is relevant to cite a passage offered earlier: "whenever two or three data of sense are gathered together under a common name, there a Form is present also."² Thus the theory of simples helps to give a significant account of novelty when dealing with the classes of Ideas which enter into the creation of more complex Idea-classes.

The Neo-Realist is not directly confronted with the problem of novelty at the ontological level, since for him all the possibilities of the ontological universe already subsist. Moreover, because all the possibilities are al-

¹ Cornford, RP, 127. See also: Windelband, HP, 125-126.
² Fuller, HP, I, 131.
ready "there," none can be created; neither in the totally new sense, nor in the sense of a newly created synthesis. Since for the Neo-Realist all possible terms, all possible relations, and all possible propositions as determined by their tautologies, converses, contraries, and contradictions are already atomic subsistent parts which exhaust the subsistent whole; and since the content of the whole cannot be greater than the totality of its parts; then, it would follow that any attempt to add another part, such as a novel term, proposition, or relation, would render meaningless what was meant by the "whole" in the minor premise. Therefore, novelty, except as a logically subsistent term constituting a part of the subsistent whole, is impossible.

The individual subsistent entity of the Neo-Realist may be compared directly to the Ideas of Plato as conceived of as simples in the Realm of Ideas. At this point, however, the comparative extensity between the two systems as it pertains to ontological primitives, i.e. simples or subsistents, is again revived to illustrate the different capabilities of either system in the explanation of novelty. Merely by denying a theory of simples as explanatory of the content of Plato's ontological universe, the problem of accounting for novelty is seriously complicated, to say nothing of the question of extensity. On the other hand, the Neo-Realist is not faced with this problem, since his universe, by definition, is constituted by all possible
subsistents, primitives, or simples. In terms of explanatory value, the Neo-Realists have this obvious advantage the Platonist lacks.

3. The Relation of the Linguistic to the Ontological Universe.

The theory of Ideas expressed by Plato, although primarily a statement of a metaphysical position, carries a logical import. From a metaphysical point of view the Ideas have already been characterized as timeless, individual, immutable, and incorporeal essences which, if taken collectively, comprise a supra-sensible world that for Plato was the ultimate reality, a separate reality, dependent upon naught for its eternal nature. Thus far, nothing has been added to the earlier discussion except to assert that the theory is partly logical. But the sole basis for a treatment of the logical side of the matter stems from the earlier characterization of the Ideas in so far as each is what is expressed by a significant general term.¹

In so far as general terms are used in the dialogues, they apply to qualities, relations, negative notions, and to types of concrete objects. Plato's teaching would support this view to the extent that the general term may be used as a logical concept just so far as the term was based upon an objective reality, viz., Ideas.² This point may be further stressed, Plato believed, in that our thoughts and words must

¹. See above: Chapter II.
². Ritter, EPP, 105.
refer to an immutable reality if the predications or names we use are correct, otherwise our thoughts would be engulfed in a babbling subjectivism that "would preclude all understanding or rational interchange of thought." What Plato is asserting here, in so far as it pertains to the Idea and the meaning of the general term which correctly names it, is the relation of identity. This relation is further qualified by an *a priori* feature, namely, the Ideas expressed by general terms exist *ante rem et non in rebus*. Thus our use of general words, or terms,

depends upon a knowledge of Ideas or Forms which are the reality behind the classes of natural objects and artifacts. We know the ultimate Form and are so able to recognize its incomplete manifestations in sensible things. Knowing the Form of Man we can recognize a man when we see one and use the general word "man" significantly .... Our use of such general words as "dog" and "table" is possible because, first, Forms exist externally in the world of Being and have their shadowy manifestations in the world of Becoming and because, secondly, we know these Forms innately so that we do not cognize but re-cognize the manifestations.

In addition to characterizing the kind of thing that extends beyond the orbit of sense experience, that is, the universal, the general word in so far as it correctly characterizes the Idea has two further important explanatory functions. The first of these is the facility offered in accounting for the cohesive quality in experience made possible by the *ante rem et non in rebus*. Thus our use of gen-

2. Ibid.
eral notions such as right-angled triangle may be explained. An instance of such an explanation may be recalled when Socrates in the *Meno* educes, so to speak, the existence of a universal roughly equivalent to \( a^2 + b^2 = c^2 \) as it applies to all right-angled triangles (the corollary intent of Socrates to explain the immortality of the soul need not be considered here). The universal thus derived became meaningful due to the clarifying function it served in explaining the nature of certain triangles which previously possessed a quality of "mere approximation" to one another. A second function that the general word serves is that of helping to explain the not yet experienced. On Plato's view, only by having gained a cognizance of Courage, Temperance, and Wisdom could the philosopher-king then envisage the ideal of civic Justice. The necessary conditions may in this case be thought of as conjunctive antecedents to the consequent Justice. This example is not isolated. Other qualities, either simples or complexes, may become conjuncts which combine in such a way that they may characterize something hitherto unexperienced.

Thus the general term, in so far as it correctly describes the universal Plato regarded as being *ante rem et non in rebus*, allows us to talk about the kind of thing that extends beyond experience, helps us to talk about the coherence of experience, and to talk, if at all, about the

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yet unexperienced. These functions cannot be minimized; nor can the condition that the general term must bear a meaning relation of identicalness to the universal, or Idea, which it purports to connote.

The central position of the Neo-Realist is very close to that of the Platonist regarding the ultimate function of the linguistic structure in relation to the ontological. Moreover, the general term for the Platonist is obviously comparable in several of its characteristics with that of the "term" which the Neo-Realist defines as "any entity which can stand in any relation, and terms can be classified as physical and mental entities, complexes and simples, existents and subsistents, classes, individuals, and relations."\(^1\) Even though the Neo-Realist's usage of "term" is seen to share many common areas with that of the Platonist, two important departures are noteworthy. In as much as the term may be regarded as a subsistent, and in as much as the subsistent "denominates any one of the actual and possible objects of thought,"\(^2\) the theory of possibility as the Neo-Realist conceives of it would preclude any one-to-one comparison of the subsistent and the Idea under a strict Platonic interpretation. The second departure is even more dynamically characteristic of the logical character of Neo-Realism than the first. Primarily this is due to the fact that the Neo-Real-

\(^1\) Holt et al, NR, 175.
\(^2\) Ibid., 253.
1st regards the subsistent as having "an inseparable aspect of its meaning an 'is' relation to some other subsistent; hence every subsistent is or involves a proposition."\(^1\) The stress given to the proposition is quite unique to the Neo-Realist's position since they regard the total system of propositions, as comprised of subsistent terms, to exhaust the content of being. The body of propositions comes to form a calculus of being through which reality is reduced to logical form.\(^2\) This calculus is constitutive of the world; and the terms, classes, and relations "studied by the logician, are truly aspects of the world about him as are the phenomena of heat and light, studied by the physicist."\(^3\)

For both the Platonist and the Neo-Realist the linguistic structure serves the function of being the logical analogue for the ontological structure. The Ideas are for the Platonist what the subsistent term is for the Neo-Realist; the descriptive predicates assigned both the Ideas and the subsistent terms apply equally in each case, except as entailed by the Neo-Realist notion of possibility. The difference between the Platonist and the Neo-Realist is more a matter of emphasis than one of kind. For the Platonist the types of Ideas seem to be derived largely from perception, i.e. there is no mention made by Plato of Ideas which,

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1. Holt et al., NR, 253. The 'is' pertains to predication.  
2. Evans, NROC, 76.  
3. Ibid., 42.
broadly speaking, did not have some experiential counterpart. The Neo-Realist accepts all the terms that the Platonist recognizes, but goes a step further in a logical direction. This is to say, the Neo-Realist recognizes a formally structured calculus of subsistent terms expressed in logical proposition-form, such that the tautologies, converses, contraries, and contradictories expressed by each proposition are extended to an ontologically exhaustive degree. In short, the Neo-Realist held that logically conceived possibility is the same as the subsistent content of possibility. The question as to the ontological extensity is again seen to underly the major differences between the two views.

4. Epistemology as Subordinate.

The dualism evident in Plato's metaphysics extended to include his theory of epistemology as well. He held adamantly to the view that the Realm of Ideas was presupposed by the corporeal world of things in that the Ideas were ontologically independent of, logically prior to, and the necessary condition for the corporeal world and any knowledge about it. Accordingly, any account of Plato's epistemology must take into consideration the independence of his metaphysical position, as well as to show the dependence of his epistemology upon the metaphysics.

Plato believed that Knowledge, as such, is mediated

1. Chapter III, above.
by the Ideas. Any lesser cognitive functioning such as imaginings, opinion, or belief are the consequents produced by the effect upon the sense of the fleeting world of change. Real knowledge results only in the apprehending of the Ideas through a sort of direct intuitive acquaintance or "vision,"\(^1\) such that in the last analysis one arrives at knowledge by "never making use of any sensible object, but only of Forms, moving through Forms from one to the other, and ending with Forms."\(^2\) This is seen even more vividly when contrasting the Ideas which are perfect, undeceiving, and fixed, with the discrepancies which occur in perception of sense so highly subject to error. Hallucinatory, illusory, and delusive experiences are to be found only at the level of the phenomenal world, Plato believed, whereas the experience of Truth, absolute and ideal, was the happy consequent of apprehending the Ideas.

On Plato's terms, the apprehending of the Ideas was

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1. The metaphorical use is Platonic. When alluding to the epistemic relation Plato often lapsed into vagueness, metaphor, or both. This instance occurs in the *Republic*: "Without having had a vision of this Form no one can act with wisdom, either in his own life or in matters of state." Cornford, *RP*, 231 (*Rep.*, 517). The emphasis upon rationality in the apprehending of the Ideas is always strongly indicated, but never fully explained in the dialogues. In his account of the Good Plato tells us that "the summit of the intelligible world is reached in philosophic discussion by one who aspires, through the discourse of reason unaided by any of the senses, but not, certainly, by analogies involving these senses, to make his way in every case to the essential and perseveres until he has grasped by pure intelligence the very nature of Goodness itself." Cornford, *RP*, 252 (*Rep.*, 532), italics mine.

not a simple process. In one account he suggests that a near life-long training is necessary, one which lends particular emphasis to the rigorous development of a mathematical and philosophical conscience. The result of such an emphasis upon rational development, together with certain cardinal virtues, would tend to produce a man par excellence, the philosopher-king, who is best able to apprehend the Ideas apart from their phenomenal shadows. The epistemic side of the question stresses the point that through rational development the errors of sense perception are minimized and the insights gained through wisdom serve as the necessary condition in apprehending the ultimate reality, the Ideas.¹

The account given here no more gratifyingly answers the question, "What is the precise manner in which the Ideas become known?" than the explanation of "participation" given in the Parmenides. The reason for this is, for the most part, the same. For example, in speaking of the philosopher-kings of the Republic, Plato said that they

must lift up the eye of the soul to gaze on that which sheds light on all things; and when they have seen the Good itself, take it as the pattern for the right ordering of the state and of the individual, themselves included.²

The lapse into analogy—this time concerning a visual perception of something the nature of which is abstract—again precludes decisive treatment as to the exact cognitive rela-

¹ Chernissé, Art. (1936), 452.
² Cornford, RP, 262 (Republic, 540), italics mine.
tion. On the negative side, both conceptualism and nominalism are rejected; moreover, in the *Theaetetus* there was a disposal of the identification of knowledge with sensation or any form of simple apprehension. We have also seen that pure relativism is untenable alike in the theory of knowledge and in metaphysics.\(^1\)

The surviving theory is one of immanence so often associated with epistemological realism, but Plato's explanation is so obfuscated by metaphor that more questions are created than are answered.

The Neo-Realists make a laudably decisive and thorough-going attempt to structure their epistemic conclusions within the framework of their metaphysical system. The Neo-Realists, as do the Platonists, regard metaphysics as "logically prior to the theory of knowledge,"\(^2\) which is to say that the subsistent terms and propositions comprising the calculus of being, or Realm of Possibility, are presupposed by the epistemologist who uses these terms.\(^3\) Ontological independence is a further characteristic common to both the Platonic and Neo-Realistic systems; in this the Neo-Realist holds that metaphysics is not indebted to their theory of knowledge either for its problems or its solutions.\(^4\) Metaphysical reality consists of propositions, and terms, which are not events in space-time as are those events with which

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2. Holt *et al.*, NR, 53; see also page 69.
the epistemologist deals. To the contrary, the propositions
descriptive of ultimate reality, that is, of the universe of
being, do not themselves
come into being or get created by the student who first
learns that they are true. They are discovered and not
made, as truly as was the American continent discovered
and not made by the explorers of the fifteenth and six-
teenth centuries. Thus mathematics as a system of true
propositions has been in part discovered by man; but
this discovery or that failure to discover did not add
or subtract anything to or from mathematics, did not
make any of its propositions true or false, did not al-
ter it in any way. Two plus two equaled four, and the
sum of the angles of a plane triangle in Euclidean space
equaled two right angles when the earth was a molten
mass, as truly as they do today.

The Platonist and Neo-Realist are in firm agreement as to
the dependent status of epistemology on metaphysics, a rela-
tional status which is asymmetrical. And in as much as the
Neo-Realist "asserts the independence of reality in the know-
ing of it, the neo-Realist is also a Platonic realist."

With respect to their theory of knowledge the Neo-
Realists have vigorously sought to achieve objectivity. To
gain this objectivity they lay stress upon the relational
aspect of consciousness, a stress that had its parallel in

1. Holt et al., NR, 57.
3. Holt et al., NR, 35.
4. Ibid., 135.
5. Ibid., "A mind or consciousness is a class or group of
entities within the subsisting universe, as a physical ob-
ject is another class or group. One entity or complex of
entities can belong to two or more classes or groups at the
same time, as one point can be the intersection of two or
more lines; so that an entity can be an integral part of
a physical object, of a mathematical manifold, the field
of reality, and one or any number of consciousnesses at
the same time."
the recent developments in the relation theories of both the
natural sciences and symbolic logic. Because of the explana-
tory value as shown by the objectivity of the scientific
and logical relations, the often misleading common sense ex-
planations were rejected as a criterion of knowledge. On the
other hand, the Neo-Realists believed that the desired objec-
tivity could be achieved

by isolating the epistemological problem and studying
the cognitive relation obtaining between any knower or
apprehender and any object that he knows or apprehends
without prejudging or even raising the question as to
the ultimate nature of the apprehending subjects or of
the apprehended objects.¹

It was through the stress upon cognitive relations, conceived
by the Neo-Realist as objective, that the basis for the dev-
lopment of a relational theory of consciousness was reached.
It soon became obvious that the conscious field was unavoid-
ably fundamental to the Neo-Realist's theory of knowledge.
The ego-centric predicament was a ubiquitous difficulty in
that

consciousness cannot be eliminated from one's field of
study, because I study, I eliminate, etc., are all sit-
uations in which the relation, consciousness, is pres-
ent. We cannot therefore find anything outside of con-
sciousness, because ... finding is a form of conscious-
ness. It is methodologically impossible to compare a
thing before or after it has been in another's con-
sciousness without one's own consciousness being brought
into play. Moreover, a knowledge situation cannot be
analyzed into its parts in order that the physical as-
pect might be dealt with, because dealing with implies
consciousness. Finally, when the consciousness feature
is eliminated from any situation, nothing can be learned
about the affair.²

¹. Montague, Art. (1937), 143.
². Evans, NROR, 77.
Given this field of consciousness, the central question for the Neo-Realist became one of explaining how the content of the cognitive area of experience was related to the ultimate nature of reality which the Neo-Realists claimed to be prior. The answer given to this by the Neo-Realists was a theory of immanence which would make perception the ultimate test of reality, thus omitting reference to epistemology which itself is not logically fundamental. For the Neo-Realist, perception simply is; what is revealed through perception, i.e. the percept, simply is; the percept as the correspondent of any possible subsistent entity or term is thus the ontological primitive as cognized. "Objects known are identical with the content of knowledge." Hence, in so far as perceptions are directly presented, perception reveals the nature of reality.

The areas of Platonic and Neo-Realistic agreement have already been mentioned; the area for disagreement lies primarily in the nature of perception. Whereas the Platonist placed perception at the nether end of the cognitive scale, the Neo-Realist glorifies it to the extent of equating the ultimate revelations of perception, namely percepts, with the subsistent terms of being. For Plato, perception gave information about the phenomenal world, the shadow-like reality

1. Evans, NROR, 119.
2. Holt et al., NR, 66.
3. Evans, NROR, 119.
which was only approximately real; Knowledge via Reason was the surest contact with the eternal verities. The Neo-Realist treated mind and matter as relata in the cognitive relation such that either or both might reveal the ultimate field of being through any of the possible manifold relations into which each or both may enter. Verification of true being for Plato lay in Reason; for the Neo-Realist perception was the ultimate test. The difference here aptly illustrates the fact that a metaphysical position may be supported by any one of several epistemologies, the former not being crucially dependent upon the form of the latter.

5. The Place of Error.

The treatment of error as given by the Platonist may best be considered from the standpoint of the Ideas, but certainly not from the Realm of Phenomena. This is not to say that Plato didn't realize that aberrations in perception do take place, or that conceptual operations may be faulty when dealing with mathematical abstracts. It was the case that in the Platonic system that Knowledge does not occur at the level of opinion wherein our conceptual or phenomenal recognitions take place. Moreover, at this level the question as to truth and error never really arises since objects of opinion and objects of Knowledge are intrinsically different. In the case concerning objects of opinion the necessary ele-

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2. Ritter, EPP, 126.
ment of Reason is absent, and without a clear account for the Reasons of an assertion, no knowledge is had. In the case concerning the objects of Knowledge, Plato sought to escape the error which involved subjectivity; it was the function of Reason to make good this escape.

The account of error, or falsehood, that Plato held possible was explained by one's mistakenly conceiving certain contradictory predicates to be attributed to a subject-Idea. This does not mean that the Ideas themselves were erroneous, rather, one's conception of them was subject to error. Plato believed that while "every Form is different from every other and is not any other, some Forms can be combined with one another, whereas some cannot." Hence, contradictory predicates may not be asserted of Ideas if Reason attains the level of Knowledge. For example, the Idea of Motion may not be predicated of Rest, nor the Idea of Sameness predicated of Difference, and vice versa, yet these antinomous Ideas may be asserted of some Idea having an existential counterpart.

1. Ritter, EPP, 126.
2. Elliptically stated, the argument from the Sophist is this: "A sentence must and cannot help having a subject." Soph 262. "Every sentence must have a certain quality." Soph 263. "Seeing that language is true and false, and that thought is the conversation of the soul with herself, and opinion is the end of thinking, and imagination or phantasy is the union of sense and opinion, the inference is that some of them, since they are akin to language, should have an element of falsehood as well as of truth." Soph 264. "It would be fantastic if it could be shown that falsehood is a reality belonging to the class of real being (which is Knowledge)." Soph 266.
4. Ibid., 158.
just so long as they are asserted other than conjointly. ¹

The nature of error, as Plato conceived of it, emerges first from the absence of Reason whereby Knowledge of the Ideas is precluded; second, error

comes from our failure to distinguish the Ideas that are both different and uncombinable from those which, in spite of their differences from one another and not being one another, can nevertheless be combined. Such failure results in our assertion of the existence of non-existent combinations of Forms and vice versa.²

The problem of error which was to become a major issue in the Neo-Realist's theory of consciousness resulted from their unique answer to the question of what error consisted in. The Neo-Realists held that error occurring at the level of perception may take either of two forms, but both result

from a distortion of the real object in producing its effect on the brain. The distortion may be (1) physical or peripherally physiological, in which case we have the so-called illusions, or (2) it may be central, due to the cerebral apperception mass, in which case we have the error of inference.³

When the projective manifold that is consciousness comes into relation with the external world, the nervous system discovers the errors revealed to it. Error, then, is a relation resulting not as a product of the nervous system--since "the nervous system is a contrivance to deal with a physical state of affairs of which error is only a very delicate instance"-- ⁴

¹ Fuller, HP, I, 158.
² Ibid.
³ Holt et al., NR, 291.
⁴ Ibid., 467.
nor as something created by consciousness; error is revealed as a result of the practical discrepancies between the subjective and physical manifolds. ¹

An important point that the Neo-Realist wishes to stress is that when things are perceived, so they are. This is not to say as things are perceived so they really are; rather, while all perceived things are things, not all perceived things are real. ² The erroneous percept is the product of the relation obtaining between the consciousness of the experiencer and the referent of the external world. Aberrations may be due to any one of many causes, but such aberrations do not derogate against the being of the percept. Accordingly, it may be seen that "the indiscernibility of seeming from being can be naturally attributed not to the terms, but to the relation in which they stand." ³ The percept which, although erroneously perceived as originally the relation between the nervous system and the referent, is identical to the corresponding subsistent term in the universe of being. To this degree the theory of error advanced by the Neo-Realists "results from dividing by logical abstraction what, for common sense, is one [error] and then hypostatizing the distinction made." ⁴ The hypostatized entities of error take their place in the all-inclusive Realm of Possi-

¹ Evans, NROR, 125.
² Holt et al., NR, 358.
³ Ibid., 466.
⁴ Evans, NROR, 138.
bility right beside the actual entities. The illusory oasis has a being just as much as the Atlantic Ocean; similarly, the inferential proposition that "five plus seven equals eighteen" is just as much as the proposition "two plus two equals four."

The Platonist would turn away in disgust at such a polyglot universe comprised of plethoric uninstantiated essences. It remains to be shown whether such an aristocratic pose may be maintained in the light of logic.
CHAPTER V

CRITICISM

1. General Ontological Considerations.

To consider exhaustively the explanations of reality as offered by both schools of conceptual realists would presuppose "all the theories and facts of modern knowledge."¹ Such explanations would further involve the organization of the total body of knowledge in such a way that the manifold facts and theories could be harmonized significantly, that is, an explanation which fulfills the sufficient if not necessary conditions of consistency, completeness, and economy or elegance. Although Plato may be considered to have explicated a broad general system, an exhaustive treatment of his explanation would be frustrated by virtue of the developments in the fund of knowledge over the intervening two thousand years. On the other hand, the Neo-Realists who had the advantage of the accumulated body of knowledge during this span of two millennia, did not in point of fact develop what may be called a "system" which would explain reality in toto.² A treatment of either position in terms of an exhaustively significant description is, therefore, rendered im-

1. Feibleman, Ont., 126.
2. Holt et al., NR, 36. "There are endless special philosophical questions to which there is no inevitable realistic answer, such questions as mind and body, teleology, the good, and freedom ... philosophy of life, no characteristic verdict on the issues of religion."
possible.

There is, however, a point of contact between Platon-ic Realism and Neo-Realism which is amenable to definitive treatment. This is the area of ontological commitment made by each school which came to light through the description offered in Chapters II and III. The sort of evaluation that can be made of these schools may be justly narrowed to the ontological level if the conditions—consistency, completeness, and economy or elegance—evoked expressly for the whole of reality can be applied to the level of ontology in particular. For sake of clarity these conditions require a note of further explanation.

In judging the consistency of an explanation or theory, the term "consistency" may express either of two properties. First, it may mean general consistency in that a theory is consistent with all existing knowledge; or, second, it may mean self-consistency in that the theory itself is internally consistent.1 This is to say, consistency means squaring with all the facts in one case, and in the other case consistency requires a non-contradictory feature of certain selected facts.2 Ideally, for both general consistency and internal consistency it is a sufficient condition that

1. See also: Feibleman, Ont., 131. "Any system is a whole and for any whole there is the criterion of consistency between its parts .... For any whole there is in addition the criterion of consistency between the whole and other wholes."

2. Joad, GTP, 445.
the axioms and theorems be true propositions. Since its theorems are the logical consequences of its axioms, any interpretation which makes its axioms true will make its theorems true also. Hence it is sufficient for the purpose of proving a system consistent to find an interpretation which makes all of its axioms true.

In as much it is the present concern to determine the internal consistency of certain ontological axioms developed in the Platonic and Neo-Realistic systems, a treatment of the complementary systems of axioms and theorems governing their total philosophy is not intended. Moreover, if it were intended, it may well be questioned whether such a treatment would be at all fruitful. Bertrand Russell maintains that no one has yet succeeded in inventing a philosophy at once credible and self-consistent .... A philosophy which is not self-consistent cannot be wholly true, but a philosophy which is self-consistent can very well be wholly false. The most fruitful philosophies have glaring inconsistencies, but for that reason have been partially true.

It remains to be seen which realistic theory expressed above is better characterized by consistency.

The condition of completeness refers to the inclusiveness as expressed by any whole system in terms of accounting for all the parts or sub-parts. Of no less importance, adequacy in the integration of these parts must be met; all those parts which belong to the system must be included, and none of those parts which do belong may be left out. Beyond this requirement for accurate quantification, the relation

2. Russell, HWP, 613.
between the parts must be such that a tightly related system results; looseness is devastating when rigor is required to balance and coordinate a system. ¹ This sense of completeness, however ideal, borders on vagueness. A more precise statement of completeness may be given when the formulas of any given system are divided into three groups:

first, all formulas which are provable as theorems within the system; second, all formulas whose negations are provable within the system; and third, all formulas such that neither they nor their negations are provable within the system. For consistent systems the first and second groups are distinct, that is, have no formulas in common. Any system whose third group is empty, containing no formulas at all, is said to be deductively complete.

The above definition is roughly equivalent to saying that "a deductive system is complete when every formula constructed on its base is either a theorem or else its addition as an axiom would make the system inconsistent."³ However, as a result of Gödel's theorem, the requirement is made that the proofs of consistency lie outside that system;⁴ should the attempt be made to include the proofs, the system becomes inconsistent. The notion of completeness in terms of a closed system becomes suspect, so that the distinction between a strict consistency and a strict completeness must in some sense be compromised. As a consequence of Gödel's theorem, a delimiting condition is imposed upon the closed mathematic-

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¹ Feibleman, Ont., 131.
² Copi, SL, 160.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Feibleman, Ont., 701.
ical system; similar examples may be drawn from logic (Russell paradox) and physics (Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle). From such examples it is reasonable to doubt the possibility of any ontological system including its own proof. Such a consideration has the support of intuitive acceptability, because in so far as ontology may be defined as "the widest of a finite set of systems," and in so far as this definition implies a whole set, the knowability of the "ontological system must be kept open to the prospect of including more and more." Thus it would seem that the very condition of completeness must remain at an outermost ideal limit, and that systems may only hope to achieve an approximation of completeness, subject to the truth value of the axioms which they claim, to the internal consistency of these axioms, and to the proof of these axioms outside the system itself.

Of secondary importance, but still of primary consideration, is the question of methodology. In formulating the axioms and theorems of an ontological system there arises a demand for economy. This condition is met when each axiom of a system is independent to the extent that it is not derivable from some other axiom. A system is not to be condemned logically for having as its members one or more dependent axioms, but we should say of such axioms that they

3. Ibid.
are "redundant," and hence lack what mathematicians call "elegance." Moreover, the condition of economy may be applied to two or more competing ontological systems as well as to any redundant axioms within a particular system. This is to say, if different ontological systems explain reality equally well in terms of consistency and completeness—which implicitly involves a sufficiency in squaring with all the facts about reality—the system which engenders the fewest complexities is qualified not only by its simplicity, but also by its aesthetic appeal in terms of harmony and grace of form. The judicious exercise of Occam's razor makes for economy within a system of axioms in that no unwarranted assumptions are made, and no further assumption is made than necessary, thereby preventing the development of a system which is extravagant. Again, intuition comes to the fore in support of this view. The principle of conservation of energy whereby energy can neither be created nor destroyed even though its form may change seemingly provides incontrovertible evidence of the efficient, and hence economical, physical processes by which nature functions. It may be suggested that aesthetic judgments concerning the harmony of natural form may, in part at least, be dependent upon a demand for simplicity which has its roots in economy.

1. Copi, SL, 179.
2. Feibleman, Ont., 148.
It should be emphasized that the three criteria considered here—consistency, completeness, and economy—are best applied to formal deductive systems, such as mathematics. This recommended application does not mean that other, less formal systems could not profit by the use of such criteria. The case is otherwise; for instance, in determining the conditions sufficient for an adequate ontological description these criteria are among those most frequently cited. Indeed, it may be questioned whether any criteria are more fundamental than those remarked upon above. Whatever the case, the conclusiveness of these criteria is far from determinable, a fact that may be drawn from the examples above concerning mathematics, logic, and physics. And if such is the case in strictly formal systems, one cannot hope to provide a higher degree of conclusiveness from an application of such criteria to aesthetics or a speculative ontological system. The point to be made is: that beyond the difficulties encountered in a speculative system, there are inherent difficulties encountered even in judging the adequacy of the best criteria for that system. For an application to a speculative system these limitations are great, but not insurmountable. However, until more adequate criteria may be developed, or until these criteria may be developed more adequately, it is justifiable to assume that consistency, completeness, and economy may function as basic considerations in any treatment of ontology.
The next step is to relate the above criteria to each of the two schools of conceptual realism.

2. **Internal Questions of Platonic Realism and Neo-Realism.**

1. **Consistency.**

The question of the internal consistency of Plato's Realm of Ideas has been previously touched upon. It is relevant to restate in part what was said earlier since this has a direct bearing upon the evaluation made of Plato's system. That is, certain Ideas specifically recognized by Plato such as the shuttle, auger, and bed and certain entities specifically rejected by Plato as being Ideas such as mud, hair, and dirt, point to either an apparent inconsistency in the qualification of Ideas of sensible objects, or a double standard in judging such Ideas. It is fair to assume that Plato recognized many of the difficulties involved in giving Idea status to all classes of sensible objects in that such a recognition engendered epistemological difficulties that were extremely involved. At the same time it is difficult to see why the basic characteristics imputed to the Ideas--abstraction, individuation, eternality--should not apply equally to all classes of sensible objects. Also, if there is to be an Idea of Bedness, why then should there not also be an Idea of Hairness in as much as both bed and hair share the same qualities essential to be classed as sensible objects.

1. Chapter IV.
2. Parmenides, 130.
Moreover, Plato's reason for rejecting such entities as mud, hair, and dirt from the Realm is quite premature, namely, "visible things like these are such as they appear to us, and I am afraid that there would be an absurdity in assuming any Idea of them."¹ One finds the implication here turning upon the Platonic distinction between the world of appearances and the world of knowledge, with the assumption that visible things belong only in the world of appearances. The question arising at this point would be: How does Plato conceive of visible things like shuttles, beds, and augers as other than appearances, and why would it not also be absurd to assume any Idea of them? The inconsistency of such a position seems to be real, unless it can be shown that a double standard is warranted in judging Ideas of sensible objects.

It may be recalled that Plato said that there are no Ideas of "hair, mud, dirt, or anything else that is vile and paltry."² The implication is that there may be Ideas of things which are not vile and paltry, and apparently shuttle, bed, and auger fit this requirement. From this distinction it would follow that Plato maintained a two-valued approach in recognizing Ideas of sensible things. But how, it may be asked, may one distinguish between the value of Bedness and the value of Hairness, both of which

¹ Parmenides, 130.
² Ibid., italics mine.
otherwise fulfill the required characteristics as Ideas? One would think that making this distinction would be left to the province of physics which would determine, and accord, both bed and hair, qua phenomena, an equal value with regard to their material being. If the requirements of material being are met equally well by each, and if each meet the required characteristics for Ideahood, then what kind of value system should be used? It may be suggested that the language which Plato used reveals some inkling of this, namely, by referring to mud, hair, and dirt as "vile" and "paltry." These words are neither part of the descriptive terminology used by physicists, nor terminology Plato uses anywhere else to describe other Ideas, yet they are value terms. The question must be left open as to what sort of double standard of value, if any, Plato might have used to judge Ideas of sensible objects. Yet Plato's failure to warrant the use of such an apparent two-valued standard only serves to strengthen the indictment that a clear inconsistency has resulted in the determination of his ontology with respect to Ideas of sensible objects.

This indictment is directed at the self-consistency of the system containing the axiom: "there is a single Form or real essence corresponding to each of these sets of many things."¹ The failure by Plato to meet throughout the exposition of his theory of Ideas the specifications of such an axiom as in the case of mud, hair, and dirt, remains inexplicit.

¹ Cornford, RP, 218 (Republic 507).
cable. In passing, it seems unfortunate that the discussion which was presented in the Parmenides concerning the Forms was not carried through. It is a matter of conjecture if this omission were merely an oversight; or a gadfly technique purposefully injected to arouse a response from his readers; or perhaps a literary device in characterizing the then young Socrates' immaturity, and hence not sufficiently devoted to dialectical rigor; or, as has been suggested, an attempt to avoid certain difficult epistemological considerations. Yet the fact remains indelible that an inconsistency seems quite apparent, if not real.

Questions concerning the internal consistency, or lack of it, in the Neo-Realist's ontological system have been directed not at the exclusion of subsistent entities recognized, but at the kind of entities recognized. Typical examples of such questions are: How can an entity such as "the round square cupola on Berkeley College" be admitted as a possible subsistent since the expression itself is self-contradictory? Moreover, would not a system of possibles include an infinite number of such entities: white black snowballs, the proposition that "seven plus five equals four," and "p is true if and only if p is false?" The inclusion of such entities and propositions, it is charged, militates against the internal consistency of such a theory to the extent that it leads to a reductio ad absurdum. 1

1. Quine, FLPV, 4.
The Neo-Realists are well aware of the kind of treatment given these so-called contradictory entities by other schools, and themselves have a ready answer for those who would impute to the Neo-Realist's doctrine a recognition of, say, square circles. First, the Neo-Realist seeks to establish that neither the mental nor the physical systems described by them contain any such entities.  

The fact that one can think contradictory propositions about such terms—such as square circles—does not mean that there are such entities to be found in either the mental or physical systems.

The thought of the round-square is a propositional content about a strictly unthinkable IT:—that it is to be a square, and it is to be round, and so forth. Further than this even thought cannot go: certainly even the inner eye cannot grasp the square which is also round.

Second, the question is narrowed to the metaphysical status that such entities might have, if any. The question is resolved by making the crucial logical distinction between propositions on the one hand, and terms in relation on the other.

It is found here that propositions may subsist together in a set although they are mutually contradictory, but that such contradictory propositions can never generate, or be realized in, a system of terms in relation.

Hence, only the universe of subsistent propositions can accom-

2. Propositions expressing contradictions admit to manifold combinations as well, the "square-circular-hexagonal-triangle," for instance.
4. Ibid.
modate contradictory terms which in a mental system would be unthinkable and in a physical system would be impossible because both of these systems contain only terms in relation, such as conscious images and physical objects, respectively. The only meaning the Neo-Realist gives to the expression "square circle" is that of being a symbol for a contradictory proposition, and to this extent only do the Neo-Realists recognize such propositions as having any content.

This recognition is primarily one of contradictions that occur in a logical system; such propositions are limited to membership in this system due to the axioms of the logical system. The mental system and physical system each has its own set of axioms that determine membership of that particular system. Consistency requires that the axioms of one system determine the membership of that system only. To apply the axioms of one system to a different system would be, the Realist holds, tantamount to applying the propositions of the logically subsistent system to that of, say, the physical system. In such an application the inconsistency that would occur may be shown in that the square circle would then have to be admitted to the physical system as a space-time object. The Neo-Realists have striven to avoid the accusation that their system is inconsistent: (1) in denying the validity of the above modus operandi, (2) in restricting the membership of each system—logical, mental,
physical—through a determining set of axioms for each system, and (3) in restricting contradictory propositions to the logical level of subsistents.

11 Completeness.

An attempt at a positive and decisive appraisal of Plato's system of Ideas in terms of completeness is doomed from the beginning. Partly this is so because Plato never really formulated a system as such, and partly because he gave no definite criterion for selecting class-concepts that were to be treated as Ideas. Given these drawbacks, and in the absence of documentation, only a conjectural attempt may be made to measure the completeness to which Plato's theory of Ideas could have been carried. Taking again a clue from the critics, it may be ventured that there "is a Form for each of the qualities which may be possessed of a number of things in common." Such an interpretation is analogous to the class-concept theory, and following this analogy Plato's theory of Ideas may be similarly treated. That is, classes have the feature of entailing one another under certain qualifying conditions in which case classes form another class, and these formed classes in turn enter into more inclusive classes until the level of the all-inclusive class, the universal class, is reached.

2. Windelband, HF, 121.
3. Joad, GTP, 281.
4. Demos, PDP, 67.
Following Plato's treatment, the Idea of the Good comes the closest to fulfilling the condition of inclusiveness characterized by the universal class. In one instance the Idea of the Good is spoken of as the source of the objects of Knowledge which derive from the Good not only their power of being known, but their very being and reality; and Goodness is not the same thing as being, but even beyond being, surpassing it in dignity and power.

Similarly, a class is more than numerically identical with its members, that is, "mankind" is not the same thing as the collection of all men. The Idea of the Good may well be conceived to be that which embraces all the Ideas into a single class, the Ideas fitting "together like the pieces of a picture puzzle, and present when properly grasped by the intellect, a single coherent system." The Idea of the Good in this account would lose the ethical and causal emphasis which Plato assigns to it, and would be treated in the more clinically sterile manner of the Neo-Realist, namely, as a logical construct. But such a treatment is in no

1. It is not conclusive that Plato would have treated the Idea of the Good in this fashion. "Plato undoubtedly thought ... that there are minor departmental hierarchies within the world of Ideas; the question remains whether he thought that there is a grand hierarchy embracing them all." Ross, PTI, 241.

2. Cornford, RP, 220. (Republic 508).

3. Russell rejects the belief that a class may be equated with a collection of entities. The basis of this rejection derives from the contradiction about classes being or not being members of themselves. The number of classes will always be greater than the number of individuals since the totality of individuals will always constitute a class as a further "entity." Russell, IMP, 183.

4. Fuller, HP, I, 131.
sense derogatory; a comprehensible and ordered understanding of Plato's world of Ideas almost requires some unifying rational principle. To treat of the Idea of the Good as being analogous to the universal class is to say no more than "there must be a Form of Forms or essence of general rationality in the universe, from which comes the power of the mind to assemble the Ideas in a consistent, comprehensible picture of the Real."

The bearing which this interpretation has in judging the completeness of the theory of Ideas is to suggest that if the Idea of the Good may be conceived of as the universal class, the body of Ideas composing this class would offer a way of explanation superior to any other in explaining the completeness of such a system. The failure to meet a strict standard of consistency as pointed to earlier with respect to mud, hair, and dirt, does violence to the acceptance of this theory; parts belonging to the whole of the system were left out. Herein there lies a documented basis for considering the completeness of the theory of Ideas as requiring completion; the Idea of the Good is not expressive of an inclusive whole since it does not account for its parts which, although meeting the required characteristics of the system, are alleged not to be members of the whole system.

In spite of this theoretical failure, there are those crit-

1. Fuller, HP, I, 131.
2. Ibid.
ics who feel that this is not the case operationally. This is to say, there are critics who share a certain sympathy with Plato's position, at least to the extent that when giving statement of it would say that "there must be as many Forms as there are possibilities of grouping things under headings and applying to them a common name."¹ Perhaps this means the same thing that Plato meant when saying that "corresponding to each of these sets of many things, we postulate a single Form or real essence."² Even in the absence of precise statement from the dialogues to support this view, such a view may be considered more adequate in terms of explaining completeness than are the otherwise metaphorical descriptions offered by Plato.

If any one feature of the Neo-Realistic position stands out, it is the headlong attempt to account for all of reality, and to do so as objectively and completely as possible. Considering the ontological status of possibility, enough has been said in characterizing what possibility involves to assess its logical implications.³ In as much as the Neo-Realist's Realm of Possibility is equated with being to the extent that the content of being is included to an ontologically exhaustive degree, possibility is complete by definition. This definition is not so sacred that it remains unchallenged, but the Neo-Realist is convinced that

¹. Fuller, HP, I, 131.
². Cornford, RP, 218 (Republic 507).
³. Chapter III, above.
a failure to understand that which is entailed by the meaning of possibility is the basis of contention.

The Neo-Realist believes that axioms such as "All Being is object and objective" which prescribe the inclusive nature of possibility are adequate for the logically subsistent members of the Realm. Moreover, the Neo-Realist is satisfied that his account of contradiction dispenses with any otherwise internal inconsistencies in the system. And finally, with the membership of possibility so extensive as to exhaust the content of Being, from the point of view of the Neo-Realist the major conditions for a complete ontological system have been met.

iii. Economy.

The question of determining to what extent the role of economy measured in Plato's theory of Ideas meets with the same problems cited earlier, namely, the lack of a system as such, and a lack of criterion by which to judge which class-concepts should be treated as Ideas. Again, despite such a drawback an attempt may be made to consider the theory of Ideas as it was expressed, and from this attempt to judge the value of such a theory in terms both of its theoretical economy and ontological economy.

In explaining the diverse and manifold nature of similarity in experience of phenomena, Plato's adoption of the theory of Ideas served to appease the demand for abiding char-
acteristics within the framework of nature. Qualities and relations could now be meaningfully linked together without regard for temporal attrition to which they were subject. Rational concepts requiring a basis of identity were also made stable, whereas

if the qualities themselves are always altering, the sensations which are defined by these constantly altering qualities are undifferentiated. Such an account of the world involves the denial not only of fixed states and determinable processes but also of the laws of contradiction and the excluded middle. The data of phenomenal change, then, logically require the hypothesis of immutable and immaterial ideas.¹

The cases of epistemology and ethics were parallel, for both required the doctrine of Ideas if intellection is to have a basis in other than what Plato called "right opinion."² In all other areas the hypothesis of the Ideas satisfied the necessary and sufficient requirements of saving the intrinsic quality of experience. Thus a single, concise postulation was adequate to function as the basis for what might have been developed more systematically. But other considerations aside, the theoretical economy of the theory—when thought of as a simple axiom required to interpret total reality—is best demonstrated by its application. This value is fully and adequately justified through the scope and depth of its claim since it "makes it possible to consider the three spheres of existence, cognition, and value as phases of a single unified cosmos."³

¹. Chernisse, Art. (1936), 454.
². Ibid., 449.
³. Ibid., 456.
The question of the ontological economy within Plato's system would normally require further explication of the statement "Corresponding to each of these sets of many things, we postulate a single Form or real essence." In the absence of such, one must look to the number of entities to which Plato awards the status of Ideahood, and to the number of probable entities that would qualify as Ideas in light of the statement quoted above. The number of Ideas mentioned by name in the dialogues is, indeed, small; the implication of "each of these sets of many things" would obviously increase this number considerably, the total of which would be crucial in taking headcount of the Ideas. Even so, this question must also remain unanswered, since Plato admits relations between some Ideas whereas not between others. The ontological economy, then, of Plato's system remains indeterminate; however, if one holds that ontological economy varies inversely with the number of entities included within the system, Plato's conservative and guarded approach to the admission of certain classes of Ideas would resolve in his favor the question whether his system of Ideas may be characterized as economical.

In so far as Neo-Realism's theory of possibility is essentially a logical extension of the basic Platonic theory of Ideas, the same application of economy may be used to measure both theories. However, there are two senses in which

"logical extension" is meant which require explanation. In one sense the extension broadens the theory of Ideas itself to a logical extreme to include the modal of logical possibility. In this sense the distinction is essentially one of projecting the implications entailed by the theory of Ideas, as such. In the second sense the Ideas of qualities, relations, negative notions, and of sensible objects recognized by Plato as the entities which member the Realm of Ideas became the subsistent terms and propositions which membered the Neo-Realist's Realm of Possibility, together with all other possible terms. In this sense there is both quantitative and qualitative change. The qualitative change is made when the substantive Platonic Ideas are abstracted still further by the Neo-Realists so as to be considered as purely logical entities. The difference is not so much one of kind as one of emphasis. Quantitative change involves the addition of an indefinite number of subsistents; it is in this way that the ontological economy (not of the theory, but of this application to the Neo-Realist's system) is affected. The result is not one of duplicating any one subsistent, but rather to suggest a near-infinite number of possible relations into which a subsistent may enter. The ontological economy of such an application to the basic theory becomes questionable both on grounds of aesthetic appeal as well as logical implications. It would seem to be the case that the "third man" argument with which Aristotle belabored Plato's theory of Ideas would have equal application concerning the Neo-Realist's theory of
subsistents. The prospect of postulating a near-infinite number
of subsistents to account for every possible relation of any
one subsistent would imply an indefinite process. To this
charge the Neo-Realists offer no ready solution. And unless
one is prepared, figuratively at least, to equate possibility
with infinitude there is a question whether there can be any
solution. But if one is prepared to make this equation, the
question of economy must be forgotten.

To consider the theoretical economy of the Neo-Realist's view is another question. Again, the statement "All
Being is object and objective" serves as the prime axiom of
the system which, due to its universal character, makes fur­
ther implementation seemingly redundant. Hence, an assess­
ment of the theoretical economy of the Neo-Realistic position
would derive its force from the broad, uneconomical implica­
tions of this axiom.

3. The Reality of Universals.

The Realist's position concerning the reality of Ideas,
or subsistents, as well as the entire question as to the
possibility of imputing a separate reality to such entities,
has not gone uncontended. Historically, this question is
parallel to the argument concerning the reality of universals.
Accordingly, in as much as the possibility of the reality of
universals obviously presumes the entire ontological commit­
ment of the Realists, it is incumbent upon them not to beg
any question which may either deny or radically modify the foundation of such a metaphysics. This is to say, a defense of their theory of ontology necessitates a decisive defense of the theory of universals expressed by such an ontology. The defense of universals made by the Realists is thus aimed at the allegations made by two principal opponents, the conceptualists and nominalists.

i. Objections by Conceptualists.

The Conceptualists do not dispute the Realist's view that there are such entities as universals, but they go on to modify the Realist's doctrine by claiming that universals have no reality apart from the particulars in which they inhere, except as concepts in the mind. That is, although universals are more than mere names, they are mind-made and do not possess an independent reality of their own. This view would seem to assert that there is a distinct universal for each definite object, particular, or class of objects having a mutual resemblance. On this issue the only concession the Realist is willing to make to the Conceptualist is that the thought process is necessary for an awareness of universals. Yet a non sequitur would occur if one is to conclude from this that the universals are exclusively mental, and hence entirely dependent upon the thought process for their reality. At this juncture, agreement between the Realist and Conceptualist ends.
The rebuttals made by the Realist to the question of the reality of universals are worthy of mention both to sharpen the picture of the Realistic position presented thus far, and to present a defense of their position against their opponents. First, the Realists charge, the Conceptualists come dangerously close to identifying the concept and the universal. This is a mistake since a concept is not itself a universal, for the simple reason that it is a concept, and a concept is something mental whereas a universal is not. But if a concept is not a universal, neither does it represent mediated knowledge. It is (not represents) that aspect of the universal which is available from that particular perspective which is occupied by the knowing subject. That is to say, a concept may not be a universal but it refers to one. The reference may be false, as in the case of a false concept, or it may be true, as in the case of a true one; but the design to refer may always be attributed to the concept.

The identifying of the concept and the universal, the Realist believes, would result in the impossible position of identifying thought-the-process with thought-the-content.

On the other hand, the conceptual process is an important link in the mediation of knowledge which takes place between the independent universal and the universal as known. In so far as thought appeals to an objective basis culminating in the Realist's notion of universals, it becomes patent that this basis, if objective, must possess a reality equally independent as that of the objective reference of thought during the mental process of entertain-

1. Feibleman, Ont., 577.
ing the particular thing through perception. This is to say, if thought could never arrest the universal such that similar, diverse, and even contradictory experiences lost all meaning, then a pragmatic value to be gained by the recognition of the universal would also be lost. Even so, the proof that the universal is mind-dependent is not forthcoming. Moreover, it is difficult to countenance, the Realists argue, why thought as process should be believed capable of recreating the corresponding yet identical universal each time the process functions in terms of the objective referent.

A second and more forceful contention against the conceptualist view has been voiced collectively by men such as Ewing, Price, and Russell. This contention finds its basis in the language function which, it is claimed, the Conceptualists have failed to evaluate correctly. The Realists hold that if there were no such things as universals our language would not apply to the real world. There would be no point in calling New York, London, Paris, Philadelphia all towns, if they had nothing in common, and if they have something in common, that something is presumably an objective universal.¹

Universals which find expression in common nouns such as "town" are equally well expressed by adjectives, prepositions, and verbs, each of which denotes a significant universal.² On the one hand, adjectives and common nouns express qualities

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¹ Ewing, FQP, 212-213.
² Russell, POP, Chapters IX and X.
properties of single things, whereas prepositions and verbs tend to express relations between two or more things. At this point, the Realists attempt to show that universals expressing relations form a far better basis for argument than do universals of qualities. That is, relations although requiring terms to relate do not in and of themselves exist in the same sense as do qualities. The relation "north of" in the statement "Edinburgh is north of London" does not have a spatio-temporal coordinate like that of either city named. This unique character of relations, claim the Realists, is a kind of universal for which the Conceptualist cannot account, since there is no particular to correspond to the relation in question. Nothing mental is or need be presupposed in the fact that Edinburgh is north of London, moreover, if Edinburgh and London ceased to exist, this would not alter the essential nature of the relation "north of." Thus, the universal "north of" belongs to an independent world which the thought process apprehends but does not create.

11. Objections by Nominalists.

The arguments voiced by the Conceptualists in their attempt to discredit the Realist's doctrine of the independence of universals are voiced with equal conviction by the Nominalists. The Nominalists, however, go a step further to renounce even the possibility of universals, and grant a value to those general words used by the Realists as that of nomen-
clature merely. For the Nominalists, actual particulars are the only reality. Several objections to this account, including those previously made to the Conceptualists, are worthy of mention.

Traditionally, the accusation is made against the strict Nominalist for his failure to account for the nature of change. Given the particulars of which the existential world of the Nominalist is composed, and given the incontrovertible nature of change taking place in this existential world, the Realists question how the Nominalist can adequately defend the universal, unchanging aspect of such change which is perpetually taking place among the particulars. Change is "inconceivable and contradictory except in terms of and in contrast with something that does not change."\(^1\)

Thus it would appear that the problem of relations, using change as a further case in point, finds no immediate solution within a metaphysics which espouses the reality of actual particulars exclusively.

A more liberal interpretation of Nominalism is open, one which recognizes the Nominalist's acceptance of universals as fictions. It remains necessary, though, to meet the criticism offered under this interpretation by the Nominalist's use of general terms, or words, as descriptive of several resembling particulars. Yet the Nominalist who indicates that a similarity obtains among certain selected physical par-

\(^1\) Feibleman, Ont., 70.
ticulars and who makes use of general words to describe this similarity is again faced with the necessity of explaining the meaning of similarity, or resemblance, which relates the individual particulars. The general words offered by the Nominalist which bespeak resemblances—although denied a status as universals—none the less are found to express more than a mere description of the particular terms or re­
lata when cast in propositional form. An example is the case of "two plus two equals four" which seems to be concerned with the resemblances of the particulars "two" and "four."
The case is otherwise, urge the Realists, because many prop­
ositions which seem to be concerned with particulars are really concerned only with universals. Such a view receives support when considering the meaning to be derived from the above example, inasmuch as reflection shows that these sev­
eral words, "two" and "four", which indicate the existence of couples, do not make an assertion about any actual cou­
ples. The meaning of the proposition may be applied to ac­
tual couples, but the meaning should also remain constant of the relation of two plus two throughout eternity even though no such application is made. The conclusion the Realists draw from this is that general words extend well beyond the narrow application the Nominalist would accord to them, and may be seen to exhibit an a priori, universal feature as in the above example.

Accepting the traditional definition of Nominalism,
a variation of the previous criticism can be leveled with certain force. The Nominalist claims that a resemblance among several objects warrants applying the same name to all of them. But strictly speaking, a common name is not any more real than a general name or universal name by the Nominalist's own definition. The common name "man" is no more real than the universal "Man." Hence,

the nominalist solution of the problem of universals thus fails through being insufficiently drastic in the application of its own principles; it mistakenly applies these principles only to "things", and not also to words.1

A device often used by the Nominalists to repudiate the Realist's use of object language derives its form from Russell's theory of descriptions. It may be recalled that Russell became concerned over what he regarded as a "muddle-headedness" about the nature of existence that had been operating for over two millennia. This confusion, says Russell, is caused by the attempt to attribute some sort of existence to entities which do not rightfully possess existence; and as a case in point, Russell mentioned the "golden mountain" when one makes the statement "The golden mountain does not exist." For Russell, the subject term "golden mountain" becomes a syntactical entity, for we may transpose the statement "The golden mountain does not exist" into the statement "There is no entity \( a \) such that \( \exists x \) is golden and mountainous" is true when \( x = a \), but not otherwise.1 Thus existence is

1. Russell, HWP, 661.
asserted only of description. The Nominalist concerned with excoriating from the language any expressions which possess a misleading ontological commitment accepts Russell's technique of the foregoing, and himself goes on to apply it to such general terms as "honesty," "equality," or the like.¹ That is, rather than allowing the statement "Honesty is (or is not) such and such," the Nominalist is anxious to change such an expression to read "Whoever is honest is a person who does (or does not do) such and such, and not otherwise." All general words, claim the Nominalists, are amenable to such treatment, and inasmuch as such words may be particularized with regard to their application, there is no basis for the Realist to found his ontology using these general terms. In answer to this, the Realist would deny the Nominalist his claim on the grounds that such a linguistic reduction is deliberately artificial, and is, moreover, concerned only with existent things rather than the subsistents which populate the Realist's world. The Realist would draw the further distinction that purely linguistic considerations as treated of by the Nominalist are not subject to the same criterion as those of extra-linguistic considerations which an ontology involves. Given this, the Realists counter all such attempts by the Nominalists to limit ontology to discourse about individual things and names of those things. The

ontological dimension for the Realist is such that it is impossible that it be reduced to the dimension of the linguistic universe.

iii. Universals of Error.

Perhaps the most delicate issue of any Realist view regarding the nature of universals was raised by the Neo-Realists when admitting universals of error as elements of their ontological structure. The basis of such inclusion followed the same form of the argument as did that of recognizing universals. As in the case of the proposition "two plus two equals four" the Realist claimed that the assertion was real as a hypothetical statement even though no application of it be made to actual things. Therefore, actual cases did not determine its ontological character. Similarly, in the case of fictitious entities, ghosts, unicorns, griffins, these entities need no existential counterparts to determine their status as real subsistents. All deliberate, and non-deliberate fictions, and those errors which arise at the perceptual level have their ontological counterpart in the Realm of Possibility. It but remains for consciousness to apprehend universals of error, regardless of whether or not the perceptual counterparts are, in fact, present. By taking this position the Neo-Realists have, in effect, logically extended the scope of the Platonic system to include all possible entities. It is because of this adaptation to the theory of universals
that the Neo-Realists have been accused of overzealousness in their attempt to construct a comprehensive ontology to include all possible elements of being.

In justification of this view the Neo-Realists indicate that the Platonic system, beyond being too conservative, was also unwarranted exclusive in that mathematical and moral categories dominated his metaphysics. To avoid such exclusive particularity, the Neo-Realists believed it necessary to avoid special categories or conditions which might limit their own ontological system. A further point the Neo-Realists made in defense of their theory was that metaphysics was logically prior to epistemology, with the consequence that a system of verification operating at the epistemic level did not in any way determine the antecedent condition, the level of being. Thus the positivist's objections—that certain entities recognized by the Neo-Realists have no perceptible counterpart; that verification is essential in determining the reality of entities; hence, ontological entities failing to meet the criterion of perceptible verification have no reality—are specious, say the Realists.

The question of ficticious relations is a more pointed one for the Realist in view of his earlier dependence upon a doctrine of relations. Criticism has been leveled at the vacuity which results when treating of mathematical relations between mythical entities.
such as 'the ratio of the number of centaurs to the number of unicorns'. If there were such a ratio, it would be an abstract entity, viz. a number. Yet it is only by studying nature that we conclude that the number of centaurs and the number of unicorns are both 0 and hence that there is no such ratio.

The Neo-Realist is, by virtue of his defense of possibility, required to defend the view that there is such an hypothetical entity as the ratio $C/N$, and that such a ratio is an abstract entity at the ontological level in the same sense that the ratio between the number of horses and the number of deer is an abstract entity at the ontological level. The difference between the two examples, argue the Neo-Realists, takes place not at the ontological level but at the epistemological level. Whereas the ratio between the actual number of centaurs and the number of unicorns is non-existent; the ratio between the number of horses and the number of deer is an actual number, based upon headcount. The study of nature may net such a figure, but the appeal to this kind of verification is limited due to the space-time character of the data as opposed to the total scope of the elements included in an ontological system.

The lack of conviction one gains from entertaining such a view stems from the feeling that such a description of reality is valueless as an explanation of the real, physical world. Logical subsistents are too ethereal for empirical-minded philosophies. But empiricism is not the measure

1. Quine, FLPV, 3f.
of either success or failure in defending a theory of universals; moreover, such success or failure is as inconclusive as the speculative system which the Realists are attempting to describe. However, within the framework of the Realistic tradition, the Neo-Realists escape the criticism—that of narrowness—aimed at Plato. The strength of the Neo-Realist's view derives primarily from the absence of logical objections to it.

4. Possibility as Explanation.

Inasmuch as a theory of possibility lies at the very heart of the modern development of Realism, the importance of such an explanation becomes material in questioning the value of such a development. To understand the Neo-Realist's theory of possibility, the question of definition must first be answered. Possibility for the Realist is represented by the most inclusive of all classes, the universal class, since it is membered by individuals, the class of individuals, of classes, the classes of classes, and so on. The intent is that of exhausting all possible terms and all possible relationships that take place among such terms.¹ This heroic position, the Neo-Realist would believe, is the only answer to a thoroughgoing ontological realism.

In opposition to this view of possibility, there has been considerable controversy. Four broad criticism are out-

¹. Evans, NROR, 82.
standing. The first of these is lexicographical, charging that the expression "everything possible" is so vague and so broad in scope and implication as to be quite meaningless. Such a definition, it is urged, is tantamount to the position that given a theory broad enough, and a set of premises of one's choosing, that anything can be proved or disproved. Moreover, to set up an ontological structure which stretches comprehension beyond the elastic limit, even though possibly true, is purely trivial. What the Neo-Realist would purchase in comprehensiveness, he pays for in terms of order, economy, and clarity. Any definition of possibility thus stated violates the requirement that a definition neither be too broad nor too narrow, thus failing at the onset.

A second criticism is based upon the belief that an ontological system should exhibit aesthetic proportion, and regards the modal of possibility as producing an ontological slum, a breeding ground for disorderly elements. Take, for instance, the possible fat man in that doorway; and, again, the possible bald man in that doorway. Are they the same possible man, or possibly two men? How do we decide? How many possible men are there in that doorway? Are there more possible thin ones than fat ones? How many of them are alike? Or would their being alike make them one? Are no two possible things alike? Is this the same as saying that it is impossible for two things to be alike? Or, finally, is the concept of identity simply inapplicable to unactualized possibles? But what sense can be found in talking of entities which cannot meaningfully be said to be identical with themselves and distinct from one another? These elements are well-nigh incorrigible.

1. Quine, FLPV, 4.
The criticism bears with it the added conviction that a doctrine of possibility carries with it a denial of the meaningfulness of contradiction--alleging, say, the round square cupola on Berkeley College to be real--which, beyond having no intrinsic appeal, leads its defenders to a reductio ad absurdum.¹

A third criticism of a theory of possibility is grounded essentially in the question of its pragmatic value. The seemingly infinite membership of the Realm of Possibility promotes the opinion that there is an element of the ridiculous involved, since no sort of method can be devised to warrant such an assertion. And the retort offered by the Realists that no method can be devised to disprove it simply does not ring true. Some form of verification seems intuitively necessary upon which to base important ontological presuppositions. Moreover, the extent to which contradictory possibles seem to measure in such a theory, and because this often leads the Realist to posit a doctrine of the meaningless of contradiction, it is seen that a severe methodological drawback arises, making it impossible to devise an effective test of what is meaningful and what is not.²

The fourth and last of the broad forms of criticism that may be leveled at such a theory is even more serious since it directs itself to the very conception of possibility held to by the Realist. Taking the statement "All Being is object and objective", the conclusion may be drawn that pos-

1. Quine, FLPV, 4.
2. Ibid., 5.
sibility also is object and objective. Such a statement would then becomes subject to the criticism imposed by the theory of types.\footnote{The comprehensive class ... which is to embrace everything, must embrace itself as one of its members. In other words, if there is such a thing as 'everything', then 'everything' is something, and is a member of the class of 'everything'. But normally a class is not a member of itself. Mankind for example is not man. Form now the assemblage of all classes which are not members of themselves. This is a class: is it a member of itself or not? If it is, it is one of those classes that are not members of themselves, i.e. it is not a member of itself. If it is not, it is not one of those classes that are not members of themselves, i.e. it is a member of itself. Thus by the two hypotheses—that it is, and that it is not, a member of itself—each implies a contradictory. This is a contradiction." Russell, IMP, 136.} This theory asserts generally that no universal proposition can be demonstrated true for existence, which is to say that a proposition (universal) cannot be allowed to apply to itself. Thus if the Realists persist in limiting the descriptive nature of their ontological system to one true proposition concerning its existence, then according to the theory of types such a system would break down in that the Realists would be in the contradictory position of asserting that it both was a member of itself and was not a member of itself.

It is due to the failure to provide effective answers to such criticisms as these that the modern realistic theory of possibility loses much of its force of conviction which it might otherwise have garnered from a logical extention of Platonic realism.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Through a direct comparison of Platonic and Neo-Realism concerning their respective ontological positions, a major tension between these two views was clearly indicated by the modifications made by the Neo-Realists to the position of their early Platonic forebears. This tension was created by the Neo-Realist's doctrine of possibility. Certain differences between the two views resulted due to the commitments imposed by this doctrine.

First, whereas the content of the Platonic Realm of Ideas was affected, and thus limited, due to mathematical and moral qualifications, the Neo-Realist's Realm of Possibility was unrestrictively membered by logical constructs.

Second, in his development of the theory of Ideas, unless Plato be interpreted to mean that the Ideas be treated as simples at the phenomenal level, the explanation of novelty, meaning new synthesis, is sharply hampered. The Neo-Realist's theory of possibility is not directly confronted with this problem of novelty since the theory has, so to speak, already accounted for every possible entity, new or otherwise.

Third, Plato's treatment of general terms was seen to permit one to speak accurately about the kind of thing that extends beyond experience, helps one to speak about the coherence of experience, and to speak, if at all, about
the yet unexperienced only if the general terms have a meaning relation of identicalness to the universal which it purportedly connotes. The Neo-Realist's theory of possibility expressed a formally structured calculus of subsistent terms stated in propositional form and which propositions were inclusive to an ontologically exhaustive degree.

Fourth, Plato's account was epistemological; he explained error as resulting from the absence of Reason, thus precluding real Knowledge. In such cases it often meant that one mistakingly conceived of certain contradictory predicates to be attributed to a subject-Idea. The Neo-Realists recognized error as a reality to the extent that they made error objective through awarding it a logico-ontological status.

Consideration was given to the value of the criteria used to measure the Realistic position. Consistency, completeness, and economy were regarded as the most important criteria. In the case of consistency it was seen that Plato did not give recognition to certain entities—hair, mud, dirt—which fulfilled the requirements as stated by the primary axiom governing the qualification of the Ideas. The Neo-Realists endeavored to achieve consistency by restricting the membership of each system—logical, mental, physical—through a determining set of axioms for each system, and by restricting contradictory propositions to the logical level of subsistents. In the case of completeness if one accepts an interpretation of Plato's Idea of the Good as being analogous to the logician's
universal class, a case for the completeness of Plato's theory of Ideas is possible. The Neo-Realist's theory of possibility is such that the content of being is, from the point of view of the Neo-Realist, exhausted. In the case of economy, the theoretical economy of Plato's theory of Ideas made it possible to consider the three spheres of existence, cognition, and value as phases of a single unified cosmos. The question of ontological economy for Plato must be deferred due to the absence of a treatment of the subject by Plato. Neo-Realism seemed to fail to meet any standard of ontological economy due to the apparent infinitude of subsistent entities, or terms, which they recognized. As a matter of theoretical economy, the statement "All Being is object and objective" served as a primary axiom for the Neo-Realistic system.

Certain objections to a theory of possibility must be registered which have the collective force of placing the ontological value of such a theory in question. These objections indicate that a theory of possibility is suspect due to: (1) the failure of the Neo-Realists to provide an adequate definition; (2) the violation of all sense of aesthetic proportion; (3) a failure in providing an effective test upon which to base or warrant their assertions about conceptual reality; and, (4) the failure to justify their position in light of the criticism based upon Russell's theory of types.

From such considerations, the thesis seeks to high-
light an inconclusiveness which obtains in the two Realistic views presented here. To give a picture of reality within the framework of the Realistic tradition, a reliance upon a theory of universals was fully in evidence by both the Platonic and Neo-Realistic views. If one accepts a theory of universals, the question then arises as to what extent one is willing to be committed. On the one hand, a question of inconsistency and incompleteness arose in considering the strict Platonic position due to a circumscription of the universals accepted. On the other hand, a dissatisfaction resulted on the grounds of non-economy if one accepted the uncircumscribed theory of possibles recognized by the Neo-Realists. Yet if one is going to accept a theory of universals, but reject both the Platonic and Neo-Realistic interpretations of this theory for reasons of being too narrow and too broad, respectively, the question then remains as to exactly what sort of reconciliation between these two views, if any, would constitute an acceptable position. As yet, no such reconciliation has found general acceptance; however, at least certain important qualifying conditions—consistency, completeness, and economy—are seen to structure any such acceptance. Hence, only to the extent to which such conditions adequately qualify the two Realistic positions, may acceptance of those positions, complete, or partial, be found.
ABSTRACT

The problem of the thesis is to compare critically the major ontological questions which serve to distinguish two outstanding schools of philosophy representing the realistic development of thought. These schools are referred to as Platonic Realism and Neo-Realism. Some of the questions treated deal with such matters as ontological extensity, novelty, linguistics, the subordinate character of epistemology, and the nature of error—for each of which distinct explanations are offered by both realistic schools. More precisely, these problems became prominent as a consequence of the latter-day Neo-Realist's refusal to accept the ontological limitations imposed by the theory of the earlier Platonic Realists. In the light of this, ontological speculation stands as a decisive cleavage between the Platonic Realist and Neo-Realist. Accordingly, the particular theory of ontology expressed by each of these schools must come under examination for purpose of evaluating their claims. Upon the basis of such an examination, certain important qualifying conditions are found to be necessary in order to determine the value of conceptual realism. In the last analysis, the thesis is designed to highlight these qualifying conditions.

Plato's theory of Ideas was seen to give an early, but comprehensive, statement of one dimension in the reali-
istic view of reality. This dimension was composed exclusively of Ideas. These Ideas, which later became known as universals, were imputed to have certain important qualities: abstractness, individuation, and eternality. None of these qualities may be omitted when speaking of the various divisions by which the Platonic Ideas may be divided into classes; these classes consisted of Ideas of qualities and relations, Ideas of negative notions, and Ideas of sensible objects. The account given by Plato of the relation between the Ideas and the actual physical world led to a view of immanence which Plato most often preferred to call "participation." This account was never sufficiently or adequately explicated by Plato for his readers to have a clear and distinct understanding of such a relation. In its broadest form, Plato's ontology was inclusive of three definite dimensions—Being, the Ideas, and phenomena—which, taken collectively, exhaust the content of the Platonic universe.

The Neo-Realist movement began as a polemic against both idealism and subjectivism, and as a polemic it sought to show the difficulties with the positions that it condemned. From this polemic, however, there emerged a definite and positive commitment. This commitment included such aspects of the Neo-Realistic thesis as a theory of independence in cognition, epistemological monism, logical analysis, a pluralistic ontology, and an external view of relations. These positive features were seen in operation through the Neo-
Realist's presentative theory of perception that sought to uphold a relational theory of consciousness based upon a universe of being best described as a "neutral mosaic." The basis for such a theory of reality was found to center in the Neo-Realist's doctrine of subsistents which was seen to be expressive of an all-pervasive logical atomism.

A direct comparison of the two schools of realism gave light to certain differences between them due to the modification imposed upon Platonic Realism by the Neo-Realist's doctrine of possibility. Most important, the content of the Platonic Realm of Ideas was affected, and thus limited, due to mathematical and moral qualifications, whereas the Neo-Realist's Realm of Possibility was unrestrictedly membered by logical constructs. An explanation of novelty as it is effected by the theory of Ideas was seen to be restricted in application to the level of phenomena, however, the Neo-Realist's theory of possibility readily accounted for novelty at any level. The nature of the propositional structure in the Neo-Realist's theory of possibility was found to be more inclusive in accounting for reality than the Platonic treatment of general terms which demanded a relation of identicalness between the Idea and the general term. Whereas Plato's account of error was epistemological, the Neo-Realist awarded error an ontological status based upon their theory of possibility.

Certain objections to a theory of possibility must
be registered which have the collective force of placing the ontological value of such a theory in question. These objections indicate that a theory of possibility is suspect due to: (1) the failure of the Neo-Realists to provide an adequate definition; (2) the violation of all sense of aesthetic proportion; (3) the failure in providing an effective test upon which to base or warrant their assertions about conceptual reality; and, (4) the failure to justify their position in light of the criticism based upon Russell's theory of types.

From such considerations, the thesis seeks to highlight an inconclusiveness which obtains in the two Realistic views presented here. To give a picture of reality within the framework of the realistic tradition, a reliance upon a theory of universals was fully in evidence in both the Platonic and Neo-Realistic views. If one accepts a theory of universals, the question then arises as to what extent one is willing to be committed. On the one hand, a question of inconsistency and incompleteness arose concerning the strict Platonic position due to a circumscription of the universals accepted. On the other hand, a dissatisfaction resulted on the grounds of non-economy if one accepted the uncircumscribed theory of possibles recognized by the Neo-Realists. Yet if one is going to accept a theory of universals, but reject both the Platonic and Neo-Realistic interpretations of this theory for reasons of being too narrow and too broad, respectively, the question then remains as to exactly what
sort of reconciliation between these two views, if any, would constitute an acceptable position. As yet, no such reconciliation has found general acceptance, however, at least certain important qualifying conditions—consistency, completeness, and economy—are seen to structure any such acceptance. Hence, only to the extent to which such conditions adequately qualify the two Realistic positions, may acceptance of those positions, complete, or partial, be found.
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