[14] *Gorgias*, (507e-508α). For identifying these 'wise men' with puthagorians see Taylor, 1960, p.124.

[15] About other commentaries of *Phaedo* (73c4-8) which perform without any attention to the kinship of the nature see David Gallop, 1990, pp.117-118.

[16] It is this sense which Taylor takes the popular sense of the innatism, see 1960, p.136/ and p. 187. On this, see also Gail Fine, 'inquiry in Meno' in Richard Kraut, 1992, pp.213, 224, n.41.

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There must be noted that at this paper the innate is, knowledge which human being has it as soon as he has come to being'. And this is the definition of Allameh Tabatabaei of the innate knowledge as epistemology.

2. About this link see, for example, Gail fine, in Rechard Kraut (ed.), 1992, ch.6.

3. In the sense of natural ability, and that is something a being has naturally, and from the very moment it has come to being.

4. This word has been used in Aristotle in the sense of 'innate' (see: Posterior Analytics, 2, 19, 99b 25).

5. F. M. Cornford in his *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (1957) says, for explaining the absence of the theory of recollection here that it is probably because Plato speaks here on empirical foundations and not about knowledge universally (p.163). But we know, here we are speaking about the occurrence of error, and Plato speaks about the knowledge universally no about the empirical knowledge especially. Moreover, even though his explanation is confined to the empirical knowledge, this can not be a permission for the absence of the theory of recollection; for the first use of this theory in Plato's system is man's knowledge of sensible things which are the shadows of the corresponding Ideas.

6. I mean by intellectual faculty the power which analysis the sense data, (*Phaed.* 249 b6-c2) not what which alives the man (i.e. soul, ψὺχη). Here we suppose that the slave-boy is alive but lacks the required sense organs and the intellectual faculty in above mentioned sense.

7. For Plato the fourth stage shares the other three in putting the poion ti of the thing – which we recognize by senses – in the inadequate form of words and language, although the fourth stage tries to do this about the ti of thing – which we recognize by intelligence (see: *Seven Letter*, 342e).

8. So far he has said the first three precondition in respective.

9. This fourth condition is what is called 'dealectic' in Plato's own terminology. Contrasting the benevolent disputation with the jealous one refers to the contrast between the dialectical and philosophical argumentations and the polemical and similar ones. On this recent point, see Meno, 75c-d.

10. W.K.C. Guthire (1978, p.102, n.2) says '*οὐσία* is what the mind seeks without the aid of senses'. If he means that the mind can seek and grasp the *οὐσία* of a thing about which there is no sense-datum, we cannot be in agreement with him.

11. On the passage of *Theaetetus* 186cv- e12, see also John McDowell,1973, pp.192-3/ and F.M. Cornford, 1957, pp.108-9.

12 Plato emphasizes on this pre-condition especially in *Phaedo*, 75a 11- b2, c 3-4, and 75 b 4-d.

13 It must be noted that here what we are concerning with is only the role of the senses and sense-perceptions in the process of recollection, not the complete similarity between sensible appearances and corresponding ideas with emphasizing on the reliability of senses and sense-perceptions.

5

Another argument against innatism. In Parmenides, in responding to Parmenides' question whether there are ideas for man, fire and water as for resemblance, irresemblance; unity and plurality, says Socrates, I have often been puzzled about those things, Parmenides, whether one should say that the same thing is true in their case or not (130c)'.

This uncertainty about the realm of the world of ideas can easily reckoned a sign for his disbelieving in innatism, and that our reaching to the world of ideas and our knowledge about this world come only after the preliminary stage cited in Republic.

Now, in spite of opposite views of some modern interpreters, we can easily conclude, as Alfred Edward Taylor (1960, p.136). Concluded, that the doctrine of recollection 'is not a theory of "innate ideas", or "innate knowledge", in popular sense of the words'; i.e. man, for Plato, has no prepared knowledge about ideas or judgments when he 'comes to being'.[16]

We thus conclude from all the mentioned points that Plato's doctrine of anamnesis, therefore, is not the same as innatism.

Endnotes

[1] Descastes, in a letter to G. Voetius, says that socrates's conversation with the boy can be a good sign of Plato's inclination to philosophical innatism (see Jolley, 1990, p.163). Leibniz thinks that the doctrine of recollection leads to innatism: (1996, p.789). Kant sees Plato as the chief of the noologists, that is the chief of those who believe the modes of knowledge through pure reason are "in independence of experience they have their origin in reason" (see, 1933, BB 82, A 854).

As to contemporary epistemology, see, for example, to Paul Moser 1996, p.104/ Robert Audi, 1998, p.71, N.3/ John O. Nelson in Paul Edwards, 1967, Vol.7, p.197.

This belief is so well-worn that, for example, Louis P. Pojman in his book *The Theory of Knowledge* (1999) – which contains some readable and important passages and papers on epistemology – in the chapter devoted to, innate ideas, in pp. 16-22, only quotes a passage from Plato's Meno as a text in which the innate knowledge is introduced.

Of Iranian contemporary scholars, Mortaza Motahhari says "Plato regards all our knowledge as innate and knowing as recollecting" (see, 1376 A.H., Vol.6, p.82).

about the essence and the truth, and seek after them.

Meanwhile, there are sciences which can lead to perceiving the true being. Arithmetic is one of these, provided that we do not learn it merely for its usefulness in commerce, but do learn it an introduction to real true knowledge: 'it strongly directs the soul upwards and compels it to discourse about pure numbers" (525d), and 'it plainly compels the soul to employ pure thought with a view to truth itself" (526b). It is for this reason that those who are trained in this improve and become quicker in training in other fields, and we can not easily find any discipline more difficult than this for learning (526 b-c).

The second discipline of this kind is geometry, provided that it too to compiling the soul to contemplate essence, but if we confine it to the sensible world it would not be useful for reaching to true knowledge and understanding the idea of 'good' (526e). These are other sciences which can play the same role; including the study of the third dimension or solids (which has been neglected so far) (528b), and the astronomy which is the fourth of the introductory sciences for leading us to the dialectic, i.e. to the science of true and changeless beings (528e). The effect of these introductory sciences on our minds is comparable with the removing of band from hands and feet of the cave-prisoner, his turning back upward the mouth of the cave, and finally avoiding the shadows and images and approaching to the truth of the things and to the idea of good (522 b-c). So, anyone who wants to reach to the dialectic, the science concerns not with the image of truth but with the truth itself, must learn these introductory sciences first. But we should not say everybody can learn these science and reach to the dialectic; for succeeding in this way, one must have 'a certain keenness for study, and must not learn with difficulty' and have 'a good memory and doggedness' (535b-c). The disesteem of philosophy in our age is 'caused by the unfitness of her associates and wooers' (535c), and we must try to choose the befitting persons for learning these introductory science and reaching to the dialectical stage.

Therefore, we find no trace of innatism in the allegory of cave, nor in moving upward dialectic and reaching the true being. One must necessarily begin the whole process from the sense-perception and then finally reach to the cognition of true being. Even here, that is not that everybody is of mental and natural ability to succeed in this way; hence we are in need of minute selection for finding those who can walk this way successfully and would not bring infamy and disesteem for philosophy.

and go up to the external world: the education can not produce in the soul of the man an insight which does not exists; such an insight exists in it from the beginning, but his soul is not working in a way it must, and the role of the education is to make it work so, that is, to turn it towards real and unchanging world; Just as the eye has the power of sight from the beginning, and no one can produce the sight in the eyes of a blind, and it is enough for seeing that we turn our eyes towards a thing we want to see. It must be added that it does not suffice that we merely turn our eye, for encountering what we want to see we must turn the whole of our body toward it (518-ad).

> Then, there might be an art [i.e. education], an art of the speediest and most effective shifting or conversion of the soul, not an art of producing vision in it, but on the assumption it possesses vision but does not rightly direct it and does not look where it should, an art of bringing this about. (518d)

How does human soul shift where it should? For this, it must first earn the sort of sense-perceptions which provoke the power of reflection and thinking. If we, for example (Plato's own), consider our little finger, second finger and middle finger, to see these merely from the view that they are fingers does not provoke a thought in us, for our sight always sees them as finger not opposite of finger. Only the sense-perception in which the thing and its opposite is reported to us can provoke or awaken our power of thinking. For instance in perceiving hardness and softness the faculty of reflection and thought are awaken, for 'the sensation that is set over the hard is of necessity related also to the soft, and it reports to the soul that the same thing is both hard and soft to its perception' (524a). They are, then perceptions which produce their opposites in us at the same time, and therefore are not reliable and must be examined. This examination naturally will begin by the aid of arithmetic, for it must be examined weather these two sensations belong to one thing or to two things, and this requires applying the arithmetic. Besides, this examination require that the soul ask itself what is the 'hardness in itself' or the 'softness in itself'. Some sense-perceptions, thus, immediately lead us to this truth that there are certain matters the understanding and examining of which is the task of intellect not of sense. A thing can be perceived completely by our sight or any other sense, it cannot attract the soul to its essence; but a thing the sense perceives it by its opposite can provoke the intellectual reflection and make the intellect to request

condition only for recollecting the forgotten knowledge about the origin *sensible realities,* but according to the principle of the association of the idea, which has been introduce in *Phaedo* (Plato, 1989, 73c4-d11) it is also condition for recollecting the forgotten knowledge about the non-sensible things, and this recent recollection follows the sense-perception and recollection of the knowing about nature and truth of sensible things. According to this principle 'a person on seeing or hearing of therewise noticing one thing not only becomes conscious of that thing but also thinks of a something else which is a object of a different sort of knowledge' (73 c 4-8).[13] Plato, I think, means that when the sense-organs work and we earn sense perceptions, we can remember the forgotten ideas corresponding to this sensible thing, and this remembering in turn can help us in remembering the other idea which has no sensible manifestation. What makes this commentary possible is the principle of kinship of nature (the φύσις which is all the being), which Plato has borrowed from his Puthagorean-Orphic ancestors: 'wise men say that the heavens and the earth, gods and men, are bound together by fellowship and friendship'.[14] It is for this reason that the wise men call the world κόσμος (i.e. order of things). The principle of the kinship of the nature and the relationship of its parts is one of the foundations of the doctrine of recollection, and we should neglect it in understanding the doctrine.[15] What upon which we are emphasizing here is that we must use our senses and earn sense-perceptions at the beginning of process of learning, and this is very far from innatism.

Moreover, it is also easy to show that earning the true knowledge – which concerns with ideas and the idea of Good – occurs in Platonic teachings in a way which is far from innatism. The *Republic* (book VII) here is very important. The allegory of cave in the beginning of this book represents an special epistemological course in which we go up from the stage of opinion to the stage of belief and from that stage to stage of understanding and then to the stage of knowledge. The ontological aspect of this epistemological course is that when we are imprisoned in the cave we are concerned with the shadows of the reality, the shadows which consist of the world of changing and becoming, and the objects of the belief and opinion; but after realizing from the cave we see the realities outside of it, and especially the sun, which is the idea of Good; these are the true realities and the object of true knowledge (533 e - 534α).

No one, therefore, can teach the imprisoned unless by releasing him first, and then making him to turn back towards the mouth of the cave

original realities but with their shadows and imitations.

In other place (i.e. in *Theaetetus*) Plato says explicitly that Human mind (ψυχή) sees and hears by his eyes and ears (184d), and perceives the hardness of something hard and the softness of something soft through touch (186 b 2-3); but on the existence of the hardness and softness, on the contrariety between them and on the existence of this contrariety the mind itself judge for us through reflection upon them and comparison of the one with another (186b 6-9). Thus, it is necessary for human mind, in order to grasp the true nature (οὐσία) of a thing by itself and without the aid of the senses, to be acquainted with that thing by the senses and then contemplate on it's true nature 'through a long and troublesome process of education' (186 c4) and catch it;[10] and the doctrine of recollection refers to this 'long and troublesome process of education'. We can say, in a non-platonic terminology, only an image of the sensibles comes to the mind in the process of sense-perception, and in the process of developing these images (which Plato doesn't reckon knowledge) unto judgments (which are true knowledge for Plato) sense-perception plays no role;[11] but, in any case, the raw material of thinking about the truth of the things is provided by sense-perception. The analogy of Trojan horse (in *Theaetetus* 184 d2) is introduced to show that ear and eye, for example, are not independent in the process of hearing and seeing, but the ψυχή is in need of these organs for these perceptions; and for this reason Socrates tries to show that it is better to say that we see through eye than we see by eye. Sight is the act of the ψυχή, but an act for performing of which the ψυχή is in need of a organ called eye; and it is so about other sense-perception.

Plato never 'left the world of senses' in order, as says Kant (1933, B9, A5), to fly, on the wing of the ideas, in the empty space of the pure understanding, and seek the true essence of things, free from too narrow limits the sensible world sets on understanding. We tried, in what we said so far, to show how Plato, contrary to what Kant thinks about him, never neglected that without senses and sense-perceptions we can not succeed in searching the truth of things. It follows from the doctrine of recollection that Human beings have learnt the truth and then forgotten it along the process of coming to this world, and the learning is recollecting what has been forgotten; but we must note that the process of learning is in need of intellectual effort and a plenty of troubles, and that the sense-perception is a pre-condition for this intellectual effort;[12] so that were there is no sense-perception there no recollection of forgotten knowledge. The necessity of sense-perception is not a

impossible for us to reach to the knowledge unless we pass the third stage (i.e. the stage of perception and holding its data) and know the definition and the name of that realities: "if... a man does not somehow or other get hold of the first foure, he will never gain a complete understanding of the fifth" (*Seven Letter*, 342 e). Human soul, for Plato, is inquest of *ti* (τι, i.e. whyness, and essence) of the thing and this is the higher reality or the idea corresponding the sensible thing (for, as we know, he thinks that the soul itself belongs the world of that higher realities); whereas the three necessary preconditions of knowing that realities represent only *poion ti* (ποιον τι, i.e. quality and howness) of thing things (343b-c). Even the fourth precondition is, in a sense, in the sensible realm and we seek it in the world around us;[7] and, in principle, it is for this and because of the inability of language (343 a1) for transferring our contemplations about the essence and qualities of things that Plato thinks that we can not reckon the cognition acquired from these stages the complete knowledge, and we can not put what we got hold by intelligence (by contacting with higher realities in fifth stage) in the form of word and into the language and convey to other persons. These five stages, however, are necessary for soul's reaching to the higher reality; and it is necessary also to develop our mental powers unto its extremes by the way of conversation and by efforts and sufferings. It is in this case and on condition of the existence of some affinity between our souls and the higher realities that we can hope to reaching the knowledge and catching eternal truths and transcendent ideas. Plato adds here:

> Hardly after practicing detailed comparisons of names and definitions and visual and other sense perceptions,[8] after scrutinizing them in benevolent disputation by the use of question and answer without jealousy,[9] at last in a flash understanding of each blaze up, and the mind, as it exerts all its powers to the limit of human capacity, is flooded with light. (344b)

When he says "at last in a flash understanding of each blaze up, and mind... is flooded with light", he means that the higher intuition of the idea corresponding with this sensible thing occurs. This is the fifth stage, the stage which occurs (if it is to be occur at all) for a man after a plenty of mental efforts he performs after sense perceptions and after recognizing definitions and names. It is at this stage and after reaching to this stage that one understands that so far he has dealing not with

actually. It is after the process of *anamnesis* that the slave-boy in *Meno* achieves to ability in having knowledge, and if this process had not been perform he would have missed this ability. The recollection or learning, therefore, implies a special process which could not be performing without perception and intellectual effort. If the slave-boy lacked the sense organs and intellectual faculty[6], and of course this assumption is a repugnant one, how could the midwifery technique – Socratic or else – recollect (= teach) him any thing? Learning (or recollecting), in other words, is a process inward the learner and is performed through his intellectual efforts about his perceptions, so that if he avoids this effort, whatever the cause of the avoidance would be, no one can teach (recollect) him.

We think, therefore, that Plato doesn't say that since man has learned every thing «when he was not in human shape» (*Meno* 86a) (i.e. when his soul was not in his body) so he has real and actual knowing by his birth and is not in need of learning; by contrary Plato emphasize on the role of perception in the process of learning (or recollecting) and on the notion of equality, for example, say explicitly: we accept that "we are agreed also upon this point that *we have not and could not have acquired* this notion of equality *except by sight or touch or one of the other senses* (*Phaedo,* 75a)". (Italics are mine).

Thus we can infer that the doctrine of recollection is not a doctrine about the origin of the knowledge, but concerns with the ordinary process of learning, after repeated lives of course. It is in this way that in *Meno* (86b-c) Socrates expresses "I shouldn't like to take my oath on the whole story, but one thing I am ready to fight for as long as I can, in word and act – that is, that we shall be better, braves, and more active men if we believe it right to look for what we don't know if we believe is no point in looking because what we don't know we can never discover".

4

In the philosophical part of the *Seven Letter,* which is largely concerned whit epistemology, Plato says about the necessary preconditions of knowing the objective realities that five things are necessary to achieve to true knowledge: a name, a description, an image (sensible representations), a knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and actual objects of knowledge. He thinks it impossible for us to catch the realities (i.e. the actual objects of knowledge) unless we reach to the knowledge and it is

acquired knowledge, and whenever he wishes he can recall (and possess in this sense) and use it (198d). As in the metaphor of aviary we have two kinds of catching, one before having and with the result of bringing the bird in the aviary and the other after having and with the result of possessing and holding the bird, have so a man who has acquired and learned knowledge of a thing and has owned it for a long time can acquire and assent it again through recapturing it from his mind and teach it to another person or use it in any other way.

Now, we ask those who say flat has arisen the innatism by his theory of recollection: which of these two stages do you know the result of innatism, the stage of having (or the first capturing), or the stage of possessing (or the second capturing)? It is evident that no one can count the innatism as the possessing stage, for this absurd belief would lead to saying that everybody has the detailed knowledge of everything in every time, a corollary which is absurd and unacceptable so, we must think of those who attribute innatism to Plato that they take the doctrine of recollection to mean that everybody have the knowledge of every thing at every time but he is unaware of it, and in the process of teaching we only recollect the knowing of the learner. But the metaphor of aviary prevents this: only the one owns the knowledge who has already gathered the pieces of it in his mind and they are available to him whenever he wants. The 'meaning of knowing' which we quote from Plato (197e3-7), contains the element of availability; so that if a man has not access to a piece of knowledge he doesn't have and doesn't know it. If, then , it is in the course of dialogue and conversation that the learner finds his knowledge, we must seek the secret of the doctrine of knowledge in this point not in its initial and common meaning. It is for this reason that in *Theaetetus* and in this metaphor Plato says nothing of the recollection.[5] Another moral which can learn from this metaphor and applying it to the problem of knowledge by Plato is that the knowing person (who has the pieces of knowledge in his mind) is of ability which the ignorant person (who has not gathered yet the pieces of knowledge) privates it. This ability is not one which has its origin in the essence of human being, if so there would not be a difference between the knowing person and the ignorant; but this is secondary and acquired ability. *Anamnesis* in the sense of innatism reduces this secondary ability to an initial ability – which is the result of the human nature – and thus contradicts itself; for the process of *anamnesis* ends to the appearance of the secondary ability in the man, an ability which makes him, because of having it, would be equipped with the ability required for applying it

counterpart, it is impossible to learn (or recollect).

After discussing with slave-boy, and as an answer to Meno's repeated question weather virtue is teachable or a natural aptitude, Socrates says "if virtue is some sort of knowledge, is there a possibility of anyone teaching it?" (87b). If it is not some sort of knowledge it can be anything else, including a natural aptitude (*physei paragigentai*).[3] Here, the natural aptitude comes for its owner in a way which is contrary to earning by learning of practicing, or other way of acquiring. According to *Meno* 81c-86c, then, if a thing is natural aptitude, it is not teachable and acquirable at the some time. Natural aptitude is something a person has it, or must have it according to his nature; that means, it is something which is present to him from the beginning and so is innate (*engignontai*)[4] for him. In another words, for knowing what is innate, we need not to learn or remember ; and here "we needn't worry about which name we are to give to the process [i.e. the process of knowing what we don't know]" (87c2). Therefore the very fact that, at the beginning of *Meno* (70a1-4), virtue's being a natural aptitude is opposed to its being teachable shows that we must not take learning, even though we call it recollecting – although "we needn't worry about which name we are to give to this process" -, to signify that Plato believes in innate knowledge, whether it be about a concept or about a proposition.

3

The difference between 'having knowledge' (ἐπιστήμης που ἐξις *Theae.* 197b1) and, 'possessing knowledge' (ἐπιστήμης κτήσις, 197b4) is as important here as in *Theaetetus* about the accurance of false judgment. For clarifying what he means of this difference, there, Socrates appeals to the metaphor of aviary. In showing the difference between 'having' and 'possessing', he says: if a man has caught some wild birds and keeps them in an aviary, in a sense we might say he 'has' them all the time inasmuch as he possesses them. But in another sense he 'has' none of them unless he take and have hold any bird by catching (*Theae.* 197d-c). This metaphor is applied to the knowledge exactly (197e-198a): human soul or mind is like an aviary in which there are, instead of birds, pieces of knowledge; but, when we are babies we must suppose this receptacle empty' (197e1-2), and 'whenever a person acquires any piece of knowledge and shuts it up in his enclosure, we must say he has learned or discovered the thing of which this is the knowledge, and that is what "knowing" means' (197e 3-7). We might say such a person has the

> But how will you look for something when you don't in the least know what it is? How on earth are you going to set up something you don't know as the object of your search? To put it another way, even if you come right up against it, how will you know that what you have found is the same thing you didn't know? (80d)

The doctrine of recollection has been introduced as an answer which Socrates estimates as polemic. In defense of this doctrine, Socrates asks some questions about square from one of Meno's slave-boys and at the end extracts the rights answers out of his mouth, while he, being a salve, has been taught nothing about mathematics. Socrates shows that the boy knows the content of so called Pythagoras' rule, without learning it from teacher. The result Socrates gains is that the slave-body has had and has learned these subjects in another time and when he was not in human shape (86a). What was said, as Socrates believes, is not restricted in mathematical and geometrical sciences, but includes all 'other sciences' (85e); so we can say human soul 'since it is immortal and has been born many times, and has seen all things both here and in the other world, has learned everything that is' (81c).

According to the doctrine of recollection – which as we know is a legacy of Pythagoreans and is of close link with the Orpheo Pythagorean doctrine of reincarnation and so is not an invention of Plato himself – the slave-boy before his conversation with Socrates began knows nothing about the matter (*ibid*), but by virtue of this conversation he himself utters some true opinions about the matter (81b).

Socrates asks Memo as the slave-boy lives in his house he must know that weather someone has taught him these true opinions; and Memo assures that no man has taught him (85e). Hence Socrates argues that since nobody has taught the slave-boy these true opinions and since we saw that he possesses them, we must conclude that he has learned them not in this life but in some other period *(ibid).*

2

According to the doctrine of recollection, - whatever we say about its link with the *aporia* of *Meno*[2] - the perceptions and the intellectual effort of the learner are two necessary preconditions for his learning. Without the learner's own mental effort, we can teach him (or, cause him to recollect) nothing; and if he has no perception and does not see the sensible thing by seeing of which he is to be remembered of its forgotten

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Plato and Innatism

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Abstract
Plato's doctrine of recollection is often identified with innatism, and he is said to be an innatist. The present paper, alongside with explaining this doctrine and other related doctrines in Plato's epistemology, argues that the doctrine of recollection is not necessarily the same as innatism. It is a matter of fact that, in Plato's epistemology, perception and intellectual epistemic activity play a crucial role in the acquisition of knowledge.

Keywords: *Anamnesis, Doctrine of Recollection, Innatism, Perception, Intellectual Activity, Learning.*

1

Some philosophers and authors in the history of thought, especially some modern epistemologists think the innatism has begun by Plato's doctrine of *Anamnesis* (recollection).[1] The doctrine has been introduced by Plato first of all in *Meno* (72C-86C). The *Meno* begins by asking "is virtue something that can be taught? Or does it come by practice? Or is it neither teaching nor practice that gives it to a man but natural aptitude or something else?" (Plato, 1989, 70a). Socrates' answer to this question and the trend of conversation leads Meno to ask this epistemologic aporia:

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