

**THE METAPHYSICAL
BASIS OF
PLATO'S ETHICS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649468584

The Metaphysical Basis of Plato's Ethics by Arthur Bernard Cook

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ARTHUR BERNARD COOK

**THE METAPHYSICAL
BASIS OF
PLATO'S ETHICS**

THE
METAPHYSICAL BASIS
OF
PLATO'S ETHICS

55-738

BY
ARTHUR BERNARD COOK M.A.
FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

"Quis ille primus, cuius ex imagine
Natura solers finxit humanum genus,
Aeternus, incorruptus, aequaevus polo,
Unusque et universus, exemplar Dei?"—

MILTON

Cambridge
DEIGHTON BELL & CO.
LONDON GEORGE BELL & SONS
1895

CAMBRIDGE
PRINTED BY JONATHAN PALMER
ALEXANDRA STREET

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	ix
PART I. THE PLATONIC THEORY OF MIND	1
§ 1. The <i>Parmenides</i>	1
§ 2. The <i>Sophist</i>	17
§ 3. Aristotle's <i>Psychology</i>	23
PART II. HIGHER AND LOWER MENTALITY	54
§ 1. Purpose and Necessity	55
§ 2. Identity and Difference	68
§ 3. Theology	85
PART III. METAPHYSICAL DESCENT AND MORAL ASCENT. 113	
INDEX LOCORUM	153

Readers 2.28.35 N.T.H.

7

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

PREFACE

Τί οὖν ἡμεῖς ἐροῦμεν ἐπὶ τοσοῦτοις καὶ τοιοῦτοις ἐξηγηταῖς τοῦ Πλάτωνος; καὶ τί προσθήσομεν ἐκ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἐπιπέρας:

PROKLOS *in Parm.* ed. Cousin vi. 30.

THE following essay is neither a systematic account of Plato's metaphysics, nor an adequate exposition of Plato's ethics. Its scope is a narrower one. It aims at clearing up the connection between the two. And, if the attempt has led me to reinterpret the metaphysical scheme that underlay the ethics of matured Platonism, my purpose throughout has been to show how intimately—and indeed vitally—the latter was connected with the former. Thus far at least I find myself in accordance with the general tendency of modern Platonic criticism. For the supposed independence, not to say antagonism, of the several parts of Plato's philosophy, which still mars the work of certain exponents, is nowadays falling into disrepute. We are beginning to look askance on all constructions involving the philosopher in incongruous positions. And this is due partly, I think, to

a growing appreciation of the artistic side of his thought, partly to special efforts that have been made to determine from theoretical content or linguistic style the true order of the Platonic writings. The former movement postulates that here, if anywhere, a speculative system must mean a harmonious whole; the latter has shown that sundry seeming inconsistencies are but tide-marks of a progressive development. But, whatever be the precise causes which have of recent times tended to discredit the patchwork Platonism of the past, it will fairly be demanded of any fresh endeavour to articulate the Idealist doctrine that it represent that doctrine as an organic unity.

This being admitted, the only safe course is to regard the Platonic philosophy from the standpoint of some *ἔπος ὀρισθεὲς μέγας* for which Plato is himself responsible. Now of all such *ἔποι* that which is most constantly affirmed and most jealously guarded is the reality of the Ideal world. The late Dr. Maguire has somewhere said that "the objectivity of the Idea is the corner-stone of Platonism." I should prefer to substitute the term "reality" as a translation of *οὐσία*, because the cardinal dogma of the *Timaeus* asserts that the nature of *οὐσία* is to be at once *ταύτων* and

θάτερον, i.e. not only objective but also subjective. And here it may conduce to clearness if, by way of preamble, I sketch the main drift of my essay, indicating in the briefest possible manner how this theory of objective and subjective *οὐσία* furnished a satisfactory foundation for the superstructure of morality.

Plato conceived the universe to be a *νοητὸν ζῶον* containing within itself a series of *νοητὰ ζῶα*. Every such *ζῶον*, whether supreme or subordinate,—if it is to make good its claim to real being—must (he says) pass from the objective phase of self-identity into the subjective phase of self-differentiation. The former state consists in the intuitional exercise of pure thought; the latter comprises the emotive presentations of knowledge, opinion, sensation. But the passage from the one to the other is a necessary feature of each and every *νοητὸν ζῶον*. As regards nomenclature,—the supreme *ζῶον* in its higher condition is the sovereign Mind; in its lower condition it is the *θεοὶ θεῶν*. The subordinate *ζῶα* in their higher condition are the Ideas; in their lower condition they are particular specimens of the natural kinds. And since the higher mentality must be deemed superhuman, Plato calls the sovereign Mind