The metamorphosis of change: a study of Plato's theory of change

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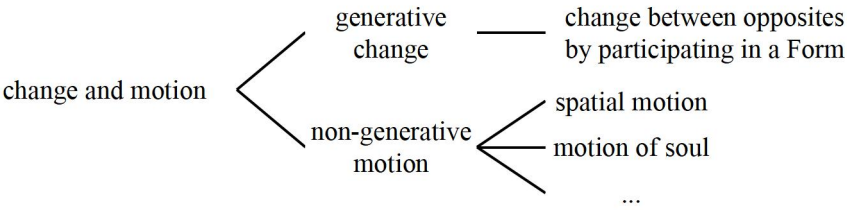
Chapter II The First Model of Change and Motion in Plato's Middle Dialogues

In the preceding chapter, we have previously posited that Plato encounters the philosophical legacies of pre-Socratic thinkers, specifically their perspectives on change and motion. This includes the following principles and a belief: The early Ionic philosophers unearthed the underlying patterns governing change between opposing forces. Heraclitus, on the other hand, introduced the theory of flux, asserting the constant flux and transformation of all things. Subsequently, the Eleatic philosophers put forth the principle of What-is, which, as we have observed, underpins the generative nature of all motion and change. Furthermore, it is widely accepted that the soul possesses both mobility and immortality. However, Plato does not unreservedly embrace these notions but engages in a deliberate and reflective examination of them. Indeed, they serve merely as the starting point for Plato's inquiry into the nature of change and motion, with his own theory gradually emerging through a protracted dialectical process.

In the middle dialogues, Plato establishes his first model of change and motion step by step. First, in the *Cratylus* and *Symposium*, he elucidates the starting point and introduces the Form. According to this framework, mortal entities are in a perpetual state of flux, whereas the immortal Forms remain immutable. Moreover, all changes inherently involve generation. Then, in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, Plato further argues that the Forms serve as the causal explanation (*aitia*) for the generative changes occurring between opposing entities. In essence, sensible entities can only come into existence by participating in the corresponding Form.

This progression not only elucidates the mechanics of generative change but also opens up space for the consideration of non-generative motion. For clearly some motions are not relevant to the participation of Forms. Hence, certain forms of motion, such as spatial motion and the motion of the soul, notably exemplified in the *Phaedrus* and other dialogues, fall outside the purview of generative change.



This model appears to be Plato's first response to Parmenides' philosophical challenge. However, it does not mark the culmination of Plato's explorations. Its notable internal vulnerabilities give rise to a series of robust critiques and reflections within Plato's later dialogues, ultimately laying the groundwork for his second model of change and motion

1. The Variable World and the Stable Forms: The *Cratylus* and the *Symposium*

Firstly, our endeavour shall be to elucidate the underlying phenomena and

character of change and motion as they are elucidated in both the *Cratylus* and the *Symposium*. According to the traditional view, Plato adopts, to some extent, the radical Heraclitean notion of flux, albeit within the confines of sensible particulars. In essence, Plato posits that sensible particulars consistently undergo perpetual changes and motions, while the Forms remain in a state of perpetual stability.[90] This idea is buttressed by Aristotle, who says,

> From his youth [Plato] was familiar first with Cratylus and the Heraclitean opinions that all things are always following and that there is no knowledge about them; **and these things he held even later**. ... For it was impossible that the common definition should be of any sensible things, since they are always changing. (*Metaph*. 987a29-b6)

In this exposition, both Plato and these pre-Socratic philosophers accept the extreme flux to some extent. The distinguishing factor between them lies in the pre-Socratics' failure to acknowledge the existence of unchangeable Forms. However, even if this interpretation is not entirely misguided, it remains somewhat rudimentary and vague in capturing the essence of Plato's genuine thoughts. While Plato does draw upon Heraclitus' theory of flux concerning the sensory and mortal realm, he does not merely replicate Heraclitus' ideas.

In this section, we are going to examine the first step of Plato's own thought. In the *Cratylus*, Plato explicitly critiques Heraclitus' original

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[90] Such as, Cherniss, 1944: 211; 218-219, n.129; Ross, 1951: 18-21; 155-157; Gulley, 1962: 70-76; 130-139. More recently, see Sedley, 2003: 109-12.

theory and reconstructs it by incorporating the Eleatic ontological principle of What-is. Then in the *Symposium*, Diotima reiterates this perspective as she describes the variable and mortal world. In both dialogues, the realm of Forms briefly surfaces as the antithesis of the ever-changing phenomena. Nevertheless, the precise relationship between Form and change, as well as the role of Form in the mechanism of change, remains undisclosed until a subsequent stage.

1.1 The *Cratylus*

The dating of the *Cratylus* remains a subject of considerable controversy, with scholars struggling to reach a consensus on whether it should be categorized among the late dialogues (such as *Sophist*, *Timaeus*, *Laws*), the middle dialogues (such as *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*) or other groups.[91] Nonetheless, we prefer to position the theory of Flux within the *Cratylus* among the earliest works within the middle Platonic dialogues. This preference stems from the fact that, in the *Cratylus*, Socrates meticulously expounds on etymologies rooted in Heraclitus' theory of flux, but only briefly alludes to them and introduces the concept of Form at the conclusion of the dialogue in an exceedingly concise and vague manner—he even appears to evade the use of the term Form. This suggests that the audience of this dialogue may not be well-acquainted with Plato's theory of Forms, as expounded in the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and other middle dialogues. Otherwise, Socrates could have directly presented more extensive details about the theory of Forms and would not have needed to repeatedly argue in the dialogue's final segment about why

[91] Cf. Luce: 1964; Ademollo, 2011: 20-21. Sedley even provides a view, suggesting that the hard core of this dialogue is written before the middle of Plato's middle period, with some certain parts of this dialogue reworked in his late years. Sedley, 2003: 6-14. Ademollo's argument against Sedley, see Ademollo, 2011: 68-70.

Forms do not undergo flux (*Crat.* 439b-440d). Therefore, even if Plato did compose this dialogue during his later period, its primary purpose appears to be laying the groundwork for neophytes in metaphysics who are about to delve into the core curriculum of middle dialogues and theory.

The central objective of the *Cratylus* is to reveal the difficulty of the prevalent Heraclitean doctrine—a principal intellectual adversary both Plato and his audience must contend with at this juncture—behind the etymologies of the name-givers. The contention arises from the belief that the notion of perpetual flux, where everything is in a constant state of change, fundamentally clashes with the concept of Form.[92] Thus, the central inquiries revolve around: What is the Heraclitean doctrine of flux that Plato explores in this context? What is Plato's stance regarding Heraclitus' theory of flux? And why is it incompatible with the Platonic Form? These questions represent Plato's initial efforts to grapple with Heraclitus' notion of flux, which, as previously argued in the preceding chapter, is the most iconic and representative view of the empirical world among the pre-Socratic philosophers.

Let us commence by delving into the Heraclitean doctrine of flux. Concerning this doctrine, a prevailing interpretive trend suggests that the *Cratylus* text hints at two levels of flux: extreme flux and moderate flux, with the former attributed to Heraclitus and the latter to Socrates, and even to Plato himself. Three primary interpretations can be identified, which we may categorize as 'gap readings'. First, the aspectual gap interpretation, as articulated by Ademollo. He posits that Heraclitus'

[92] Cf. Manson, 2016: 94.

theory espouses an extreme flux where everything undergoes perpetual change *in every respect*.[93] According to Ademollo, Plato criticizes this extreme Heraclitean flux while allowing for the possibility of moderate flux in sensible particulars, where changes occur *in some aspects* while stability remains in others. If this interpretation holds, it implies that sensible particulars also possess a degree of stability, as they can undergo changes *in some aspects* while retaining stability in others. Second, the temporal gap interpretation, as advocated by Calvert and others, posits that there exists a middle ground between the absolute rest which is *always* in the same state and the extreme change which is *never* in the same state.[94] In other words, Plato seems to imply, albeit perhaps inadvertently, that the sensible realm can *at times* be in a state of stasis, experiencing change intermittently. Thornton also asserts that 'totally changing' and 'totally unchanging' are *contraries* rather than *contradictories*.[95] Similarly, Baxter claims that Plato does assert that the sensible world is in extreme flux.[96] Barney, too, suggests an intermediate position between extreme flux and absolute stability in Plato's arguments.[97] Third, the ontological gap interpretation, as posited by Manson, proposes that the name-giver actually adheres to the notion of '*flow*' which does not entail substantial and intrinsic change. It is Plato who muddles the moderate '*flow*' and more radical '*flux*'. Manson contends that the concept of flux "entails further that change is chaotic

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[93] Ademollo, 2011: 451. Ademollo elaborates on this viewpoint in a subsequent paper. Cf. Ademollo, 2018. In this paper, he says, '[Plato] must believe that sensible particular enjoy at least some degree of stability'.
[94] Calvert, 1970: 39.
[95] Thornton, 1970: 591.
[96] Baxter, 1992: 176.
[97] Barney, 2001: 155.

and precludes the existence of any abiding thing."[98]

However, all these gap readings encounter difficulties, for there is no indication in the *Cratylus* that Plato endorses the idea of moderate flux in sensible particulars. As we shall soon observe, in the *Cratylus*, Plato does not advocate or imply that sensible particulars exhibit moderate flux by undergoing changes only *in some aspects* or *sometimes*. Manson's interpretation is closer to the text, as it suggests that the original Heraclitean flux theory is compatible with diachronic identity and existence, a notion that Socrates vehemently rejects. Nevertheless, Plato does not conflate extreme *flux* with moderate *flow*; rather, he seeks to demonstrate that the proponents of etymologies and Heraclitus' followers fail to recognize that their 'flow' doctrine inevitably leads to universal and substantial flux. In essence, the notion of moderate 'flow' does not genuinely exist in this text. In order to delve into this argument in greater detail, we will first examine the Heraclitus-style etymologies and subsequently address the concluding argument of the *Cratylus*.

In the *Cratylus*, Socrates meticulously catalogues a vast array of vocabulary terms, providing etymological analyses for each. He contends that through such analyses, one can discern the ancient name-givers' understanding of the essence of the objects they name. As van den Berg points out, those names do not simply mirror reality, but reflect the name-givers' interpretation of reality by dividing the world into groups.[99] Socrates says,

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[98] Manson, 2016: 66.
[99] Van den Berg, 2008: xiv.

> "Most of our wise men nowadays get so dizzy going around and around in their search for the nature of the things that are, that the things themselves appear to them to be turning around and moving every which way. Well, I think that the people who gave things their names in very ancient times are exactly like these wise men. They don't blame this on their own internal condition, however, but on the nature of the things themselves, which they think are never stable or steadfast (οὐδὲν αὐτῶν μόνιμον εἶναι οὐδὲ βέβαιον), but flowing and moving, full of every sort of motion and constant coming into being (ἀλλὰ ῥεῖν καὶ φέρεσθαι καὶ μεστὰ εἶναι πάσης φορᾶς καὶ γενέσεως ἀεί)…Perhaps you didn't notice that they are given on the assumption that the things they name are moving, flowing, and coming into being (φερομένοις τε καὶ ῥέουσι καὶ γιγνομένοις)." (411b4-c10)

Namely, the name-givers, who embrace the Heraclitean doctrine of flux, operate under the assumption that everything is perpetually in a state of motion, flowing and coming into being. According to Socrates, they hold the belief that the entities they designate are subject to ceaseless and profound change. However, it is essential to dissect the precise implications of asserting that everything is in a state of "flowing and moving." Furthermore, we must elucidate how these entities could be described as being "full of…constant coming into being." To undertake this analysis, it becomes imperative to closely examine a sequence of etymologies presented by Socrates (411b-426c) as substantiating evidence for his assessment.

No.	Name	Etymology	Meaning
1	**Wisdom**	*phronēsis = phoras noēsis* or, = *phoras onēsis*	The **understanding** of **motion** and flow. Or, **taking delight** in **motion**.
2	**Judgment**	*gnōmē = gonēs nōmēsis*	To examine or **study** whatever is **begotten**.
3	**Understanding**	*noēsis = neou hesis*	The **longing** for the **new**. (To signify that they are always coming into being.)
4	**Moderation**	*sōphrosunē = sōteria phronēsis*	The **saviour** of the **wisdom**.
5	**Knowledge**	*epistēmē = hepetai + e*	A soul **follows** the movement of things.
6	**Comprehension**	*sunesis = sullogismos* *sunienai* (literally)	A kind of **summing up**. The soul '**journeys together**' with things.
7	**Sophia**	*sophia = esuthē + epaphē*	The **grasping** of '**rush**'.
8	**The good**	*tagathon = thoon + agaston*	What is **admirable** about the **fast**.
9	**Justice**	*dikaiosunē = dikaiou sunesis*	The **comprehension** of the **just**.
10	**Just**	*dikaion = diaion + k* *= di'ho*	The fastest and smallest thing: governor and **penetrator** of everything else. **Through which** a thing comes to be is the cause.
11	**Injustice**	*adikia = a- + diaion*	A **hindering** of that which

			penetrates.
12	**Courage**	*andreia = anreia + d*	A battle as an opposing flow (**flowing back**).
13	**Male** **Man**	*arren & anēr = anō rhoē*	**Upward flow**
14	**Woman**	*gunē = gonē*	**Womb**
15	**Female**	*thēlus = thēlē = tethēlenai*	**Nipple** A nipple makes things **flourish**.
16	**Craft**	*technē → echonoē = hexis nou*	The **possession** of **nous**.
17	**Device**	*mēchanē = mēkos anein*	To **accomplish** some sort of **greatness**.
18	**Virtue**	*aretē = aei rheon*	Being unrestrained and unhindered and so **always flowing**.
19	**Vice**	*kakia = kakōs ion*	**Moving badly**. (All such things are mostly given to a soul in which this bad movement in relation to things resides.)
20	**Cowardice**	*deilia = desmos + lian*	The strongest (**too much**) of the soul's **shackles**.
21	**Aporia**	*aporia = a- + poreuesthai*	Things which hinder **motion**.
22	**Bad**	*kakon* ?	(A foreign origin?)
23	**Fine**	*kalon = kaloun*	To **name things** is to perform beautiful works.
24	**Disgraceful**	*aischron = aei ischei ton*	What **always restrains the**

		rhoun	**following** of the things that are.
25	**Advantageous**	*sumpheron* → *sumphora/sumpheronta* = *sumperipheresthai*	A soul is in accord with the **movement** of things which are being moved **in harmony with things**.
26	**Profitable**	*lusiteloun = luon + telos*	The good **does away with** any **end** to motion.
27	**Beneficial**	*ōphelimon → ophellein = auxein + poiein*	**To increase** and **to make**.
28	**Gainful**	*kerdaleon = kerdos = kerannutai*	The good penetrates everything and it has the power to **regulate** everything.
29	**Harmful**	*blaberon = blapton + rhoun = boulomenon haptein rhoun*	Which is **harming** the **flow**. **What wants to grasp the flow**.
30	**Hurtful**	*zēmiōdes → dēmiōdes = doun to ion*	**What shackles motion**.
31	**Day**	hēmera → himera/hemera = himeirousin	**Longing for** the daylight that comes out of the darkness.
32	**Yoke**	*zugon → duogon = duoin + agōgēn*	Whatever binds **two** animals together so that they can **pull a plough or cart**.
33	**Pleasure**	*hēdonē = hē onēsis*	Activity that tends towards **enjoyment**.
34	**Pain**	*lupē → dialusis*	The **weakening** of the body suffers when in pain.

35	**Sorrow**	*ania* → *hienai*	What **hinders** motion.
36	**Distress**	*algēdōn* → *algeinos*	(Seems to be a foreign name deriving from **distressing**.)
37	**Grief**	*odunē* → *endusis*	The **entering in** of pain.
38	**Affliction**	*achthēdōn* → *achthos*	Giving motion a **burden** to carry.
39	**Joy**	*chara* = *diachusis* + *rhoē*	An **outpouring** of the soul's **flow**.
40	**Delight**	*terpsis* → *terpnon* = *herpsis* + *pnoē*	Which **glides** through the soul like a **breath**.
41	**Lightheartedness**	*euphrosunē* = *eu sumpheresthai*	The movement of the soul that **well accords** with that of things.
42	**Appetite**	*epithumia* = *epi ton thumon iousa* *thumos* → *thusis*	The power which **goes against the spirited part of the soul**. The **raging** and boiling of the soul.
43	**Desire**	*himeros* = *hiemenos rhei*	What **flows with a rush** and sets on things, and thus violently drags the soul.
44	**Longing**	*pothos* → *pou*	A desire or flow not for what is present but for what is **elsewhere** or absent.
45	**Love**	*erōs* = *esros*	**Influx.** (What flows in from outside through one's eyes.)
46	**Opinion**	*doxa* → *diōxis*	The **pursuit** the soul engages

		or, → *toxon*	in when it hunts for the knowledge of how things are. Or more likely, the shooting of a **bow**.
47	**Thinking**	*oiēsis* → *oisis*	The **motion** of the soul towards every thing, towards how each of the things that are really is.
48	**Planning** **Wishing** **Deliberating**	*boulē* → *bolē* also, *boulesthai* & *bouleuesthai*	Trying to **hit** some target. Aiming at something.
49	**Lack of planning**	*aboulia* → *a-* + *bolē*	A failure to get something.
50	**Compulsory**	*anankē* → *ankē*	Like trying to get through a **ravine** which restrains motion.
51	**Voluntary**	*hekousion* = *eikon tōi inoti*	**Yielding to the motion**—the one coms into being in accord with our wish.
52	**Truth**	*alētheia* = *alē theia*	**A wandering that is divine**—the divine motion.
53	**Falsehood**	*pseudos* = *ps-* + *katheudousi*	Inactive, like people **asleep**.
54	**Being**	*on* & *ousia* → *ion*	**Going**.
55	**Name**	*onoma* → *onomaston* = *on hou masma estin*	A thing named: **a being for which there is a search**.
56	**Not being**	*ouk on* → *ouk ion*	**Not going**.
57	**Going**	*ion*	

58	**Flowing**	*rheon*	
59	**Shackling**	*doun*	
*	**Motion**	*kinēsis* = *kiein* + *hesis*	**Moving** and **going forth**.

This may appear somewhat perplexing at first glance. The names referenced do belong to various forms of motion. This might explain why Socrates characterizes them as being "full of every sort of motion". For instance, 'just' refers to something that penetrates and generates everything (412c-d), and 'vice' signifies what moves badly (415b). However, many of these etymologies describe momentary actions that are neither readily apparent nor continuous flows. This prompts the question: Why are they asserted to unveil the concealed truth that everything is *always* flowing and becoming?

Indeed, those activities, despite their brevity and specificity, refer to the universal and constant flow of things. 'Wisdom', for instance, is posited to denote an understanding of motion and flow, or to take delight in motion (411d). 'Understanding', similarly, is construed as the longing for what is always coming into being (411d). 'Knowledge' signifies the soul's following the movement of things (412a). 'Sophia' entails the grasping of motion (412b). 'Good' also implies that everything is moving, but some are quick while others are slow (412c). 'Courage', again, opposes the flow which is contrary to justice (413e). 'Aporia' hinders motion (415c), while 'Virtue', on the contrary, is unrestrained and constantly flowing (415d). And 'Disgraceful' is similar to 'Aporia' (416a-b). Then, 'Advantage' means the movement of a soul in accord with the movement of things (417a). 'Profitable' signifies the end of motion (417c). All of them show the continuous moving of things.

Through these meticulous etymological analyses, additional insights concerning the nature of these entities' motions and changes emerge. Firstly, it becomes evident that the immortals are in perpetual motion. The gods, encompassing celestial bodies and sky, are described as naturally running and moving (397c-d). This implies that this type of motion is eternal, lacking both a beginning and an end. This bears a resemblance to Alcmaeon's doxography, which was previously examined in the initial chapter (DK24 A12). And what's more important, the immortal serves as the source of motion for mortal beings. The name of 'Hestia' is said to come from the 'pusher' (*ōthoun*), for it is the cause and originator of the always-flowing things (401b-e); 'Pan' is also understood as the one "who expresses all things and keeps them always in circulation" (408c). Similarly, the soul—if it is considered immortal in the text—is also believed to sustain and support everybody and to make the latter live and move about (400a). Therefore, both the gods and the soul are not only in perpetual motion themselves but also move the soulless—an opinion commonly found in pre-Socratic philosophy, as explored in the preceding chapter.

Secondly, regarding mortal things, it is evident that they are always being moved and they themselves are in a constant state of motion and flux throughout their existence. Mortal beings undergo birth and destruction. And shown by the etymology of 'just', the mortal things are generated by what penetrates them. Socrates claims,

> "Those who think that the universe is in motion believe that most of it is of such a kind as to do nothing but give way, but

that something penetrates all of it and generates everything that comes into being." (412d2-5)

Consequently, mortal entities come into existence through a process of penetration. And then, it is clear that good properties or things always help the mortal things keep their motions; while the bad always hinder and restrain those motions. The cessation of motion, in essence, signifies death and destruction for the mortals. In the etymologies, 'Virtue', as previously noted, signifies an unrestrained and unhindered flow (415d). 'Gainful' implies that goodness permeates all things and regulates them (417a-b). The most helpful information emerges from the etymology of 'profitable'. It reveals that the fastest thing "doesn't allow things to remain at rest, or permit their motion to stop, pause, or reach an end. Instead, it always does away with any attempt to let motion end, making it unceasing and immortal." (417c) In contrast, 'Injustice' clearly serves as an impediment to that which permeates (413d). 'Aporia', representing a malign form of movement, suffers restraint and hindrance (415c). 'Disgraceful' is what hinders the flow of entities (416a-b). Again, 'Sorrow' refers to something which hinders motion (419c). This portrayal of the continuous motion and flow of mortal entities aligns unequivocally with what Socrates expresses in the *Theaetetus*. In this later dialogue, he asserts that Heraclitus and other philosophers maintain that everything is the offspring of flow and motion, and motion is beneficial for both the soul and the body, whereas immobility is detrimental, leading to decay and corruption (*Theaet.* 152e-153d).[100]

[100] Concerning the flux doctrine, the *Theaetetus* is obviously and closely related to the *Cratylus*. But in the *Theaetetus* Socrates seriously and systematically rejects Heraclitus' extreme flux theory by arguing that it is impossible for the sensible things to be always moving and changing. This criticism does not appear in the *Cratylus*.

A further inquiry arises: why does Socrates assert that these etymologies rely on the assumption that everything is *always coming into being*? While these analyses do mention the coming-into-being of things several times, it is evidently far away from the notion of 'always'. The explanation may lie in the perspective that every activity and motion is perceived as a form of a coming-into-being of things. For name-givers and the followers of Heraclitus, 'coming-into-being' of a thing does not necessarily entail a substantial change resulting in the loss of its self-identity. Rather, it may simply denote the acquisition of new characteristics or elements. This interpretation gains support from the etymology of 'understanding':

> "And if you want yet another example, understanding (*noēsis*) itself is the longing for the new (*neou hesis*). But to say that the things that are are new is to signify that they are always coming into being (τὸ δὲ νέα εἶναι τὰ ὄντα σημαίνει γιγνόμενα ἀεὶ εἶναι)." (411d8-e1)

The things, obviously, are always coming into being, continuously becoming something novel. And since they are *always* becoming new, it strongly implies that these entities do not forfeit their self-identities during their successive changes and motions. Instead, they continually amass fresh properties or attributes. Moreover, it is reasonable to posit that the motions and activities elucidated through these etymologies engender specific changes and coming-into-beings of things, as illustrated by the etymology of 'aporia':

> "Aporia is a vice of the same sort, and so, it seems, is everything else that hinders movement and motion. This makes it clear that the bad movement in question is a restraining or hindering motion, whose possession by a soul causes it to become filled with vice (κακίᾳ μεστὴ γίγνεται). And, if '*kakia*' is the name of that sort of thing, '*aretē*' is the opposite…it seems that it is given the name '*aretē*' because it is unrestrained and unhindered and so is always flowing." (415c5-d3)

Namely, when a soul possesses a bad movement, it becomes filled with vice and encounters an aporia. Through this process, the soul, adopting a new character, undergoes a 'coming-into-being'. Consequently, if we consider that everything is continuously engaged in diverse forms of motions and activities, as delineated in the etymologies, it is reasonable to concur with Socrates' assertion that everything is full of all kinds of motions and always coming-into-being. This explicit depiction aligns with the Heraclitean worldview attributed to the name-givers, where everything is in a constant state of flux. For mortals, goodness consistently augments the motion of entities, whereas malevolence obstructs and restrains them, ultimately culminating in the termination of motion, equating to destruction. Furthermore, every motion and activity represents a sort of coming-into-being. Through this coming-into-being, a thing does not necessarily undergo a substantial change and becomes a completely different thing. Thus, everything is constantly becoming.

However, it is evident that Plato does not subscribe to this Heraclitean perspective. In the final argument (439b-440d), Socrates elucidates his own stance regarding this matter. He poses the question: If the

name-givers' belief that everything is always moving and flowing is true, then can we say the Form or *F* itself (i.e. the beautiful itself) is always such as it is (τοιοῦτον ἀεί ἐστιν οἷόν ἐστιν, 439d5-6)? Subsequently, Socrates presents four arguments in an endeavour to demonstrate that there is no room for anything to remain "always such as it is" within the Heraclitean framework of the name-givers. According to Socrates' own metaphysical perspective, the always-flowing things have no diachronical self-identity. Let us examine these arguments in a step-by-step manner, commencing with the first argument:

> "But if it is always passing away, can we correctly say of it first that it is this, then that it is such and such? Or, at the very instant we are speaking, isn't it inevitably and immediately becoming a different thing and altering and no longer being as it was? (ἢ ἀνάγκη ἅμα ἡμῶν λεγόντων ἄλλο αὐτὸ εὐθὺς γίγνεσθαι καὶ ὑπεξιέναι καὶ μηκέτι οὕτως ἔχειν;)" (439d8-11)

This argument appears to serve as a preparation, paving the way for subsequent arguments. It can be reconstructed in several sequential steps, beginning with an omitted precondition:

(1) If everything is always moving and flowing, then *F* itself is also always flowing.

Here Socrates employs a *reductio ad absurdum* approach to elucidate the consequence for *F* itself within the framework of Heraclitean flux. The deductions made by Plato are as follows:

(2) If *F* itself is always flowing, it cannot be said of first that it is this, then that it is such and such.

(3) If *F* itself is always flowing, at each instant it immediately

becomes a different thing.

Clearly, (3) is an interpretation of (2), and (2) represents Socrates' rephrasing of the Heraclitean doctrine. It is plausible that (3) may not be the original reasoning of the name-givers but rather an extension made by Socrates. The purpose of Plato's argument here has been the subject of interpretation. Some scholars, influenced by similar arguments in the *Theaetetus*, suggest that Plato aims to underscore the extremity of flux, contending that the flow posited by the name-givers must occur in all aspects to meet the criteria of '*always* flowing'.[101] However, this interpretation lacks robust textual support.

Instead, this argument serves two primary functions. Firstly, Socrates employs it to elucidate the meaning of name-givers' 'always flowing' and offers a more stringent definition, laying the groundwork for subsequent discussions. Secondly, and more significantly, Socrates introduces his own conceptual categories and ontological thinking. In (3), the emphasis is placed on *F*'s becoming different, altering and being another at the moment when it changes. The terms 'being different' and 'being the same' are quintessentially Platonic expressions, reflecting Plato's own approach to addressing the concept of change. While previous passages describe the name-givers and Heraclitus' followers in the context of constant movement and flow, they do not explicitly address whether an entity becomes wholly different during its flux. In contrast, they tend to view ceaseless motion as a pivotal means of maintaining an entity's good condition and preventing its corruption or destruction. Socrates, on the other hand, seeks to argue that such forms of change and motion inevitably result in the loss of an entity's self-identity, transforming it into

[101] Ademollo, 2011: 468-473.

a substantially different entity. Consequently, the primary objective of the first argument is to contend that within the framework of the flux doctrine, *F* itself must undergo uninterrupted change and perpetually become a substantially different entity, thus "no longer being as it was" (439d11). This notion is conspicuously influenced by the Parmenidean principle of What-is. As discussed in the previous chapter, according to this doctrine, What-is always is and cannot be What-is-not. Any form of motion or change experienced by a being entails its transformation into a substantially different entity, adhering to the Parmenidean principle. Consequently, Plato's approach involves reconstructing Heraclitean flux through the lens of the Parmenidean principle.

Then, the second argument proceeds as follows:

> "Then how can it be something, if it never stays the same? After all, if it ever (*pote*) stays the same, it clearly isn't changing during that time, and if it always stays the same and is always the same thing, how can it change or move, given that it never departs from its own form?" (439e1-5)

The primary objective of this argument is to establish the following proposition:

(4) If *F* itself never stays the same, it cannot be something.

The initial portion of this statement has already been expounded upon in the previous argument, where it was demonstrated that everything, including *F* itself, undergoes perpetual change and becomes a different thing. Consequently, the focus of this argument shifts to the latter part of (4) that "it cannot be something". Then the argument, serving as a process

of demonstration, follows two stages:

(5) If *F* itself ever stays the same, it is not changing during that time.

(6) If *F* itself always stays the same, it never changes.

Clearly, (6) is based on (5). The underlying approach appears to be that if something does not change when it stays the same, then it never changes if it always remains the same. Nevertheless, this process itself may be subject to doubt, as (6) does not directly address what (4) seeks to establish. While (4) seeks to demonstrate whether *F* itself can *be something*, (6) solely examines whether it undergoes *changes*. Additionally, (4) seems to foreshadow that the ensuing steps will be based on negating the concept of 'never stays the same'—namely, not always moves, whereas (6) merely addresses 'never moves'. Consequently, there appears to be a gap between (4) and (6), prompting some scholars to speculate that Plato allows for the possibility of entities that move only *sometimes*.

However, there is no need to assume such an implication, as the argument at this point remains incomplete. Socrates omits the subsequent and most critical step:

(7) If *F* itself is something, it must always stay the same.

Indeed, (7) has already been implied since the beginning of the final argument. For the original question is whether "the beautiful itself is always such as it is" (439d5-6). This aligns with the Parmenidean principle that What-is always is and can never be What-is-not. And from (6) and (7) we can readily deduce (7*), which serves as the equivalent proposition to (7):

(7*) If *F* itself is something, it cannot change even once.

Then, if it never undergoes change, it certainly cannot "always change and never stay the same", which precisely aligns with the requirement of (4). Therefore, there is no gap in this argument. On the contrary, Socrates actually makes a highly strict demand that *F* itself cannot be something even if it only changes or moves once. For Socrates, there is no distinction between the things that *always* change or merely *sometimes* move, changes *in all aspects* or just *in some aspects*. Just as Melissus' fragment goes, even if "the whole had become different by a single hair in the course of thousands of years, it would have been destroyed in the whole of this time." (DK30 B7)

Up to this point, the intention behind these two arguments becomes evident. The first argument underscores that the Heraclitean flux, as articulated by the name-givers, necessitates an extreme and unceasing state of motion for everything. In contrast, according to Socrates' metaphysical perspective, significantly influenced by the Eleatics, these things should always move substantially and generatively by becoming completely different. The second argument highlights that *F* itself must always be the same as it is, so it is incompatible with any change and the always-flowing flux posited by the name-givers. And it is not difficult to recognize that all three gap readings are untenable. Here Socrates never intends to imply a moderate flux that changes *in some aspects* or *sometimes*. And he also does not confuse so-called moderate 'flow' with substantial and extreme 'flux' Instead, Socrates seeks to demonstrate that the Heraclitean flux inevitably results in a continuous and substantial process of coming-into-being.

The view, as well as the approach of demonstration, is reiterated in the

following epistemological arguments (439e-440b). First,

(8) If *F* itself never stays the same, it cannot be known.

The reason for (8) is elucidated by (3). Namely,

(9) If *F* itself is always flowing, at the instant the knower-to-be approaches, it immediately becomes a different thing or of a different character.

Similar to (7), it is imperative that knowledge, or that which can be known, remains immutable and free from any change,

(10) If *F* itself is knowledge, it cannot be what isn't.

Consequently, the logical conclusion from (9) and (10) is that knowledge is incompatible with any form of change.

Moreover, Socrates makes a further deduction that,

(11) If all things are passing on, there is no knowledge.

On the contrary, *F* itself, in its role as knowledge, does not undergo any transformation from knowledge itself, as demonstrated in (10). However, if *F* itself, or knowledge, were subject to the same constant flux as other things,

(12) If the knowledge passes on from being knowledge, at the instant it changes, it immediately becomes something other than knowledge.

In a manner similar to the structure of (5) and (6), Socrates proceeds to deduce,

(13) If the knowledge always passes on from being knowledge, there is always no knowledge.

It is essential to clarify that (12) and (13) represent logical deductions founded on the Heraclitean doctrine that everything is *always* flowing. However, (13) does not insinuate that something that changes is

sometimes to be known. As elucidated in (10), that which can be known must always be what it is and never change. Eventually, since Socrates and Cratylus both agree that there is *F* itself (439c) which is undoubtedly the knowledge according to the context,

(14) *F* itself or knowledge is not flowing or motion.

Thus, Socrates conclusively establishes that *F* itself or knowledge is incompatible with the Heraclitean flux doctrine embraced by the name-givers.

Hence, as exemplified by the final argument reconstructed above, Socrates neither refutes (nor simply endorses) the Heraclitean flux itself as a phenomenological portrayal of the empirical world nor does he negate the original and rudimentary experiences of the name-givers. Instead, he posits two fundamental arguments: Firstly, grounded in his metaphysical reflection, he asserts that if the sensible entities are subject to flux, then all their motions and changes inherently entail substantial generative processes. Secondly, he contends that *F* itself or Form cannot participate in such a form of flux. Within this very dialogue, Socrates does not explicitly divulge his stance regarding the empirical world, particularly whether sensible particulars perpetually undergo generative changes. This concept is revisited and somewhat reinforced by the speech of Diotima in the *Symposium*.

1.2 The *Symposium*

In the *Symposium*, the speech of Diotima presents a continuum of the metaphysical concept of change expounded in the *Cratylus*. The mortals are always changing. And every tiny change and action of the mortals, as elucidated in her discourse on love, should be construed as a form of

generation (*genesis*). In order to clarify what is love, she first claims that Eros is a daimon and an intermediate between the mortal and the immortal, given that he is the offspring of Poros and Penia (*Smp.* 201d-204c). Then, for us, love is the wish for happiness and always owning the good (204c-206a). To be more precise, it aims to possess the good forever by begetting in Beauty, either in the body or in the soul. She further claims that reproduction serves as mortals' means to seek immortality since it goes on forever (206b-207a). And it is the generative nature of the mortals that determines their approach to pursuing immortality (207a-208b). People would like to be pregnant in both body and soul for the sake of immortality (208b-209e). Then, Diotima unveils "the final and highest mystery"—namely, the famous ladder of love which is the ascent of the soul to Beauty itself (210a-212a). Concerning the generative nature of mortals, she says,

> "For among animals the principle is the same as with us, and mortal nature seeks so far as possible to live forever and be immortal. And this is possible in one way only: by reproduction, because it always leaves behind a new young one in place of the old (τῇ γενέσει, ὅτι ἀεὶ καταλείπει ἕτερον νέον ἀντὶ τοῦ παλαιοῦ).[102] Even while each living thing is said to be alive and to be the same (καλεῖται καὶ εἶναι τὸ αὐτό)—as a person is said to be the same from childhood till he turns into an old man—even then he never consists of the same things, though he is called the same, but he is always being renewed and in

[102] Similarly, in *Laws* IV, 721c: "And what makes the human race immortal is the way it leaves behind children, and their children, as successors, while itself always remaining one and the same. It is through the birth of children that mankind tastes immortality."

other respects passing away, in his hair and flesh and bones and blood and his entire body. And it's not just in his body, but in his soul, too, for none of his manners, customs, opinions, desires, pleasures, pains or fears ever remains the same, but some are coming to be in him while others are passing away. And what is still far stranger than that is that not only does one branch of knowledge come to be in us while another passes away and that we are never the same even in respect of our knowledge, but that each single piece of knowledge has the same fate. For we call studying exists because knowledge is leaving us, because forgetting is the departure of knowledge, while studying puts back a fresh memory in place of what went away, thereby preserving a piece of knowledge, so that it seems to be the same. And in that way everything mortal is preserved, not, like the divine, by always being the same in every way, but because what is departing and aging leaves behind something new, something such as it had been (οὐ τῷ παντάπασιν τὸ αὐτὸ ἀεὶ εἶναι ὥσπερ τὸ θεῖον, ἀλλὰ τῷ τὸ ἀπιὸν καὶ παλαιούμενον ἕτερον νέον ἐγκαταλείπειν οἷον αὐτὸ ἦν)." (*Smp*. 207c9-208b2)

In this passage, the body, soul and knowledge of the mortals are all argued to be in continuously changing and constant generations. On one hand, it is evident that mortal beings exhibit a form of Heraclitean flux, as they are described.[103] On the other hand, even the tiniest change in the body, such as the metabolic process, culminates in a complete and substantial generation of the body. As articulated in Diotima's speech, during those changes, the body cannot remain its self-identity and is

[103] Cf. Guthrie, 1962: 210; Kahn, 1979: 167.

merely “said to be the same”. Consequently, the passing away and subsequent renewal in any regard explicitly signify the destruction of the original body and the birth of the successor. The soul and knowledge appear to share a parallel fate, continually generating and never remaining the same. Diotima suggests that the soul undergoes substantial renewal, becoming a different entity by altering its behaviours, customs, opinions, emotions, and more. Similarly, our knowledge is also refreshed all the time through the process of forgetting and studying.

Scholars have previously noted that the portrayal presented by Diotima in this context foreshadows the philosophical perspective of David Hume, presenting a bundle theory of identity.[104] Namely, mortals never possess diachronic self-identity; instead, they are dynamic collections of a series of successive, similar but different pieces. Indeed, this idea finds its roots in a historical tradition that encompasses certain pre-Socratic philosophers, particularly the Eleatics. As discussed earlier in the previous chapter, Melissus puts forth a similar argument regarding What-is, asserting that it “could not either be destroyed…nor suffer either pain or distress. For if it underwent any of these affections, it would no longer be one.” And he further emphasized that even the change of a single hair equates to destruction for What-is (DK30 B7). According to the Parmenidean principle of What-is, all forms of change and motion, including feelings, are perceived as threats to the identity of What-is. From this perspective, any alteration or motion experienced by a being necessitates substantial generation, transforming it into an entirely distinct different thing. Namely, the previous one is destroyed and

[104] Price, 1989: 23; Corrigan, K. & Glazov-Corrigan, E., 2004: 143.

replaced by a new one that comes to be. The resemblance between Diotima's argument and Melissus' fragment is readily apparent, as Diotima's speech also adheres to this pattern of generation, underscoring the Parmenidean principle of What-is as the foundational ontology of her theory of change. This inclination aligns precisely with what Socrates introduces in the concluding argument of the *Cratylus*, wherein he reconstructs the Heraclitean flux theory and asserts that if things are indeed in perpetual flux as postulated by the name-givers, these changes are inevitably substantial generations.

Furthermore, this inclination is discernible in Diotima's exposition of Form a few pages later. She elucidates that:

> "[The Form (such as Beauty)] always is and neither comes to be nor passes away (ἀεὶ ὂν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον), neither waxes nor wanes...it is not beautiful this way and ugly that way nor beautiful at one time and ugly at another, nor beautiful in relation to one thing and ugly in relation to another; nor is it beautiful here but ugly there, as it would be if it were beautiful for some people and ugly for others…it is always one in form; and all the other beautiful things share in that, in such a way that when those others come to be or pass away (γιγνομένων τε τῶν ἄλλων καὶ ἀπολλυμένων), this does not become the least bit smaller or greater nor suffer any change." (210e6-211b5)

As what has been briefly argued, in the *Cratylus*, the Form always is and never has any sort of change. The Form *F*-ness always is. The sensible

things, conversely, are unstable. They themselves can become *F* or not-*F*, and they can also become *F* or not-*F* in relation to something else or for some people. And then, all those changes, no matter being self-changes or relative changes, are thought to be 'coming-to-be' and 'passing away'. So obviously, those changes are all generative, which confirms again that Diotima's speech is built on the same ontological foundation as what is found in the *Cratylus*.

However, our understanding faces a challenge when considering the discussion on the immortality of the soul. From our vantage point, the soul presented in Diotima's speech appears to be mortal and perishable. It is depicted as continuously changing, characterized by the acquisition and loss of various customs, manners, feelings, and more. This perspective aligns with the interpretations of scholars such as Hackforth, who contend that the mortal soul can only aspire to vicarious immortality, a view incongruent with the belief in an immortal soul found in dialogues like the *Phaedo* and other dialogues. He thinks it is because Plato had a sort of 'temporary scepticism' about the doctrine of the immortal soul at the time when he wrote the *Symposium*.[105] Nightingale further extends this argument, suggesting that according to Diotima's conception of the soul it ages and perishes alongside the body.[106] While we may not wholly subscribe to these interpretations, we acknowledge their foundational premise that the soul in Diotima's speech is both generative and mortal.

Conversely, some scholars assert that Diotima does not necessitate the mortality and generativity of the soul, thus averting a conflict with

[105] Hackforth, 1950.
[106] Nightingale, 2017.

dialogues like the *Phaedo* and other dialogues. These scholars propose that the soul is also implied to be immortal by nature in this dialogue. Luce, for instance, posits that the term *psyche* discussed here refers to life rather than soul.[107] More recently, Reed advanced the idea that the philosophers attain true immortality rather than the vicarious one. According to him, Diotima never denies that the personal identity is able to persist over time. Conversely, the same person maintains its continuity because only parts of him are constantly replaced and renewed.[108] And some adopt a more moderate standpoint, suggesting that the soul is not inherently immortal but becomes immortal. For instance, O'Brien believes that the imperishability of the soul, in Diotima's speech, is the "never-ending blessedness to be achieved through a life of philosophy".[109] Sheffield advocates human immortality in the sense of partaking in the divine and becoming godlike.[110] Hooper asserts what the *Symposium* is really concerned with is "the eternal preservation in the world of those parts of oneself that one values."[111] At any rate, if these scholars' opinion that the soul in Diotima's speech is immortal is accurate, then our previous judgment that the soul is mortal and generative because of the acceptance of the Parmenidean principle of What-is would stand on the verge of collapse.

It is essential to recognize that the motivation behind proving the immortality of the soul in Diotima's speech stems from concerns about its compatibility with other dialogues. However, in the pursuit of a coherent

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[107] Luce, 1952. Also, cf. Morrison, 1964:44.
[108] Reed, 2019.
[109] O'Brien, 1984: 201.
[110] Sheffield, 2006: 147.
[111] Hooper, 2013: 547.

understanding of Plato's various dialogues, we should not disregard the primary imperative of comprehending the precise ideas conveyed in each individual dialogue. We are hence going to present the following arguments: (1) The passage from Diotima's speech cited above does not solely indicate the mortality of the soul but specifically aims to establish the generative nature of the human soul. Subsequently, (2) the notion of the mortal soul aligns more closely with a literal and natural reading of the text.

Returning to the text, the passage from Diotima's speech cited above (207c9-208b2) addresses the question of what causes love and desire to reproduce human beings and animals without understanding and reason (207a-c). But this response is unconventional. For in this passage, rather than discussing the reproduction of being pregnant in body and soul, which would be a more intuitive response—as she does elsewhere (206c; 208d-209a, etc.), she focuses on the essence or pattern of reproduction, namely on renewal and refreshment. This pattern, however, does not pertain to the essence of love—namely, the want to possess good forever by giving birth in beauty (206a-b; 209b-c, etc.). Moreover, within this text, body, soul and knowledge themselves, as mortals, somehow share in immortality by reproducing a similar successor in place of themselves and thereby preserving themselves, whereas the offspring through the pregnancy in body and soul which she mentions later, such as children and glorious fame, are obviously not same with their parents (208c-209e).[112] Consequently, this response seems somewhat abrupt in the context and perplexes the young Socrates (208b7-9). This is because Diotima's precise focus in this passage is not *how* the mortals love and

[112] Cf. Obdrzalek, 2010: 421; Price, 2017: 181, n.12.

pursue immortality, but rather *what* causes and motivates them to do so. And the answer is quite straightforward: the nature of the mortals. The pursuit of immortality is deeply ingrained in their nature. Diotima's response commences with the assertion that "for among animals the principle is the same as with us, and *mortal nature* seeks so far as possible to live forever and be immortal" (207c9-d2). Subsequently, the constant generation (*genesis*) of mortal bodies, souls and knowledge is provided to illustrate the mortal nature of reproduction (*genesis*). According to her argument, through continuous renewal and refreshment as generation and reproduction, body, soul, and knowledge appear to be preserved, as the newly generated successor remains similar to the preceding one that has passed away. Thus, as the divine is immortal due to "always being the same in every way" (208b8), mortals can partake in immortality by seemingly remaining the same through their internal succession. In essence, it is inherent in the nature of mortals to reproduce and generate, and through this process, they appear to be preserved as they remain similar to their replaced predecessors. As such, they draw closer to true immortality, which is characterized by unwavering sameness. Therefore, mortals are naturally inclined to pursue and participate in immortality through the very nature of reproduction and generation.

Therefore, the mortals are demonstrated to possess the nature to seek immortality. In light of this, the soul, as well as the body and knowledge, must also be mortal and generative. Otherwise, the soul would lack the inherent disposition to pursue immortality. If the soul were immortal, there would be no need for Diotima to argue that the soul of mortals seeks immortality through reproduction and generation. Thus, Diotima clearly

endeavours to establish that the soul is both generative and mortal in this text, a foundation for her entire speech. The attempts to advocate for the concept of an immortal soul in this context are untenable. As mentioned earlier, Luce contends that Diotima discusses life rather than the soul, and that this life is mortal and perishable, aligning with the concept of an immortal soul in the *Phaedo* and other dialogues.[113] However, there is no indication of a distinction between life and soul within the *Symposium*. Diotima does not intend to posit an immortal soul behind mortal life. Furthermore, if the soul were immortal, as we have argued, there would be no need for it to seek immortality. O'Brien, besides, asserts that Diotima avoids making the soul generative in the text. For she only argues for the mortality and generation of the body but keeps silent on the mortality of the soul.[114] Reed goes further, claiming that what Diotima conveys is that "the things 'in the soul' (207e1) come into existence and pass away," referring to the contents of the soul rather than the soul itself, and thus asserting that the soul is not argued to be mortal in this passage.[115] Nevertheless, these readings lack substantial support from the text. Sheffield has already contested these viewpoints, emphasizing the inconsistency of arguing for the mortal nature of the body while excluding the soul, especially when Diotima explicitly states that the generative nature exists "not just in his body, but in his soul, too" (207e1-2).[116] Reed's argument also fails to provide ontological evidence to substantiate the distinction between "the contents of a soul" and "the soul itself" within the context. Once again, the speech aims to assert that the soul is mortal and perishable. Diotima explicitly states that the

[113] Luce, 1952.
[114] O'Brien, 1984: 195.
[115] Reed, 2019: 815-816.
[116] Sheffield, 2006: 147-148, n.47.

immortal is “always being the same in every way” (208b1). Given the soul's continual changes due to the coming-to-be and passing-away of manners, customs, opinions, and more, it can never remain the same and is unequivocally mortal. And because of this mortal nature of the soul, the soul cannot attain real immortality even at the end of the ladder of love and ascent to Beauty. Human beings can, at most, be close to immortality by begetting in beauty and giving birth to the true virtue (212a-b). In this scenario, it is the achievement of human beings, rather than their intrinsic nature, that leads to immortality. This does not negate the mortal nature of the soul. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the mortal soul undergoes generation and destruction, akin to soulless bodies, due to the acquisition of new manners, customs, opinions, and other attributes.

Therefore, the *Symposium*, as well as the *Cratylus*, reinforces our previous analysis in the first chapter, demonstrating that Plato’s exploration of the theory of change and motion is profoundly influenced by pre-Socratic views regarding the empirical world. On one hand, Plato acknowledges that every sensible entity is in a perpetual state of flux, a stance aligned with the arguments of Heraclitus and his followers. On the other hand, inspired by the Eleatic philosophers, Socrates interprets these changes as generative processes. Furthermore, his acceptance of the Parmenidean principle of What-is prompts him to critique the Heraclitean flux theory by asserting that the Forms or true Beings remain unaltered, impervious to the process of becoming.

However, from this standpoint, even the soul is considered mortal, as it is undeniably characterized by motion and activity. Nonetheless, this need not engender concerns about a conflict between the *Symposium* and other

dialogues regarding the immortality of the soul. It is important to recognize that the *Cratylus* and the *Symposium* do not represent Plato's final stance on the theory of change. Diotima is even described as arguing "in the manner of a perfect sophist" (*Smp*. 208c1). Plato's first model of change, based on the preparation of the *Cratylus* and the *Symposium*, will come very soon.

2. The Form and the Mechanism of Generative Changes: The *Phaedo* and the *Republic*

A pivotal detail from the Symposium foreshadows the fundamental insight of Plato's first model of change. Diotima claims that the Form *F*-ness always is, while the sensible things, by sharing (or losing) the Form, come to be *F* or not-*F* (*Smp.* 211b). Although the participation of Forms is a familiar notion within the realm of Platonic philosophy, its significance should not be underestimated. This concept introduces a mechanism and interpretation of change that Plato comprehensively develops in his works, particularly the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*. Plato acknowledges the early Ionian philosophers' proposition regarding the change between opposites as an accurate phenomenological depiction of sensible entities. Furthermore, he emphasizes that these changes are inherently generative in nature. Consequently, Plato introduces the concept of Form as the causal and explanatory foundation for this mechanism of generative changes. Participation in the Form of *F*-ness, Plato asserts, leads to a process of generation whereby a sensible entity becomes *F*. In doing so, Plato provides both an ontological and normative interpretation of the phenomena of change. However, it is essential to note that this rigorous philosophical analysis of change simultaneously suggests the potential existence of non-generative motion, thus modifying

the prevailing doctrine posited in the *Cratylus* and *Symposium*, which asserts that all changes and motions are inherently generative.

2.1 The *Phaedo*

In the *Phaedo*, Plato presents for the first time an original and normative theory of change, delineating his approach into two distinct stages. Initially, he expounds upon a general pattern of change occurring between opposites, subsequently introducing Form as the philosophical cornerstone supporting this pattern. These two stages warrant closer examination.

Within the Cyclical Argument, posed by Cebes in an endeavour to establish that "the soul still exists after a man has died" and "still possesses some capability and intelligence" (*Phd.* 70b), Socrates attempts to justify the "ancient theory" (παλαιὸς λόγος) in a more philosophical way that the souls arrive the underworld from here and then again arrives here from the dead (70c). In order to accomplish this objective, he embarks on a passage concerning the nature of becoming:

> "Do not, he said, confine yourself to humanity if you want to understand this more readily, but take all animals and all plants into account, and, in short, for all things which come to be, let us see whether they come to be is the opposite of the ugly and the just of the unjust, and a thousand other must necessarily come to be from their opposite and from nowhere else, as for example when something comes to be larger it must necessarily become larger from having been smaller before." (70d7-e8)

Namely, the characteristics of all things appear in pairs as opposites, such as large and small, just and unjust, etc. And the large(r) thing comes from the small(er) thing, and the hot(ter) thing comes from the cold(er) thing. Therefore, as a general rule, everything which comes to be must necessarily come from their opposite. We are not unfamiliar with this idea. As we have argued in the first chapter, it finds its early conceptualization in the works of Anaximander and Anaximenes, later being generalized by Heraclitus, and subsequently influencing a multitude of pre-Socratic philosophers, even including Eleatics such as Melissus. Socrates further claims,

> "There is a further point, something such as this, about these opposites: between each of those pairs of opposites there are two processes of becoming (μεταξὺ ἀμφοτέρων πάντων τῶν ἐναντίων δυοῖν ὄντοιν δύο γενέσεις): from the one to the other and then again from the other to the first; between the larger and the smaller there is increase and decrease, and we call the one increasing and the other decreasing." (71a12-b4)

Hence, the process of alteration between opposing attributes is herein defined as 'becoming/generation' (γένεσις). Consequently, for an entity to be alive, it must come from a state of being dead, and *vice versa*.[117] As Sedley aptly notes, this theory of change is presented as "a maximally general theory of change".[118] It encapsulates three fundamental propositions. The first proposition, commonly referred to as (1) "the Principle of Opposites": opposites only come from opposites (70e1-2;

[117] It proves that the soul must exist somewhere before it comes back to this world again (71b-72a). We will delve deeper into the subject of the soul at a later point.
[118] Sedley, 2012: 149.

70e5-6; 71a9-10). Greco reasonably interprets this formulation as follows: "For any *x*, and for any pair of opposite properties *F* and *G*, if *x* comes to be *F*, then it comes to be so only form being *G* and *vice versa*."[119] And further, (2) the Principle of Universality: the Principle of Opposites encompasses all entities that come to be (70d8-e1; 71a9-10; 71b8-10). Hence, all sensible things change between opposites. Finally, (3) the Definition of Becoming: The change between opposites of all things is defined as the generative becoming (71a12-b10). In order to gain a precise understanding of Socrates' comprehension of change and his theory thereof, it is essential to explore these three propositions individually.

First, what precisely does Socrates mean by using the term 'opposite'? This question could be traced back to Syrianus, the fifth-century Neoplatonist philosopher.[120] In this text, the usage of 'opposite' appears quite ambiguous. This ambiguity results from its apparent reference to various types of relationships, encompassing (i) relative sensible properties (such as large/small, weak/strong, swift/slow), (ii) evaluative contradictories (such as just/unjust), and (iii) that appear less relative or comparative (such as sleeping/being awake, being alive/being dead).[121] There are two main readings of the term 'opposites'. The majority contends that, notwithstanding the ambiguity, 'opposites' fundamentally

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[119] Greco, 1996: 228.

[120] Damascius, GC I.191., in Westernik, 2009: 194-197. Cf. Gertz, 2015.

[121] Hence, the 'opposites' seems to be merely a miscellaneous collection without a clear account. This vagueness, according to certain scholars, renders the argumentation somewhat crude and undermines the cogency of the Cyclical argument regarding the soul. If the pair of opposites, in this case, the living and the dead, are merely 'contraries,' then it remains plausible that the living can originate from a state other than the dead. Cf. Hackforth, 1955:64; Dorter, 1982: 37-38; Burger, 1984: 235, n.20; Rowe, 1993: 156. Also, cf. Bostock, 1986: 49-51.

alludes to ‘contradictories.’ Namely, if the opposite properties *F* and *G* are contradictory, *G* is equivalent to not-*F* while *F* to not-*G*.[122] The colder comes from not-colder—that is, hotter, while the alive comes from the not-alive or the dead. Sedley, however, claims that this solution fails to be satisfying. One of the strongest reasons he provides to criticize the contradictory reading is that it neglects Socrates’ repeated use of comparatives and then excludes the latter from the analysis of change. Indeed, the comparative predicates—such as ‘larger’ and ‘smaller’—are not contradictories, for Socrates also admits ‘equal’ as an intermediate between them.[123] Then, Sedley proposes an alternative interpretation known as ‘converse contraries.’ Namely, the contraries *F* and *G*, as the ‘opposites’, are ‘converse contraries’ when “*x* is *F* compared with *y* if and only if *y* is *G* compared with *x*.”[124] The hot is the opposite of the cold is because *x* is hotter than *y* only when *y* is colder than *x*.

Plato’s perspective on ‘opposites’ here appears multifaceted. Sedley rightly observes that while the contradictory interpretation disregards Socrates’ repeated use of comparatives, but his ‘converse contraries’ also do not entirely encompass the various forms of becoming between opposites that Socrates may have had in mind. Indeed, Socrates never asserts that opposites are necessarily comparative. Though he provides comparatives like ‘larger’ and ‘smaller’ as examples, he does not mention phrases like ‘more sleeping’ or ‘less alive.’ The dead, for instance, is intrinsically not alive and need not compare itself to the living, and *vice versa*. Besides, take a later case that Socrates discusses as an example

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[122] Barnes, 1978: 402; Dorter, 1982: 37-38; Bostock, 1986: 43-51 Rowe, 1993: 156. Cf. Sedley, 2012: 153.
[123] Sedley, 2012: 153.
[124] Sedley, 2012: 155. Also, cf. Justin, 2020.

(96e-97b)—one becomes two and two becomes one—clearly 'one' and 'two' are not Sedley's comparative 'converse contraries'. Socrates' usage of 'opposites' is so broad that it could include both 'contraries' and 'contradictories', for he wishes to provide a most inclusive description of the becoming of all things (70d8-e1)—the changes between large and small, just and unjust, as well as living and dead.

Evidently, Plato is not content with merely elucidating these phenomena. Subsequently, Socrates clarifies the underlying mechanism. In a change involving opposing attributes, sensible entities possessing those opposing attributes are named after the opposites themselves, namely, the Forms (103b-c). Moreover, Form serves as the cause behind the change between opposites. Through participation in the corresponding Form of *F*-ness, a thing comes to be *F* from its opposite not-*F*. We will revisit this point later.

Second, according to the Principle of Universality, Socrates asserts that the Principle of Opposites applies to all entities undergoing change, which is doubted by some scholars. They deny that change between opposites is a universal pattern or law for all things which come to be. Sedley, for instance again, claims that the theory of change here explicitly "restricts itself to changes to and from properties that have opposites."[125] For he believes the restriction is obvious shown at 70e2 ("all things come to be…from their opposites if they have such") and 70e5 ("whether those that have an opposite must necessarily come to be from their opposites").[126] Rowe also provides a similar reading in his

[125] Sedley, 2012: 149.
[126] Sedley, 2012: 140, n.3.

commentary.[127] Namely, they propose that among all entities undergoing change, only those possessing opposing attributes adhere to the Principle of Opposites by transitioning between those opposites. According to this view, the text implies the potential for entities to come into existence without undergoing change between opposites. However, this interpretation is untenable. No textual evidence suggests the possibility of entities coming into existence without undergoing change between opposites. Additionally, as previously argued, Socrates aims to establish a general rule encompassing "all things which come to be (ὅσαπερ ἔχει γένεσιν περὶ πάντων, 70d9)". Otherwise, a logical possibility would arise that the living and the dead are not opposites. Then even though the living inevitably comes to die, the dead may not become living. And the later argument based on the balance of the two processes of becoming between opposites (72a-d) also cannot work, for the living and the dead might not even be opposites. The living and the soul may come from something else or completely from nothing.[128] If this is so, the whole Cyclical argument is merely founded on the unreflective intuition that the living is the opposite of the dead (72c). On the contrary, the argument is much more reasonable from our perspective. The text at 70e2 and 70e5 should be read as all things which come to be must have an opposite and come from their opposites. The things which have no opposite cannot come to be at all. Then, the Principle of Opposites precisely covers all things which come to be. Therefore, given that the living invariably succumbs to death (71e4-6), it is explicitly established that the living and the dead are opposites and must come to be between one another. The Cyclical argument thus remains sound. Furthermore, Socrates' later argument on

[127] Rowe, 1993: 157.
[128] As it is suggested by Rowe, 1993: 156.

Form as what is responsible for (*aitia*) the generation and destruction also corroborates this interpretation. This argument undeniably relies on the premise that all entities change between opposites. Socrates does not engage with a kind of becoming which is not a change between opposites. Consequently, what Socrates posits here is more likely a universal principle of transformation.

And finally, the term 'becoming' signifies the generative essence of the change. The majority of scholars interpret this term as a change of variable attributes within a persisting and underlying subject.[129] Accordingly, the process of becoming (*genesis*) between opposites can encompass both non-generative alteration and substantial generation. It implies a distinction between various levels of '*genesis*' (as well as the corresponding verb '*gignesthai*'). On the one hand, it may simply denote 'becoming *F*' by being used with a compliment, or absolutely 'coming to be born/exist' on the other hand.[130] Nevertheless, this semantic dichotomy reveals an ontological difference between the two forms of change. In the former, the subject acquires a new attribute while retaining its self-identity and remaining the same entity. Conversely, in the latter absolute sense, it signifies the generation of a new entity, with the preceding subject ceasing to exist and giving way to its successor. The majority obviously believe that during a 'becoming' between opposites,

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[129] Cf. Barnes, 1978: 403-404; Dorter, 1982: 35-36; Burger, 1984: 57-58; Justin, 2020: 444-445.

[130] Gallop, 1975: 104. Besides, Gallop believes that it is the same to say 'the living is coming to be *alive*' and 'the living is coming to *be/exist*'. Some scholars, such as Barnes, emphasize the distinction between these two propositions, suggesting that the soul always exists, but only comes to be alive by incarnation. But as what we will soon discuss, the soul cannot 'come to be' in the strict sense. Cf. Barnes, 1978: 410-413; Gallop, 1982:215.

an entity can maintain its diachronic identity and remain the same subject. Barnes provides extensive textual evidence to support this assertion. According to his interpretation, Plato posits a general proposition regarding change: "[i]f anything that exists at a time *t* acquires a property at *t*, then it existed during a period immediately prior to *t*", which he calls 'Principle of Existence'. At 70c8-d2, Socrates recalls an "ancient theory" that "surely our souls must exist there [i.e. the Hades], for they could not come back if they did not exist." From Barnes' perspective, the argument could be reconstructed as: since the soul comes into existence as living at *t*, it must exist before *t*, otherwise, it cannot come to be alive at *t*. This argument is believed to be built on the so-called 'Principle of Existence'.

However, this interpretation is not entirely convincing. The "ancient theory" does not presuppose the diachronic identity of the soul during its becoming. It does not even suggest that the soul genuinely undergoes a 'becoming.' Rather, it merely describes the soul's journey between the underworld and the world. And further, in the *Phaedo*, Socrates does not advocate an underlying and persisting subject. He never hints that a subject can maintain its identity during its becoming. The ontological distinction between non-generative alteration and substantial generation is also never addressed in the text. Barnes' proposal, which considers the soul as an underlying and persisting subject during its transformation between living and dead, is also unconvincing. His 'Principle of Existence' can, at most, demonstrate that something *x*' exists before *x* becomes *F*, but it does not guarantee the preservation of the identity of *x* and *x*' throughout the process of 'becoming.' Moreover, Gallop rightly points out that 'becoming *F*' and 'come to be' cannot be definitively

distinguished in semantic terms because "'*x* comes to be *F*' may also be expressed as '*F* comes to be (in *x*)'".[131]

The ontological essence of becoming is further elaborated and clarified in the subsequent Affinity Argument and Final Argument. The Affinity Argument unveils a comprehensive view of various types of beings—the well-known Two-world Theory. It posits,

> "Is not anything that is composite and a compound by nature liable to be split up into its component parts, and only that which is noncomposite, if anything, is not likely to be split up? … Are not the things that always remain the same and in the same state most likely not to be composite, whereas those that vary from one time to another and are never the same are composite? (οὐκοῦν ἅπερ ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχει, ταῦτα μάλιστα εἰκὸς εἶναι τὰ ἀσύνθετα, τὰ δὲ ἄλλοτ᾽ ἄλλως καὶ μηδέποτε κατὰ ταὐτά, ταῦτα δὲ σύνθετα;) … Let us then return to those same things with which we were dealing earlier, to that reality of whose existence we are giving an account in our questions and answers; are they ever the same and in the same state, or do they vary from one time to another (πότερον ὡσαύτως ἀεὶ ἔχει κατὰ ταὐτὰ ἢ ἄλλοτ᾽ ἄλλως;); can the Equal itself, the Beautiful itself, each thing in itself, the real, ever be affected by any change (μεταβολή) whatever? Or does each of them that really is, being uniform by itself, remain the same and never in any way tolerate any change (ἀλλοιόω) whatever? … What of the many beautiful particulars, be they men, horses,

[131] Gallop, 1975: 104.

> clothes, or other such things, or the many equal particulars, and all those which bear the same name as those others? Do they remain the same or, in total contrast to those other realities, one might say, never in any way remain the same as themselves or in relation to each other?" (78c1-e4)

The comparison is highly salient, highlighting a fundamental distinction between the Form and the sensible realm. The Form, characterized as non-composite, exhibits a perpetual constancy, maintaining an unalterable state and resisting any form of change. In stark contrast, the sensible is a compound which is liable to be split up, vary from time to time, and never remains the same as itself as well as in relation to the others. For instance, sensible particulars such as men, horses, clothes, etc., always change between beautiful and not-beautiful. Therefore, sensible particulars are constantly undergoing two kinds of changes: decompositions and alterations.

Hence, within this passage, Plato unequivocally acknowledges the Early Ionic insight that sensible things change between opposites, as well as the Heraclitean picture of the empirical world that all sensible things are in flux. Furthermore, he confirms the universality of this pattern of change, asserting its applicability to all entities that come to be. Most significantly, this passage strongly implies the generative essence intrinsic to the process of becoming. It is worth noting that in previous dialogues, the terms 'the same' and 'not the same' serve as iconic markers, delineating whether a subject undergoes a process of generation. As we have seen in the *Cratylus*, the Form is depicted as always staying the same and being the same thing. In contrast, the generative nature of sensible entities is

underscored, as they perpetually become some different things, no longer being as they were (*Crat.* 439d ff.). Similarly, in the *Symposium*, mortals are portrayed as incapable of maintaining constancy. They are just "said to be the same" but indeed constantly pass away and are replaced by their new young successors (*Smp*. 207c9-208b2). And here in the *Phaedo*, Socrates once again emphasizes that sensible entities never retain sameness, as they continually oscillate between opposing attributes. Thus, if our analysis holds true, when a sensible subject vacillates between *F* and not-*F*, it relinquishes its identity, succumbing to an alteration that is inherently generative.

Then, Plato's innovative elucidation of the generative essence and the phenomenological mechanism of change unfolds further in the Final Argument. To establish that the soul is not only long-lasting but also indestructible, Socrates begins to elaborate his "thorough investigation of the cause of generation and destruction" (95e10). To be more specific, Specifically, he undertakes the inquiry into the causes (*aitiai*) of everything, "why it comes to be, why it perishes and why it exists (διὰ τί γίγνεται ἕκαστον καὶ διὰ τί ἀπόλλυται καὶ διὰ τί ἔστι)." (96a8-9)[132] Notably, this investigation aligns with the pursuits of pre-Socratic natural philosophers, yet Socrates finds their answers lacking in conviction. In what he terms the 'second voyage,' Socrates presents two interpretations, advocating the 'safest answer' and the 'more sophisticated answer.'[133] In

[132] A very prevailing opinion is that the '*aitia*' should not be translated as 'cause' but 'explanation', which is first advocated by Vlastos. M. Frede further claims that the *aitia* is confined to propositional. Cf. Vlastos, 1969; Frede, 1987. Also cf. Ledbetter, 1999. But most translators of the *Phaedo* still read *aitia* as cause. And explicitly, in the text Plato does consider Form as the cause of change, especially when he says "all beautiful things are beautiful by the Beautiful" (100d).

[133] Concerning the aim, the 'second voyage' is not distinct from the natural

both interpretations, the central role of the Form is unequivocal. In the 'safest answer,' Socrates posits,

> "[I]f there is anything beautiful besides the Beautiful itself, it is beautiful for no other reason than that it shares in that Beautiful, and I say so with everything. … I simply, naively and perhaps foolishly cling to this, that nothing else makes it beautiful other than the presence of, or the sharing in, or however you may describe its relationship to that Beautiful we mentioned, for I will not insist on the precise nature of the relationship, but that all beautiful things become beautiful by the Beautiful. … This is the safe answer for me or anyone else to give, namely, that it is through Beauty that beautiful things are made beautiful." (100c4-e3)

An individual entity in itself does not possess the property *F*. As demonstrated earlier, Socrates strongly underscores that a sensible entity is in a perpetual state of flux, consistently oscillating between opposing attributes and never maintaining a static condition. Consequently, it cannot always be *F*, indicating that the property *F* does not inherently exist in this thing. Therefore, an external cause is required to effect the change of the entity from not-*F* to *F*. Socrates considers Form *F* as the safest and most self-evident candidate for this causative role. Consequently, in accordance with this safest answer, Form *F* serves as the causal agent that enables an individual entity to become (and remain) *F* through its participation in the corresponding Form. Given that the 'safest answer' is Socrates' response to the question of what precipitates the

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philosophers, but their approaches are different. Cf. Ferber, 2020: 375-376.

processes of generation and destruction, it becomes apparent that, in Plato's view, the changes brought about by participation in or losing a Form are essentially generation or destruction.

This mechanism is further elucidated through a vivid illustration. Consider Simmias, who is taller than Socrates but shorter than Phaedo. This circumstance does not imply that Simmias possesses an innate disposition of tallness or shortness, much less the simultaneous possession of both attributes. When Simmias appears to be tall, his tallness overcomes the shortness and *vice versa* (102b-d). To be more specific, Socrates continues to say,

> "Now it seems to me that not only Tallness itself is never willing to be tall and short at the same time, but also that the tallness in us will never admit the short or be overcome, but one of two things happens: either it flees and retreats whenever its opposite, the short, approaches, or it is destroyed by its approach. It is not willing to endure and admit shortness and be other than it was, whereas I admit and endure shortness and still remain the same person and am this short man. But Tallness, being tall, cannot venture to be small. In the same way, the short in us is unwilling to become or to be tall ever, nor does any other of the opposites become or be its opposite while still being what it was; either it goes away or is destroyed when that happens." (102d6-103a2)

Imagine, when Simmias stands alongside Socrates, appearing taller in comparison, but then becomes shorter when compared to Phaedo. In this

process, a series of events unfolds: First, the Form Tallness approaches and brings the tallness-in-Simmias, which makes Simmias become tall(er). Then, when Simmias stands beside Phaedo, the Form Shortness approaches and the Tallness retreats. The shortness-in-Simmias also replaces the previous tallness-in-Simmias.[134] This is how Simmias becomes tall or short. And undoubtedly, the Forms Tallness and Shortness are the real causes of Simmias' changes in height. Hence, the Form *F*-ness, by approaching the sensible thing *x*, results in the emergence of *F*-in-*x* and makes *x* become *F*. On the contrary, the left of Form *F*-ness leads to the destruction of *F*-in-*x* and forces *x* to lose its previous property *F*. In other words, *x*'s becoming *F* is essentially *F*-in-*x* comes to be in *x* because of *x*'s participating *F*-ness.

Consequently, it is through participation in or detachment from the Forms that individuals like Simmias undergo generative alterations. Socrates contends that when Simmias becomes taller in comparison to Socrates, "it is not willing to endure and admit shortness and be other than it was, whereas I admit and endure shortness, and am still being such man (καὶ ἔτι ὢν ὅσπερ εἰμί), and am this short man." This comparison strongly implies that by retaining the Form of Shortness, Socrates sustains his identity, while Simmias undergoes a transformation, ceasing to be the same individual as he was becoming tall(er) by admitting the Shortness. The tall-Simmias is not the short-Simmias. Thus, through the destruction of tallness-in-Simmias and becoming of shortness-in-Simmias, Simmias

[134] It is important to note that although Socrates suggests that tallness-in-Simmias either flees or be destroyed, he does not endorse the idea that the tallness-in-Simmias can remain and retreat during the change. As he clarifies in subsequent pages, if those things were really indestructible, the odd, the three, the hot, the fire and all other sensible things would be indestructible, which is ridiculous (106b-c).

undergoes a generation due to its participating and losing the corresponding Forms.

This philosophical interpretation explicitly aligns with the pattern of change between opposites outlined in the Cyclical Argument. The sensible *x* does change between *F* and not-*F*. However, the crux of this change lies in the emergence of *F*-in-*x*, which replaces the contrary attribute within *x* through participation in the Form of *F*-ness. Throughout this process, the *x* undergoes a generation, evolving into a distinct entity by acquiring *F*-in-*x*, an attribute its previous state lacked. It recalls the speech of Diotima in the *Symposium*, in which she claims the mortals are only said to be the same and actually they are constantly replaced by the new young ones. The growth and metabolism of hair, flesh or other tissues always make a new and different body come to be (*Smp*. 207c-208b). It is now evident that the primary causal agents behind these generative processes are the Forms themselves. The Forms facilitate the generation, destruction, and replacement of *F*-in-*x*s. By acquiring a new *F*-in-*x*, the sensible subject becomes a new and different thing, leading to the replacement and generation of the mortals.

Clearly, this theory of change is deeply affected by the Parmenidean principle of What-is. The Form is the typical Eleatic What-is, for it always is and never suffers any change or motion. As Socrates claims, the opposites themselves—namely, the Forms—never tolerate the coming to be from one another (*Phd.* 103c1-2). Nevertheless, Plato acknowledges the change of sensible things, a departure from the Eleatic standpoint that unequivocally rejects any possibility of motion. Moreover, this replacement pattern of change, as argued previously, essentially aligns

with the essential result of the Parmenidean principle. According to this principle, What-is cannot be What-is-not, otherwise it has to generate. And then the things change between *F* and not-*F* must belong to generation. As Socrates argues, when the hot approaches the snow, the latter cannot remain as it was, otherwise it would be both snow and hot. It has to be destroyed (103d). Besides, Socrates also admits that in the case of the odd becoming even, the odd does not directly become even. Rather, in this change the odd is destroyed and the even comes to be instead (106b-c). If so, such kind of alteration or change between opposites is naturally a replacement that the previous thing is passing away and replaced by the new successor.

Plato's significant contribution lies in synthesizing insights from pre-Socratic philosophy and reconstituting the mechanism of change through the causal theory of Forms. Even in the 'more sophisticated answer', the role of Form and such understanding of change remain unchallenged. This alternative explanation does not supplant the 'safest answer'; rather, it extends its purview. In this expanded perspective, not only is the Form considered as the cause of change, but also that which essentially brings along the Form into the changing thing. As what Socrates illustrates,

> "I say that beyond that safe answer, which I spoke of first, I see another safe answer. If you should ask me what, coming into a body, makes it hot, my reply would not be that safe and ignorant one, that it is heat, but our present argument provides a more sophisticated answer, namely, fire, and if you ask me what, on coming into a body, makes it sick, I will not say sickness but

> fever. Nor, if asked the presence of what in a number makes it odd, I will not say oddness but oneness, and so with other things." (*Phd*. 105b6-c6)

Fire, the stuff which necessarily contains the Form Hotness, serves as a more sophisticated cause, rendering the body hot. Similarly, the fever, which must possess the Sickness, is the more sophisticated cause to make the body become sick. Thus, in the previous safe answer, it is Form *F* that results in the emergence of *F*-in-*x* and makes the particular thing *x* become *F*. Now, we encounter a further perspective wherein the approach of another particular thing *Y*, fundamentally associated with the Form *F*, results in the *F*-in-*x* and makes *x* become *F* as a more sophisticated cause.[135] As previously stated, in formulating this 'more sophisticated answer,' the Form still plays a pivotal role in the process of change. This assertion finds additional validation in Aristotle's commentary, wherein he notes that Platonists regard the Form as the causal agent responsible for becoming and existence.[136]

In this manner, Plato furnishes a comprehensive theory of generative change within the *Phaedo*. All sensible particulars are always changing between opposites, and these alterations inherently entail generative essence for they deprive the subjects of diachronic self-identity. Then, it is the Form that causes the sensible things to change between opposites.

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[135] Vlastos et al. argues that what brings the Form to the body itself is a Form, namely, the Form of fire, heat, etc. But in this passage Plato clearly discusses fire and heat as sensible things and stuff. Gallop. There is hardly any hint suggests that Socrates is dealing with the relationship between Forms. Further, in the *Phaedo*, Plato never mentions the Form of any individual things, rather he mainly talks about the Form of properties and moral values.

[136] Cf. *Metaph*. 987b9-14.

By their participating in or losing a certain Form *F*-ness, the *F*-in-*x* is generated or passes away in the sensible thing *x*, consequently making the latter become *F* or not-*F*.

2.2 The *Republic*

In the *Republic*, Plato continues to elucidate the theory of change represented in the *Phaedo*. This theory of change encompasses three fundamental tenets, as previously expounded: (1) The distinction between Forms and sensible particulars: The Forms always remain the same, while the sensible particulars are always changing and never in the same state. (2) Participation in Form *F*-ness is considered as the cause for a sensible thing to become *F*. (3) The sensible things, then, are ceaselessly changing between opposites, namely *F* and not-*F*. And this sort of change is generative for the sensible things. All those points, more or less, can be recognized from the text of the *Republic*. When Socrates first introduces *eidos* in the sense of Form in order to expound on what the philosopher is concerned about, he argues,

> "Since the beautiful is the opposite of the ugly, they are two…And the same account is true of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the Forms. Each of them is itself one, but because they manifest themselves everywhere in association with actions, bodies, and one another, each of them appears to be many." (*Rep*. V 476a1-8)

Therefore, that a sensible thing appears to be *F* is because the Form *F*-ness manifests itself in association with that thing. Namely, the beautiful things are beautiful because they participate in the Form Beauty

(476c-d). The just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all other cases are the same as well.

This notion of participation between the Form *F*-ness and the attribute *F* of a sensible entity aligns with our earlier observations in the *Phaedo*, in which this relationship is obviously based on the essential distinction between Forms and sensible particulars. In the *Republic*, Plato further clarifies this two-world theory. Socrates continues to argue that the Form, as What-is, is the object of knowledge (477a-b), while the sensible particular is the object of belief as something intermediate between What-is and what-in-every-way-is-not (478d). Hence, sensible things always both participate What-is and What-is-not (478e). This means they both possess the property *F* and its opposite property not-*F*. Socrates exemplifies this with beauty, asserting that a beautiful thing, by necessity, be beautiful in one way and also be ugly in another way, and the same with all other things (479a-b). This illustrates the manner in which a sensible thing possesses opposite properties and intermediates between What-is and What-is-not.

However, this does not imply that the sensible things exist between What-is and What-is-not in a comparatively unfluctuating way. Rather, Socrates immediately elucidates that they are in a perpetual state, "*rolling around* as intermediates between What-is-not and what-purely-is" (479d). Therefore, sensible things lack stability, consistently vacillating between What-is and What-is-not, or between *F* and not-*F*. The beautiful particular, for example again, does not maintain beautiful, but alternates between beautiful and ugly. This is confirmed by Socrates' subsequent assertions several pages later, such as:

> "Since those who are able to grasp *what is always the same in all respects* are philosophers, while those who are not able to do so and who wander among *the many things that vary in every sort of way* are not philosophers…" (484b4-7)

> "Let's agree that philosophic natures always love the sort of learning that makes clear to them some feature of *the being that always is* and does not *wander around between coming-to-be and decaying*." (485a10-b2)

In contrast to the immutable Forms, which remain perpetually unchanged, Plato posits that the sensible particulars are unstable and changeable. Although Plato does not explicitly underscore the perpetual flux of sensible entities in this text, he subtly alludes to a narrative that closely resembles the mechanism of change expounded in the *Phaedo*.[137] The sensible things are changing between opposites—that is, between *F* and not-*F*. And the reason for them to change in this way is due to their participation in Form *F*-ness and not-*F*-ness. Consequently, it becomes pertinent to inquire whether Plato also advocates, within the *Republic*, that such change possesses a generative essence. The answer to this inquiry is unequivocally affirmative.

Given that the sensible particular is changing between What-is and What-is-not, delving into the meaning of the term '*esti*' is instrumental in

[137] It is essential to note that this narrative, at least, does not in any way suggest that Plato abandons the notion of continuous change in sensible particulars within the *Republic*. In Book IX, Socrates also calls the sensible thing "what is never the same and mortal" (585c).

shedding light on the essence of the discussed change. '*Esti*' exhibits a dual sense, operating both predicatively and existentially in Ancient Greek. In its predicative usage, What-is serves as a concise representation of What-is-*F*, such as What-is-just, What-is-beautiful, etc. Therefore, when Plato asserts that sensible things intermediate between What-is and What-is-not, he essentially signifies this thing's being *F* and not-*F*, since it possesses the property *F* sometimes or in some way.[138] This interpretation is substantiated by textual evidence. Prior to introducing What-is and What-is-not at 476e, Socrates engages in a discussion regarding Forms such as beauty, ugliness, justice, injustice, goodness, and badness. (475e-476a). Concurrently, he underscores the distinction between a Form itself and the multiple entities that participate in the Form (476a-d). Socrates then suggests that those who confuse the participant with the Form only have an opinion but not true knowledge. He is going to persuade them and let them recognize their fault (476c-e). This context illuminates why Socrates transitions to discuss What-is and What-is-not aiming to establish a clear distinction between the Forms and their participants. Consequently, the Form represents the authentic What-is-*F*, while the participants merely exist between What-is-*F* and What-is-not-*F* and cannot stably possess the property *F*. And besides, there is a piece of more direct and explicit evidence. After arguing that the sensible things intermediate between What-is and What-is-not, Socrates argues that since the participants always appear both *F* and not-*F* (i.e. the beautiful particular thing is also ugly in a way), they are no more *F* than not-*F*. And hence, they are not What-is or What-is-not, but something wandering between those two extremes (478e-479e). This argument undoubtedly shows that What-is and What-is-not are used as

[138] Cf. Fine, 1978: 132-138; Annas, 1981: 195-199; Reeve, 1988: 58-71.

predicate terms.[139] If this is so, the sort of change Plato has in mind when saying the sensible things roll around What-is and What-is-not (479d) is the alteration between opposites *F* and not-*F*.

Conversely, some scholars contend that '*esti*' also carries an existential connotation in this context. In addition to its predicative usage, What-is can also refer to what-exists, while What-is-not to what-does-not-exist. According to this interpretation, What-is-*F* means an *F* thing exists, and an *F* thing emphasizes that the *F* thing exists *such and such*.[140] The existential '*esti*' usage can be recognized in the text. When Socrates introduces the distinction between What-is and What-is-not, he claims the object of belief is intermediate between "what purely is" as the object of knowledge and "what in no way is" as the object of ignorance (477a-b). It is quite natural to read 'What-is' here as what-exists. And this formulation itself strongly implies the ontological hierarchy of existence (which is precisely what will be argued later, especially in the discussion of the Divided Line). And moreover, several lines later Socrates continues to argue that it is impossible to opine What-is-not, as we cannot opine

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[139] Fine, 1978: 133.

[140] Cf. Stokes, 1992: 129-130; Gonzalez, 1996: 258-262; Dorter, 2006: 155-156. Some supporters of the predicative interpretation of '*esti*', such as Fine and Annas, strongly reject the existential reading. According to them, if the '*esti*' can be understood in the existential sense, we must accept the 'degrees of existence' because the sensible things are said to exist between What-is and What-is-not. Thus, the sensible things have to exist in the half degree. This idea of half-existence is thought by them to be ridiculous. And further, a thing's possessing the property *F* seems to be irrelevant to its existence. As it is illustrated by Fine, the fact that this paper is not green does not mean that it does not exist. Gonzalez has already pointed out that their objects are fundamentally based on the assumption of the sharp distinction between predictive and existential senses of '*esti*'. This argument, then, has been proved by Kahn to be an anachronism. Plato himself does share this distinction. Cf. Kahn, 1966; Fine, 1978: 132-138; Anna, 1981: 196-197; Gonzalez, 1996: 258-262.

nothing. He especially emphasizes that What-is-not is not 'one thing' but 'nothing' (478b). Obviously, the '*esti*' here primarily focuses on existence. Because we can of course have the opinion that this cup of tea is not hot or that page of paper is not green, but we cannot opine what does not exist at all. Consequently, the existential interpretation of '*esti*' stands as a viable perspective. As a result, a substantial distinction is drawn between What-is and What-is-not, even when they pertain to What-is-*F* and What-is-not-*F*. As we have said above, What-is-*F* does not merely indicate a thing's possessing the property *F*, but that an *F* thing exists. Thus, when Plato suggests that sensible entities oscillate between the opposites What-is and What-is-not (479d-e), he implies that these entities undergo generative changes. Sensible particulars, through participation in or detachment from the Forms, change between opposites, and these changes are considered generative in nature.

This view is further corroborated by subsequent texts. Notably, approximately two pages later, Socrates reiterates his claim, stating that philosophers "always love the sort of learning that makes clear to them some feature of the being that always is and does not wander around between coming to be and decaying." (485b) It is clear, this view is paraphrasing what he has argued previously that the sensible things, as the participants of the eternal and changeless Forms, are not stable and change between What-is-*F* and What-is-not-*F*. Hence, Plato interprets the alteration of sensible things between opposites as generation and destruction. Additional corroborative instances are pervasive throughout the *Republic*. Such as, "When it [i.e. the soul] focuses on something illuminated by truth and *what is*, it understands…but when it focuses on what is mixed with obscurity, on *what comes to be and passes away*, it

opines…" (508d); "This instrument cannot be turned around from that which is *coming into being* without turning the whole soul until it is able to study that *which is* and the brightest thing that is, namely, the one we call the good" (518d); "if geometry compels the soul to study *being*, it's appropriate, but if it compels it to study *becoming*, it's inappropriate" (526e); "their accounts are for the sake of knowing *what always is*, not *what comes into being and pass away*" (527b); "that which is related to *what is always the same*, immortal, and true…that which is related to *what is never the same* and mortal…" (585c). These passages distinctly highlight the dichotomy between what always is (i.e. the Form) and what is subject to generation and destruction (i.e. the sensible particulars), reinforcing our assertion that the alteration of sensible things between opposites is inherently generative.

Therefore, within the frameworks of change depicted in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, Plato acknowledges, at least in part, the portrayal of the empirical realm by early Ionic philosophers and Heraclitus, wherein all sensible particulars are always changing between opposites. Influenced by Eleatic philosophy, he further clarifies that these changes are all generative, depriving the identity of each sensible thing. A novel contribution of Plato is the Form theory and its role in the mechanism of change. The Form always remains the same and it results in the generative change of the sensible. By participating in a Form *F*-ness, the sensible thing *x* generatively becomes *F*, for during this process an *F*-in-*x* comes to be inside *x*.

3. Non-generative Motion and the Motion of Soul: From the *Republic* to the *Phaedrus*

At the same time, the theory of Form also introduces the possibility of non-generative motions. As we have argued, Plato's understanding of change is strongly influenced by the Eleatic metaphysics. Parmenides and other Eleatic philosophers insist on the principle of What-is. It posits that any form of change or motion, including alteration, spatial motion, and activity, undermines the absolute self-identity of the What-is and thereby necessitates a generative transition for What-is to become What-is-not. This perspective is echoed in the *Cratylus* and the *Symposium*. In the *Cratylus*, Socrates suggests that if everything is always moving and flowing as Heraclitus suggests, they will always pass away, become different things and no longer be as they were (*Crat*. 439b. ff.). The *Symposium* more explicitly categorizes both bodily metabolic changes and the soul's activities—encompassing shifts in manners, customs, opinions, and emotions—as generative (*Smp.* 207c-208b). But in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, the concept of Forms is introduced to elucidate the rationale and mechanisms behind generative changes, suggesting that sensible entities undergo generative changes through their participation in or detachment from Forms. Consequently, it suggests that in the empirical world, there exist some sorts of motions and changes which are not relevant to the Forms and are categorized as non-generative motions. The most notable examples of such motions are spatial motion and the soul's motion, which are not influenced by Forms or oscillations between *F* and not-*F*, and thus are classified as non-generative. We are going to examine them in turn.

In the *Republic*, Plato distinctly portrays the non-generative nature of spatial motions. In Book VII, Socrates elaborates on five subjects of the Guardians' education which "draw the soul from the realm of *becoming* to the realm of *What-is*" (*Rep.* 521d; also cf. 525c; 526e; 527b, etc.). Although Socrates emphasizes that these subjects cannot really grasp What-is but only "dream about What-is" (533b), their unequivocal objective is to investigate the things that never undergo generation and destruction. These subjects are calculation, geometry, solid geometry, astronomy and harmonics. We will focus on astronomy and harmonics, for Socrates claims that they are closely akin to each other since they are both subjects concerning motions (530d). This suggests that astronomical motions and harmonic motions are accepted as motions but not generative processes. Socrates claims,

> "We should consider the decorations in the sky to be the most beautiful and most exact of visible things, seeing that they're embroidered on a visible surface. But we should consider their motions to fall far short of the true ones—motions that are really fast or slow as measured in true numbers, that trace out true geometrical figures, that are all in relation to one another, and that are the true motions of the things carried along in them. And these, of course, must be grasped by reason and thought, not by sight." (529c6-d5)

Accordingly, in Plato's view, genuine astronomy studies the "true motions" of astronomical objects which can only be grasped by reason rather than sensory perception. Despite ongoing debates regarding whether Plato's astronomical focus is on speculative bodies and their

motions (contrary to the celestial objects in the heaven) or the genuine motions of celestial bodies (contrary to the apparent and observed motions of the heavenly bodies), and whether Plato really dismiss the empirical astronomy,[141] the so-called 'true motions' are undoubtedly circular motions (528c). These motions are posited to consistently preserve the immutable nature of the true astronomical objects, without deviation (530b). Consequently, these circular movements are inherently non-generative, existing in perfect spatial harmony without necessitating the involvement of the Form, nor compelling the subjects to become something other than themselves, thereby not meeting Plato's criteria for generative change.

Similarly, the study of harmonics, which forms the last subject of the curriculum for the Guardians, ought to be similar. Socrates says, "as the eyes fasten on astronomical motions, so the ears fasten on harmonic ones, and that the sciences of astronomy and harmonics are closely akin." (530d) He claims that this is advocated by the Pythagoreans. Indeed, Greek acoustic theories universally regard sound as a form of motion through air.[142] While Socrates advocates that his genuine harmonics should investigate "which numbers are consonant and which aren't or what the explanation is of each" (531c), he does not deny that this discipline is a subject concerning motion (530c-d). Therefore, the harmonic motions are also conceded as the motions which are not generative and do not threaten their subjects, unrelated to the participation in or detachment from Forms.

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[141] Cf. Bulmer-Thomas, 1982; Gregory, 1996.
[142] Barker, 1989:9.

The concept of the soul's motion presents another primary example of non-generative movement. In the *Phaedo*, the Affinity Argument provides a series of motions and activities of the soul. It can 'investigate' 'stray' 'confuse' 'be fuzzy' (*Phd.* 79c), and it also 'orders the one [body] to be subject and to be ruled' (80a). After death, the soul goes to the Hades and escapes from associating with the body (80d). Of course, the soul will also reincarnate in animals or human beings (81d-82b). Besides, the soul does have passions and emotions like love, pleasure, pain, desire, etc. (83b-c). Gallop claims that the soul is not unvarying for it is the subject of incarnation and 'life-principle'. Bostock further asserts that the soul is subject to change 'when it perceives the physical world but it finds peace and rest when it isolates itself from the body and contemplates the unchanging forms'.[143]At least, some of those activities can also be found in the *Symposium* in which Diotima claims that the soul is renewed because of the passing away and coming to be of its manners, customs, opinions, desires, pleasures, pains as well as memory and knowledge (*Smp.* 207c-208b). However, there is a critical difference between these two discussions of motion and activity of the soul. In the *Symposium*, as we have argued, the elaboration of the activities of the soul is supposed to prove the mortality of the soul and to exhibit that the soul is full of generative changes and motions which make the soul never remain the same as it was. On the contrary, the arguments in the *Phaedo* clearly aim to demonstrate the immortality of the soul, thus the motions and activities of the soul in this dialogue are by no means generative.

The non-generative feature of the soul's motion is explicitly and repeatedly suggested in the *Phaedo*. For instance, in the Affinity

[143] Gallop, 1975: 170-1. Bostock, 1986: 119.

Argument, the soul is claimed to be more akin to the Forms which are "ever the same and in the same state" (*Phd.* 78d2-3) as well as "divine, deathless, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, always the same as itself" (80b1-3), while the body is more like the sensible particulars which are "never in any way remain the same as themselves or in relation to each other" (78e3-4) and "human, mortal, multiform, unintelligible, soluble and never consistently the same" (81b3-5). To be short, the sensible particulars are always changing in a generative way while the Forms never undergo any of these generative changes. Then, since the soul is more akin to the Forms, its activities and motions are not thought to be generative and they will not force it to become something other than it was—just as what precisely is argued in the *Symposium*. And moreover, we have already clarified that the Form is believed to be the reason for the sensible to become something other than it was. So clearly, if the soul never shares any generative change, it cannot participate in or lose any Form. The motions of the soul which Socrates elaborates on, such as activities and emotions, are hardly reduced to the change between *F* and not-*F* by participating in or losing the Form *F*-ness, so they are explicitly not generative.

Plato's discussion on the motion of the soul can be further explored in the *Phaedrus*. In Socrates' second speech of the *Phaedrus* (also known as 'the Palinode'), he argues that every soul is immortal, because whatever is always in motion is immortal, and the soul is undoubtedly always self-moving as well as the origin of the motion of all soulless things (*Phdr.* 245c-246a). The basic points of this argument should not be novel for Plato's contemporaries. As we have argued in the previous chapter, the idea of the ever-moving soul probably belongs to Alcmaeon. Moreover,

Anaxagoras, needless to say, inspires Plato that the soul causes the motion of all other soulless things. And indeed, the immortality of the soul is also quite a common view among the pre-Socratic philosophers. Therefore, the uniqueness of the *Phaedrus* lies not in the introduction of new ideas but in how Plato establishes the whole argument. The way he integrates those pre-Socratic views into this argument reveals his own essential thoughts about soul and motion as the foundation of the whole argument. Especially, how is the theory of motion of the soul built on Plato's Form theory as well as his general theory of change and motion? The argument unfolds as follows:

(1) (Conclusion:) "Every soul is immortal." (245c5)
(2) "That is because what is always in motion is immortal (τὸ γὰρ ἀεικίνητον[144] ἀθάνατον);" (245c5)
(3) "but what moves something else and is moved by something else stops living when it stops moving." (245c5-7)
(4) "So it is only what moves itself (τὸ αὐτὸ κινοῦν), since it does not abandon itself (οὐκ ἀπολεῖπον ἑαυτό), never desists from motion," (245c7-8)
(5) "and this (self-mover) is also the source and origin of motion (πηγὴ καὶ ἀρχὴ κινήσεως) for everything else that moves." (245c8-9)
(6) "And an origin does not come-to-be (ἀγένητον)." (245d1)

[144] Here I follow most scholars preferring ἀεικίνητον to the alternative reading αὐτοκίνητον which is found in Oxyrrhynchus papyrus 1017. Cf. Skemp, 1942: 3, n.2; de Vries, 1969: 121-122; Hackforth, 1972: 65; Mohr, 1985:162; Bett, 1986: 4, n.6; Blyth, 1997: 195, n.22; Robinson, 2018: 111-112.

(7) “For everything that comes-to-be (τὸ γιγνόμενον) must come-to-be from an origin,” (245d1-2)

(8) “but the origin does not come-to-be from anything; for if the origin came-to-be from anything else, it would no longer be the origin.” (245d2-3)

(9) “And since it does not come-to-be, then necessarily it cannot be destroyed (ἀδιάφθορον).” (245d3-4)

(10) “That is because if an origin were destroyed, it could never come-to-be from anything else and nothing else could come-to-be from it—that is, if everything comes-to-be from an origin.” (245d4-6)

(11) “This is then how the self-mover is the origin of motion.” (245d6-7)

(12) “And that is unable to be destroyed or come-to-be (οὔτ᾽ ἀπόλλυσθαι οὔτε γίγνεσθαι), otherwise all things that have been generated (πᾶσάν τε γένεσιν[145]) would fall in ruin, come to a stop, and never have cause to start moving again.” (245d7-e2)

(13) “And since we have found that a self-mover is immortal, we should have no qualms about declaring that this is the very essence and account of soul (ψυχῆς οὐσίαν τε καὶ λόγον). For everybody that is moved from outside is soulless, while a body has its motion within itself does have a soul, that is the nature of a soul.” (245e2-6)

(14) “And if this is so—that whatever moves itself is nothing else than the soul—then it follows necessarily that soul

[145] Burnet follows Philoponus to replace γένεσιν by γῆν εἰς ἓν. But γένεσιν is widely agreed to be more reasonable than γῆν εἰς ἓν. Cf. de Vries, 1969: 124; Hackforth, 1972: 66-67; Bett, 1986: 8, n.14; Ryan, 2012: 182.

should have no generation nor destruction (ἀγένητόν τε καὶ ἀθάνατον).” (245e6-246a2)

The basic shape of this argument is a standard syllogism beyond controversy for almost all scholars:

(i) A self-mover is immortal ((2)-(12));

(ii) and the soul is the self-mover (13);

(iii) therefore every soul is immortal ((1);(14)).

Indeed, (ii) and (iii) are quite straightforward and hardly disputed. The debate among scholars primarily concerns how Socrates constructs argument (i), with most scholars agreeing it consists of two parallel sub-arguments: One is more directly established on the premise that what is always in motion is immortal (2), and since the self-mover is always moving ((3)-(4)), the self-mover is hence proved to be immortal. The other one is relatively more complex. It starts from the character of the self-mover that it must be the origin of motion for everything else that moves (5). Then, as such an origin, the self-mover is argued to be non-generated and imperishable ((6)-(10)). Therefore, it is immortal (11). According to this structure, these two sub-arguments do not buttress each other. As Robinson says, “Plato chooses to stress their cumulative rather than their individual plausibility.”[146] The only slight disagreement among those scholars is whether the “τὸ γὰρ ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον” (what is always in motion is immortal) in step (2) is an axiomatic premise without any demonstration or a proposition which will be proved later in the first sub-argument.[147]

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[146] Robinson, 2018: 113.

[147] The former such as Hackforth, 1972: 65-67; Mohr, 1985: 161-162; Bett, 1986: 3-6. And the latter such as Robinson, 2018: 112-113. Besides, some scholars advocate that there is only one comprehensive argument in (i) to demonstrate that the self-mover is

However, this reading has to face several serious difficulties. According to this reading, the later sub-argument ((5)-(12)) does not rely on the former one ((2)-(4)), which makes (2)-(4) seemingly redundant and meaningless. In (5)-(12), Socrates sufficiently proves the immortality of the self-mover by arguing that the self-mover is the origin of everything else and the origin does not have generation or destruction, which does not completely rely on the critical essence of self-mover shown in step (2)-(4)—namely, the self-mover is always in motion. If so, step (2)-(4) is fully unnecessary. Indeed, even if the self-mover is not always moving, such as moving intermittently, it still meets the requirement of the sub-argument (5)-(12), since it is only required not to be started up by something else in step (8). Hackforth considers the eternal moving of step (2) as an *endoxa*,[148] which seems to suggest that after this *endoxa* Socrates still needs to provide an original argument not being established on that premise. Unfortunately, we cannot find any hint in the text to verify this possibility. On the contrary, step (2) "τὸ γὰρ ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον" closely follows the conclusion (1) "every soul is immortal" and emphasizes their relationship by the explanatory conjunction "γὰρ", which strongly implies that step (2) ought to play a critical role in the whole demonstration. Even if step (2) is really an *endoxon*, we are

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immortal. Such as Ackrill, 1953: 278; Blyth 1997: 194-198. However, Ackrill's idea relies on his acceptance of the αὐτοκίνητον reading of 245c5 rather than the ἀεικίνητον reading which is more convincing. Blyth claims, the step (2)-(4) proves the weak hypothesis that the self-mover is always in motion as long as it exists, while the step (5)-(12) proves the stronger one that the self-mover is immortal for it exists forever. But as we will argue, it is difficult to explain why Socrates still needs the step (2)-(4) since the step (5)-(12) itself seems to be sufficient for proving the immortality of self-mover. We also advocate that there is only one argument here, but for different reasons.

[148] Hackforth, 1972:65.

obliged to explain why Socrates introduces it as the reason for the immortality of the soul in this argument. And moreover, as Blyth points out, if step (2)-(4) contain a brief but complete sub-argument, it has to commit a naïve logical error that "what moves itself … never desists from motion (and is hence immortal)" is wrongly inferred from "it does not abandon itself".[149] Indeed, the self-mover, at most, is proved to be in motion as long as it exists, which is a far cry from the required eternal motion and existence.

We, instead, advocate that there is only one complex argument within this text. Step (1) "every soul is immortal" does serve as the conclusion of the whole argument. But "τὸ…ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον" of step (2) is not an axiomatic premise but rather an essential proposition requiring proof. What does "τὸ ἀεικίνητον" mean? It should not be simplistically interpreted as something moving constantly and ceaselessly. In fact, in most middle Platonic dialogues, it is the mortal sensible things rather than the immortal (such as the soul) that are emphasized to be always in flux and constant motion. In the *Phaedo*, for instance, Forms are "ever the same and in the same state" (*Phd.* 78d2-3), but the sensible particulars are always changing generatively for they "never in any way remain the same as themselves or in relation to each other" (78e3-4). Socrates employs "τὸ ἀεικίνητον" in the *Phaedrus* to convey the concept that the subject cannot not move. Motion is the intrinsic essence and nature of the subject, making it impossible for it to be motionless, even for one moment.[150] And it can be further confirmed by Socrates' claim in step (4) that the self-mover is always in motion because it "οὐκ ἀπολεῖπον ἑαυτό" (does

[149] Blyth, 1997: 194-195.
[150] Cf. Bett, 1986: 6.

not abandon itself). Therefore, in step (2), Socrates announces that he is going to demonstrate what cannot not move (in other words, what is moving by its nature) is immortal.

However, direct demonstration of this proposition may prove challenging, prompting Socrates to search for an equivalent proposition of "τὸ…ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον". Step (3) provides a crucial observation. What moves something else or is moved by something else will be destroyed when it stops moving. Therefore, what is moved by external forces is not always in motion and is not immortal. While it does not strictly demonstrate that what is not moved from outside—namely, what is a self-mover—is immortal, it strongly implies that what is always in motion—that is, what cannot not move by its nature—must be a self-mover (4).

It is worth noting that some scholars mistakenly infer an unspoken deduction: a self-mover is immortal, since it is always in motion (4) and what is always in motion is immortal (2). However, this extrapolation goes beyond the text, as Socrates provides no explicit indication of this deduction. Therefore, the argument has not yet proven that entities consistently in motion are immortal. Nevertheless, given that the self-mover is always in motion (4), if it is demonstrated to be immortal, then τὸ ἀεικίνητον is undoubtedly immortal. So Socrates turns to argue the immortality of the self-mover after (4).

The self-mover is the origin of everything else that moves (5). Because all generative things must come from some origin which is not generative (7), but the origin itself cannot come-to-be according to its definition ((6);

(8)). At the same time, the origin also cannot be destroyed, otherwise, the generative things would lose their origin and cannot come-to-be, and the whole cosmos would collapse ((9)-(12)). Therefore, the self-mover is successfully proved to be the origin of every generative thing and it is explicitly immortal.[151]

Finally, Socrates argues that the soul is this immortal self-mover ((13)-(14)). The reason is that the soulless things are moved from the outside, while what has a soul moves from the inside. Obviously, this reappears the critical steps (3) and (4) in which Socrates makes a clear distinction between what moves itself and what is moved by others. Here Socrates' idea is straightforward: the soul is not moved by anything else, on the contrary, it serves as the source of its own motion and moves by virtue of its inherent nature (13). Therefore, the soul is the self-mover and hence it is immortal (14).

Undoubtedly, the sole presupposition underlying this argument is that the soul is caused by its own nature to move. As discussed in the first chapter, the idea that the soul owns the inner essence of motion is widely shared by the pre-Socratic philosophers, such as Thales (DK11 A22a) and Anaxagoras (DK59 B12). In the *Cratylus*, Socrates offers an etymological analysis of the 'Soul,' suggesting that it causes the body to live and gives it the power to breathe—to be revitalized (*Crat.* 399d-e). While another view—"τὸ ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον" (what is always in

[151] As Nicholson argues, contrary to Hackforth's view, it is not necessary for everything to be directly caused by the self-mover. Rather, the generative things could exist in great casual chains and the self-mover is only the ultimate reason of it. The self-mover, as the origin, merely needs to push down the first domino. Cf. Nicholson, 1999: 159.

motion is immortal) and the soul is such an eternal moving subject, while akin to Alcmaeon's famous doctrine, represents a derived result of the argument rather than an axiomatic premise. The self-mover is demonstrated to be immortal, and what is always in motion is argued to be self-mover. Even if Plato drew inspiration from Alcmaeon or other predecessors, his objective here is to establish a concrete philosophical foundation for this idea, rather than merely accepting it as an *endoxon*. But the essential question emerges again: why does Socrates introduce "τὸ ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον" as a necessary claim? Why cannot the soul just be an intermittent thing which does move itself but does not persistently remain in motion?

The primary reason lies in Plato's conception of immortality and his fundamental principle of Being. As previously argued, when Socrates refers to "τὸ ἀεικίνητον", he primarily implies that the thing is by its nature to move and cannot not move. Consequently, it is in a perpetual state of motion. Notably, 'always being *F*' represents the standard formulation of immortality in Plato's dialogues. In the *Cratylus*, Socrates suggests that the Forms remain unchanging and maintain the same state (*Crat*. 439d-e). Likewise, Diotima asserts in the *Symposium* that the Form "always is and neither comes to be nor passes away…it is always one in form…this does not become the least bit smaller or greater nor suffer any change" (*Smp*. 210e-211b). Namely, Form never changes between *F* and not-*F* like the sensible particulars. And as previously mentioned in the Affinity Argument of the *Phaedo*, the soul is immortal because it is akin to the Form, which is described as "ever the same and in the same state" (*Phd.* 78d2-3) and "divine, deathless, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, always the same as itself" (80b1-3). This stems from Plato's acceptance

of the Parmenidean principle of What-is. What-is always is, so it always remains the same, otherwise it has to undergo a generation. Then obviously, only what always remains the same is immortal. Therefore, if the soul is immortal, it has to be 'always being *F*' and cannot not be *F*. Given that the nature of the soul is to move (13), the soul ought to move eternally and ceaselessly. If the soul does not remain in perpetual motion but instead moves intermittently, it would necessitate generation and destruction.

In addition, it is essential to consider that the soul is posited to possess an inherent nature of perpetual motion. To remain static would fundamentally violate the essence of the soul, compelling it to deviate from its self-identity and enter a state different from its nature. Consequently, it becomes explicit that the soul cannot maintain its distinct identity and is subjected to the generation when its motion ceases. This would effectively blur the distinction between the soul and soulless entities. Soulless entities, moved externally, indisputably rely on an external source to sustain their motion, and they cease to exist when their motion halts (3). The cessation of motion signifies their inevitable collapse and destruction (12). Then, for soulless entities, being in motion and being at rest represent two distinct and consequential states. So through starting or ending such a motion, the soulless actually comes to be or destroys. Consequently, if the soul were capable of coming to a halt, it too would be subjected to the processes of generation and destruction in a parallel manner. Accordingly, the soulless possesses generations while the soul, in its perpetual motion, never desists from its own nature and eternally undergoes non-generative motion. We have already been very familiar with this distinction between generation and non-generative

motion. Thus, "τὸ ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον" is essential for the nature and immortality of the soul.

And what sorts of non-generative and eternal (self-)motion do the soul precisely undergo? Plato abstains from providing an exhaustive and explicit list. Instead, he tells a myth, namely the chariot metaphor. The human soul is said to be like "the natural union of a team of winged horses and their charioteer", one horse is beautiful and good, and the other is much worse (*Phdr*. 246a-b). And then, the motion of the soul or the chariot in this story includes: (a) The soul looks after all soulless things (245b6); (b) it travels about the heaven and comes to be different shapes at different times (ἄλλοτ᾽ ἐν ἄλλοις εἴδεσι γιγνομένη) (246b6-7). The former contains: (c) the soul follows the gods by climbing to the high tier at the rim of heaven (247a8-b1); it then (d) stands on the high ridge of heaven (247b7-8) and (e) gazes upon what is outside heaven—namely, the Forms or the knowledge (247c1-2; 247d5-e2); and finally (f) it is brought around to where it started (247d4-5). And the phrase "come to be different shapes" infers: (g) because of the divine, it grows perfect wings by which it can fly high (246b7-c1; 246d8-e1); and (h) due to the ugliness and foulness, the wings of soul shrink and disappear, then the soul wanders and embodies (246c2-6). Besides, (i) the outstanding soul is nourished and educated by knowledge (247d1-5), and (j) the soul which does not follow the god closely may lead to disorderly struggles and damage to its plumage. It can only nourish itself by opinions (248a6-b5).

Given that Socrates has already established the soul's immortality and immunity to generation or destruction, all the motions described above must be considered non-generative. Even when asserting that the soul

"comes to be different shapes" (b), Plato does not suggest that the soul undergoes any generation. It is essential to recognize that Socrates is employing a myth and metaphor here, and he does not suggest that the soul genuinely undergoes metamorphosis. On the contrary, the soul must transcend the empirical and perceptible realm. Moreover, all of those motions appear to be the activities of the soul and can be categorized into three groups: (I) the 'travelling' of soul [(a), (b), (c), (d), (f)]; (II) the cognition of soul [(e); (i); (j)]; (III) the growth and fall of soul, as well as its embodiment and reincarnation [(g); (h)]. As Blyth points out, *Erōs* is the fundamental power behind all these (self-)motions.[152] According to Socrates' story, the soul is driven by *Erōs*, yearning for Beauty. When it encounters a godlike beautiful face or body, the soul shudders and its wings grow from their roots (250e-252b).

And undoubtedly, all these motions belong to the (self-)motions and eternal motions of the soul. By undergoing them ceaselessly, the soul is immortal. Although these motions introduce variations to the soul, they do not compel it to relinquish its inherent identity and transform into something other than itself. This ontological foundation probably comes from the theory of change presented in the *Phaedo*. In that dialogue, Forms are considered the cause of all generative motions. Given that the motions of the soul in this context bear no relation to the participation in or loss of Form, they are permissible as non-generative and intrinsic to the soul.

[152] Blyth, 1997: 193. Also cf. Ostenfeld, 1992: 326.

4. Rethinking Plato's First Model of Change and Motion

Now we are able to see the comprehensive picture of Plato's first model of change and motion. We have previously contended that this model represents Plato's earliest endeavour to furnish a systematic and philosophical account of the experiential world's perpetual flux—a perspective significantly influenced by the ideas of pre-Socratic philosophers. In the *Cratylus* and the *Symposium*, Plato examines the phenomena of change with a distinctly Heraclitean approach, asserting that everything, aside from Forms and the immortal, exists in a perpetual state of change. But diverging from Heraclitus and his followers, Plato simultaneously embraces the Parmenidean principle of What-is and interprets these changes as instances of generation. Consequently, sensible and mortal entities are in a constant state of becoming, perpetually *F* and not-*F*. This underlying pattern, as we have previously noted, has a rich historical lineage tracing back to the early Ionian philosophers. Plato's remarkable contribution lies in his introduction of the Form theory to elucidate these manifestations of change, thereby refining his perspective on change and motion. In the *Phaedo*, Plato posits that Forms serve as the causal agents of change, providing a compelling rationale for the generative nature of changes in sensible particulars. Namely, the thing *x* becomes *F* from not-*F* by participating in Form *F*-ness, and when it loses Form *F*-ness it reverts to not-*F* again. Further, by participating in the Form *F*-ness, an *F*-in-*x* generates in *x* and makes *x* undergo a generation, while the *F*-in-*x* perishes and *x* undergoes destruction when *x* loses the Form *F*-ness. This theoretical framework introduces the possibility of non-generative change. Prior to the introduction of the Form theory, exemplified in works like the *Symposium*, Plato concedes that all forms of change and motion are generative, as

they inherently entail a transformation into something distinct from the original state. This perspective aligns with the Eleatic position. But according to the new story of the *Phaedo*, it is the Form that causes the subject to change generatively. Thus, the motion which does not rely on participating or losing a Form is certainly not generative. Apparently, it is the introduction of Form theory which largely modifies the Parmenidean principle of What-is and hence allows some sorts of motions to be non-generative. The most conspicuous instances of non-generative motions manifest in spatial movements and the multiple motions of the soul, as we have seen in the *Republic*, the *Phaedo* and the *Phaedrus*. Therefore, Plato's first model of change and motion, conceived as his initial attempt to comprehend and explicate the phenomena of change, relies heavily on the Form theory advanced in his middle dialogues. This theory, lauded for its conciseness and sophistication, seemingly resolves the enigma of change. However, several aspects warrant further examination, prompting Plato to develop a new theory in his later dialogues.

(1) The passive sensible particulars. According to this model, the world is full of all kinds of changes and motions. The sensible things are always changing generatively between opposites, while the soul remains in perpetual self-motion, moving both itself and external entities. Correspondingly, two distinct causal factors are at play. The Form is the direct cause of all generative changes of the sensible things, whereas the soul acts as a mover of both itself and sensible things. And the sensible particulars seem to be entirely passive, having no immanent power to move, for they do not possess the nature to initiate a change or motion.

In the *Cratylus*, Socrates offers a plausible etymological interpretation of the word *theoi* (gods), positing that the earliest inhabitants of Greece believed the gods—the sun, moon, earth, stars, and sky—to be in constant motion, as it was inherent in their nature to run (*thein*) (*Crat*. 397c-d). This concept bears a resemblance to Alcmaeon's argument concerning the immortality of the divine (DK24 A12). Furthermore, Socrates asserts that the name *psuchē* (soul) signifies the belief of the name-givers that the soul serves as the 'nature-sustainer,' sustaining and supporting the body, initiating its vitality and motion (399d-400a). Hence, perpetual motion is deemed intrinsic to the nature of the soul (including gods), while the soul also serves as the origin of motion in physical objects, which are passive and lack an inherent capacity for self-initiated motion. Plato unequivocally endorses this viewpoint in the *Phaedrus*. As we have seen in this dialogue, Socrates emphasizes that the soul, by its very nature, moves itself and other entities, while soulless sensible entities lack an inherent origin to come-to-be. In the absence of the soul as the origin, the sensible particulars would fall in ruin and come to a stop (*Phdr.* 245c-246a). Consequently, sensible entities are envisioned as wholly passive.

Furthermore, the notion of the passivity of sensible entities is also evident in the *Phaedo*. Within this dialogue, Forms are posited as the cause behind the generation, existence, and dissolution of sensible entities. Simmias becomes high because the Highness approaches and the high-in-Simmias generates (*Phd*. 102d-103a), while Simmias himself is not by itself becoming high or short. Hence, without the participation of Form, Simmias or other sensible beings would never undergo any generation and destruction.

Consequently, within the framework of the first model of change and motion, sensible entities are characterized as passive entities incapable of initiating change or motion. Although they are perpetually in motion and subject to change, these changes are never motivated by their own nature. Nevertheless, Plato challenges this premise in his later dialogues, such as the *Philebus*, the *Timaeus*, and the *Statesman*, by recognizing the existence of inner motion within sensible entities—specifically, disordered motions.

(2) Forms in pairs and the negative Forms. As we have made clear, the theory of change in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* undeniably hinges on Plato's conceptualization of Forms. However, this pivotal idea presents a potential paradox, as it appears to necessitate the recognition of the existence and relevance of negative Forms.

For considering that Forms are the causal agents behind the alteration of sensible particulars between opposites, it logically follows that Forms must exist in pairs to facilitate these changes. Without such paired Forms, the sensible particulars would be incapable of undergoing change. For instance, the transition of water between the states of hot and cold, or the transformation of Simmias from a shorter to a taller stature, as delineated in the first model of change and motion, necessitates the existence of Hotness and Coldness, as well as Tallness and Shortness. This line of reasoning suggests that all Forms must inherently exist in pairs.

At the same time, in addition to those Forms closely associated with sensible properties, there also exist Forms that transcend the realm of

sensory perception, encompassing prominent moral values. These evaluative Forms play a pivotal role within Plato's theory of Forms and often serve as the primary focus when he deliberates on the concept of Forms. For example,

> "Therefore, if we had this knowledge, we knew before birth and immediately after not only the Equal, but the Greater and the Smaller and all such things, for our present argument is no more about the Equal than about the Beautiful itself, the Good itself, the Just, the Pious and, as I say, about all those things which we mark with the seal of 'what it is,' both when we are putting questions and answering them." (*Phd.* 75c7-d4)

> "If those realities we are always talking about exist, the Beautiful and the Good and all that kind of reality, and we refer all the things we perceive to that reality, discovering that it existed before and is ours, and we compare these things with it, then, just as they exist, so our soul must exist before we are born." (76d7-e4)

The Forms of the Beautiful, the Good, and the Pious are undeniably evaluative in nature, distinguishing them from sensible Forms such as the Large, the Small, the Hot, and the Cold. However, the presence of these evaluative Forms raises the question of the existence of their negative counterparts, such as the Ugly, the Bad, and the Impious. This question emerges from the premise that Forms must exist in pairs to facilitate the generative change of particular entities. Without the existence of negative Forms, the transition from one state to its opposite, such as from ugliness

to beauty or from impiety to piety, would be conceptually problematic. Plato hints at the existence of negative Forms in his works. In the Final Argument of the *Phaedo*, the soul is believed to perpetually bestow life upon the body, indicating its participation in the Form of life. As death stands as the antithesis of life, it logically follows that there must exist a Form of death (105d ff.). Besides, in the *Republic*, when Socrates introduces the concept of Forms, he states, "And the same account is true of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the Forms. Each of them is itself one, but because they manifest themselves everywhere in association with actions, bodies, and one another, each of them appears to be many." (*Rep*. 475a5-8) This passage explicitly suggests the participation of negative Forms, such as the bad and the unjust, in the realm of sensible things, leading to their coming-to-be.

However, the concept of negative Forms presents an inherent challenge. Given that Forms are presumed to be inherently good and divine, the existence of negative properties or values as corresponding Forms poses a philosophical quandary. Particularly noteworthy is Plato's designation of Forms as the offspring of Goodness in the *Republic* (*Rep*. 508c). Despite this initial recognition of negative Forms, Socrates notably refrains from further elaborating on them in the core books of the *Republic*, hinting at a potential internal contradiction within the concept of negative Forms. A more thorough examination of this issue will be undertaken in the forthcoming discussion of the *Parmenides*.

(3) The Parmenidean principle: The ontological criterion for identity, sameness and difference. The most critical premise of the first model of change and motion is undoubtedly the refined Parmenidean principle of

What-is. The Eleatics advocate that the What-is is strictly identical to itself, and any sort of motion and change would force it to undergo a generation by becoming What-is-not. Consequently, Plato's viewpoint that all changes are generative aligns with the Eleatic perspective. However, the first model, by attributing generative change to the participation in Forms, limits the scope of generative changes. Given that the generation is now understood as caused by the participation in a Form, those motions which are irrelevant to Forms are clearly non-generative. Namely, according to this model, the change between opposites deprives the self-identity of the subject, while the non-generative motion will not destroy the latter.

One more point needs to be clarified. Since all changes between opposites can make the thing undergo a generation, every property seems to be equally essential for the identity of a thing. This is the critical reason why all those changes can be generative. One may question this view, for Plato does suggest that some properties are more essential than others. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates discusses the melt of snow: the snow will not admit the hot, when the hot approaches it will be destroyed (*Phd*. 103d). And then he comments, "It is true then about some of these things that not only the Form itself deserves its own name for all time, but there is something else that is not the Form but has its character whenever it exists." (103e2-5) Accordingly, one may reduce that the sensible thing may remain its existence and identity as long as it still possesses the essential property and participates in the Form from which it acquires its name and character. For example, the snow is still the same snow as long as it is cold and not melted by the hot. So coldness is the essential property of snow. If so, only by becoming hot the snow undergoes generation. Other changes and

alterations, such as becoming black, do not result in a substantial generation.

However, even though the coldness is more important than other properties, it does not necessarily exclude the generative feature of other changes. It will be beneficial to introduce White's distinction between kind-essence and particular-essence.[153] The former is the essence of the whole genus of things, while the latter is only for a certain particular. Hence, the cold is essential for every snow. A snow does destroy when it loses the cold. But at the same time, other properties are particular-essences of the certain snow. By becoming black, although the snow-black is still a kind of snow, it becomes generatively from the previous snow-white. This clearly recalls Diotima's speech: the mortals are only "said to be the same" but in fact is always replaced by the new young ones. Although the previous thing and its successor share the same kind-essence and undoubtedly belong to the same kind, strictly speaking, they are completely different things. This thought, again, is built on the Parmenidean principle of What-is. No matter what a tiny change will make the What-is destroy and What-is-not come to be. And What-is-not is always completely and thoroughly different from What-is.

Nevertheless, this is not Plato's final theory of change and motion. In the next chapter, we will see Plato's serious criticisms of it. We may offer one point which is apparent in the meantime. Namely, if the changes are generative because they make the things become different, do the non-generative motions really unable to bring any difference to the things?

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[153] Cf. White, 1981. And this issue is closely connected with the debate whether Plato advocates a bundle theory.

Do the multiple motions of the soul change no aspect of the soul? The Eleatics, indeed, do not suffer from difficulty, for they do not admit the possibility of non-generative motions. But since Plato limits the scope of generative changes by introducing the theory of Form, he must confront the problem that his theory lacks an unambiguous description of the ontological status of those non-generative motions if they do not make things become different.