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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THE CAPACITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL
FOR A GROWTH IN BEING OR REALITY
IN THE THOUGHT OF PLATO

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The Capacity of The Human Soul
For A Growth in Being or Reality
In The Thought of Plato

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PREFACE

My intention, in this thesis, is to show that the human soul is capable of 'a growth in being' or of acquiring a greater share of reality, within the framework of Plato's thought.

The acquisition of a greater measure of reality on the part of the human soul presents itself under many aspects for Plato. It is expressed as the realization of a power inherent within man, a path that returns man to his "first and better state"; it is the attainment of the excellence peculiar to the human soul, the acquisition of true virtue, the attainment of "true immortality"; it is to become a true and adequate cause of what comes to be in the sphere of one's own activity, to become an intelligent cause that acts out of choice of what is best.

This process takes place through the acquisition of limit, proportion and measure under the guidance of reason and eros. It is a motion away from dispersal and unlimitedness towards unity and limit, a victory of intelligent causation over the errant cause, the achievement of the maximum possible independence from the irrational and the unlimited.

The standard by which this acquisition of a greater share in reality is to be judged, the ground on which this "growth" is based, lies in the status of limit and intelligent causation as opposed to the unlimited and the errant cause, vis-a-vis the eternal. The growth on the part of the human soul is a growth in proximity to the eternal.

The human soul is "open" to the eternal. Because of this openness it can bring about within itself that which is most like the eternal; it can acquire a greater share of that element of changing things that constitutes the measure of truth and reality of what is in change and becoming, its likeness to the eternal.

The fact of the possibility of a human soul's participation in the eternal is the ground for saying that there is a true or a real nature of the human soul. In order that a human soul may become 'more real' it must approach its real or true nature.

Can "Growth in Reality" Mean Acquiring a
Greater Measure of Existence?

Can a Thing Exist More or Less

On coming face to face with Plato's thought regarding being and reality, we are first met with a linguistic difficulty. "From the Greek "is" (ἔστί) we get directly the participle ὄν, the noun, οὐσία, and the adverb, οὕτως. From the English "is" all we can get directly is the participle, being, but no noun or adverb. We can't say "beingness" or "beingly," and have to shift to "reality" and "really." But when we do this we lose a verb from the same stem: we can't say, "Socrates reals a man" or "Socrates reals wise", ... If we want to talk English, we will have to break up the consanguineous Greek quartet into two etymologically unrelated groups, picking our verbs from the first, our noun and adverb (and also the exceptionally useful adjective, "real") from the second. This... makes less than obvious what leaps to the eye in the Greek: that "real" and "reality" are simply the adjectival and nominal forms of "to be", and that "is" in turn represents the verbal form of "real" and "reality".¹

1.

G. Vlastos, "Degrees of Reality in Plato," New Essays on Plato and Aristotle, ed. Renford Bambrough (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 1.

Plato "... says such things as these: The Form is "completely" real, or "purely" real, or "perfectly" real, or "really" real, it is "more real" than its sensible instances, which are said "to fall between the purely real and the wholly unreal" (477a), because their state is such that "they both are and are not" (477a-478d).¹

Moreover, given two entities in the world, Plato does ask the question "which do you think more truly is?"²

If Plato says that something more truly is, or is more real, or has truer being than another, does he mean to say that it exists more than another or that the other exists less? Is existence the kind of thing that one can have more or less of?

According to the Theaetetus, existence is something common to everything that is³ including objects of perception. The first thing that confronts us vis-a-vis an existing entity is its existence,⁴ that it is. Now, it appears in certain passages that Plato is saying

1.

Ibid., pp. 1-2.

2.

585c, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1963), p. 813.

3.

186a, F.M. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1935), p. 106.

4.

185a, F.M. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1935), pp. 103-4.

that sensible objects both "are and are not", i. e., "exist and do not exist", yet, as Gregory Vlastos points out, Plato's linguistic behaviour indicates that these expressions are ellipses for "are and are not F", where F is a Form.¹

Whereas I do not agree that this is the only proper interpretation, yet I do agree in that I do not believe that Plato ever maintained that a thing can be (exist) and not be (not exist) at the same time, or that an entity can acquire more existence or lose some of the existence that it has.

Yet is not Plato implying the very thing that I want to deny in saying that "what is not" is or has being? The point comes up in the Sophist and in the Parmenides. Plato "finds it necessary", in the Sophist, to put in question Parmenides famous saying, and to establish that "what is not" in a sense has being.² The Parmenides leads us to the point that "what is" in a sense is not and that "what is not" in a sense is, for "... the existent must have the 'being' implied in 'being existent' and the 'not being' implied in 'not being non-existent' ... and the non-existent... must have the 'not being' implied in 'not being existent' and the 'being' implied in 'being

1. G. Vlastos, "A Metaphysical Paradox," Proceedings and Addresses of The American Philosophical Association, XXXIX, (October 1966), p. 10.

2.
241d.

non-existent".¹ How can the existent have "not being" and the non-existent have being?

Plato has not said, however, that something exists and does not exist at the same time. In fact, the very next point that he makes is that "That which is not, is not . . . it is altogether absurd that something should be and not be at the same time."²

Plato is not delighting in antinomies, he is trying to say something. He does not disagree with Parmenides on the point that ". . . let not anyone assert that we declare that not-being is the opposite of being, and hence are so rash as to say that not-being exists. For we long ago gave up speaking of any opposite of being. . ."³ so, if 'what is', or exists, in a sense has not-being, not-being cannot be taken to mean the opposite of being, thereby allowing an object that is to have non-being or non-existence. Non-existence is not a form of being. Also, if there is a sense in which 'what is not' i. e., what does not exist, has being, being cannot mean existence.

The same point is asserted in the Parmenides. If 'what is

1.

162 a-b, F.M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1939, p. 226.

2.

162b, F.M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1939, p. 226.

3.

258c, H.N. Fowler (trans.), "Sophist", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), p. 423.

not' is to denote that which has no being whatsoever, or to denote the total absence of being, then "We do not mean that the thing in a sense is not, though in another sense it is. The words (is not) mean without any qualification that the thing which is not in ^{so} sense or manner is, and does not possess being in any way. So what is not cannot exist or have being in any sense or manner."¹ The contrary or opposite of being neither exists nor can it be named or spoken of, for what has no being whatsoever cannot have a character or a nature whatsoever.²

What, then, does Plato mean by saying that 'what is not' is? It is pointed out that what we mean by 'what is not', when we say that it is (is real), is what is other than or different from being itself and not the contrary of being.³ What is not being, i. e., what is other than being, any Form other than being; is (real). Or, the statement 'what is not' can be taken as an ellipse for 'what is not F', where F

1.

163c, F.M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1939, p. 232.

2.

164 a.

3.

257 b, H. N. Fowler (trans.), "Sophist", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), p. 415.

is any Form, so that 'what is not beautiful' is (real),¹ 'what is not just' is (real).² Moreover, any Form that is real possesses this reality by virtue of blending or mixing with reality or being. Difference, for example, is (real) by virtue of blending with being³ or reality.

Moreover, we can legitimately say that 'what is not', what does not exist, can have being in the sense that an object of thought or the subject of a sentence, which is not to be found in the world other than in our minds, has being in that the idea in one ^{of} minds is an idea of an object that can only be conceived as participating in different Forms.⁴ One can say that 'that which does not exist' has being, in that it has an essence and a character by virtue of a participation in different Forms. "... If a man says 'if a One (one thing) does not exist'... he is speaking... of something knowable... of something different from other things... distinguishable from other things... (it) must have the character of being this and many other characters as well."⁵

1. 257 c.

2. 258 a.

3. 259a, H. N. Fowler (trans.), "Sophist", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), p. 423.

4. Sophist, 263.

5. 160c-161a, F. M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1939), pp. 220-2.

Also, one can say that 'what is' has 'not being'. What is (what is real), a Form, any Form, is not (any other Form). So 'what is' can be said not to be (something else). Also what is, what exists, an existing object in the world, can be said to have not-being, in that it does not partake of certain Forms, or in that it partakes of certain Forms other than being and other than, different from, other Forms. So, an existing object may partake of motion but not of triangularity. We must grant, then, that there is a sense in which 'what is' can have 'not being', but we can never allow ourselves to say that what exists does not exist or vice-versa.

A Distinctive Characteristic of Existence

Of a thing in time, the Parmenides says that if a thing is to exist, it must have existence at some time. If it is not to exist, there must be some time at which it does not have existence. It cannot both have existence and not have it at the same time:

" And since it cannot both have and not have existence at the same time, it can only have existence at one time and not have existence at another."¹

1.

155 E, F.M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1939, p. 196.

Existence is an affair that involves time, according to this dialogue. Moreover, existence and non-existence are naturally incompatible with reference to the same object and the same point in time.

If one were to say of a thing that it exists and that it does not exist, one would be implying, in the very act of attributing both existence and non-existence to it, that there is a transition from one state to the other.¹ With explicit reference to existence, the dialogue asserts that "A thing which is in a certain condition can not be in that condition only by passing out of it."² The only way in which a thing can be in both the state of existence and that of not existing is to be in them at different times, and to pass from one condition to the other. So, "And there must also be a time when it comes to possess existence and a time when it ceases to possess it; it can possess a thing at one time and not at another only if there are times when it acquires the thing and loses it."³ Acquiring existence is to come to be, losing existence is to cease to be.

1.

162 B & C, F.M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1939, pp. 228-9.

2.

Ibid.

3.

155 E.

Moreover, the transition either from existence to non-existence or from non-existence to existence is an instantaneous transition. The transition itself is not an event in time, it does not occupy time. There is no point in time during which it is between existence and non-existence, nor any time at which it is in both states. The transition involves no time, and the state of transition is one where the object is "... neither existent nor non-existent, and it is neither coming into existence nor ceasing to exist."¹ There is only sheer coming into existence and sheer ceasing to exist.

The fact of existence allows only of a sheer yes or no.

We must conclude then that "growth in reality" cannot mean "growth in existence", for the latter is not even possible.

II

A Preliminary Exposition of "Growth in Reality"

Let us approach the subject by examining the different ways in which Plato himself attributes reality to the human soul, and by searching for certain expressions that are synonymous with reality, as attributed to the human soul. I shall then attempt to isolate the aspect or aspects by virtue of which this attribution takes place.

In the first place, Plato does attribute reality to the human soul and, in contrast, attributes a lesser measure of reality to the body. I cite the passage from Republic IX, where Socrates asks "... whether something which is closely connected with the unchanging and immortal world of truth and itself shares that nature together with the thing in which it exists, has more or less reality than something which, like the thing which contains it, belongs to a world of mortality and perpetual change.

"No doubt it is much more real.

"And a higher or lower degree of reality goes with a greater or less measure of knowledge and so of truth?

"Necessarily.

"And is there not, to speak generally, less of truth and reality in the things which serve the needs of the body than in those which feed the soul?"

"Much less.

"And, again, less in the body itself than in the soul?"

"Certainly."¹

Soul has more reality than body, just as that on which soul and reason "feed" is more real than that on which "desire" arising out of bodily conditions feeds, just as the eternal is more real than the world of perpetual change.

It is curious that the eternal is called the "unchanging and immortal world of truth", Is it just that it is being contrasted to the "world of mortality and perpetual change"? How can one attribute immortality to the eternal?

In the Timaeus, Plato speaks of an immortal "part" of soul. There are also two mortal parts. Now, Plato has shown that soul is immortal, i. e., deathless, everlasting. What does he mean by calling a part of soul immortal and other parts mortal? Is it simply that some "parts" of soul shall perish, while others are everlasting?

1.

585 c-d, F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941, p. 305.

My contention is that the word 'immortal' acquires, in Plato's hands, a meaning other than everlasting or deathless. We shall presently see that immortality can be possessed, it can also be acquired, it can be lost, and one can share more or he can share less in immortality, as Plato uses the term. The term denotes something else than everlasting, and is used by Plato in both meanings.

Plato calls the immortal "part of soul" the "divine part".¹ It is "the most sovereign form of soul", that which has its roots not in earth but in the heavens. "Immortal", used in this sense, is a synonym for divine. In the address of the Demiurge to the gods, he says concerning the race of men "In so far as it is fitting that something in them should share the name of the immortals, being called divine and ruling over those among them who at any time are willing to follow after righteousness...".² The name 'immortal', as applied to the highest element in a man's soul, is borrowed from the gods. Something in man, because of its nature, shares a name with the gods.

In the Phaedrus, the soul of a philosopher, or of a lover, who is

1.

90-a.

2.

41 c, F.M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1937, p. 140.

also a lover of wisdom, recollects the vision of true being. The soul of such a man "is ever near in memory to those things a god's nearness whereunto makes him truly god."¹ A god, therefore, according to this passage, is a god by virtue of the fact that he is near to true being. Divinity and immortality are aspects of proximity to true being. He who ever approaches the full vision of true being" draws nigh to the divine."²

Yet is this proximity, this nearness, just a matter of knowledge or of memory? The Theaetetus tells us that "... nothing is more like the divine than any one of us who becomes as righteous as possible."³ Righteousness, virtue, perfection, are standards of this proximity to the eternal. In the Symposium, Diotima says that "... when he looks upon beauty's visible presentment, and only then, ... a man will be quickened with the true, and not the seeming virtue - for it is virtue's self that quickens him, not virtue's semblance. And when he has brought forth and reared this perfect

1.

249 c, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 496.

2.

249 d, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 496.

3.

176 c, F.M. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1935), p. 87.

virtue, he shall be called the friend of god, and if ever it is given to man to put on immortality, it shall be given to him."¹ Righteousness, true virtue, is what determines whether a man is "immortal" or "divine" or close to the eternal. A man becomes immortal, in a true sense, only if he arrives at Beauty itself. Yet that is not sufficient. He himself must be altered in the process. He must be quickened with the true virtue. Only so does he become immortal.

It is important to note here that this is a kind of immortality that can be put on, that can be acquired. "Immortal", that was applied only to one aspect of the man, is now applied to the whole man. He acquires immortality in being quickened by the true and not the seeming virtue. The character of immortality "spreads out" to cover the whole man. The slow process that leads to the vision of Beauty is a process of the basic transformation of the whole man, a qualitative change that brings to birth within his soul true virtue, which constitutes his acquired immortality.

Now, what is this immortal aspect or element or part of the soul of every man that can imbue the whole man with its own character of immortality and divinity? The immortal "part" of the soul

1.

212-a, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 563.

described in the Timaeus is the creation of the Demiurge himself. The lesser gods create the remaining "mortal" elements of soul, spirit and desire. Therefore, the immortal part of soul must be what is neither spirit nor desire. One element of the immortal part is, of course, reason or mind, the "cause of the mixture" according to the Philebus, the "cause of coming to be" according to the Phaedo. Yet, this does not exhaust the immortal "part", for in the Symposium, we learn that eros is a longing for immortality and at the same time a longing for propagation, which is "the one deathless and eternal element in one mortality."¹ More accurately, Eros is halfway between mortal and immortal.² We must say then, that taking Plato's dialogues as a whole, we must conclude that there is one immortal and one "semi" immortal aspect to a man's soul, reason and eros.

Moreover, "the mortal does all it can to put on immortality",³ and those "whose procreancy is of the spirit... conceive and bear the things of the spirit. And what are they?... Wisdom and all her

1.

207 a, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 559.

2.

Symposium, 202 d.

3.

207 d.

sister virtues...".¹ Eros is a longing not "for the beautiful itself, but for the conception and generation that the beautiful effects."² The most magnificent fruition of eros, the highest form of propagation that this longing effects, is the actualization and the inculcation of real virtue within the soul. This is the way in which both eros and reason imbue the whole man with their own character of immortality; by bringing about true virtue in the soul of a man, they uplift the whole soul.

Now, "immortality" is seen by Plato, in this sense of the term, as something that one can lose as well as acquire, something that one can have more or less of besides: "As concerning the most sovereign form of soul in us we must conceive that heaven has given it to each man as a guiding genius - that part which lifts us from earth towards our celestial affinity... Now if a man is engrossed in appetites and ambitions and spends all his pains upon these, all his thoughts must needs be mortal and, so far as that is possible, he cannot fall short of becoming mortal altogether, since he has

1.

209 a, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 560.

2.

206 c, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 558.

nourished the growth of his mortality. But if his heart has been set on the love of learning and true wisdom and he has exercised that part of himself above all..." he cannot fail to "possess immortality in the fullest measure that human nature admits; ... he is always devoutly cherishing the divine part and maintaining the guardian genius that dwells within him in good estate..."¹ A man's immortality is increased insofar as the immortal element within him grows and determines the rest, insofar as reason attains its true nature and eros actualizes its power. Conversely, a man can become entirely mortal if the power of reason is brought into the service of the "lower" elements of the soul, so that it becomes like them in character; or if eros fails to realize the ascent of which it is capable, and instead of uplifting the man, is uplled down with him.

The Theaetetus says: "... Nothing is more like the divine than any one of us who becomes as righteous as possible. It is here that a man can show his true spirit and power or lack of spirit and nothingness."² The acquisition of righteousness and divinity is a

1.

90 b-c, F.M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1937), pp. 353-4.

2.

176 c, F.M. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1935), p. 87.

display of a man's power, his immortal aspect, and it is at the same time a growth of this power, a greater measure of immortality acquired. The acquisition of mortality, on the other hand, is a display of a man's nothingness, or of the lack of the power to bring about the true end, that can only lead a man to a deeper nothingness.

As a man becomes more truly immortal or less immortal, his affinity with the divine increases or decreases and his proximity to the eternal increases or decreases. As he rears the true virtue within himself as opposed to the false virtue he becomes a more adequate reflection of the eternal, a more authentic image of the really real. We shall come to that later.

Now, if we go back to the section in the Republic which we cited at the beginning, we shall find a clue for the meaning of "immortal", as applied to a part of the soul. Both the Republic and the Timaeus, in making a broad tripartite division of the soul, ~~set~~ eros aside and take reason as the "immortal" part of soul. Now, this part of the soul, according to our passage, is not only called immortal, it is also called more real than desire, which is another part. It is clear that what is "closely connected with the unchanging and immortal world of truth and itself shares that nature together with the thing in which it exists" and no doubt "is much more real" is reason, and the

thing in which it exists is soul. Both reason and soul are immortal and more real. That which is less real than soul is body, and that which is less real than reason is the set of desires that arise out of bodily conditions, just as the nourishment of reason is more real than the nourishment of desires arising out of "bodily states".¹

There is no bodily desire, for the Philebus denies² that the body can have any affections. All desires are part of the soul.

The class of desires arising out of bodily conditions are a part of the soul that is "less real". Then there is much more truth and reality or a greater measure of truth and reality in the immortal element than in the mortal. Note that one class of things is said to be more real than another. "More real" is not applied to the same entity or kind of thing, so that to be more real cannot be simply to be more really itself or a more adequate representation of its own nature or essence. To say that one kind of entity is more real than another is to posit a classification between different entities with regard to their grades of reality vis-a-vis the really real, the eternal, the "unchanging and immortal world of truth."

1.

585 b.

2.

35 c-d.

Plato, besides speaking of immortal and mortal "parts," speaks of "real" and "unreal parts": "... because they can never satisfy with unreal nourishment that part of themselves which is itself unreal..."¹ Not only that, but the word 'immortal' is used in place of 'really real' or 'eternal', as in "the immortal world of truth", and 'mortal' is a substitute for 'unreal' in "a world of mortality and perpetual change." Also in 611 c, Plato speaks of "the divine, immortal and everlasting world"² of truth to which soul is akin.

'Immortal', as used in this sense, does not mean deathless, indefinitely enduring in time, but is rather a denial of mortality which is perpetual change, unlikeness, dispersal which, in its extreme form, approaches "the bottomless ocean of unlikeness", that which is furthest away from order and design and the determination and limitation of form and of intelligence. The truly mortal is that which lacks unity, limit and intelligence and is the farthest away from the eternal; that which is other than the authentic reflection of the eternal; that which escapes the creative activity of the Demiurge and of mind. As such, the "mortal" points to that

1.

585 c, F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 306.

2.

F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 338.

factor in the world which may be termed relatively "unreal", that which is distant from truth and the "really real".

There is the possibility of a growth in reality, which is the growth in immortality. As a man can achieve immortality he achieves reality. The immortal "part" can endow the rest of soul, to some extent, with immortality, which is to say that the real "part" can share its reality with the "unreal part", thereby overcoming its unreality and uplifting it. The motions of reason, the revolution of the same and uniform can "draw into its train all that turmoil of fire and water and air and earth that had later grown about it," and a man's soul can "control its irrational turbulence by discourse of reason and return once more to the form of his first and best condition."¹

1.

42 c-d, F.M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1937), p. 144.

III

Growth in Reality from the Perspective of Limit and the Unlimited

One major criterion for the "immortality" or reality of the soul that has emerged is proximity or nearness to the eternal or the really real. This proximity is the measure to which it reflects the eternal within itself. The process of ascent towards greater reality is the process of becoming a more adequate reflection of the eternal. I shall attempt to verify this with respect to the constitution of the human soul.

We have seen that reason is called immortal and real, while the lower class of desires is called mortal and unreal with respect to reason. On what basis is this contrast made? Let us look to the Philebus for a more adequate answer to this question than what we have seen so far.

According to the Philebus, pleasure and desire are akin to or of the class of the unlimited. Mind, on the other hand, is of the class of the "cause of the mixture" and is "... either identical with truth or of all things most like it and truest."¹

1.

65 d, H. N. Fowler (transl) "Philebus", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1962), p. 393.

Pleasure, the lower pole of the mortal element of a man's soul, the less true and real element, is akin to the class of the unlimited. Now, there are two classes among existing things, the class of limit and the class of the unlimited.¹ All existing things have inherent within them the elements of limit and unlimitedness.² "Unmixed pleasure" belongs to the class of the unlimited,³ yet what we are acquainted with under the name of pleasure more properly belongs to the mixed class, i. e., there are no instances of absolutely unmixed pleasure. Nothing in the universe truly exists in the unmixed state, anything that comes to be must contain some measure and proportion, for "that in which there is no admixture of truth can never truly come into being or exist."⁴ Therefore, it is more proper to say of pleasure that it is akin to the class of the unlimited. What is this unlimited "element" or "class of things"?

Limit and the Unlimited:

Everything in becoming is "sprung from one and many" and

-
- 1.
 - 26 c.
 - 2.
 - 16 c.
 - 3.
 - 27 c - 28 a.
 - 4.

64 b, H. N. Fowler (transl) "Philebus", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1962), p. 387.

has "inherent in it" limit and the unlimited.¹ These two elements enter into the constitution of anything that is in the world. Any object is a mixture of these two elements. The mixture forms the third class. Added to these, there is a fourth class, that of the cause of the mixture.

Neither limit nor the unlimited can exist by itself, they are elements in the constitution of things that are, or aspects in the nature or essence of the existing thing. The unlimited is what remains if we abstract limit and unity from the mixture. The Parameides views the world as composed of the one and the many, or unity and the unlimited. The Parmenides argues that pure unity, taken in complete abstraction, neither possesses being nor any other character or limitation other than unity itself.² However, if the element of unity is completely abstracted what remains is an element of absolute indeterminacy and indefiniteness that will not admit of any character what so ever, it cannot even be "a many", there can be no likeness or unlikeness within it, it is something that can neither come to be nor cease to be nor is it capable of

1.

16c.

2.

137c - 142b.

motion or of rest.¹ Yet, the element that is other than or different from unity, but not the opposite of unity, is an element that will appear or seem to have unity, limit, number and many other characters besides; but all its characters will be a seeming, an appearance, but will not be real; it will possess the character of unlimitedness, yet this will be only an appearance of unlimitedness and not true unlimitedness. For the Parmenides, the unlimited factor is an infinitely divisible continuum which cannot actually exist without the element of unity or limit.²

The unlimited of the Parmenides is analogous to the unlimited of the Philebus, which is portrayed as a continuum or a quality that always allows of more or less but has no measure or proportion or determinateness within itself.

In terms of quantity and measure, the unlimited is an indeterminate continuum that has no definite number; in terms of the one and many it is the indefinitely numerous and the infinitely divisible that can present an appearance of unity and number, of greatness and smallness, equality and inequality, of likeness

1.

159b-160b.

2.

165a, F. M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1939), pp. 238-9 also pp. 208-211.

and unlikeness. In terms of motion and rest, it is an element that is in perpetual flux and chaotic motion, but cannot display any ordered motion if left to itself.

The element of limit, on the other hand, is the element of measure, fitness, and definiteness and their kindred. This, according to the Philebus, is "chosen by the eternal nature" as "the first of possessions."¹ Beauty, proportion and truth, considered as one, are more truly regarded as cause of the mixture than any other element in the mixture.² It is "through the goodness of these" that "the mixture itself has been made good."³ Thus limit, as a component or element of the mixture, is an authentic reflection of the eternal and is closest to the eternal.

In the Timaeus, the world is viewed as an image or copy of true being, of the Forms. The Forms act as a model for the creation. The Forms, according to the Parmenides, are as 'patterns fixed in the nature of things; the other things are made in their image and are likenesses... and this participation in the

1.

66 a-b.

2.

65a.

3.

65a, H. N. Fowler (trans.) "Philebus", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1962), p. 391.

Forms is nothing but their being made in their image."¹ We may say then that the possession of limit and unity is an expression of the fact of an object's participation in true reality. Nothing can come into being if it does not possess some measure of truth, of limit, of unity.

In the Timaeus the Demiurge, in creating the world, takes over what is in chaotic and unordered motion,² what is discordant and without form or definiteness. In the Statesman, God intervenes to rescue the universe from "the bottomless abyss of unlikeness".³ These too are expressions of the unlimited, what would be left over if one abstracted the creative activity of the creator, which imposes form and order.

Thus limit, form, unity constitute a reflection of the eternal nature in things that are not eternal, but which can participate, come to share in the eternal through the possession of limit.

Limit and the unlimited are generally taken as cosmological concepts or concepts that Plato uses in expounding his cosmology.

1.

F.M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1939), p. 93.

2.

30a.

3.

273d.

I maintain, however, that because of what we have seen, they are actually ontological notions. They can be understood not as terms or concepts of physics, but only vis-a-vis the eternal. The function of limit can only be adequately conceived in terms of participation in the eternal, within Plato's thought. The element of limit is called "cause" of the mixture, or rather, in so far as there is anything in the mixture that is closest to the true cause and worthy of being called by that name, it is the element of limit in the form of beauty, proportion and truth "considered as one."¹ This element is placed even above mind, which is another type of cause of the mixture, according to the classification made at the end of the Philebus.²

Moreover, beauty, proportion and truth, taken in unity, are cause of the goodness of the mixture, and it is "through the goodness of these that the mixture itself has been made good."³ Not only do they possess the good, but they have the power of sharing this goodness, of infusing the mixture with their own goodness. Now,

1.

65a.

2.

66 a-d.

3.

65a, H. N. Fowler (transl) "Philebus", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1962), p. 391.

it is well known that according to the Republic, the Good is the cause of the being or the reality of the Forms, and it is that which endows the objects of knowledge with their truth and reality and endows the knower with the power of knowing.¹ Must we not then say that the presence of the element of limit in the mixture is the extension of the power of the Good to the world, and that as the element of limit and form and unity is the expression of the participation of the temporal in the eternal, it is at once the element without which nothing could be anything, nothing in the world of change could be known and nothing in the world of change could possess any truth and reality. Limit is the element which is not only itself good but endows the rest of the mixture with goodness.

Let us see how this is applicable with respect to the human soul.

The Application of Limit to the Soul

We have seen that man possesses a mortal or relatively unreal element in his soul, which is pleasure and is of the kind of the unlimited. We have seen that man possesses an immortal or real element in his soul, which is reason. We have also seen that the whole soul can put on immortality or reality through the

1.

508 c - 509 b.

acquisition of true virtue. Let us see how this takes place.

Although pleasure is allied with the unlimited and is of the class of the mortal and has a low share of true being, yet the "part" of the soul of a man that is the source of pleasures and pains, can be uplifted out of this mortality and drawn closer to the eternal.

Now, not all pleasures are alike. In fact, some pleasures are the opposites of other pleasures.¹ There are true pleasures as well as false pleasures, according to both the Philebus and the Republic. There are pure pleasures and impure or adulterated ones. There are pleasures that are evil and others that come from the acquisition of wisdom.

In order for a man to gain immortality, he does not have to rid himself of the class of pleasures. Soul, if it is a human soul, must have a union of pleasure and of wisdom. The point is made again and again in the Philebus. Socrates says that every single person, without exception would prefer the mixed life to either the life of pure reason or pure pleasure.² The union of the two is to be preferred to the life of reason alone. Neither wisdom, the

1.

12c.

2.

22a.

excellence of reason, nor the excellence of pleasure "itself contains the good."¹ Neither in itself "is sufficient or desirable for man or any other living being."² Neither the life of pleasure "unmixed with wisdom" nor the life of wisdom which has "not the slightest alloy of pleasure" is by any means sufficient for any one.³

In fact, the very way in which the human soul is constituted, the very way in which it functions, necessitates the interaction of the different powers" of the soul."... let him ask whether anyone would wish to have or acquire anything whatsoever... if he could have no true opinion that he is pleased, no knowledge whatsoever of what he has felt, and not even the slightest memory of the feeling. And let him ask in the same way... whether anyone would wish to have wisdom without any... pleasure... rather than with some pleasures..."⁴ Man needs the desire to seek after something, even wisdom. He feels pleasure upon acquiring it and he needs to have a knowledge of the pleasure as well as the memory of it if he is not to wander about in a mindless, unconscious and indifferent

1.

22b.

2.

22b.

3.

60c-d, H. N. Fowler (trans.) "Philebus", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1962), p. 375.

4.

160d-e, H. N. Fowler (trans.) "Philebus", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1962), pp. 376-7.

state, neither desiring nor knowing anything, neither striving after or achieving anything, completely immersed in the flow of things.

To be human, the different "parts" of soul must interact.

Man does not acquire immortality by dropping off "part" of his soul and thereby ceasing to be a man. There is a form of "immortality" or a higher measure of reality that a man may acquire during the span of his existence. If, in order to "become immortal" he cannot leave part of himself out of the process, then he must do something about that part.

"For any class to be alone, solitary, and unalloyed is neither altogether possible nor is it profitable".¹ How, then, can the "two classes" come together in a way that can achieve immortality?

Plato searches for the element in the "mixture" that is of the highest worth and is the true cause of its value, truth and reality, in so far as any element in the mixture is capable of being such. He finds this element in measure, proportion, definiteness, limit. However, not in any measure, but in the "just measure."

The notion of just measure is developed in the Statesman. The just measure is contrasted with relative measure or measure

1.

63b.

according to a relative standard. The stranger asserts that "Excess and deficiency are measurable not only in relative terms but also in respect of attainment of a norm or due measure."¹

A "due measure" must be brought about, realized within that which lacks it. It must impose limit upon "the more or less" or the unlimited, if this relatively unlimited element within a man's soul is to be delivered of its mortality so that the whole may put on immortality. That component of the mixture, truth, proportion and beauty, must be actualized within the soul, and as it is a true cause of the mixture, it can endow the soul with the measure of reality which it brings with it, and as it is good, it can endow the soul with goodness. Once a soul truly possesses this element it will have the true virtue and come to partake more adequately of truth and of reality.

As far as pleasure is concerned, the soul is to be "pruned" of the "false" pleasures and of the violent and evil ones. The remaining pleasures are to be limited by the just measure imposed by reason, which is a cause of the mixture in the sense of that which brings about the mixture, that which imposes the limit upon "the more or less."

^{1.} 284b, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1963), p. 1051.

IV

Growth in Reality from the Perspective of the "Real Nature" of a Thing

The Republic divides the human soul into three "parts", corresponding to the three parts of the state. The division made in book IV is later corrected and elaborated upon. In book IX we meet such an elaboration. Plato still speaks of three parts of the soul, but he tells us that "each part seems to me to have its own form of pleasure and its peculiar desire."¹ The three parts are now called reason or the "knowledge-loving" part, spirit or the "ambitious" part, and finally the "gain-loving" part, which is really a multifarious lot for which it is difficult to find an appropriate name.

The section running from 580 d to 588 b deals with these three "parts". Plato goes into a discussion of the pleasures of the various parts. Each part has its own form of pleasure. There are three classes of pleasures, those that belong to reason, those to the ambitious part and those to the gain-loving part. The

1.

580d, F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 300.

pleasures of the three "parts" are considered as belonging to one general class, that of pleasure, and the discussion plunges into the question of which pleasures are real or true pleasures, and which pleasures are false or illusory. We are told that: "there are, it seems, three kinds of pleasure, one genuine and two spurious."¹ And that "Only the pleasures of intelligence are entirely true and pure; all the others are illusory."² Contrasted with the pleasures of intelligence, the pleasures of the spirited part are not genuine, they are "illusory phantoms of true pleasure"; as pleasures, they are not real.

The pleasures of intelligence are true pleasures, for they are pure, they are not mixed with pain. Moreover, they are the pleasures that are produced under the direction of reason and must therefore be based on a knowledge of the attendant realities of the situation; they are based on "truth". They involve no conflict with the true nature of the other parts of the soul. These pleasures are not given to excess but possess limit. The pleasures of

1.

587b, F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 307.

2.

583b, F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 302.

intelligence are part of what the Philebus calls the "pure pleasures of the soul itself, those which accompany knowledge and, sometimes, perception."¹ These are the highest form of pleasures, and are "chosen" by the "eternal nature" as the "fifth of possessions",² they and, among pleasures, are most akin to the good. These pleasures "belong" to intelligence, they are the proper pleasures of the immortal element of the soul.

The Philebus dismisses the other pleasures as unworthy of mention as choices of the eternal nature. The pleasures of the ambitious part and the gain-loving part are illusions of true pleasure, they are mixed with pain, they arise out of the relief of pain and are by no means pure pleasures, for they go along with cravings and violent passions that engender pains and are never truly satisfied. Moreover, without the guidance of reason, they can be "false" pleasures, if based on false beliefs and expectations and not on the realities of the situation, for, according to the Philebus, such pleasures are false.³ Also, such pleasures may bring pains in

1.

66c, H. N. Fowler (trans.), "Philebus", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Hememann Ltd., 1962), p. 395.

2.

66a-c.

3.

Philebus 37c-40d.

their train or be accompanied by pains, so that the man has no unadulterated experience of pleasure. Bereft of the guidance of reason, the desires of the other two parts of the soul may cause conflict and pain within the soul. If the other two parts are left to themselves, without the determination of reason, they enslave the man; they are cravings and violent desires; they are of the class of the unlimited; they lack measure and proportion. If a man "seeks, at all costs, to gratify his ambition by envy, his love of victory by violence, and his ill-temper by outbursts of passion, without sense or reason"¹ his pleasures will be illusory. Similarly, when a man indulges in gluttony, with no measure or proportion, the pleasures he tastes are "uncertain and impure"; he can never satisfy the endless craving within himself, and he never drifts away from the "upper true region".

Nevertheless, these pleasures need not invariably be false or spurious or illusory and unreal, for Plato says "May we boldly assert that all the desires both of the gain-loving and of the ambitious part of our nature will win the truest pleasures of which they are capable, if they accept the guidance of knowledge and

1.

585c-d, F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 306.

reason and pursue only those pleasures which wisdom approves?

Such pleasures will be true, because truth is their guide..."¹

Let us look at how this takes place, and, in the process, attempt to draw out the meaning of "real".

The most immediately obvious meaning of 'real' in this context, as applied to pleasure, is 'genuine', as opposed to spurious or illusory. One is inclined to say that some pleasures become real, i. e., become real pleasures, in that they no longer merely constitute the absence of pain, and are no longer tainted by the character of accompanying pains. If we said this, we would no doubt be right. If reason were to come to direct the affairs of the soul, it could manage the affairs of the soul by limiting the excessive nature of the desires of the ambitious and the gain-loving parts of the soul and by eliminating the conflict between the different desires of the soul, thereby making it possible for the soul to enjoy unmixed pleasure.

Moreover, Plato says pleasures will be true "~~if~~" truth is their guide." One could take this to mean that, in so far as certain pleasures are false because they are based on false beliefs and not on the realities of the situation, such pleasures

1.

58c-d, F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato

(London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 307.

could come to be true if they came to be based on knowledge or true opinion and on an adequate grasp of the situation. In that case, 'real', as applied to pleasure, would mean 'true', whereas 'unreal' would mean 'false', in the sense of the terms 'true' and 'false' that is applicable to pleasure. These pleasures could become real "if they accept the guidance of knowledge and reason and pursue only those pleasures which wisdom approves."

However, Plato does not rest content with such an explanation. We have so far not drawn out the full significance of "truth" as the "guide" of pleasures that are true and the significance of such pleasures having reason as their guide. In the passage with which we are concerned, Plato has brought out the unlimited nature of the pleasures and the desires that he calls spurious and unreal. For an explanation of the process whereby they become real, we would have to turn back to the Philebus and to the previous section of the thesis, to see the significance of limit and the unlimited and the role of reason as "cause of the mixture." But, we have already gone into that. If, then, 'real' and 'spurious' as applied to pleasure are seen in the perspective of the Philebus, we would have to say that pleasure is spurious and is an illusion of true pleasure in so far as it retains unlimitedness and lacks measure

and limit; and that pleasure becomes as real as its nature admits in as much as it acquires limit and measure. In that case, the acquisition of reality on the part of pleasure would be parallel to the acquisition of reality on the part of everything else in the world, for limit and the unlimited are ontological notions applicable to everything in the world.

In saying all this, have we captured Plato's meaning? The answer is no. What we have said so far is perfectly true, but we have glossed over what I believe is the major aspect of the section under discussion.

Pleasure, in this section, is not taken as a class in isolation. Plato does take pleasure as a class of things and compares different kinds of pleasure with respect to their truth and reality; however, in commenting on this, we have abstracted the discussion from its context. The different kinds of pleasures are integrally connected with the different "parts" of the soul. Pleasure, in the context of the discussion, plays a particularly important role with respect to these three "parts". Plato points this role out: pleasure is the "appropriate satisfaction" of a "natural need",¹ or pleasure is "to be filled with what befits nature."²

1. 585d, F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 305.

2. 585d, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1963), p. 813.

and limit; and that pleasure becomes as real as its nature admits in as much as it acquires limit and measure. In that case, the acquisition of reality on the part of pleasure would be parallel to the acquisition of reality on the part of everything else in the world, for limit and the unlimited are ontological notions applicable to everything in the world.

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1. 585d, F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 305.

2. 585d, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1963), p. 813.

Pleasure is the satisfaction of a need or a desire arising from the nature of a thing. It is the appropriate satisfaction of such a nature, or the satisfaction that belongs peculiarly to the nature of that thing. Moreover, it is the satisfaction of the desire or the need peculiar to that nature.

Have we forgotten that our starting point was that "each part" of the soul has "its own form of pleasure and its peculiar desire?" Each of the three parts, intelligence, spirit, and the gain-loving part, has a nature of its own. Each has a desire peculiar to that nature. Each part, moreover, has a form of pleasure or a class of pleasures that are peculiar to it, are its own. Which is to say that each part of the soul has a peculiar form of satisfaction for the need or the desire that properly belongs to its nature, that arises from that nature.

Each "part" or element or aspect of the human soul has an exigency that arises from its own nature, and a unique form of satisfaction for this exigency. This is what takes Plato into a discussion of which pleasures are real or true pleasures and which are illusory. In so far as the exigency of the nature of each part is satisfied, then that part attains real or true pleasure and the man experiences true pleasure. To see this better, let us go back

to the section which we have been quoting, but which we have not been quoting in full: "May we boldly assert that all the desires both of the gain-loving and of the ambitious part of our nature will win the truest pleasures of which they are capable, if they accept the guidance of knowledge and reason and pursue only those pleasures which wisdom approves? Such pleasures will be true, because truth is their guide, and will also be proper to their nature, if it is a fact that a thing always finds in what is best for it something akin to its real self."

"Well, that is certainly a fact."¹ Or, to use Paul Shorey's translation: "in both the gain-loving and the contentious part of our nature all the desires that wait upon knowledge and reason, . . . will, since they follow truth, enjoy the truest pleasures, so far as that is possible. . . and also the pleasures that are proper to them and their own, if for everything that which is best may be said to be most its 'own'".

"But indeed, he said, it is most truly its very own."²

1.

F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 307.

2.

586 d-e, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 814.

In attaining true pleasures or true satisfaction, the ambitious part and the gain-loving part are attaining true satisfaction for the exigencies of their own natures. In doing this, each of these parts approaches not only its true satisfaction, its true or its own pleasures, but it also approaches its "real self" or what is "most truly its very own." Each part becomes "akin to its real self" and "most truly its very own."

This interpretation is born out by the very next passage, for Plato says "To conclude, then, each part of the soul will not only do its own work and be just when the whole soul... follows the guidance of the wisdom-loving part, but it also will enjoy the pleasures that are proper to it and the best and truest of which it is capable..."¹. To attain true satisfaction, each of these parts of the soul must approach its real self and do its own work, perform its proper function; it must be what it should be, what its true nature is; it should be most its own. If it is this, then it will also attain true pleasure, enjoy pleasures that are its own.

However, if this is the case, then, prior to the state in which they "follow the guidance of the wisdom-loving part", the state in

1.

586 d - 587 a, F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 307.

which they are like their real selves, they must not have been like their real selves. If our interpretation is correct, should Plato not have previously given an indication of such an important fact?

But he did. He struck the gong so loudly that we missed the point. He said: "To conclude, then: those who have no experience of wisdom and virtue and spend their whole time in feasting and self-indulgence . . . can never satisfy with unreal nourishment that part of themselves which is itself unreal and incapable of lasting satisfaction."¹

What we called (in the second part of this thesis) the set of desires arising out of bodily conditions or that are "states of bodily inanition"² turns out to be either identical with or a part of the desires that belong to the gain-loving part. These desires, the gain-loving part itself, the food on which such desires feed and the satisfaction of these desires are all termed "unreal". We are in a better position now to see what this means. Both the gain-loving and the ambitious parts of the soul, if not directed by reason, are unreal or relatively unreal because they are not their true selves, they are

1.

586 a-b, F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 306.

2.

F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 305.

not truly their very own, they do not function as their true selves.

We must conclude, then, that either for the pleasures of any part to be real, or for that part itself to be real, the part in question must be akin to, must be like its real self or its real nature. If the pleasures of a part are real, the satisfaction is real, which is to say that the needs of the true nature of that part have been truly met. I maintain that this implies that the part in question must be in conformity with its real nature or its real self.

However, we require a more thorough analysis of this.

We have so far been glossing over the clause "it is a fact that a thing finds in what is best for it something akin to its real self",¹ or, "for everything, that which is best may be said to be most its 'own'".²

Supposing we take "what is best" or "that which is best" to mean the best or truest pleasures.

Working with Shorey's translation, we would then have to interpret the clause as meaning that the desires of the ambitious and of the gain-loving parts or that the ambitious and the gain-loving

1.

F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 307.

2.

586 d-e, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 814.

parts themselves, find what is most their own, the pleasures that most truly belong to them, in that subset of the set of pleasures that belong to them, which is the subset of true pleasures that belong to them. Which would be an extremely complicated way of saying that, among the pleasures appropriate to these parts, the truest pleasures are the most appropriate.

Working with Cornford's translation, we would have to say that what is best for each part, the true pleasures of each part, are most akin to the real nature of that part or most akin to the real nature of the desires of that part.

Both interpretations are consistent with what Plato is saying. They both assert that the part in question attains what is most appropriate to it. Does this necessarily imply that the parts in question approach their real nature or their true selves?

The very next point made is that each of these parts "does its own work", performs its own peculiar function, and "is just." This points the way to an interpretation that is more comprehensive and, I believe, more coherent. The passage 586c - 587a definitely indicates that the part in question functions or behaves **most** in conformity with its true nature, it does its own work. Therefore,

the part in question does approach its true nature either way. If we were to understand "what is best for it" as the excellence or the superiority of the part, its virtue, then we could interpret the clause in 586 c-d as saying that in so far as a thing possesses virtue, it is most akin to its real self, closest to its own nature, or "most truly its very own." After all, when Plato says that the part in question does its own work he means that it possesses virtue, and he does call it "just." The interpretation that I am putting forward is that in so far as a thing possesses virtue it is like or in conformity with its real nature. We must remember that the whole section we are analyzing is in the midst of a comparison of just and unjust lives. Plato has already made the point that if the ambitious and the gain-loving parts are left to themselves, then they will not be able to satisfy the desires peculiar to them. These two parts of the soul do not contain within themselves the possibility of truly satisfying the exigencies of their own natures.

The question is approached by Plato from the point of view of the function of each part and of the soul as a whole. According to Republic I, the function of a thing is the work for which that thing is the only or the best instrument. The function of a thing is its

"appointed work", or "the work that that thing alone can do, or can do better than anything else."¹

For everything that has a function there is a particular excellence or virtue. If a thing possesses its specific virtue it can perform its function well, if it lacks its specific virtue it will function badly.²

Now, in so far as a thing performs its specific function, its own "appointed work", must we not say then that it is like its real self or its real nature? Must we not also say that in so far as a thing possesses its specific virtue it is like its real self?

Each part of the soul has a function and soul as a whole has a function. In so far as any part of the soul, or the soul itself, performs its function well it will possess its specific virtue and will be like or akin to its real self.

The human soul has a specific virtue peculiar to itself. This virtue is justice.³ We must conclude, then, that in so far as a human soul is just it is akin to its real nature. In Republic X,⁴ Plato

1.

352c-353a, F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 37.

2.

352 b-c.

3.

353d-354a.

4.

611b-612a.

brings out this very point. The human soul is compared to the sea-god Glaucus, "whose original form can hardly be discerned" because it has been mutilated, ~~marked~~ by the waves and encrusted with "the clinging overgrowth of weed and rock and shell." The sea-god is more like a monster than "his natural self."¹ The experience that we have of the human soul in this life, is an experience, not of its real self or its original form, its natural self, but, of an *image* of this real self, which is quite often deformed, much like the sea-god Glaucus. The human soul does not possess its "original form", rather, it is in a fallen state. The human soul is quite often encumbered with a "wild profusion of rock and shell, whose earthy substance has encrusted her, because she seeks what men call happiness by making earth her food."² It is encumbered with "those clinging overgrowths which come of gluttony and all luxurious pleasure and, like leaden weights charged with affinity to this mortal world, hang upon the soul..."³ The soul must be cleared of these overgrowths, it must be pruned of this gluttony and lift its eyes up to "true reality." "We must not think of the soul, in her

1.

F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 337.

2.

F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 338.

3.

F.M. Cornford, (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 228.

truest nature, as full of diversity and unlikeness and perpetually at variance with herself."¹ For this is true only of the unjust soul as it exists in this life. The presence of justice would eliminate this diversity and strife, for "Justice is produced in the soul, like health in the body, by establishing the elements concerned in their natural relations of control and subordination, whereas injustice is like a disease and means that this natural order is inverted."² When the natural order is reestablished, when the soul is cleared of the overgrowth encrusting it, it will become just. *She* will approach its "original form" and its "real nature" when she "seeks to apprehend and hold converse with the - immortal - world to which she is akin." We shall get a more adequate grasp of this real or "true nature" of the soul when we see it reflected in the soul and in "what she would become if her affections were entirely set on following the impulse that would lift her out of the sea in which she is now sunken."³

1.

F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 337.

2.

444d, F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 140.

3.

F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 338.

The soul of a man can become more real, is more like its real self, if it comes to possess justice. It is the function of reason to discern true reality and to rule, to direct the activity of the whole soul. Reason will approach its true nature in functioning more truly in the manner indicated by its "real self." It will then possess its own virtue, wisdom. Wisdom is a virtue concerned not only with any abstract process of gaining knowledge but with the direction and transformation of the whole soul. Even for intelligence to gain knowledge it must reorient the whole soul towards the true and unchanging world of truth; it must rechannel the drives of the other parts so that in transforming them it can lead them towards their own true natures and, by eliminating the opposition it encounters from the other parts, make it possible for itself to attain its own true nature. Moreover, wisdom exists in the soul not merely as a potentiality but as an active power that can be deformed, but it cannot fail to express itself, even in a deformed state. Wisdom is not like the other virtues that "can be produced by habituation and exercise in a soul which had not possessed them from the first. Wisdom, ... is... the virtue of some diviner faculty, which never loses its power, though its use for good or for harm depends

on the direction towards which it is turned."¹ "There are two kinds of vice in the soul, and ... we ought to consider cowardice, intemperance and injustice to be all alike forms of disease in the soul, and ignorance, of which there are all sorts of varieties, to be deformity."² It is fitting that once one sees virtue in the soul as an approximation of its true nature that he should look upon vice as deformity and disease.

The other two parts of the soul, if left to themselves, or to their own direction, will not be able to fulfill the exigencies of their own natures. They can only find this satisfaction if they accept the guidance of reason. Spirit, or the ambitious part, will be able to perform its specific function well and will attain its specific excellence, courage, only in so far as it accepts the direction of reason, springing from a true knowledge of what is to be feared and what is not to be feared. It must come to possess the habit of acting only under the direction of such knowledge, and it must come to persevere, to endure as the true auxiliary of reason and not be swayed from its course. The gain-loving part will also perform the function peculiar

1.

F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 227-8.

2.

228c, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 971.

to it well only in so far as it accepts the limitation and measure imposed by reason and is pruned of its gluttony and excess. Only so will the soul be lifted out of the sea in which it is immersed.

Thus, after comparing the pleasures of the three parts of the soul, Plato says "To conclude, then, each part of the soul will not only do its own work and be just, when the whole soul, with no inward conflict, follows the guidance of the wisdom loving part, but it will also enjoy the pleasures that are proper to it and the best and truest of which it is capable; whereas if either of the other two parts gains the upper hand, besides failing to find its own proper pleasure, it will force the others to pursue a false pleasure uncongenial to their nature."¹ If there is injustice in the soul, then there is a rule established in the soul "which does not belong to it,"² "injustice is to cause one to rule or to be ruled by the other contrary to nature."³

1.

586c-587a, F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 307.

2.

444b, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 686.

3.

444d, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 687.

Any part of the soul of a man will become more real if it becomes more like its real self or true nature. The pleasures of that part will become more real in so far as the part in question approaches its real nature. The whole soul will become more real, will become truly immortal, in so far as it is possible for a man to become immortal, in acquiring true virtue and its own particular excellence. The soul of a man, in so far as it possesses true justice, will be a true reflection of its real self.

For the human soul, or for any element within that soul, any aspect or "part" of it, to become more real is to become more like its real self or its real nature.

Now, Plato's philosophy is a philosophy of participation. Real nature or real self can only be understood, in such a frame of reference, in relation to the eternal, to the unchanging world of truth and reality. A thing, any thing, comes to be what it is through participation in the eternal; it participates in its own Form or in several Forms, which, when "mixed" or "blended" produce a particular Form or essence or nature, which is the "appropriate" Form for that particular thing. A thing participates in such a Form in that it is an "image" or a "reflection" of the reality which

is the Form in which it participates. That thing is structured or molded after the pattern which is the Form, so that Plato says "there is no other way in which any object can come into being except by participation in the reality peculiar to its appropriate universal."¹ As such, a thing can come to participate more or less in the reality appropriate to it. In so far as it participates more adequately, is a more adequate image; it is more real in the sense that it is closer to, more like its eternal nature, its real nature, its real self.

It is not my concern to explain in detail the theory of participation. However, there is one aspect of it that is crucial for our endeavour.

Through the eyes of the mind one can arrive at intelligible realities that are, "as it were, patterns fixed in the nature of things."² What is important for our exposition is that there are such realities, and that things in the world are related to these realities. The mind can discover such realities but it cannot create them, they are not merely ideas in the mind of man.³ That there are such realities

1.

101c, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 82.

2.

Parmenides, 132d, F.M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1939), p. 93.

3.

Parmenides 132b-c.

is reflected in the fact that there is a "just measure" or a "due measure", as opposed to a relative measure, that is applicable to things in the world. It makes the arts possible, it makes the sciences of man possible. Similarly, it makes it possible for us to say that there is a "real nature" or a "true nature" for the human soul or for any part of it. The "real nature" of a thing cannot be understood simply in terms of a state or a condition that a thing may arrive at at any one time, or by comparing two states of a thing without referring to a third thing. This third thing is the standard, it is the criterion by which these two states can be compared with respect to truth and reality. There must be a "real nature" of the thing that is a criterion for what the thing is 'in reality', there is need for a standard that is not relative, that is independent of place and time and that will allow us to say that this is the "real nature" of the thing, rather than that.

The real nature of the human soul, or of any aspect of the human soul, can be truly understood or adequately conceived only in relation to the eternal, so that our knowledge of it may be termed knowledge rather than opinion or belief, whether the opinion be true or false. There must be a foundation that allows us to have knowledge

rather than true opinion. This is a fundamental assertion by Plato, a fundamental assertion that he attempts to explain through what has been termed the "doctrine" of participation.

According to Plato, man's reason can only be adequately conceived in relation to the eternal. A man's true nature can only be conceived vis-a-vis the eternal. The temporal in itself could not explain this, it is helpless before it. It is only in so far as the temporal is an image or a reflection of the eternal that the temporal can be conceived, can be talked about, can be what it is, it is only in so far as it is a reflection of the eternal that the temporal can have meaning or value.

Man, in order to be his real self, in order to attain his true nature, must relate himself not only to his existing self but to something beyond himself. He must pull himself out of the sea of change and project himself upon the eternal, upon the what is "in itself", what is independently true and real, the unchanging world of truth and reality. Reason and eros carry him on the path that leads to the vision of "true being." The purpose in this is not merely to attain knowledge or a vision of beauty but to transform himself so that he becomes like or akin to his real self, for eros

is not merely a longing for the beautiful but for "the generation that the beautiful effects." On the path the man himself is transformed, so that at the end of the path he becomes as much like his real self as possible, he is "quickenened with the true and not the seeming virtue," he becomes just in so far as it is possible for a man to become just and he becomes immortal in so far as it is possible for a man to become immortal, he uplifts the mortal parts of himself. Man, in relating himself to his own self must relate himself to the eternal. He projects himself upon the eternal, and this projection is reflected off the eternal and is reflected upon his existing self. In order for man to have knowledge of himself, to become like his real self, his relation to himself must be mediated by his relation to the eternal.

Now, we have said that parts of the soul of a man are more real than other parts. This is not to say that the real or eternal nature of reason is more real than the real nature of spirit or of desire, but it is an expression of the fall of the human soul. The soul of a man, as it exists in the world, contains two parts or aspects that are unlike or distant from their true natures or true selves. Left to themselves they would not become like this real nature. Reason, on the other hand, left to itself, would become like its real

self. It is the other two "parts" that drag reason down, and it is reason that must uplift them, in order that the whole soul may become like its real self, an adequate reflection of the true nature of the human soul. Desire and pleasure, not the eternal aspect of desire and pleasure, contain unlimitedness, are akin to the unlimited. Reason, as it exists, is not akin to the unlimited. Although it can be deformed, reason, if it does not allow the desires of the other parts to deform it, has the power, in itself, to become like its eternal nature.

A human soul can come to be more real by becoming a more adequate reflection of the eternal nature of the human soul. It can also become a more adequate reflection of the eternal in that it comes to possess limit and design. The relation of participation has two faces, the process of becoming more real has two faces. One face, vis-a-vis the eternal, is becoming a truer image or a more adequate reflection of its eternal nature. The other face is the process of acquiring limit, unity, measure which are the elements in the world which uplift him towards the eternal. Each face is one aspect of the same reality, one faces the eternal, the other faces the world.

The Perspective of Reason and Necessity

Two Types of Causes:

In the Phaedo, Plato delineates his theory of causation. There are two kinds of things to which the term 'cause' may be applied. The cause of the coming into being of anything in the world is its "participation in the reality peculiar to its appropriate universal."¹ Mind or intelligence is also the cause of the coming into being of anything in the world. Mind acts as a cause "through choice of what is best."² Both Form and mind are causes. In order for anything to come into being, there must be a cooperation between Form and mind. It seems to me that Plato is drawing a distinction here between two different types of causes, a distinction that is the precursor of Aristotle's distinction between formal cause and efficient cause.

There is an element in the constitution of things that is allied to Form and belongs to the same kind of cause as Form. This

1.

101c, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 82.

2.

99b, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 80.

element is limit, it is "... beauty, proportion, and truth... considered as one, "which "may more properly than all other components of the mixture be regarded as the cause,..."¹

Mind or intelligence, on the other hand, as differentiated from limit, the unlimited, and the mixture of the two, belongs to the class of the cause of the mixture.²

Mind can only exist in soul. Soul has a particular kind of being, for the essence or the definition of soul (ψυχῆς οὐσίαν καὶ λόγον) is "that which moves itself" or self-motion.³ As such, it is "the source and first principle of motion for all other things that are moved."⁴ Mind or reason or intelligence, existing in soul, can bring things about, is the cause of things coming into being through choice of what is best.

Now, if we put Form and limit in one class, considering them as belonging to one type of causes, then we can place intelligence in another class and call it a different kind of cause. In that case, we can place a number of causes which are Necessity, the errant cause

1.

65a, H. N. Fowler (trans.), "Philebus", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1962), p. 301.

2.

Philebus 30c.

3.

Phaedrus 245e, Laws 895d-896a.

4.

245c, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1963), p. 492.

and mechanical causes or secondary causes (which are really pseudo causes) in the same class as intelligence, as a type of causes distinct from the type of Form and limit.

Human reason has a specific function and a role to play in cooperation with the other kinds of causes in the class we have just delineated. In so far as it succeeds in this, it will uplift the whole soul, and all that with which it has to deal, towards greater reality. In so far as it fails to do this, the soul of a man will not be real, i. e., it will not attain to a likeness to its real nature and to a proximity to the eternal, it will not achieve immortality.

Reason and Necessity:

According to the Timaeus, "the generation of the universe" is a "mixed result of the combination of Necessity and Reason".¹

Necessity is a cause that is "destitute of reason", producing "sundry effects at random and without order."² Necessity does not refer to an inexorable chain of cause and effect. Necessity is the errant cause that works out of chance. A motion resulting

1.

48a, F.M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1937), p. 160.

2.

46c.

out of chance is a motion resulting under the constraint of the "nature" of the thing in question, in so far as a thing may be said to have a nature of its own "before" it receives form, limit and order from the creator. The resulting motion arises not out of design or for a purpose, but out of blind impulse. It either acts or responds to eternal stimuli to produce a result that its "nature" forces upon it. It is blind to the consequences of its actions. The result of such motions is not order or a chain of actions that are intelligible and conform to "natural law", the result is rather chaos.* Plato's idea of causation necessitates that reason or intelligence should rule, should direct the activities of what lacks intelligence, in order for there to be an orderly universe. Thus the Demiurge, in creating the universe "took over all that is visible - not at rest, but in discordant and unorderly motion - and brought it from disorder into order..."¹ Moreover, he created a world-soul that it may rule over the world's body.

The Necessity of the Timaeus is allied with the Fate of the Statesman. When, in the age of Cronos, god lets go of the helm

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See Cornford's discussion of Reason and Necessity in Plato's Cosmology, pp. 159-210.

1.

30a, F.M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1937), p. 33.

of the universe, the universe displays a backward or a contrary motion. Chaos results. The universe is "dissolved... in the bottomless abyss of unlikeness".¹ According to Cornford, "As Proclus observes, the machinery of the reversal of the world's motion is a mythical device to represent as existing at separate times things which in fact are always coexistent in the cosmos. The same is true of the description in the Timaeus of the condition of the world 'when divinity is absent from it' as if it were a state of things that had existed 'before the Heaven was made.'"²

There are a number of other causes, at different levels, and displaying various degrees of structure and of ordering, which contain an element of necessity within them, in that they lack purpose, design and meaning. These are "accessory causes" or "secondary causes" or mechanical causes such as those involved in the mechanism of vision³ or in the mechanism of walking.⁴ These are pseudo causes or accessory causes that are used by intelligence,

1.

273d, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 1039.

2.

F.M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1937), p. 207.

3.

Timaeus 45b-46a.

4.

Phaedo 98c-99b.

the true cause, in achieving its ends. Reason can persuade necessity; however, it cannot compel it. The universe is a mixed result of reason and necessity. Thus, in the Statesman, when the god takes over the helm of the universe once again and rescues it from the bottomless abyss of unlikeness, a new decree is passed by the god.¹ A new law governing conception and generation is made binding on the universe and therefore on all creatures. A new decree is passed; ~~but~~ that "the universe must take sole responsibility and control of its course."² Creatures are freed of "the formative activity of external agents." Just as the course of the universe is no longer absolutely determined by god, neither is a man's life determined by his guardian daemon. Man's destiny "follows the destiny of the universe through all time."² Man, therefore, gains the power of choice and of determining his own life, but he retains the possibility of the contrary motion within him, the motion that is allied with necessity. Man possesses reason, his soul has an element within it that can act as an intelligent cause, but "there

1.

273d-274d.

2.

274d, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 1038.

is in us too much of the casual and random."¹

A similar point is made in the Laws. The Athenian says that "... the world is full of good things, but no less of their contraries..."² Now, "... he who provides for the world has disposed all things with a view to the preservation and perfection of the whole..."³ The god desired the victory of virtue over vice, he made soul the cause of all change and becoming in the world, yet he did not compel soul to act according to virtue. He leaves the formation of either type of soul, good or evil, "free to our individual volitions."⁴

There are two factors at work in man, the errant cause and the intelligent cause, which works out of choice of what is best. It is man's destiny, that man should take over the control and management of his life, according to the will of the god in the Statesman and in the Laws. Man must work, through the intelligent cause within him, using the accessory causes as his aids and thereby giving meaning to their activity, to "persuade" necessity to "persuade"

1.

34c, F.M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1937), p. 59.

2.

906a, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 1461.

3.

903 b.

4.

904c, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 1460.

the errant cause within him, and to give meaning to that in his life, which, without the activity of intelligence, the activity that is proper to his nature, would be without meaning and absurd.

It is man's destiny that he shall have control over and responsibility for the course of his life.

In the myth of Er of the Republic, the universe revolves upon the Spindle of Necessity. The Necessity of the Republic, however, involves an ordered revolution of the firmament. Time is the "moving image of eternity," according to the Timaeus. The Necessity of the Republic refers not to the errant cause but to the new destiny of the universe and of man himself, that they shall henceforth determine their own lives. "No guardian spirit will cast lots for you, but you shall choose your own destiny."¹ The universe displays structure and ordering, an ordering, however, that is not absolutely determined but that leaves room for the creative activity of reason.

An element of chance is, nevertheless, involved in man's situation. There is an order of priority for the choice of lots. Life exhibits the fact that not all men are born to equal situations.

1.

F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London; Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 346.

This is another feature of chance that man has to come to grips with. Yet this too is not unamenable to the persuasion of reason. "Even for the last comer, if he choose with discretion, there is left in store a life with which, if he will live strenuously, he may be content and not unhappy."¹ The quality of a man's life is left to his own determination. He shall be responsible for the formation of his own character, he shall create his own personality, he shall have more of virtue or less of it in as much as he becomes more or less worthy of it. Neither his situation nor accessory causes within it can triumph over the intelligent cause within him to determine what becomes of him, unless he allows this to take place. So that "... in none of these lives was there anything to determine the condition of soul, because the soul must need change its character according as it chooses one life or another."²

The intelligent cause acts out of choice of what is best. Man must learn the effect of each of different qualities on the goodness of his life, and accept or refuse, combine or separate these qualities in the interest of virtue. He shall form his own character as

1.

F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 348.

2.

F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 347.

he combines or separates different qualities within himself. He must choose "... with reference to the constitution of the soul, calling a life worse or better according as it leads to the soul becoming more unjust or more just... for ... this is the supreme choice for a man..."¹

Man has the power to transform the world, to give direction and meaning to processes that are blind and without meaning, whether they be within him or outside him. He, like the Demiurge, can create, can give meaning and purpose. He can uplift himself and what is around him to a closer proximity to the eternal, by combining reason with necessity, by causing them to co-operate, persuading the irrational and the random to follow the directive of reason, and by imposing limit and structure on the unlimited.

Reason, then, is the cause whereby something comes to be more real, i. e., more like the eternal. The Demiurge created the world, according to the Timaeus, using the Forms as his model. He made the universe a moving image of the eternal nature of the living creature. However, the copy, as we have seen, only incompletely reflects the original, not merely because

1.

F. M. Cornford (trns.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 347.

the copy is in becoming and change, and is not "in itself", but also because the work of the imposition of order, limit and design was not completely determined by the god, as we have seen. There is further determination left to be added. This determination can only be supplied by reason.

Reason is the cause of such further determination, because reason is akin to the eternal and because reason exists in soul, and soul is the universal cause of change and motion.¹ It is a first-principle, an irreducible or ultimate cause of change. Reason can be a cause of growth in reality only because it, at one and the same time, is akin to the eternal and is an aspect or element in soul.

Reason is a different type of cause than Form. The process of becoming more real requires two principles of explanation. It takes place (a) through a greater participation in true reality and (b) under the direction of reason. Thus, properly speaking, there are two causes for a greater participation in reality, one is Form, the other is reason. However, just as the role of Form is not reducible to that of reason, so the role of reason is not reducible to that of Form.

Man, because he possesses reason, is the cause of his own greater participation in reality.

1.

Laws 986a.

VI

Concluding Remarks

The soul of a man has an immortal element within it.

According to the Timaeus, this element includes both reason and belief. The immortal aspect of man includes another element, which, although not properly immortal is "halfway between mortal and immortal." This element is eros.¹ Moreover, the whole soul can come to put on immortality through the acquisition of justice. The character of immortality can "spread out" to cover the whole soul. This is the process of growth in reality.

The immortal element of the soul is an intermediary between the eternal and the corporeal. Like the World-soul, it is "composed" of intermediate Being, Sameness and Difference,² which are a mixture of indivisible Being, Sameness and Difference, as that of the Forms, and of divisible Being, Sameness and Difference, as in sensible things. There are two revolutions within the immortal "part" of the soul, that of the Same and that of the Different.

1. Symposium 202d.

2. Timaeus 35a and 41d.

Through the revolution of the Same, soul has contact with true being and is therefore capable of rational understanding and knowledge. Through the revolution of the Different, it has contact with the sensible, and is therefore capable of true judgement and belief.¹

The soul of a man has contact at once with the world of unchanging truth and reality and with the sensible world of constant change and transformation. Man has a divine element within him, for "the soul of every man possesses the power of learning the truth and the organ to see it with".² Wisdom, the virtue of reason, is not inculcated in the soul through "habituation and exercise", rather, the human soul in a way possesses wisdom from the start, in that soul has the ability to "recollect," for "... every human soul has, by reason of its nature, had contemplation of true being".³ The effect of dialectic is to bring to birth what is already inherent in the soul because of its constact⁶ with true being. Reason never loses its power,⁴ although this power can be deformed by being directed

1.

37b-c.

2.

F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 227.

3.

Phaedrus 249c.

4.

F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 227.

away from its proper field. By its nature, reason, as it exists in every man, will seek after truth and knowledge if left to ^upursue the desire peculiar to it. Reason is "more real" than the other "parts" of the soul, it exists in the likeness of its eternal nature and its own desires alone will allow it to become an adequate image of this eternal nature.

Reason, moreover, is a true cause of coming into being. It can bring the other parts of the soul into conformity with their real selves. It can uplift the whole soul.

There has been a fall. The human soul has deviated from its real self or true nature, for reason was unable to govern spirit and desire. There came to be injustice in the soul, whereas we have seen that justice, the virtue peculiar to soul, is an aspect of the real nature of soul. The virtue of a thing, the excellence peculiar to it, belongs to its very definition because it is a part of its true nature. In so far as a soul is unjust it has deviated from its real nature and is therefore not fully real, is not truly itself. Reason can bring about justice in the soul, thereby making it "more real."

Eros, another element in the soul is variously spoken of as

"halfway between mortal and immortal,"¹ and as immortal.

"There is an immortal something in the midst of man's mortality".²

This immortal element is the "longing for immortality"³ and a

"longing for propagation" which is "the one deathless and eternal element in our mortality."⁴ Eros, is this immortal element. Yet,

in so far as it longs for immortality, it cannot be truly immortal,

for "nothing longs for what it does not lack".⁵ There is a lack

in man, a felt lack, a lack of immortality. Yet man would not

feel this lack if he were not already immortal to some extent, for

those who possess no beauty, nor truth nor intelligence would not

long for these things nor would they even feel their lack.⁶ We find

within ourselves a form of immortality which is a longing for immortality.

Eros is the child of Resource and Need. He bears the imprint of his father, who is "master of device" and finds therein a means

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1. Symposium, 202d.
 2. 206c.
 3. 207a.
 4. 206e.
 5. 200a.
 6. 204a.

of access to the beautiful. He also inherits the need of his mother, which drives him to seek the beautiful.

Neither love nor reason are disinterested powers that work in abstraction. Reason seeks truth, not for its sake alone, but to gain wisdom and knowledge. Similarly, love seeks the beautiful and the good, not for its sake alone, but "to make the good his own."¹ Love is not a longing for the beautiful itself but "for the conception and generation that the beautiful effects."² When the procreant approaches the beautiful then conception takes place within him. His soul is that which receives the imprint of the beautiful, if his generation is of the highest order.³ Procreancy "is brought to bed" and the procreant becomes "big with child." At the end of the path of eros, the soul ascends to a vision of the beautiful itself. When this takes place, he bears the fruits of this union with the beautiful, he conceives and bears true virtue. He puts on immortality.⁴

The virtue of the whole soul is justice. None of the parts of the soul can truly exercise their own function and attain their

1.
204c.

2.
206e, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Bolingen Foundation, 1963), p. 558.

3.
212a.

4.
212a.

peculiar excellence, i. e., become an adequate image of their real selves, unless each part plays the role appropriate to it. Thus, if the "parts" of the soul attain their true virtues, the soul must come to possess justice. As each of the parts then becomes an adequate reflection of its real self, so does the whole soul become an adequate reflection of the real nature of the human soul. The mortal parts of the soul, which were distant from their real selves and caused the whole soul to be distant from its real self, are now uplifted, through the causal activity of reason, which imposes limit and order.

Socrates says in book X of the Republic that "we must not think of the soul, in her truest nature, as full of diversity and unlikeness and perpetually at variance with itself..."¹ The human soul, in its truest nature, is not "composed of a number of parts not put together in the most satisfactory way" for "such a composite thing could hardly be everlasting."²

Justice institutes a unity in the soul. It institutes this unity by pruning the soul of the clinging overgrowths that are the result

1.

F. M. Cornford (trns.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 337.

2.

F. M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 337.

of excess and gluttony¹ and unlimitedness. When soul follows "the impulse that would lift her out of the sea in which she is now sunken" it approaches or becomes like its true nature.² When reason institutes justice in the soul, it imposes measure and limit and proportion and overcomes diversity. Soul then acquires unity for "any compound, however made, which lacks measure and proportion, must necessarily destroy its components and first of all itself; for it is in truth no compound but an uncompounded jumble."³ Then the bonds tying soul together become truer bonds.

In acquiring justice, the soul becomes a more adequate reflection of its true nature. It does not become that true nature by acquiring justice.

In acquiring true virtue the human soul becomes immortal. I apply the term 'immortal', in this context, to the human soul to mean "more real" or a more adequate reflection of the "real nature" of the human soul. I am not thereby denying the literal sense of the term as applied by Plato to the human soul. I seek to isolate a sense

1.

F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 228.

2.

F.M. Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 338.

3.

64c, H.N. Fowler (trans.), "Philebus", Plato with an English Translation (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), p. 389.

of reality that the soul of a man can acquire during the span of his life.

Yet, the full meaning of the immortality or the reality of a man is obscured rather than brought out by this statement of it.

A man's reality, his immortality, lies in his unique position vis-a-vis the eternal. Man is "open" to the eternal on the one hand and to the temporal and to the sensible on the other. As such, man is an intermediary. Man is "open" to true being and he is also ~~the~~ means whereby form, limit, order and meaning and intelligibility come to be in the world. Reason, because it is a "part" of the soul, is an intermediary between the eternal and what lacks intelligence. It is an intermediary, however, that has causal efficacy, that is an "efficient" cause. Eros, another aspect of man's immortality, exists within the soul as an active drive towards greater reality, towards beauty, truth and intelligibility, a drive that culminates in there coming to be a greater measure of beauty and truth within the soul. Through reason and eros man can project himself upon the eternal and he can also relate the eternal to himself and to the world. This mode of projecting and of relating belongs to his essence, it is his own specific function.

It belongs to the nature of man that he can uplift himself and uplift different aspects of the world outside himself towards a greater measure of reality. He can do this not only because of his "openness" to the eternal, but because he is an independent source of motion and of change and of creativity, in so far as he has a soul. Soul is the universal cause of change and of motion. Nothing can come to be without the causal activity of soul. Man has a power within him, an efficacy whereby form and meaning may enter the world. This is the proper function of man, this is the work that is proper to his soul. When man performs this function at the highest level, he is a true reflection of his real nature. The fact that man is a creator who works to bestow intelligibility is expressed by his "real nature" or his "eternal nature." However, his "real nature" cannot perform this function, only his existing self can do it.

Reason, according to the Phaedo, is a true cause of coming into being. Now reason, the cause of coming to be or the "cause of the mixture" is a dynamis. Reason is an aspect of the soul. The being or essence of soul is self-motion. It is a first principle of motion, an independent source of motion. Reason, which is an element within the soul, is an efficacy that works towards the

good.

In the Philebus, reason or intelligence is the cause of the mixture. The cause of the mixture is isolated in a separate class, other than limit, the unlimited and the mixture of the two. This class is not reducible to any of the others. Moreover, reason, as cause, is different from beauty, proportion and truth, as "cause" and is not reducible to them.

There is no doubt that Plato considers reason as real. It is akin to true being. The causality of reason, "efficient causality" is real. It is not the same as nor is it reducible to "formal causality", although the causality of reason is "akin" to the causality of Form in that both work toward the good.

The existing self of man is real and it can become more real, more like his "true self" or "real nature" in perfecting the reality that it possesses as an intermediary and as a cause, a reality that springs not only out of its "eternal nature" but also out of its existing self.

The soul of a man becomes immortal in acquiring the virtue peculiar to it, the perfection of its existing nature. It becomes immortal or more real by becoming a more adequate cause, creator, bestower of intelligibility, and therefore more like its "eternal" nature.

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