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FLOW AND FLUX IN PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY

ANDREW J. MASON

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In this bold new study, Andrew J. Mason seeks both to shed light on the key issue of flux in Plato's work, and to show that there is also in Plato a notion of *flow* that needs to be distinguished from flux. Mason brings out the importance of this hitherto neglected distinction, and proposes on its basis a new way of understanding the development of Plato's thought.

The opposition between the 'being' of Forms and the 'becoming' or 'flux' of sensibles has been fundamental to the understanding of Plato from Aristotle to the present day. One key concern of this book is to clarify which kinds or levels of flux Plato accepts in sensibles. In addition, Mason argues that this traditional approach is unsatisfactory, as it leaves out the important notion of flow. Unlike flux, flow is a kind of motion that does not entail intrinsic change. It is also not restricted to the sensible, but covers motions of soul as well, including the circular motion of *nous* (intelligence) that is crucial in Plato's later thought, particularly his cosmology. In short, flow is not incompatible with 'being', and in this study Plato's development is presented, largely, as his arrival at this view, in correction of his earlier conflation of flux and flow in establishing the claim that being is set apart from all motion.

Mason's study offers fresh insights into many dialogues and difficult passages in Plato's oeuvre, and situates Plato's conception and usage of 'flow' and 'flux' in relation to earlier usage in the Greek poetic tradition and the Pre-Socratic thinkers, particularly Heraclitus. The first study of its kind, *Flow and Flux in Plato's Philosophy* uncovers dimensions of Plato's thinking that may reshape the way his philosophy is understood.

Andrew J. Mason holds a PhD in Philosophy from Macquarie University, Australia. He was previously a lecturer at Griffith University and Macquarie University.

ISSUES IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

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PREFACE

This book undertakes an unusual – in some ways unheard of – journey through Plato's thought over the 'middle' and 'late' periods. In terms of content its novelty consists, broadly, in two theses. First, there is in Plato a notion of 'flow' that is to be distinguished sharply from 'flux'. The latter theme is familiar to all readers of Plato, but commentators (abetted by Plato's own failure to distinguish the two explicitly) have not seen the distinction with flow or grasped its importance. Second, this notion of flow casts a new light on the course of Plato's thought from the first 'middle' dialogue (the *Cratylus*) all the way through to his last dialogue, the *Laws*. It is not quite a case of T.S. Eliot's 'in my end is my beginning', for there is more to flow in Plato's 'beginning' than he avers expressly at the end (and indeed more to flux in Plato's subsequent thought than he is able yet to see in the *Cratylus*), but there is a resemblance, and I think a very significant one.

Inasmuch as it treats these two dialogues as a frame for addressing those in between, the present study is also unusual in the *way* it approaches Plato's corpus. Regarding the *Cratylus*, the overwhelming tendency has been to disregard the etymological section as both unserious in itself and of no serious value in assaying Plato's own thought, be it about the correctness of names (the dialogue's stated theme) or anything else. Ackrill (1997: 33) speaks for many in finding philosophical 'relevance' in the *Cratylus* only in the passages before and after it. Slowly this has been changing. For Baxter (1992: 2), we cannot do the *Cratylus* justice without doing the etymologies justice. Barney (2001), Sedley (2003), and Ademollo (2011) all argue in their own ways for the seriousness of the etymologies. Nevertheless, these studies are still held back by the assumption that flow = flux. In the etymologies, a notion of flow is in play that is fundamentally at odds with the doctrine of flux which the namegivers are *said* to have presupposed. Unlike flux, this flow is not incompatible with 'being'. In fact, here the *Cratylus* anticipates Plato's much later redefinition of being in the *Sophist* to accommodate entities besides motionless Forms. In this book I treat the etymological inquiry as a reservoir

which Plato (although he ultimately turns his back on it in the *Cratylus* itself) goes back to and draws from for the rest of his career, precisely in relation to themes to which he cannot do justice simply by relying on the opposition between unchanging Forms and sensibles in flux.

Regarding the late dialogues, while I certainly do not subscribe to the view that they abandon the theory of Forms, nor do I think they are only distinguished *by* being late. Partly this is because I am (largely) persuaded by Sayre's (1983) claim that late Plato modifies the theory. But the more important point, in this book, is Plato's emphatic turn to cosmology in the late period, beginning with the *Timaeus*. It is astonishing to read that in the mid-1980s scholarship on this key Platonic text had become 'almost a wasteland' (Mohr 2005: xi). Plato's cosmotheology has certainly become a much livelier field of study in the decades since. This burgeoning interest has restored the *Timaeus* to a place of primary importance in Plato's oeuvre as the grand synthesis of the Platonic project, and salvaged from relative neglect the cosmological passages in other late dialogues.

There are significant disparities between these texts, and how to relate them to each other is a major concern. Generally one starts with the *Timaeus* and brings in texts such as the *Statesman* myth, the 'metaphysical passage' in the *Philebus*, and *Laws* X around or after it, whether for clarification, confirmation, or contrast. This obviously makes sense: for unitarians because the *Timaeus* gives the fullest account of the topic; for developmentalists because it was, in all likelihood, written before the other late dialogues. Nevertheless, I think this approach has limitations. If these later texts respond to problems buried, or only cursorily dealt with, in the cosmotheological scheme of the *Timaeus*, which in my view is very much the case, beginning with it may be something of a false start, and the later texts may, as it were, get us closer to the beginning. In this book I come to the *Timaeus* by way of Plato's last dialogue, the *Laws*, along with the *Cratylus*, because they have significant (retrospective and prospective) implications regarding what is going on in the background in the *Timaeus*. In brief, they give us reason to think that the notion of cosmic flow informs its cosmology without appearing by name.

Besides cosmology, Plato mobilises the notion of flow in a number of other contexts: wisdom, virtue generally, love, desire, and pleasure, to name a few. Note that all of these relate to soul, not just body. This is a good indication of the irreducibility of flow to flux, which pertains specifically to body or matter. But it also has a broader significance, for it forces us to consider that the *cosmological* relevance of flow is psychical as well as physical. That is, flow pertains to the circular motion of *nous* (intelligence) in the world-soul and the celestial souls.

It was George Boys-Stones who suggested a monograph bringing together my work on flow and flux in Plato. I express my deep gratitude for his enthusiasm for, and support of, the project throughout. I also thank the editorial and production staff at Routledge, Amy Davis-Poynter, Lola Harre, Lizzi Thomasson, and Alex Douglas, for helping to bring the book to its final form, and the Routledge Editorial Board for taking something of a punt on an unaffiliated and little-known freelance scholar. My deepest thanks to my wife, Mari, both for being who she is and for her

thoughtful and unstinting support over the period of writing this book, and to my parents, Phil and Lesley, for their support and supportiveness over very many years. Thanks also to Sebastian Job for a philosophical conversation now two decades long, and to my orthopaedist, Dr. Hayashi, for unimpeding my course through this book.

Please note that there are two Andrew Masons currently writing on Plato: the better-known Andrew S. Mason, author of *Plato*, and myself, Andrew J. Besides differences in viewpoint (and, who knows, perhaps hiatus avoidance), it may help that Andrew S. is Scottish, and Andrew J. resides in Japan.

ABBREVIATIONS

DK	H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. 2nd ed. Berlin: 1906.
LSJ	H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Revised by H.S. Jones. 9th ed. Oxford: 1940.
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*. 3rd ed.
PCG	*Poetae Comici Graeci*. Ed. R. Kassel and C. Austin. Berlin and New York: 2001.
PMG	*Poetae Melici Graeci*. Ed. D.L. Page. Oxford: 1962.

INTRODUCTION

The simplest way of stating the problem that motivates this book is that two quite different notions share the same term in Plato's dialogues, without being explicitly distinguished. In Plato's usage of the noun ῥοή and the cognate verb ῥέω there is, besides the sense of 'flux', a sense of 'flow' that is irreducible to flux, not adjunctive to it. This has gone unnoticed by commentators, and bringing it out of obscurity will, as I aim to show, cast a new light on Plato's thought and its development. At the same time, it stacks a new set of problems on top of those relating to the notion of flux in Plato. I will begin with this more familiar set of problems and use it as a lead-in to the central concern of this study.

1 Aspects of the problem

One of the first things any student of Plato learns is that Plato posits transcendent, unchanging Forms in opposition to sensible 'flux'. Aristotle's account of the genesis of Plato's theory of Forms is an important source in this respect, and may serve as a first way into our problem. According to Aristotle, Plato consistently accepted a (putatively Heraclitean) fluxist account of the sensible world:

> In his youth Plato first became familiar with Cratylus and the Heraclitean doctrines, that sensible things as a whole are always in flux [ὡς ἁπάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀεὶ ῥεόντων] and that there is no knowledge of them, and he still held these views in later years.
>
> (*Metaphysics* 987a32–b1)

Aristotle adds that it was in order to salvage the possibility of knowledge that Plato came to affirm the existence of Forms. This is expressed most plainly when Aristotle restates the account much later in the *Metaphysics*:

> The theory of Forms occurred to those who proclaimed it because they were persuaded by the Heraclitean doctrine regarding the true nature of reality [περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας]: that all sensible things [πάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν] are always in flux, so that if there is to be any knowledge or practical wisdom about anything, there must be, besides them, certain other entities which are stable and endure [ὥστ' εἴπερ ἐπιστήμη τινὸς ἔσται καὶ φρόνησις, ἑτέρας δεῖν τινὰς φύσεις εἶναι παρὰ τὰς αἰσθητὰς μενούσας]. For there is no knowledge of things that are in flux.
>
> (1078b13–18)

In the earlier passage this is stated in the form that 'there can be no general definition of sensible things, inasmuch as they are always changing [ἀεὶ γε μεταβαλλόντων]'. Definitions must concern those 'entities of a different kind', the Forms after which, in Plato's doctrine, the sensible things that participate in them are named (987b6–11).

Modern opinion is divided on the veracity of Aristotle's account. Some deny that Plato was 'persuaded by the Heraclitean doctrine' at all, and among those who agree that Plato embraces a fluxist conception of sensibles, there is disagreement on what form this takes. There is certainly much to query in the account. One issue is whether Plato came to the 'Heraclitean doctrine' through Cratylus. Another is whether Heraclitus held a flux doctrine at all, although if this is a mistake it is one Aristotle inherits from Plato. Ever since Plato, 'flux' has come with Heraclitus' name attached. Plato's reading, and misreading, of Heraclitus is not the central theme of this book, but we can scarcely examine the notion of flux in Plato without considering this, and we understand Plato better if we see that this relationship is a complex one. Plato's ambivalence towards Heraclitus largely reflects the fact that he is much more ambivalent about flux than Aristotle makes out, but beyond this, Plato's very portrayal of Heraclitus as a fluxist is something of a caricature, and he knows it. This second point I will take up later. The first one will emerge more clearly in the paragraphs that follow.

A third problem with Aristotle's report is that when Plato addresses by name the 'Heraclitean' doctrine, it is usually treated with great scorn. It condemns all things to be 'unwholesome', such that they 'flow [ῥεῖ] like leaky pots' or 'like men afflicted with catarrh' (*Cratylus* 440c–d). It is a kind of hallucination, a projection of one's own dizziness and confusion onto the 'the things themselves' (411b–c; cf. 439c). Can Plato have been persuaded by a doctrine he describes in such terms? It might be argued that all he objects to is the doctrine's overreach, its zeal to cover *all* things. *Sensibles* may warrant a comparison with leaky pots or men with runny noses, but not Forms (which the doctrine fails to recognise). Yet would Plato accept such a denigrating description even of all sensibles? It is hard to see how the notion that sensibles *participate* in Forms could then have any traction for him, for this entails that a thing is identifiable as an instance of a type, which implies at least some degree of stability, however subject to change that thing may also be.

In view of this, a common approach among commentators is to take Plato to accept 'moderate' flux in sensibles and reject 'total', 'universal', 'extreme', or 'radical'

flux. In general terms, there is much to be said for this. It is a strongly held tenet of Plato's that the sensible world is in the best condition possible for it. If flux is an ineradicable characteristic of sensibles, a moderated flux is evidently in keeping with this belief, and universal flux (or chaos) clearly at odds with it. Nevertheless, this approach hits a snag. When Plato actually takes up flux as a theme for discussion, this is not the way he proceeds. He argues that the flux doctrine necessarily commits one to radical flux. In the *Theaetetus*, where this is most explicit, it is argued that those who hold that all things are in motion must say that they 'are *always* in motion *in every respect*' (πᾶσαν κίνησιν ἀεὶ κινεῖται: 181e–182a), that is, incessantly subject both to motion in space and alteration, for otherwise they must contradict themselves and predicate 'rest' of all things as well, since there will be things that are moving without changing or changing without moving. The purpose of this move is to reduce the flux doctrine *as such* to absurdity.[1] It seems, then, if the interpretative approach sketched out above is right, that what Plato says and what he does where flux is concerned are not the same. He denies others the right to a moderate flux, but apparently not himself – hardly the strategy of one who is straightforwardly in agreement with others who maintain the flux doctrine.

To approach what is at stake more precisely, let us start with Heraclitus fragment DK B 12: 'Different and still different waters flow upon [ἐπιρρεῖ] those who step into the same rivers'. Here Heraclitus underscores a river's abiding *identity* as its waters constantly change. But Plato has him saying something quite different: that 'you cannot step twice into the same river' (*Cratylus* 402a).[2] This is evidently a more radical sense of flux. It is not that *the* river differs from one moment to the next; these differences amount to different rivers. And if, as Plato claims here, Heraclitus' river is a simile of 'beings' in general, this applies to everything. Nothing lasts. Change is not something undergone *by* an enduring thing. It is so constant and radical that the thing we wish to speak of is no longer there by the time we speak, as Plato often puts it (*Cratylus* 439d, *Theaetetus* 182d, *Timaeus* 50b). In short, then, Plato has hyperbolised Heraclitus' river so that it exemplifies this kind of change. According to Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 1010a11–15), Cratylus took the hyperbole still further, arguing that one cannot step into the same river *once*.[3] In Plato's version (let us call it flux *Mach* 2), it may not be one and the same river enduring through time, but at each moment there is *a* river, a fleeting but identifiable liquid thing which is not, say, a puddle. Cratylus' version (*Mach* 3) denies just this. There is no river, not even a different one at each moment. To speak of a river is to lie things into being (as Nietzsche would say) when there is only change. Accordingly, Aristotle says, Cratylus concluded that speaking was futile and ended up merely moving his finger, presumably to indicate ineffable, unqualifiable change.

All three versions of the flux doctrine briefly distinguished above can be found in Plato's oeuvre. On the interpretation I will defend, Plato rejects the most extreme one (*contra*, for example, Cherniss and Mohr), but does this mean he accepts one or both of the others? If Plato is 'persuaded' by (what he takes to be) the Heraclitean doctrine, as Aristotle says, we might reasonably expect him to defend it *against* the most extreme version. Why then, in his explicit remarks about the doctrine, does he do the opposite and have all versions sucked into that

extreme, so as to reduce the doctrine *per se* to absurdity? One thing at least is clear. There is more going on than we find in Aristotle's report.

In an influential article, Irwin seeks to clarify what 'Plato's Heracleiteanism' is and is not by arguing that two forms of flux are operative in Plato which he was not able to distinguish clearly (1977: 5): the 'self-change' of things and 'aspect-change' in their sensible *properties*. The former, which denotes the successive *states* of a changing thing, corresponds broadly to my flux *Mach* 1. By aspect-change, Irwin means the 'compresence of opposite properties' in a thing, especially where this involves the context-dependence of its description as *this* rather than *that*; the same action, for example, may seem brave in one context, cowardly in another. Irwin holds that what Plato accepts from Heraclitus is *aspect*-change as an inescapable feature of sensibles. Sensible properties are 'deficient' (Irwin 1977: 9) and fail to give a reliable account of moral properties (such as beauty, justice) and relative ones (such as equality), precisely the sorts of things that serve as Plato's primary examples of Forms. Irwin argues further that only aspect-change is in play in Plato's arguments that Forms are *separate* from sensibles. In these terms, he endorses Aristotle's account.

I have misgivings about this approach. When Plato makes no bones about the fact that he is talking about *flux*, his focus is very much the kinds of change associated with motion. He sets off verbs that clearly have a motile sense against the verb μένω, which serves him well since it combines the senses of lasting and standing still. At *Cratylus* 401d Heraclitus is said to hold that 'all beings ἰέναι [move, go] and nothing μένει'. At 402a this is repeated with the substitution of χωρεῖ, 'make way, withdraw, move on', which nicely plays off both senses of μένει. ῥέω itself is routinely partnered with φέρω ('move'), likewise their nouns, ῥοή and φορά. At 411b–c both are mentioned with γένεσις and opposed to μόνιμον and βέβαιον, 'lasting and stable'. At 440b–c they are opposed to eternally unchanging *being*. At 439c ῥέω and εἶμι (go) are coupled in participial form. At *Theaetetus* 152e ῥοή is coupled with κίνησις, which comprises locomotion and alteration (181d). In short, motion seems essential to Plato's notion of flux. Irwin points to passages where self-change and aspect-change are addressed together, but this is not enough to convince me that Plato would accept aspect-change as a *form* of flux, rather than, say, a consequence of it.[4] On Irwin's view, Plato countersigns Heraclitus on aspect-change, but endorses a form of *motile* change (self-change) other than the 'extreme' form he takes Heraclitus to maintain. This suggests that he *can* distinguish self-change and aspect-change quite clearly. Why, then, should they be jumbled up in his own notion of flux? Doubtless even the greatest thinkers have their blindspots, but it seems to me that Plato would kick himself if this were his.[5]

Another problem is that the designation *self*-change unduly restricts what is in play in Plato's approach to motile change. As we have seen, the two more extreme versions of flux deny precisely that change is indexed to an enduring thing, an 'itself'. Yet while Plato certainly rejects *Mach* 3, in different places and contexts he embraces not only *Mach* 1 but also *Mach* 2. *Symposium* 208a–b stresses the ongoing identity of a man throughout the changes he undergoes in his lifetime. Irwin rightly takes this to involve 'regular' self-changes which 'maintain a close qualitative

similarity between the man at one time and at another' (1977: 6). However, he takes this to be what *generally* distinguishes Platonic from Heraclitean notions of motile change. This is doubly misleading.

On the one hand, *Timaeus* 49b–50b is an example of Plato upholding a more extreme form of flux, in the context of elemental transmutation. Here it is argued[6] that, because fire, air, etc., are always passing into each other, and because at no time in this process can we identify anything that is *purely* fire (etc.), we should not refer to them as things but as fleeting if broadly identifiable *qualities*. We should not speak of 'this' thing here called fire, and say that 'it' then becomes a thing called air. Rather, there is an enduring *region* in space that is mostly fiery then more airy in character. Irwin is right to distinguish this from the still more extreme flux articulated and rejected in the *Theaetetus*, in which not only things but *qualities* are lost; the elements 'suffer change in *some* respect all the time', not 'in every respect all the time' (1977: 3). But it is also clearly distinct from self-change, whereas Irwin tends to operate with a simple duality of self-change versus extreme Heraclitean flux. Self-change is not the only kind of motile change that Plato 'appeals' to.

On the other hand, like many commentators, Irwin goes along with Plato's portrayal of Heraclitus rather uncritically. It is actually the *Symposium* passage that is comparable to Heraclitus' *real* doctrine, for it addresses human beings in the same way that Heraclitus spoke of rivers: ongoing unity in constant change. If Heraclitus is a fluxist, he is more a *Mach* 1 fluxist than Plato makes out.[7] Moreover, Plato knows it. In the *Symposium* this is signalled with an authorial wink accompanying the speech of Eryximachus, whom we are clearly meant to regard as someone who does not know nearly as much as he thinks he does. Eryximachus regards as absurd Heraclitus' statement (B 51, quoted rather loosely) that harmony *itself* is at variance or 'formed from things that are *still* varying' (ἐκ διαφερομένων ἔτι εἶναι: 187a). He supposes Heraclitus must have meant that variance is *changed* into agreement, but failed to express himself clearly. That Plato knows better is apparent from *Sophist* 242d–e, which differentiates Heraclitus from Empedocles in just such terms, the former holding that 'coming together' and 'drawing apart' (συμφερόμενον διαφερόμενον in B 10) occur simultaneously, the latter that they alternate in time. *Pace* Irwin (1995: 162), this simultaneity is not simply a case of compresent opposites. It pertains precisely to 'self-change', the way something maintains itself over time so that it is not submerged by the changes it undergoes. In changing or 'differing from itself', a thing at the same time relates back to itself and 'agrees with itself' (διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῷ ὁμολογέει: B 51). These are *actions* it does in relation to itself (ἑωυτῷ), and that it *goes on* doing them is implied by διαφέρω, which often has the sense (LSJ *s.v.* I.2) of continuing or enduring (for example, the way one 'goes through' life). Irwin assumes (with LSJ) that the middle-passive forms in B 10 have a passive sense, but a medial one is more in keeping with the sense, and the dative reflexive pronoun, in the closely related fragment B 51. That Plato is aware that Heraclitus is speaking about a temporal process *throughout* which the two actions are simultaneously present is particularly clear from ἔτι ('still') at *Symposium* 187a. He may not understand the Heraclitean doctrine (cf. *Sophist* 243a), but he knows it is not simply a doctrine of radical flux in which nothing has any kind of abiding.

In sum, then, I don't think the complexities of the flux issue are resolved by dividing flux into self-change and aspect-change. What is more, I am afraid I must complicate matters still more. One of the few things left on which Plato scholars seem universally agreed is that flux (in some form) is *meant* whenever Plato uses ῥοή and ῥέω. Bringing *this* into question may seem the last thing we need now. Yet it may be that the ambiguity in Plato's usage of these terms helps to explain why scholars diverge on the issue of Plato's attitude towards flux. If there is a dimension to this usage that has not been seen clearly hitherto, and if we can disentangle this thread from others that are mistaken for it, and then view the more familiar Platonic themes and theses in relation to it, it may be that some of the disputes currently polarising the field are resolvable. I put forward my additional complication believing that it may ultimately simplify things and yield a more complete picture of Plato's thought.

Taking Aristotle again as my point of departure, I shall indicate what I think is a fourth problem with his account. Aristotle says that what characterises sensibles in general for Plato is that they ἀεὶ ῥεόντων. This is true, but it is also quite ambiguous. Depending on whether we stress the adjectival or verbal function of the participle, ἀεὶ ῥεόντων could mean 'are always in flux' or 'are always flowing'. These notions are not simply interchangeable. More specifically, I aim to show that:

1. There is a clear *conceptual* difference between flow and flux.
2. In Greek *usage* prior to Plato, including Heraclitus, ῥέω and ῥοή denote *flow*, with quite different connotations than those associated with flux.
3. There is some evidence that in Pythagorean circles in Sicily these terms *were* used in a fluxist sense.
4. If the fluxist sense pre-dates Plato, it is likely that he derived it from this source during his first stay in Sicily, and assimilated Heraclitus to it.
5. Juxtaposed with the fluxist sense, the older and more typical usage continues in Plato, without him ever expressly distinguishing them.
6. The distinction is highly significant in terms of Plato's *philosophy* and its development.

I will speak to all six theses below, but it is necessary here to address point 5. Aristotle clearly takes Plato to mean ῥέω in a fluxist sense, for he understands ἀεὶ ῥεόντων as synonymous with ἀεὶ μεταβαλλόντων (987b8), 'always changing' (typically in an abrupt and dramatic way). Obviously there is a basis for this. As we have seen, in many places Plato uses ῥέω and ῥοή in just this way, and Aristotle undoubtedly has such passages in mind.[8] However, there are also many passages, in the *Cratylus* and elsewhere, where Plato deploys them very differently.

Here I will just mention two: the *Cratylus* etymologies of ἀρετή from ἀεὶ ῥέον, 'always flowing' (415c–d), and of αἰθήρ from ἀεὶ θεῖ περὶ τὸν ἀέρα ῥέων, 'runs flowingly forever about the air' (410b). As every reader of the *Cratylus* knows, there are rather tricky questions about whether Plato takes his etymologies seriously or has any commitment to the ideas embedded in them. These issues will occupy us centrally in Chapter 2, but they can be set aside at present, for here we are

simply concerned with usage. Irrespective of whether Plato believes that ἀρετή, 'virtue', derives from ἀεὶ ῥέον or implies this notion, the notion at issue is *not* that virtue is 'always in flux'. That would be bizarre here, where virtue is characterised by 'ease of motion' or a sense of 'faring well' (εὐπορία), in contrast to the 'halting and impeded' motion said to typify wickedness. The contrast demands that we take ῥέον to refer to a smooth and regular, effortless and easily maintained motion – in short, a *flow* – which is also constant and unfluctuating. Likewise for the second passage. Whether or not Plato believes in aether (in popular belief the upper, celestial air), the idea in play is that it has a flowing motion, not that it is 'in flux'. There is no sense of its incessant transmutation into air or anything else. In that case it simply could not be said to run flowingly *about* the air *forever*.

Two further points. First, aether (if it exists) is an example of a *sensible* that 'always flows' but is not 'always in flux'. We should bear in mind that there may be other such examples for Plato, contrary to Aristotle. Secondly, Plato's use of ῥέω and ῥοή is not *restricted* to sensibles. Virtue is a quality of *soul*, and if flow characterises the one it also characterises the other. There is a 'flow of the soul' (ῥοῆς τῆς ψυχῆς: *Cratylus* 419c), as of the body or matter more broadly. We will find other indications of this in the dialogues.

Like Aristotle, Plato's modern commentators have not been alert enough to the distinction between flux and flow. Regarding translation of ῥέω and ῥοή, all I think would agree that there are places where one simply has to go with 'flow', as it were. But we can do this and still assume that Plato ultimately just means flux, that flow has no independent semantic or philosophical valency. This assumption is understandable, since Plato himself does not expressly separate them. Besides using the same term in different senses in *different* places, sometimes his usage blurs these senses together (for example, *Cratylus* 440c, where 'flowing like leaky pots' clearly does not denote smooth and regular motion, but a lack of stability and integrity in things). Nevertheless, the assumption is wrong. The distinction is important, especially in the context of Plato's cosmological thought in the late dialogues, which has significant consequences for his basic metaphysical position in the middle period. I will say more about this later.

2 The conceptual difference between flux and flow

It is needful at this point to try to formalise the difference between flux and flow. I stress that my focus here is the *conceptual* difference. The definitions I offer tally well with our own (non-technical) *usage* of these terms,[9] which I will draw on for the purpose of clarification, although obviously this cannot help to settle the issue of *Greek* usage.

In the previous section I distinguished three levels of flux. Here I take *Mach* 2 flux as my paradigm to avoid either understating or overstating the difference from flow. Three basic characteristics can then be isolated. First, what is in flux suffers *intrinsic alteration*, typically in the sense of transformation into something else. Thus, secondly, flux entails the *fleetingness* of what is 'in' it, especially if change is constant.

The third characteristic is *chaoticness*, both diachronically as tumultuous, haphazard, unpredictable change, and synchronically as a confused jumble of diverse elements. When things are in flux we cannot tell them apart, and unity is just as lacking as clear distinctions. And the changes are too fast, too abrupt, too radical, too many, and pull in too many different ways, for us to recognise any subsistent current or pattern of events and infer a clear future course from it. I emphasise that this is not the kind of change that something undergoes while still remaining that thing. If a society, for example, is said to be 'in a state of flux', flux is, technically, predicated of it as though the same old thing is still there, only now in a state of constant change. But this is a predicate that tends to dissolve the thing of which it is predicated.[10] Hence we often say that 'things' are in flux, where 'things' is shorthand for 'I no longer know what'.

On this definition it must be asked whether *Mach* 1 flux is really a kind of flux at all. A thing that undergoes inner alteration without ceasing to be itself may be finite, but it is not ephemeral; it still exists when we get around to referring to it. Likewise, *Mach* 1 flux or 'self-change' may be regular, as Irwin said, not chaotic. Is it then more a case of flow? I will come back to this.

The most basic characteristic of *flow*, as I understand it, is unbroken, ongoing, even motion.[11] This kind of motion distinguishes a flow from 'spurts' of water, 'surges' of electricity, or any motion that proceeds 'in fits and starts'.[12] Note that this does not preclude *tumultuous* motion. A river 'flows' whether its flow is smooth and stately or a headlong rush, if only it be a continuous, sweeping motion – analogue rather than digital, as it were. Secondly, flow is *directed* motion. A river may meander, and may have different currents that seem less than unanimous, but if there were not a sense of the whole river going in a definite direction we would not speak of it as flowing. Even a headlong 'flow' does not move in all directions at once, unless it is an *over*flow. This also applies when the subject is not a specific thing but a collective; a crowd flows into a stadium (if its motion is not impeded or else a chaotic stampede).[13] A third characteristic is *effortlessness*. Something 'flows' if its constancy is lightly and easily sustained, not a grim perdurance amidst a 'sea of troubles'. This is also integral to flow in the sense of logical or causal entailment, when we say that an effect flows (i.e., follows easily) from a cause or a conclusion from a set of premises. A fourth characteristic is *copiousness*. If something flows there is a lot of it, and it is given or gives itself freely and continuously, at least until it runs out, like wine at a party.

So understood, flow does not entail any of the three characteristics associated with flux. What flows may not be subject to intrinsic alteration *at all* in some cases, but even if it does change, it is not in the sense of changing into something else. It is not ephemeral but has an ongoing existence corresponding to the continuity of its motion. And flow is not chaotic in anything like the sense that flux is. As directed motion, it does not have the more or less radical haphazardness and unpredictability of flux. What flows carries not only its past moments but even its future ones in its present, so that its future follows from its past. It would be easy to overstate this point, but it is not without truth. Lastly, flow does not involve a confused jumble of diverse

elements, even when what flows is a mass rather than a specific thing. A crowd 'flowing' into a place is seen from the perspective of a basic homogeneity of its members. The various differences that could be identified are put to the side.

Clearly the line between flow and *Mach* 1 flux is less easily drawn, for both involve the ongoing identity of a thing and a sense of regularity. Should we simply identify them? I think there is still a difference, relating to the *range* of kinds of change that they include. A potential source of confusion here is that Plato tends to work with broader notions of change and motion than we do. We *can* regard the inner alteration of a thing as a kind of *motion* alongside locomotion, but it is not typically what we have in mind by motion. And we generally distinguish a thing's change of location from the ways that it *itself* changes. Flow has essentially to do with *motion* as we understand it, whether it be literal or metaphorical (for example, motions of thought). But it need not entail alteration, or change as we typically mean it. Things like the heavenly bodies could (in Plato's universe) 'flow' constantly without once suffering alteration in any meaningful sense. This applies in principle to soul as well, *a fortiori* to intelligent soul. But alteration is fundamental to flux in all versions, including *Mach* 1.

That said, we should not draw this line too sharply. One reason is that we want to know what makes it possible to conflate flux and flow, and *Mach* 1 flux may be the place to look. Furthermore, we should avoid a simplistic *evaluative* contrast between flow and flux that hinges on whether alteration is present. Up to a point this may be valid, but if flow does not *entail* alteration that does not mean it entails its contrary. Flow may have good (regular) and bad (errant) sides between which it can switch. This does not mean it is ultimately nothing distinct from flux, only that the distinction needs to be subtly drawn. For example, in Plato's cosmology we can distinguish flux as a microscopic elemental transmutation from a macrocosmic flow of the elements as concentric cosmic *masses* around each other, and then distinguish times when the *latter* is orderly and disorderly.

3 Pre-Platonic usage of ῥοή, ῥέω, etc.

I turn now to the second of my six theses. Among Plato's predecessors we find, almost without exception, that the sense of the words ῥοή and ῥέω largely coincides with the conception of flow outlined above, not with that of flux. After addressing this 'mainstream' usage in section 3a, in 3b I argue that the fluxist usage of these terms probably derives from Epicharmus and Sicilian Pythagoreanism more generally. In 3c I address another term denoting flow, the verb νάω and the cognate adjective ἀέναος.

3a. The poets

At *Cratylus* 402a–c and *Theaetetus* 152e it is asserted that Homer and other poets share, or 'tend towards', the 'Heraclitean' doctrine of flux. In both passages Plato cites Homer's line (*Iliad* 14.201, 302): 'Ocean the origin of the gods, and their mother Tethys'. He also has in mind the obvious derivation of 'Rhea' from ῥέω. In naming the ancestral gods after streams, Homer is taken to say that 'all things are

the offspring of flux[14] and motion' (πάντα εἴρηκεν ἔκγονα ῥοῆς τε καὶ κινήσεως: *Theaetetus* 152e). But as with Heraclitus, a close look at Homeric usage indicates that he does not conceive of flowing rivers in a fluxist way.

Let us start with ῥοή in Homer, or rather with ῥοαί, since he always uses the plural.[15] This has a much more restricted range in Homer than the verb. It occurs almost always in conjunction with a specific river – for example, Μαιάνδρου τε ῥοάς (*Iliad* 2.869) – and denotes the 'flows' or 'currents' *of* that river. In the example given it is tempting to think that ῥοαί might refer to the famed 'meanderings' of the Maeander, but the underlying notion must be a general one for Homer to use this construction for several other rivers.[16] It is possible that in connection with Ocean ῥοαί has a different sense. Since Ocean, the great river encompassing the earth, is grasped as the origin of all lesser ones (*Iliad* 21.195–197), the ῥοαί 'of Ocean' may be the *rivers* that issue *from* it (genitive of source). But in most contexts the meaning is unambiguously the flowing waters of Ocean itself, which, for example, Odysseus must cross to get to the underworld (*Odyssey* 24.11ff.).[17] Homer's only other use of ῥοαί is for the 'streams' of water that Achilles pours into his cup to clean it (*Iliad* 16.229).

What are the connotations of Homeric usage? By the 'flows' of a river, are *successive* flows meant, or *simultaneous* ones alongside each other? In the first case we could conceivably approach something like flux: the ever-different but always momentary shapes thrown up at whatever part of a river we are observing. In the latter case, which I favour, the different currents would themselves be relatively enduring features of a river. They might shift over time, but this does not prevent us from recognising in a river a certain enduring character which expresses itself *in* such changes and internal differentiations. From this point of view we could only speak of flux if a river's motion is so turbulent that everything goes by in an angry blur. But such motion is not *intrinsic* to Homer's use of ῥοαί.

As indicated above, 'the flows of X' is a stock Homeric formula, used in connection with a great many rivers, irrespective of their characters. The Fagles *Iliad* translation, for all its merits, takes liberties in fairly routinely rendering ῥοαί 'rapids' or 'whirling rapids'. This may be justified if a specific river is described elsewhere as 'whirling'. But it is misleading insofar as it implies that whirling is intrinsic to ῥοή as such. We might defend Fagles's practice on literary grounds, arguing that Homer wishes to set the military tumult at Troy in the context of a natural one in the rivers by which it occurs, as he compares the surges of war to other natural forces. Yet Homer is just as expert in the contrastive evocation of natural setting. In his introduction to the Fagles translation (1990: 30), Knox calls attention to the way the end of Book 8 evokes the unforgettable clarity of every aspect of the landscape for the Trojan soldiers as they await dawn and the resumption of battle, knowing they may never see these things again. To translate Ξάνθοιο ῥοάων 'Xanthus' whirling rapids' here, when everything else in this scene speaks of ethereal clarity and 'windless calm', seems questionable to me.

True, elsewhere the Xanthus *is* described as 'whirling' (δινήεντι: 5.479; cf. 21.1–16), 'deep-whirling' (βαθυδίνης: 21.228), indeed 'roaring' (βράχε) and 'plunging' (αἰπὰ ῥέεθρα: 21.9). And in Book 21 this clearly corresponds to the whirl of the

battle going on *in* the river. Yet it can be asked if there is not a certain licence in Homer's description. αἰπὰ ῥέεθρα suggests the flow of a waterfall, yet the scene is the Xanthus where it adjoins the *plain* of Troy. Additionally, here the Xanthus is a would-be pacifist. He implores Achilles to stop butchering Trojans in his waters, on the grounds that his 'lovely flows' (ἐρατεινὰ ῥέεθρα) are full of corpses and cannot make their way to the sea (218f.). At first he asks Achilles to do his butchery on land. But when Achilles complies he complains further, and Achilles famously attacks the river, provoking Xanthus to surge up against him, 'rousing all his flows' (πάντα ῥέεθρα κυκώμενος: 235) to clear away the corpses, and coming close to killing Achilles before the gods intervene.[18]

The Homeric river, then, may whirl, even seethe and rage when attacked, but its bent is more simply to flow on and reach the sea. I doubt it is because they whirl that its flows receive the epithets 'lovely' (ἐρατεινὰ) and 'beautiful' (καλῇσι).[19] The point of the plural is not that there are too many 'flows' bouncing against each other for a river to have any clear direction. Nor are the flows successive. Those at 21.218 and 235 are all present at that stretch of the Xanthus where the corpses lie, and are gathered together there in an effort to dislodge them. Not only is the river differentiated into various 'flows' without losing its identity in them, but these flows are more or less stable features of it with *their own* ongoing existence.

There are a couple of noteworthy features in later poetic use of ῥοή. One is its application to other things of a liquid nature; Euripides has a 'flow of the grape', i.e., wine[20] (*Cyclops* 123), of honey (*Bacchae* 281), and of spilled blood[21] (*Suppliants* 690). Although these uses are not found in Homer, the last two stem from his more diversified use of ῥέω. Unsurprisingly, blood is the second most common subject of the verb in the *Iliad*. In such cases ῥέω usually denotes the 'gushing' of blood from a wound. It may be that Homer did not use ῥοή in this connection because *it* did not have this connotation for him. 'Rivers of blood' is an easy simile, but rivers do not bleed *out* – at any rate that never seems the sense of their *flows* in Homer.

The second point is that, whereas the metaphorisation of ῥέω is already in full swing in Homer, that of ῥοή only comes later. Pindar in particular speaks not only of ῥοαί 'of the Muses' (*Nemean* 7.12) or 'of words' (*Isthmian* 7.19), i.e., streams of poetic song, but elusive ῥοαί of foresight (*Nemean* 11.46), and ῥοαί of cheerfulness or contentment (εὐθυμία) and of hardship (πόνων) that come to men at different times (*Olympian* 2.33).

These usages are thought-provoking. The last one is reminiscent of the adage that good or bad luck comes in threes, but Pindar gives us, as it were, the analogue version. He evokes periods when we felt 'in sync' with the world and could not put a foot wrong, when the flow of life was with us and all we had to do was stay in this stream, which it seemed would last forever. And he sets this off against other times we recall only too well, when every step led with the same facility to more and more trouble, and we wondered if the malevolent wind at our backs would ever pass. Generally Pindar takes this bemusing duality as a fact of life, which he does not seek to explain other than by invoking inscrutable Fate. Yet the passage in *Olympian* 2 continues, after the obligatory reference to Fate and the Furies, with a

moral explanation for such reversals *across generations* of a family. Pindar does not draw moral inferences about an individual's own character from whichever stream he is presently in. He does not assign the two streams to good and bad men respectively, nor explain the change from one to the other by one's own going bad or coming good. A good son may keep paying for the sins of the father, and a bad one bask in the stream of good fortune passed on from him. And Pindar does not seem to consider that the streams may be self-sustaining, self-reproducing, or self-exacerbating states of the *psyche*, which can, to some degree, perdure through changing circumstances. They are for him, as LSJ say, 'tides of affairs' to which we are subject. Why we find ourselves cast from one stream to the other *at a particular time* – this Pindar does not claim to understand or seek to explain.

'Streams of foresight' is also a rich expression, implying streams of fate. It may be set off against foresight in the more punctual sense of a capacity to predict a specific event or consequence, and denote an ability to follow *easily* the whole course fate will take and has taken. In addition, the plural indicates that for Pindar fate is not just one such course, but contains a manifold of interweaving currents. What foresight we mortals have may be limited just because we only get glimpses into one of these and do not see it in the full context. The streams of foresight are distant and withheld from us (ἀπόκεινται), and to seek them out is to risk being broadsided by what is at hand (cf. *Isthmian* 8.12ff., *Nemean* 3.74f.). But this epistemological limitation does not recoil on fate ontologically for Pindar. That fate is an incalculable complex does not mean that it is just a 'flux'. These streams, for all their interweavings and for all our difficulties understanding the how and why of it all, go somewhere definite, this way *rather than* that.

Similarly, no one would suppose that by 'streams' or 'flows' of poetic song Pindar means some kind of linguistic flux. Here ῥοαί may denote whole poems or successive sentences in a poem. In any case the flowing and modulated character of poetic *rhythm* is clearly what motivates the comparison, which is arguably especially apposite to Greek poetry, where the basis of metre is syllable length rather than stress and the 'vertical' plane of accent is superimposed on this 'horizontal' one. Besides this metrical aspect, where in Bowra's words Pindar has 'no rival in variety, speed and lightness' (1969: xiii), it may be suggested that there is a more latent stream in Pindar's poetry: that of his real thoughts, where they are really leading through all the strange changes of tone and subject. The disjunction or juxtaposition of his poems' formal and substantive elements may be intended to focus attention on this other, unapparent and unbroken stream subsisting below it.

In the poetic tradition, then, the connotations of ῥοή seem much the same as those of our word 'flow': the steady and continuous, directed, and in cases effortless, motion *of something*. At the same time the distinguishing marks of flux are absent. There is no sense of radical and chaotic changes in quick and constant succession, precluding any enduring subject of such changes. The Homeric river does not become another river in the blink of an eye. Its changes are 'self-changes'. Pindar's stream of contentment may cease and be replaced by one of trouble, but it is not simply one

side of an incessant fluctuation. Like his imagined streams of foresight, it is an ongoing and identifiable 'tide' that sets the tone of one's life for a certain duration.

Poetic usage of ῥέω is more complicated. It too is used epithetically by Homer, particularly with εὐρύ ('*wide*-flowing').[22] But it appears to cover a wider range of ways that a river might flow. Apart from the stateliness and relative slowness implied by 'wide-flowing', ῥέω often denotes a river's torrential, headlong motion, its 'rushing', although other words often reinforce this (for example, at *Iliad* 16.389–91, πλήθουσι and μεγάλα στενάκουσι). Ocean 'flows, roaring with foam' (ἀφρῷ μορμύρων ῥέεν: 18.403). Homer uses ῥέω, but not ῥοή, when a river breaks its banks. The Xanthus *turns* his ῥοαί into a great wave (21.306); at 21.251–256 ῥέω is used *for* such a wave, as well as for Achilles, in his desperate 'rushing back' from it (ἀπόρουσεν). Note also its usage in connection with springs (for example, *Iliad* 22.149–151, *Odyssey* 5.70). LSJ's primary sense of ῥέω includes 'gush' with 'flow, run, stream', and gushing or welling up may be implied here as well as 'flowing'.[23]

In river *similes*, both in and after Homer, ῥέω typically denotes headlong, chaotic motion. Diomedes' rampage is compared to a river in spate, 'tearing away the dykes as it swiftly flows [ὦκα ῥέων]' (*Iliad* 5.88). Diomedes knows no bounds; he fights the very gods. Aeschylus compares the army 'streaming' towards Thebes to a roaring mountain torrent which is soon to flood the city (*Seven Against Thebes* 78–90). Aristophanes describes the comic poet Cratinus in his glory days as 'gushing [ἔρρει] over the plain in a flood of renown [πολλῷ ῥεύσας … ἐπαίνῳ], uprooting oak, plane tree, and rival alike and bearing them away' (*Knights* 526–8).

A further complication concerns the much greater range of *things* besides rivers that take the verb. When Homer uses ῥέω for the gushing of blood from a wound (for example, *Iliad* 4.140), spilled brains (3.300), sweat (11.811), and tears (17.438), the sense is again an overflowing or breaking of bounds. Conversely, when Euripides speaks of a plain 'flowing' with milk, wine, and the nectar of bees (*Bacchae* 142), the sense is a steady, continuous supply, an abundance. And as Pindar could use ῥοή to denote a 'tide of affairs' which is directed and lasting, this is implicit in Euripides' use of ῥέω, to which he adds ἄνω to give the sense of an *inversion* of the proper state of affairs (*Suppliants* 520). In highlighting the differences we should not lose sight of the continuities between the basic sense of the verb and the noun. Moreover, while the salient sense of chaotic (and abnormal) motion in ῥέω may *approach* flux, it is not yet there by any stretch. Cratinus, for example, is not becoming *other* as he gushes across the plain. Nor is his fame; that comes later.

LSJ's second sense of ῥέω is a metaphorical one relating to things, such as the 'raining' of missiles in war (*Iliad* 12.159), or the flowing of *words* 'from the tongue', be they like honey (*Iliad* 1.249) or reckless and liable to cause panic (*Seven Against Thebes* 557). LSJ place here Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* 258–9: 'What use then is honour or good repute when it flows in vain?' Jebb (1899 *ad loc.*) gives the sense of 'in vain': words (of praise) without corresponding deeds (when the one praised is in need). But Jebb wrongly claims that ῥέω here does not entail the *currency* of what flows. He refers to other passages in Sophocles where a perishing or flowing *away* is

meant, yet in those passages the *additions* to ῥέω are what produce that sense: ῥεῖ πᾶν ἄδηλον at *Women of Trachis* 698; ἀπορρεῖ at *Electra* 1000, and διαρρεῖ at *Ajax* 1267. True, Oedipus' name is mud; when the elders of Colonus first learn who he is they are aghast and want to expel him. But he brings them round. It is his reputation as the saviour of Thebes that he appeals to at 258–9. Something of this must flow on, despite subsequent events, for his claim to be a blessing to Colonus (288) to persuade them (462–4).[24]

Between the first two senses of ῥέω and the fluxist sense 5, LSJ list as sense 3: 'fall', 'drop off' (of hair or ripe fruit); 'wear out'[25]; 'be in a tumble-down condition' (of a house), and as sense 4: 'liquefy' or 'run' (of molten objects). The sequence reads like a recipe for how the Greek world got from 'flow' to 'be in perpetual flux and change'. In sense 2 we find succession added to continuous, streaming motion; sense 3 adds the trait of not lasting, and sense 4 inner alteration. The conjecture is ingenious, but doubtful. Apropos sense 2, it is not clear why LSJ place the passage from Sophocles, where ῥέω is used for the continuance of one and the same thing, alongside passages where a successive plurality is involved. Regarding sense 3, the use of ῥέω for hair at *Odyssey* 10.393 has a very different sense than 'wear out' or 'be in a tumble-down condition'. Having turned Odysseus' men into pigs, Circe applies an ointment which causes the bristles to 'drop off' their limbs, not only making them men again but younger and better looking men. The tenor here is positive: the ease with which the offending hairs are removed. A broader issue (*if* the sequence seeks to account for the Platonic, fluxist sense on the basis of previous developments) is that Platonic and post-Platonic usages are brought in to bolster senses 2–4.[26]

Instead of trying to see the fluxist sense as an organic development in the word's overall history, we should, I think, regard it as a more external one, one which Plato, among Athenians at any rate, was perhaps in a unique position to be influenced by and to disseminate. External is perhaps not the *mot juste*, for the Greek colonies in Sicily – where I will argue this usage emerges – are part of the Greek world. But the fluxist sense emerges there in connection with a specific philosophical problem with which 'mainstream' usage of ῥέω and ῥοή has essentially nothing to do.

3b. A fluxist sense in Sicily

Under their fluxist sense of ῥέω, LSJ refer to only one source before Plato, an unattributed fragment of comic poetry: ἅπανθ' ὁρῶ ἅμα τῇ τύχῃ ῥέοντα μεταπίπτοντά τε. In such close conjunction with μεταπίπτω, and in association with τύχη and ἅπανθ' … ἅμα, the sense of ῥέω is certainly that of universal and random flux. All things at once are in flux, being transformed in whichever way chance dictates, so that the very notion of 'things' effectively collapses into that of ever-changing combinations. But is this *prior to* Plato? I do not know on what grounds LSJ date the fragment before the comparable usages in the *Cratylus* and *Theaetetus*. It is preserved in a chapter of Stobaeus' *Anthology* (I.6) on the theme of τύχη, chance. The

attributed sayings here cover figures as far apart in time as Archilochus and Menander, who was born a few years after Plato's death. They are not arranged chronologically. Fragments 1, 9, 10, and 14 are from Menander, our anonymous fragment is 2, and Archilochus follows! Nevertheless, whether the fragment be Old, Middle, or New Comedy, it seems likely that it is modelled on, and pays homage to, an earlier comic writer whose influence on Attic comedy was considerable: the Sicilian Epicharmus, thought to have been most active in the second quarter of the fifth century.[27] There is indirect evidence that Epicharmus used ῥέω and its cognates in a fluxist way.

Certainly he was greatly exercised by the problem of change and identity. In an early formulation of what came to be called the 'growing argument', Epicharmus invites us to consider men as not essentially different from changing magnitudes. As a cubit no longer exists as such when we add to or subtract from it, so

> One man is growing, another is diminishing, and all are constantly in the process of change [ἐν μεταλλαγᾷ δὲ πάντες ἐντὶ πάντα τὸν χρόνον]. But what by its nature changes [μεταλάσσει] and never lasts [μένει] must already be different from what it has changed from. You and I are different today from who we were yesterday, and by the same argument we will be different again and never the same in the future.[28]

The comic effect to which Epicharmus puts this is as follows. The speaker excuses himself from paying a debt on the grounds that he is no longer the person who contracted it, and will be a different person again by the time of the banquet for which he borrowed the funds. The victim of this fraud promptly turns it back on its perpetrator, hitting him and then exculpating himself on just the basis that he is no longer that guy.

We learn this from an anonymous commentary on Plato's *Theaetetus*, thought to stem from (or just after) the first century BCE.[29] Its author refers (column 71) to συνεχῆ ῥύσιν in connection with the incessant change of substances.[30] Evidently the sense is constant *flux*, and the context suggests that not just this theme but the *word* ῥύσις derives from Epicharmus (supposing that 'this', referring to the argument which Epicharmus 'comedised', takes in the terminology as well). ῥύσις is cognate with ῥέω but is a much rarer noun than ῥοή. In fact, according to LSJ it first appears in Plato's very last work (*Laws* 944b). Did the commentator assimilate Epicharmus' thought to a term used but once by Plato in a different work, when ῥοή is Plato's word in the *Theaetetus*? That surely can be discounted. It is more likely that ῥύσις was Epicharmus' word, Plato derived it from him, and it first appears in Plato because the original sources are lost.

That Epicharmus used ῥέω in a fluxist way might be gleaned from Plutarch's discussion, in *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions*, of the polemic between the third-century Academy and the Stoics under Chrysippus. The Academics, Plutarch says (1083B), held that 'all individual substances are in flux and motion [ῥεῖν καὶ φέρεσθαι], releasing some things from themselves and receiving others which reach

them from elsewhere'.[31] Chryssipus recognised that the Academics were repeating Epicharmus' argument from long before (1083A). Plutarch does not say that he also recognised Epicharmus' *terminology* in their arguments; they could easily have adopted their founder's fluxist usage of ῥέω. But it is possible that Plato adopted this from Epicharmus, especially in light of the additional evidence below.

It is widely assumed that Epicharmus derived his concern with flux from Heraclitus. I cannot agree. I do not endorse Reinhardt's objection (1916: 121) that Epicharmus simply could not have known of 'the Ephesian hermit' at the other colonial extreme of the Greek world.[32] But Reinhardt has already pointed to a much stronger objection. Epicharmus' notion of constant flux precludes the possibility of an underlying, enduring subject of change, a ταὐτόν. To change is to become *a different thing* or person.[33] As Reinhardt says (120), this is the exact opposite of Heraclitus' teaching of identity in change, a teaching Heraclitus certainly extended to persons. For him (B 88) there is a 'same' (ταὐτό), the soul, that endures in reversals between 'living' and 'having died', as between being awake and sleeping. As we have seen, this teaching is present in the one (surviving) fragment in which Heraclitus uses ῥέω. Epicharmus, assuming that he used the term, simply put it to a different use. Neither his usage nor his preoccupation with flux derive from Heraclitus.[34]

If he did not inaugurate the fluxist sense himself, a more likely source is Pythagoreanism. A number of ancient sources count Epicharmus among the Pythagoreans in Sicily. Besides, for example, Diogenes Laertius, Iamblichus, and Plutarch, the *Theaetetus* commentator says that Epicharmus was their pupil and that he explained well a number of their beliefs. In particular, 'he brought to completion the argument about the growing man in a systematic and reliable way'.[35] This suggests that the argument was already current in Pythagorean circles.[36] The same may well be true of the fluxist sense of ῥέω that first emerges in connection with it. According to Aristotle,[37] the Pythagoreans 'called matter "other" because it was in flux [ῥευστὴν] and always becoming other'. Whether Epicharmus followed this practice or prompted it, Sicilian Pythagoreanism is a far better contender for the source of our fluxist sense.

It remains to address the connection between Epicharmus and Plato. At *Theaetetus* 152e, where all earlier philosophers except Parmenides and 'the top poets' in comedy and tragedy are said to share the flux doctrine, Plato's representative of comedy is Epicharmus, not Aristophanes. This attests the high level of respect that his work enjoyed in fourth-century Athens, and we can ask whether Plato is just referring to this as a cultural fact or signing it personally. There are suggestions that Plato was indebted to Epicharmus. Gordon argues that in terms of style Plato's dialogues draw not on philosophical writers but on Epicharmus and a later Sicilian comic poet, Sophron, with whose work she figures Plato must have become acquainted in Sicily (1999: 69–73). She refers to Epicharmus' penchant for giving his characters comical names which reflect their type (69), and draws a parallel with such Platonic characters (whether invented or historical) as the hiccup-fighting Erixymachus, the bold-in-battle Thrasymachus, and, with an ironical twist, the 'straight thinker' Euthyphro (72). But this sort of thing is salient in Greek literature

from Homer and Hesiod on.[38] It is doubtful that Plato derived this practice specifically from Epicharmus.

In a rather different spirit, an ancient source, Alcimus (as quoted by Diogenes Laertius 3.9–17), claims that Plato stole many of his key philosophical ideas from Epicharmus. Alcimus' text is obviously a politically motivated attempt to discredit Plato and gain favour with Dionysius, whose satellite Plato refused to be. We have no good reason to believe that the theory of Forms and the doctrine of recollection were taken from Epicharmus, or to regard as genuine the fragments adduced to such effect. Yet Alcimus' first example is another matter. The view he imputes to Plato, αἰσθητὸν μὲν εἶναι τὸ μηδέποτε ἐν τῶι ποιῶι μηδὲ τῶι ποσῶι διαμένον, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ ῥέον καὶ μεταβάλλον ('nothing sensible ever lasts, either in terms of quality or quantity, but is constantly changing and in flux': 3.9), agrees with the position expressed in the earlier quoted text which is independently attested as Epicharmean. Alcimus' grubby denunciation proceeds from a firm foundation; he just milks it, making out that as this fluxist conception of the sensible stems from Epicharmus, so must the theory of Forms that Plato came to in counterpoint to it. Conversely, while we may demur at the charge of *theft* even here, Plato arguably leaves himself open to this inasmuch as he does not openly aver that Epicharmus is his source, but attributes the doctrine to Heraclitus, and in a disparaging way to boot, as if one form of disowning served to conceal another.

In summary, then, I propose that both the theme of flux *senso stricto* and the fluxist use of ῥέω and its cognates stem not from Heraclitus but from this Sicilian source, and that Plato picked them up during his first stay in Sicily in 388/7 BCE (shortly before the first 'middle' dialogues were written, starting with the *Cratylus*)[39] and brought them back with him to Athens.

3c. *νάω and ἀέναος*

It is unnecessary to dwell at length on νάω, a much rarer verb for 'flow'. It occurs only once in the *Iliad*, in the statement that all rivers, seas, springs, and wells on earth 'flow' from Ocean (21.196–197). The universality of this claim speaks to the generality of the sense of 'flow'; no more specific charge, such as the headlong motion often salient in Homer's use of ῥέω, can be gleaned here. In the *Odyssey* it is used twice: in relation to springs (6.92) and the whey in the Cyclops' milking vessels (9.222), where 'overflowing' may be meant.

Of much greater significance is the adjective ἀέναος, 'ever-flowing', always with the sense of reliability: hence 'everlasting' or 'never failing'. Many authors use the term in connection with rivers or springs: for example, Homer, *Odyssey* 13.109; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 550, 595; Herodotus 1.93.5, 1.145; Aeschylus, *Suppliant Women* 553; Euripides, *Ion* 1083; Plato himself at *Phaedo* 111d. But it is used for a great many other things besides: glory (Heraclitus B 29, Simonides fragment 531 PMG); wealth (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 4.2.44); resources or supplies (*Agesilaus* 1.20), Zeus' power (Euripides, *Orestes* 1299), his honour (Pindar, *Olympian* 14.12), his flame (*Pythian* 1.6), and his provision as god of strangers (*Nemean* 11.8).

According to Iamblichus (*On the Pythagorean Way of Life* 150, 162), the Pythagoreans called the tetractys 'the source and roots of everflowing nature [ἀεννάου φύσεως]'. The Neo-Platonist Proclus uses ἀέναος for the 'everflowing' processions (πρόσοδοι) of the divine gifts into the lower orders of being (*Elements of Theology* 152). Proclus may be drawing from a neglected and misunderstood remark of Plato's that will be my central concern in Chapter 1. At *Laws* 966d–e Plato speaks of the 'everflowing being' (ἀέναον οὐσίαν) brought about by divine soul *in* the world of becoming.

In none of these instances does 'everflowing' have connotations other than 'everlasting'. There is no implication that what is ἀέναος is always changing or a constant source of consternation. The (Sicilian) Pythagoreans may hold that matter is in flux, but this is not what is meant by 'everflowing nature'. For one thing, they do not restrict nature to the corporeal. As Aristotle says (*Metaphysics* 986a1–4), numbers are the primary things in their universe, which is conceived as a 'harmony'. It is a safe assumption that 'everflowing nature' reflects their belief that nature as a whole follows numerical laws and is harmonious in its motions. Indeed, assuming that the *astronomical* application of the tetractys[40] was central to their intellectual endeavours, the phrase may refer primarily to the motion of the celestial bodies, as, I will claim, 'everflowing being' does in Plato's *Laws*.

As far as I know, there is only one exception to this pattern in the period before and around Plato. Xenocrates, the third head of the Academy and Plato's companion on his second trip to Sicily, refers to the dyad as 'the everflowing' (τὸ ἀέναος).[41] The dyad (or the 'Great and Small') is for Xenocrates (and Plato, according to Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 987b20–27) the *material* principle of the cosmos, over against the formal one, the monad. The indications are that, as Xenocrates (fragment 15 Heinze) identifies the monad with Zeus and *nous*, he associates the dyad with Rhea and ῥέω. Stobaeus says that Xenocrates' τὸ ἀέναος 'refers obliquely to the matter which always flows through the multitude' (ἀέναον τὴν ὕλην αἰνιττόμενος διὰ τοῦ πλήθους), i.e., which always becomes greater or smaller, hotter or colder, etc. Here flux *is* meant. However, notwithstanding that Plato himself adopts the same two principles in the *Philebus*,[42] and that the dyad remains in play in the cosmology of the *Laws*, I do not believe that Xenocrates' use of ἀέναος corresponds to Plato's.[43]

4 The philosophical importance of the flux/flow distinction

'Everflowing being' is a striking phrase, coming from Plato. The claim at *Cratylus* 440b–c that being is incommensurable 'in every way with flow[44] or indeed motion' (ῥοῇ οὐδὲν οὐδὲ φορᾷ) lays down the cornerstone of Plato's philosophy as ordinarily understood. Whatever truly *is*, because it is unchanging, is free of all motion, including ῥοή. Clearly the *Laws* passage contradicts this. That it adopts a different term for flow is no doubt important, but not *that* important. Certainly Plato wishes to divest 'everflowing being' of any of the fluxist connotations of his earlier terminology; he would never associate *flux* with οὐσία. But that is not to say the contradiction boils down to a terminological difference. As I indicated in section 1,

in the *Cratylus* itself the fluxist sense of ῥοή stands in an awkward, unremarked, and seemingly unrecognised juxtaposition with another sense which, when used with ἀεί, corresponds to ἀέναος. The contradiction evinces a *doctrinal* shift between the middle and late dialogues.

This shift had already been announced at *Sophist* 248e–249d, the gist of which is that the category of being includes motion no less than rest. The *Laws* passage simply extends this point to 'flow'. It must be stressed that this is not just a formal redefinition. It is bound up with, even motivated by, an extension of the range of things that can truly be said to *be*. In the middle dialogues τὰ ὄντα typically refers exclusively to Forms. The problem this generates is that being is divorced not only from change and motion, but from 'life, soul and intelligence' (ζωὴν καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ φρόνησιν: *Sophist* 248e) inasmuch as these entail motion. The point of this is not, as some have held, that Plato is now giving all of this to Forms themselves. Rather, he is saying that *whatever* has life, soul, or intelligence is something that truly 'is', even if it is generated and not free of all change. Without question, the first thing he means to usher through the gates is the cosmos. Indeed, at 249c–d τὸ ὄν is used interchangeably with τὸ πᾶν. The philosopher, it is concluded, must deny both the (Eleatic) doctrine that 'the All is at rest' (τὸ πᾶν ἑστηκὸς), and the doctrine Plato primarily and wrongly associates with Heraclitus,[45] that 'being is altogether and in every respect in motion' (πανταχῇ τὸ ὂν κινούντων τὸ παράπαν). Plato is not comparing apples and oranges here; 'the All' appears just where 'being' would in Parmenides.

In terms of content, I will argue in Chapter 1 that 'everflowing being' at *Laws* 966d–e relates specifically to the eternal circular motions of the cosmos, the celestial bodies, and the celestial *souls*.[46] In the late dialogues such circular motion is adduced as proof that the cosmos is governed by *intelligence* (*nous*).[47] Intelligence itself is said to have a special kind of motion that goes hand in hand with a certain stability: in graphic terms, uniform axial rotation without change of location; in cognitive terms, 'always thinking the same thoughts about the same things' (*Timaeus* 40a–b). Intelligence, and whatever in this world has it in an exemplary way, stays the same *by* constantly moving in the way it does. Its motion is not only compatible with but inseparable from its *being*.

With this the philosophical significance of the distinction between flux and flow emerges more clearly. Clearly flux could never be associated with the motion of *nous*, both because of the chaotic motion it entails and because it pertains specifically to the vicissitudes of matter, not the motion of a self-same thing, and especially not the *self*-motion of an *ensouled* thing. But flow is another matter. Not only can it denote the smooth and regular motion *of something*, but it is transcategorical in a way that flux is not. It can relate to the eternal circular motion both of intelligent *soul* and of the *bodies* driven by intelligent soul, and because of this it can, as flux cannot, be linked with being.

If our gaze is not unduly skewed by the occasional lapses into caricature, we will find that this is already very much how Plato thinks of flow in the etymological section of the *Cratylus*. Flow is not *only* referred to here as though it is synonymous with motion broadly conceived. It also designates *good* (*qua* flowing) as opposed to bad (impeded or impeding) motion, and the paradigm of this good motion, as I

will argue in Chapter 2, is precisely the eternal circuiting of the celestial bodies. A regular, *nous*-governed cosmic flow is what the etymological inquiry has in view, what it aims for. Whether it arrives there is another matter. My point here is simply that the *Laws* passage, in speaking of everflowing being, says what Plato, or at least part of Plato, had *wanted* to say in (and ever since) the *Cratylus*.

But if this is so, how on earth did Plato come to conflate flow with flux? The *terminological* ambiguity in ῥέω/ῥοή is not enough to explain this. Even if Plato was influenced by Sicilian usage while at the same time maintaining the mainstream one, it is not immediately clear why this should entail a *conceptual* confusion. For Plato has independent philosophical grounds for distinguishing flow and flux, irrespective of what the words ῥέω and ῥοή mean for him. This could and should have led him to specify when he was using them in a fluxist sense and when he was not. What is it, then, that allows the terminological ambiguity to infect and override his own thinking? There must be some additional characteristic, some ambiguity intrinsic to the notion of flow, that abets this tendency to blur flow with flux or meets it halfway.

As we will see, in the *Cratylus* flow gradually reveals a second face besides the one that is sought. Besides the distinction between flowing and impeded/impeding motion referred to above, flow itself may be errant rather than orderly, or manic and seething rather than smooth and easy. This seems to explain how we might get from flow to flux. What exactly is the difference if flow is variable, smooth and regular here, errant or manic there? And what sense can be given to a motion that is circular *some of the time*? My guess is that it was questions like these that led Plato to collapse flow into flux and reserve 'being' only for what is entirely free of change and motion. Yet a couple of examples will serve to show that the distinction should still be drawn.

In the *Timaeus* preamble we read that some natural catastrophes on earth occur due to a very occasional deviation in the orbits of the celestial bodies (22c). This is part of a story reportedly told to Solon by an Egyptian priest, whom we should not rush to regard as a mouthpiece for Platonic doctrine. In the *Laws* the Athenian, who *is* Plato's mouthpiece, asserts that such deviations are merely apparent; in truth each of the celestial bodies perpetually follows a single fixed orbit (822a). Yet it can be asked whether this really is Plato's view, or whether it reflects what Vlastos (1965a: 392) calls his 'apologetic' purpose in the *Laws*. I will argue in Chapter 5 that in *Laws* X we should regard the idea of occasional celestial deviation as implicit, backgrounded, or (less euphemistically) brushed under the carpet so that it does not complicate the task of persuading atheists of their error. My point here is that there is clearly a gulf between occasional celestial deviation and celestial *flux*. Perhaps, if such deviations are left uncorrected and snowball, the *end result* will be a chaotic flux in which discrete things like stars and planets can no longer be distinguished. But a variably orbiting celestial body is still a celestial body, and an orbiting one at that.

A second example shows that this point is not limited to cosmology. The *Cratylus* treats some passions or affective states of the soul in terms of a smooth flow of the soul, and others as a more manic flow in which the soul boils and throbs. In the

Phaedrus, as we will see in Chapter 3, love involves *both*, if not at once then in close succession. Is this flux? The lover's confusion may suggest so. But it depends on the form confusion takes. If we swing between extremes of love and hatred for a person, flux may not be an inapposite description of our psychic state. But this is not at issue when the *Phaedrus* addresses love in terms of flow. The lover is confused about what is happening to him and why he is in love, but *that* he is in love he has no doubt at all. The vicissitudes he undergoes are vicissitudes *of love*. They belong intrinsically to the way love unfolds and endures. They do not entail, and are not brought up to convey, that love is already something else by the time it is named.

The fact that flow has two sides may seem to diminish its significance in Plato's thought. But the reverse is true. Precisely on account of its double nature, flow constitutes a problem which will, as I hope to show in this book, cast a new light on the developmental course of Plato's thinking and what drives it to take this course. In brief, the duplicity of flow should help us explain, or at least better understand, three key aspects of this development:

1. Plato's ultimate reduction of flow to flux in the *Cratylus*, in arriving at the basic metaphysical standpoint of the middle period, which centres on the opposition between Forms (being) and sensibles (becoming or flux).
2. The necessity of Plato's dissatisfaction with that standpoint and his need for a broader framework, especially the teleological one provided by the *nous* doctrine, to straddle the two domains and motivate their relation (or in other words, the necessity of what I shall call Plato's cosmological turn).
3. The remarkable series of variations of his mature cosmological scheme from the *Timaeus* to the *Laws*.

Point 1 has been touched on above. Regarding point 2, the key issue is that equating the Forms/sensibles opposition with that of being/flux pressures Plato to evaluate negatively *any* kind of motion or change. He may want to maintain that sensibles have something of the goodness of the Forms in which they participate, but on the criterion of participation in motionless Forms it is hard to see how what is good in them could ever include their motion. To do justice to why it is *good* that a given thing moves in the way it does, Plato must make *nous* the star of the show, giving Forms second billing as the models *nous* looks to in its purposive activity. The *Timaeus*, where this is unfolded, still retains the being/becoming dichotomy of the middle period. But it is striving for more than that opposition can provide by itself. As the Forms/flux dichotomy presupposes the collapse of flow into flux, the new framework involves, I will claim, a retrieval of flow. We already encounter something of this in the *Phaedrus*. As the contradictory aspects of love there correspond to the two sides of flow in the *Cratylus*, so, I will argue in Chapter 4, do *nous* and necessity in the cosmology of the *Timaeus*. In both cases, rather than a fixed dichotomy, it is a matter of subsuming the negative aspect of flow under the positive, or in Timaeus' terms, of necessity's compliance with *nous* (48a).

Regarding point 3, the different versions of Plato's cosmological scheme in the late period correspond, in my view, to different ways of dealing with the issue of natural disaster. Why do such things occur at all in a universe ruled by intelligence? To summarise briefly the argument of Chapter 5, the problem is located in material necessity (over against *nous*) in the *Timaeus*, in deficient aspects of the world-soul (over against its *nous*) in the *Statesman*, and in a bad *class* of soul (over against the good, intelligent class) in the *Laws*. Flow is a useful rubric for understanding these significantly different approaches on account of its transcategorical status (the fact that it pertains to soul and body/matter alike). They amount, I argue, to three ways of handling flow's two-sidedness.

There is one further dimension to the philosophical significance of flow *as a problem*. What makes it appropriate to speak of a cosmological *turn* in the late period, not just a development of the rudimentary cosmology we find in the middle dialogues, is the much greater burden that cosmology is expected to bear, especially ethically. In the middle dialogues, besides the obvious normativity of ethical Forms like Justice as standards to be emulated, Forms are models in that contact with them may help us to become *constant and unchanging* like them (*Phaedo* 79d). In the late dialogues the *cosmos* becomes the normative standard, specifically its *motion* in conformity with *nous*. This corresponds to the normativity of cosmic flow in the etymological section of the *Cratylus*, where virtue is treated as 'going with' this flow. Plato is genuinely drawn to this idea, but also wary, and with reason. For it is in this ethical context that the malleability of flow is most salient and disturbing. If we can go with the flow both when we glide through life joyously, without any ill feeling towards anyone or anything, and when we rage and boil like Ajax or the Maenads (or Pentheus for that matter), how can flow be a normative basis for conduct?

In fact the problem is still more complex, for what if it is also possible to glide through life precisely when we are given over to a life of injustice? Chapter 6 proposes that the problem of flow ultimately has its root in the question of natural justice, which likewise seems to have two faces: harmonious order and 'might is right'. This moral Janus-facedness of nature is something that Plato tends to avoid tackling head-on. His firm belief, of course, is that the wicked only *seem* to prosper and to be favoured by nature. This is expressed in *Republic* X through the image of just and unjust men running a lap-race in which the former finally prevails. I will argue that this responds to, but also provokes anew, the problematic character of natural justice. It seems that both competitors go with the flow in their own ways, but *why* is this flow such that it favours the unjust in the short term, the just in the long? As for the late dialogues, I think Plato's deepest forays into the cosmological and the ethical aspects of the problem actually come in the *Statesman* myth. The *Laws*, in contrast, is more evasive on both counts. 'Everflowing being' may be what (part of) Plato always wanted to say, but he does not come by it having resolved the problem of flow, but having avoided flow's dark side.

5 Methodological considerations, and the orientation of this study

This book is not exactly a concept study, for its central theme is one that comes and goes in Plato, is often suppressed, distorted or disguised, and never attains the status of a definite Platonic concept. Flow is of interest because it falls in the interstices of Plato's conceptual architecture. Unlike flux, it does not simply fall on one side of oppositions such as Forms/sensibles, being/becoming, stability/motion, soul/body, *nous*/necessity. It seems to encompass both,[48] but it is not a kind of master concept embracing them. To the extent that we can speak of a Platonic system, if we compare it to a solar system, we might almost compare the flow motif to a comet making an appearance in it from time to time and traversing it at a somewhat funny angle, as if in conformity with a different law.

But why exactly is this of interest, and how should we pursue it? Let me stress that this book is not an exercise in 'tripping up the master'. My intention is not to use flow as a critical lever to topple Plato's 'system', or reduce it deconstructively to a rubble of difference which may then be moved around in whichever way takes one's fancy or serves one's agenda. The task is to 'get' Plato hermeneutically, to fathom the richness of his thought and the reach of his philosophical quest.[49] Exploring the theme of flow, and retelling the story of Plato's development in terms of it, will shed light on the *drama* of his thinking. By this I do not just mean the revision of his earlier theses. Grasping the nature of and the reasons for these revisions is of course important. But Plato's thought is not simply the sum of his doctrines, with modifications over time factored in. For one thing, the drama is already there in the formulation of his theses. An example is the way the opposition between being and ῥοή at the end of the *Cratylus* is reached by suppressing the non-fluxist associations of ῥοή. Secondly, the revisions can involve the retrieval of themes which were not, or not adequately, taken up into Plato's doctrinal standpoint. This may occur explicitly or more subliminally, in what we might call Plato's hinterthoughts. A significant part of my task in this book involves trying to get into these hinterthoughts, to make more visible thoughts which may be involved in the development of Plato's theses without themselves being taken up into them, and which may remain as misgivings about or dissatisfaction with those theses and so drive him further, but may also remain as more or less nebulous anxieties which are deferred or avoided. It is my belief that flow is at the heart of this undercurrent of Plato's thought.

This raises further methodological issues, but before broaching them let me lay some hermeneutical assumptions on the table. I am of the view that the deeper a thinker's insight, the deeper the *problems* that insight opens up. No doubt the capacity to resolve problems and carry insight further is a mark of greatness in a thinker, but the ultimate mark does not lie in a final absence of problems. That is more likely a sign that one has not pushed far enough. It lies rather in the depth of the problems opened up, even if they are too much to handle. This is why the distinction between a thinker's standpoint and his thought is crucial. I presuppose that a philosophical standpoint, no matter how comprehensive, cohesive, and persuasive it

may be, will not resolve all the problems of existence. Having attained it, a thinker as intrepid and original as Plato will naturally think *from* it into the purlieu of problems, uncertainties, inchoate anxieties, and not yet clearly articulated questions which surround it, but which also begin to become accessible and more determinate from the standpoint he has won. Plato kept pushing into this purlieu for more than fifty years, and in many ways we are still taking the measure of his questioning. In places I think he does avoid some of the problems that his own thought makes available to him, and I will criticise him for it, but in the name of the problems and the need for further insight into them.

While the distinction between standpoint and thought is sound in principle, difficulties emerge when we seek to give a determinate content to the 'hinterthoughts'. The obvious danger here is arbitrariness. Having opened up this space in distinction from Plato's explicit theses, what is to guarantee that we do not fill it up with thoughts of our own that we 'read into' Plato?[50] There must of course be some kind of textual support. If Plato has thoughts that play a role in shaping or reshaping his theses without themselves taking shape explicitly in them, there must be something in the text that reflects this or allows us to infer it. My claim that flow is operative in passages where it does not appear by name will often be supported by references to *other* Platonic texts where the role of flow in the same context is more explicit. This brings with it questions regarding the relationship between the dialogues and the unity of Plato's corpus, which I will come to below. But as a basic principle let it be agreed that such external support is not sufficient by itself. Internal support of some kind within the same text is necessary.

To give an example, my argument in Chapter 4 that flow is in play in the cosmology of the *Timaeus* is rendered *plausible* by the way Plato speaks of flow both before the *Timaeus* (in the *Cratylus* etymologies) and after (at *Laws* 966d–e). This, along with the rehabilitation of flow in the *Phaedrus* (in a different context), gives us a basis for supposing that the notion of flow will have remained in Plato's thoughts from the *Cratylus* all the way through to his last work. But it does not prove it. The *Timaeus* itself should, and I will argue does, reveal this to us, however indirectly. By contrast, my argument in Chapter 5 that flow is also in play in the modified cosmology of the *Statesman* must remain more speculative, because the external evidence is not backed up by anything in the text which suggests the flow motif. That is not to say it is *wildly* speculative; it seems to me a plausible explanation for how we get to 'everflowing being' in the *Laws*, and to the *kind* of cosmotheological scheme in which Plato is comfortable using this phrase. Nevertheless, there is a difference.

One of the major fault lines dividing Plato's commentators is that between 'unitarians' and 'developmentalists' or 'revisionists'. As will be evident, I take the developmental view; what occurs in Plato's late dialogues goes well beyond clarification or gap-filling. But I also differ from many developmentalists in terms of the status I think the revisions have. I resist the tendency to seek at or near the end of Plato's career a definitive doctrine that overcomes all the recognised deficiencies of his prior stance. I see not just a final theory but an only partly resolved, and partly suppressed, problem. And because I am led to this by my belief that the theme of

flow persists as an undercurrent of Plato's thought and has a say in how that thought unfolds even when it does not appear by name, my kind of developmentalist approach may be prone to an additional objection: that of circular reasoning. I will hold that later developments in Plato give us grounds to believe that in the *Cratylus*, alongside the Plato that dismisses flow as an ontological hallucination, there is a part of him that wants to commit to it philosophically. But having mobilised later dialogues to support my reading of the *Cratylus*, can I then use *it* to support my claims for the relevance and status of flow in those dialogues?

I think I can. The notion of the hermeneutic circle is now a familiar one, and while it should not be worn as a talisman that somehow wards off in advance any threat of circular reasoning, it is important to recognise that the circularity involved in textual interpretation is broader than this. The hermeneutic circle usually concerns the understanding of the relation between part and whole (rather than that between rule and instance, for example, in syllogistic reasoning). Whether these be passage and text, text and corpus, author and culture (etc.), there is a necessary movement back and forth between them and a deepening of our understanding of both in this process. To read the *Cratylus*, say, is never *just* to read the *Cratylus*, but is at the same time to work towards a fuller understanding of Plato's whole oeuvre and to test out whatever understanding of that oeuvre we bring to the *Cratylus* against the dialogue itself. We can't expect to reach this fuller understanding unless we give each dialogue its time in, or rather as, the sun, its chance to organise the whole corpus around itself.

This is admittedly somewhat truistic, and does not yet fully meet the question. Unitarians typically have an easier time of it here. If Plato's dialogues constitute a doctrinal unity, one need not worry greatly about *when* he says this or that, or why he says it here but not there. One can just say that 'Plato cannot give all his doctrine everywhere' (Hackforth 1972: 56). While I do not think that is enough, it has to be admitted that on a developmentalist approach, where the unity of Plato's corpus has to do not just with a set of doctrines but a set of problems which are dealt with in quite diverse ways in different dialogues, these issues are more serious, and they do seem to raise obstacles to drawing inferences both ways between dialogues occupying different stages in Plato's development. However, I would argue that, besides the one between text and oeuvre, there is another hermeneutic circle relevant to the Platonic oeuvre: that between the doctrines and the underlying problems. Here too there must be a movement back and forth, in which the doctrinal changes both point to and are newly appreciated in light of the background problems which they partly respond to and partly avoid. This is not simply a case of presupposing what one is to prove, namely, that flow constitutes a persistent undercurrent of Plato's thought. Rather, we start from a preliminary sighting of this undercurrent, which the concrete process of interpretation seeks to bring more and more clearly into view, with the aim of not just following but explaining the course of Plato's thinking.

If this regrettably long introduction has shown one thing, it is how multifaceted the theme and the problem of flow is in Plato. I have brought these facets together

from various places in Plato's work. There is no one passage or dialogue that gives all of them, although the *Cratylus* comes close. When flow is rehabilitated, starting with the *Phaedrus* and ending with *Laws* 966d–e, it appears, as it were, piecemeal. There are always key aspects missing, whether it be one side of the soul/body distinction, of the macrocosm/microcosm distinction, or of the distinction between good and bad, orderly and disorderly, aspects or kinds of flow. It would be good if we could explain why Plato, without ever really calling attention to it, takes on the flow problem one piece at a time, why he takes on this piece rather than any other when and where he does, and in the way he does.

Notes

1 Opinion is sharply divided about whether Plato endorses a fluxist doctrine of *perception* in the *Theaetetus*. I discuss this in Chapter 4, section 3.
2 Many editors list this (or rather Plutarch's slightly different form of it) as an independent Heraclitean fragment (B 91 in DK), and there is a long-running controversy over whether it or B 12 represents Heraclitus' actual doctrine. I agree with those who deem B 12 the authentic form, such as Reinhardt (1916: 207 n1), Kirk (1962: 374–5), Marcovich (1967: 206), and Graham (2006: 129–31).
3 Since this is a development *from* Plato's misrepresentation of Heraclitus' statement, it seems unlikely, or at least too simplistic, that Cratylus introduced Plato to 'the Heraclitean doctrine'. See also the arguments in Allan (1954) against Cratylus as the young Plato's teacher.
4 In one of the passages Irwin (1977: 5) adduces, *Theaetetus* 152d, opposite sensible properties, such as largeness and smallness, are referred to as *generated* from the motion and change and intermixture of all things (ἐκ φορᾶς τε καὶ κινήσεως καὶ κράσεως πρὸς ἄλληλα γίγνεται πάντα…).
5 Could it not equally be said that Plato would kick himself for the conflation I impute to him, that between flux and *flow*? A first response is that a stronger case can be made that something stands in the way of Plato attaining a clear distinction here. Since both entail motion, and since (middle) Plato is more concerned with asserting a strict dichotomy between motion as such and *being*, the distinction between flowing and fluxist motion can fall from view and not receive the attention it should. Beyond this, in my view there probably was a point when Plato *did* kick himself for not distinguishing flux and flow more clearly.
6 On the interpretation of this hotly disputed passage that I favour. See Chapter 4, section 1a for detailed discussion.
7 A case can be made that Heraclitus embraces 'self-change' more widely than Plato does. Fire, he claims, is what the cosmos is *essentially* (B 30), sea, earth, and what he cryptically calls *prêstêr* being fire's 'turnings' (B 31): not simply things that fire turns into, but guises in which fire is still present, only 'with its back turned towards us', as Dilcher nicely puts it (1995: 61). This means the whole meteorological process can be characterised in terms of the self-changes of fire. In *De Caelo* (298b25), Aristotle recognises that Heraclitus posited fire as something underlying 'flux', and 'from which' all things are so many transmutations. This nuance is missing in the *Metaphysics*, and is generally absent in modern discussions of Plato's attitude to 'Heraclitean flux'.
8 Cf. Tredennick 1933: 43 note d.
9 Our word flux derives from the Latin *fluxus*, past participle of *fluere*, 'to flow', and is at times equated with flow, typically in scientific or technical contexts. In physics, flux may refer to the flow, or rate of flow, of fluids, particles, or radiant energy across an area or over a period of time. Electric or magnetic flux is a property of the (relatively enduring) corresponding field, although in this case (as my father pointed out to me) a distinction can also be made between the flow of electricity *through* a wire and the flux of the electromagnetic field *around* it. In medicine, flux refers to an abnormal discharge or

'flow' (of blood, pus, etc.) from the body. Diarrhoea – in Greek διάρροια, a 'flowing through' – has long been called 'the flux', dysentery 'the bloody flux'. But outside of these contexts we generally recognise a difference between flux and flow.

10 So, for example, if a relationship is in flux, what is unclear is not just how it will pan out, but what it *is* and *if* it is. Much the same applies when our views about something are in flux. This *can* be said in the watered down sense that they are simply changing. But the full force of the expression is that 'my views' are changing so much that I can no longer claim to hold views at all. I don't know *what* to think. My mind is swimming.

11 Compare the OED, which identifies the primary sense of the verb 'flow' as 'move steadily and continuously in a current or stream'. The usages grouped under the OED's second sense include the other characteristics of flow that I will highlight here.

12 Compare the distinctions between an athlete with a flowing running style and one whose action seems jarring, forced, and 'mechanical', and between 'fluent' speakers of a language and those whose speech is halting and laboured. While in the first case 'flow' may just have to do with a natural endowment, in the second case there is a connection with expertise or mastery. This may help to explain the strong link in the *Cratylus* between the specifically intellectual virtues and flow. See Chapter 2, section 4a.

13 The motion of a crowd flowing *out* of a stadium is not unidirectional, but directedness in general remains integral to flow in this case. Note further that this need not entail a destination. The flow of conversation may not have or need this, but it will have a tendency or bent, unless it is the kind of conversation that 'goes nowhere', that is, does not *have* a flow that easily sustains itself and us. Likewise, when we describe a text or a film plot as flowing, we mean not only that the sentences, arguments, or scenes are connected, but that throughout them we have an abiding sense of going somewhere, even if we are not yet sure exactly where.

14 That *Plato* here means 'flux' by ῥοή is clear from the fact that he is assimilating the poets to Heraclitus' position as he (mis)represents it: constant becoming without identity (cf. 152d).

15 As remarked by LSJ. But ῥόος is used in the singular, for example, at *Odyssey* 5.451, 461.

16 In the *Iliad*, Ocean (3.5, 18.240, 19.1), Aesepus (4.91), Simois and Scamander where they unite (5.774), Xanthus (= Scamander: 6.4, 8.560), Minyeos (11.732), Sangarius (16.719). In some of these cases the accompanying genitive is ποταμοῖο, referring back to the river previously named. In the *Odyssey* the river's name is not always given (6.216, 9.450), but at 10.529, 22.198, and 24.11 it is Ocean.

17 Compare *Iliad* 18.240 and 19.1, where the phrase denotes the distant *places* where the sun sets and rises respectively. Similarly at *Iliad* 3.5 ἐπ' Ὠκεανοῖο ῥοάων denotes the destination of the cranes' winter migration, presumably the southern part of the encircling 'flows of Ocean'. At 21.195–197 (cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 841) the point is that Zeus' thunder is felt everywhere, throughout the heaven above, the sea below, the earth, and 'the flows of Ocean' embracing it.

18 Hera's part in this is to summon Zephyrus and Notus, the west and south winds. If Lascalles and Crowe are right in relocating Troy at Bergama and identifying the Xanthus with the Bakir Çayi, then as Crowe (2011) points out, Hera's wind goes directly against the river's southwesterly flow to the Aegean (it would blow across it at Schliemann's location). This may give more force to the statement that the river no longer had any *will* to flow on (οὐδ' ἔθελε προρέειν: 366), its will having been directly countered by Hera.

19 *Iliad* 16.229. Cf. *Odyssey* 5.441.

20 Not the grape's 'juice' (LSJ), for ἀμπέλου ῥοάς is in apposition to βρομίου πῶμα, Dionysus' draught.

21 Even in tragedy this *idea* is more often conveyed simply by pluralising αἷμα, blood (cf. LSJ).

22 In the *Iliad*, mostly of the Axius (2.849, 16.288, 21.157 and 186), also the Alpheius (5.545) and the Xanthus (6.172, 21.304).

23 It depends on whether the focus is the source or the direction of the flow from it. The *Iliad* passage leans to the former side, the *Odyssey* passage to the latter.

24 Sophocles may also have in mind Heraclitus' reference to 'everflowing glory' in B 29.

25 LSJ reference *Phaedo* 87d, assimilating ῥέω not just to ἀπόλλυμαι but κατατρίβω (justifiably, in context).
26 For the sake of completeness, I note the further senses of ῥέω listed by LSJ (leaving aside the extremely rare senses II and III): 6. (of persons) 'be inclined to' something (for example, Plato, *Republic* 485d and 495b); 7. (of a ship, a roof, etc.) 'to leak'; 8. 'to have a flux' (diarrhoea); 9. an impersonal use: 'it flows from the nose'. Sense 7 seems relevant to us given *Cratylus* 440b–c, although Plato does not seem to have used the verb itself in this sense. Plato's use of sense 6 will be addressed in Chapter 3.
27 Epicharmus' dates are uncertain, but are roughly set at 540–450 BCE. By comparison, Aristophanes was born ca. 446.
28 Fragment B 2 DK, 196 PCG. Translation Sedley (1982: 255), although I have changed his 'stays put' to 'lasts'.
29 Plutarch refers to it more vaguely at *De sera numinis vindicta* ('On the Delays of Divine Vengeance') 559A–B.
30 I rely here on the reconstructed text of Bastianini and Sedley (1995: 458, 460).
31 Adopting Sedley's translation (1982: 256). As the ordinary senses of ῥεῖν and φέρεσθαι, 'flow' and 'move', would imply enduring subjects of flow and motion, which is just what the growing argument means to deny, 'are in flux and motion' is better.
32 Pindar, Epicharmus' contemporary, seems to have been influenced by Heraclitus, and if the Ephesian hermit's utterances could reach him in Boiotia, I do not see what prevents them from reaching Sicily, especially if, as argued by Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén (2012: 83), Epicharmus read and parodied Pindar himself. I am less persuaded by her claim (2012: 91–4) to find Heraclitean terms and themes in Epicharmus.
33 The implications of this are brought out in the later dispute between the Academics and the Stoics. According to Plutarch (*Against the Stoics* 1083B–C) both parties agreed that, so understood, change is not truly growth and decay but generation and destruction, for the former pair are changes undergone *by* an underlying, enduring body (πάθη σώματός ἐστιν ὑποκειμένου καὶ διαμένοντος).
34 Even Sedley, who is generally insistent that Heraclitus is the fluxist he has long been made out to be, recognises a difference between the flux at issue in the growing argument and what he calls the 'stable flux' of Heraclitus' river: succession without growth or diminution (1982: 258). But is this all Heraclitus means?
35 Accepting Battezzato's emendation (2008: section 5) of the text and translation in Bastianini and Sedley (1995). Note his alternative ὁμολογήσας (being in agreement with) for ὁμιλήσας (being a pupil of, or being in the company of).
36 For Horky (2013: 135), Epicharmus is representative of 'early Pythagorean speculation concerning identity'.
37 In a fragment of the lost work *On the Philosophy of Archytas*. I am indebted to Horky (2013: 136) for this reference.
38 For a survey see Ademollo 2011: 33–5.
39 I follow the convention of dividing Plato's work into three basic periods, although I take the primary mark of the 'late' dialogues to be, not a critical departure from the 'middle' doctrines, but what I call Plato's cosmological turn. In many cases, including the *Cratylus*, it is hotly contested whether a given dialogue belongs in the middle or late period, and where it stands relative to other dialogues of the same period. A clear stance on some of these issues is crucial to my developmental approach to Plato's thought in this book. It has seemed best to me, however, to deal with all the relevant dating issues together in an appendix. In the body of the book I will simply state my view in each case and refer to the Appendix.
40 According to Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 986a8–13; cf. *De Caelo* 293a24–28), the Pythagoreans *invented* a 'counter-earth' (in addition to the five planets, the earth, sun, and moon, and the sphere of the fixed stars) to bring the number of celestial entities to the desired ten.
41 Fragment 28 Heinze, from Stobaeus, *Anthology* 1.10.12, and on Diels's reconstruction (1879: 288) from Aëtius, *Placita* 1.3.23. I thank the anonymous reviewer who brought my attention to this fragment.

42 As strongly argued by Sayre (1983). See Appendix for further comment.
43 Zeller (1869: 343, note 6 to 342) supposes that Xenocrates' usage may derive from the Pythagorean text, refracted through Empedocles' reference to the *elements* as four 'roots'. If so, Xenocrates has misunderstood the Pythagorean text as well.
44 I translate ῥοή 'flow' here to stress the contrast with the *Laws*, but 'flux' is more accurate. By this time in the *Cratylus*, the possibility of distinguishing them has passed by; the non-fluxist sense has been pushed out of the nest. See Chapter 2, section 6 for detailed discussion.
45 Even in the *Sophist*, where Plato acknowledges the subtlety of Heraclitus' thought more than elsewhere, he is apparently unaware of Heraclitus' saying μεταβάλλον ἀναπαύεται, 'changing, it rests' (B 84a).
46 But not the *world*-soul, which drops out of Plato's cosmology in the *Laws*. See Chapter 5, section 3a.
47 *Nous* in Plato is variously translated. 'Mind' is wrong, for the reasons given by Menn (1995: ch. 3), but 'reason', the translation preferred by most, seems less apposite than 'intelligence'. Accepting Menn's argument that *nous* denotes a *virtue* which exists independently and in which ensouled things can participate, doubtless it hinges on a capacity for logical reasoning from Form to Form. But more fundamental is the capacity to *see* Forms in the first place, be it in themselves or in their sensuous instantiations. It is particularly in the latter respect that Plato makes his own what von Fritz identified as the original sense of *noein*, that of discerning the true nature of a situation, person or action (1993: 23ff.). 'Reason' does not cover this aspect, whereas 'intelligence' embraces both it and reasoning.
48 As we will see in Chapter 3, in the *Phaedrus* flow is associated even with a Form, that of Beauty.
49 Nor, however critical I am of Plato's caricature of Heraclitus as a fluxist, is it my desire to dismantle the Platonic edifice to allow Pre-Platonic wellsprings to rush through and win a kind of second chance in the modern age, *à la* Heidegger or Nietzsche, for example. Plato is by no means the villain of the story I wish to tell. He is not exactly its hero either. He is simply the thinker and questioner he is, the one who more than anyone else shaped the future course of thought through to the present day. His thought has an astonishing, seemingly inexhaustible richness. It is a more or less inevitable consequence of this wealth that Plato will not equally chew and digest everything he bites.
50 In something like the way, for example, that Heidegger sought to make his 'clearing' the 'unthought' in Greek thought, what the Greeks thought *within* but not *about*.

1

EVERFLOWING BEING IN THE *LAWS*

Why start with the very last book of Plato's last work? For two reasons. First, it is a matter of putting the best evidentiary foot forward. *Laws* 966d–e, correctly construed, shows unequivocally that Plato thinks 'flow', and specifically cosmic flow, in the way I want to show he does. The evidence in the middle section of the *Cratylus* is more contestable, since it can be argued (in my view wrongly) that Plato is *only* doing etymology there and does not even take it seriously. It will be easier to disentangle this evidence from the contrary indications it vies with in the *Cratylus* if it has first been established that in at least one other dialogue (however remote in time) Plato gives flow a cosmological significance very different from flux. The second reason relates to the *development* of Plato's thought. The *Laws* passage is significant because, up to a point at least, in this 'end' we can see what is in a sense Plato's beginning. In his *Four Quartets* T.S. Eliot wrote famously that 'the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time'. With Plato it is not *exactly* thus (as will become clear in Chapters 5 and 6), but Plato's use of ἀέναος οὐσία at 966d–e does throw an important retrospective light on the prior course of his thinking from the *Cratylus* on. I will say more about that in section 4 of this chapter. The chapters that follow will then seek to trace Plato's course *to* the standpoint of the *Laws*.

As I proposed in the Introduction, the reduction of flow to flux plays a decisive role in Plato's arrival at the view, at the end of the *Cratylus*, that being is divorced from flow and motion. The exact reverse occurs in the *Laws*. 'Everflowing being' could not be affirmed here without Plato recognising that flow is irreducible to flux. Some scholars assume that ἀέναος οὐσία refers to the *constant flux* of the sensible world. I will argue that this is a misconstrual of the phrase and of the passage in which it occurs, both linguistically and substantively. It also decides too quickly what in *Laws* X the phrase recapitulates. There certainly is a fluxist aspect to the cosmology of Book X, but 'everflowing being' does not speak to it. Rather,

it speaks to those aspects that Bury (1926: vol. 1, xvi) calls the *Laws*' 'most valuable additions to Platonic philosophy', soul's relations to motion and *nous*, and the distinction between the primary motions of soul and the secondary ones of bodies. What the phrase refers to is the regular and eternal circular motion both of intelligent soul and of the cosmos and the celestial bodies in conformity with intelligent soul.

1 The recapitulation at *Laws* 966d–e

Towards the end of *Laws* XII the Athenian reprises two of his key arguments in Book X which 'lead to belief in the gods' (966d6–7). Expressed simply (as we will see, *too* simply), the first (966d9-e2) is that soul is created prior to material things and is the cause of their generation, destruction, and change. This harks back to 891e–892c and 896a–d. The second (966e2–4) is that *nous*, having ordered the All (τὸ πᾶν διακεκοσμηκώς), is master (ἐγκρατής) of the orderly motion of the stars and the other heavenly bodies. This goes back to 896e–898c, which makes the point with reference to the intelligent (φρόνιμον: 897b8) *kind of soul*, which is said at 897b1–3 to work in partnership with *nous* itself.

After asserting these points the Athenian stresses their theological importance. If only one does not study astronomy and related *technai* in a careless and amateurish way, one will not reach the atheistic conclusion that things come about only due to material, not teleological, principles: 'by necessary processes' (ἀνάγκαις) rather than 'by the *thought* processes of a *will* to the fulfilment of good' (διανοίαις βουλήσεως ἀγαθῶν περὶ τελουμένων: 967a4–5).[1] It would not be possible, he says at 967b, to calculate the movements of the celestial bodies with such marvellous precision, if they were just lumps of matter. That is, it is the fact that they have, and are driven by, intelligent soul that makes their motions regular and predictable. He then rebukes Anaxagoras and other *phusikoi* for defaulting to material causation even as they recognise intelligence as 'the orderer of all that is in the heavens'. Obviously this recalls *Phaedo* 98b–99c, but the Athenian adds that the mistake of the *phusikoi* hinges on their *derivation of soul* from a prior material principle (967b–c).[2] This indicates that the *first* point, like the second, is cosmologically focused. It is not primarily a question of *our* souls' priority to our bodies, or of divine soul's creation of *our* bodies (as at *Timaeus* 42d–43a).

At 967d–e the two points are then recapped a second time. First, 'soul is the oldest of all the things that partake of birth, is immortal [once born], and rules all bodies' (ψυχή τε ὡς ἔστιν πρεσβύτατον ἁπάντων ὅσα γονῆς μετείληφεν, ἀθάνατόν τε, ἄρχει τε δὴ σωμάτων πάντων). The second point, which is not expressed (or preserved) so clearly, concerns τόν τε εἰρημένον ἐν τοῖς ἄστροις νοῦν τῶν ὄντων. Menn (1995: 75 note 3) takes the genitive as objective and translates 'the *nous* of beings which has been asserted [to be present] in the heavens': that is, the *nous* that *knows* beings in ordering them.[3] With a subjective genitive we could translate 'the previously asserted *nous* of [belonging to] the beings in the stars', i.e., the divine *souls*. Doctrinally, the issue is whether *nous* here is an independent divinity higher than soul, or simply the intelligence belonging to the divine souls said in Book X

to drive the cosmos. While I take Menn's point (1995: 35–7) that the former view makes the distinction between the two points clearer, the alternative should not be dismissed.[4] Plato's doctrine embraces *nous* at both levels, and it is likely that he adopts ambiguous language here to cover both at once. I will address this issue later. My purpose here is simply to set down this fuller context and retain it as a touchstone for the analysis of the first point as recapitulated at 966d–e.[5]

This passage demands special attention, for the point is articulated here in a peculiar way that has generated widely divergent interpretations. Soul, says the Athenian, πρεσβύτατόν τε καὶ θειότατόν ἐστιν πάντων ὧν κίνησις γένεσιν παραλαβοῦσα ἀέναον οὐσίαν ἐπόρισεν. Linguistically, there are several reasons for uncertainty and disagreement about the sense of this statement. One is that γένεσιν παραλαβοῦσα is ambiguous; with an antecedent aorist it can mean 'having received genesis' (cf. England 1921: vol. 2, 631), but with an ingressive aorist 'in taking charge of becoming'.[6] In addition, there are questions about *whose* motion is the subject of this phrase and of the main verb ἐπόρισεν (or in other words, about the status of πάντων in relation to the superlatives πρεσβύτατόν and θειότατόν), and, of course, about what the object of this verb, ἀέναον οὐσίαν, denotes.

Philosophically, disputes over the sense of the passage have generally turned on whether soul is grasped in the *Laws* as created. For those who take soul as generated prior to all things bodily,[7] the sense is that soul is 'the oldest and most divine *of* all the things' whose motion is glossed in the remainder of the sentence. Conversely, for those who regard the *Laws* as going back to the *Phaedrus*' tenet that soul is ungenerated, not just immortal *once* generated,[8] the point is rather that soul is incomparably older and more divine *than* all those things. I side with the former camp, not just because of the clear references to the genesis or birth of soul in Book X (892a, 892c, 896a) and at 967d, but because the attempt to read the superlatives as comparatives is in this case 'linguistically impossible' (Hackforth 1936: 5). However, ungenerated soul is not the only assumption that has led some to misconstrue the passage. Arguably just as decisive is the assumption that by ἀέναος οὐσία Plato means the constant flux of matter.

England has the statement saying that soul 'is far older and more perfect than all the things whose movement, having received its origin (from elsewhere), starts them on a ceaseless round of change'. There are many problems with this translation. First and foremost, it gives ἀέναος οὐσία the sense of incessant flux, corresponding to the 'transformation and rearrangement' (μεταβολῆς τε καὶ μετακοσμήσεως: 892a) of physical things in Book X.[9] It is true that Book X implies fluxist vicissitudes along various physical continua: hard and soft, heavy and light (892b), big and small (893e), long and short, wide and narrow, deep and shallow, strong and weak (896d). These are aspects of the material principle of the 'Great and Small' or the 'Dyad', Plato's take (cf. Aristotle: *Metaphysics* 987b26–28) on the Pythagorean *apeiron* as an indeterminate material plethora. Whether this can be said in the *Laws* to be a material *principle* in the strict sense, as Sayre (1983) shows it is in the *Philebus*, is a complex question that I will go into later. In any case, it is certainly to be associated with flux. It is also true, as we saw in the Introduction, that Xenocrates uses

ἀέναος in connection with the Dyad. In this respect, however, I think Xenocrates' reputation for fidelity to Plato's views is undeserved, for this is not how Plato uses the term here, and it is not the fluxist aspect of the argument in Book X that the term goes back to.

Why not? In short, because he uses it to qualify οὐσία, being, which is just what fluxist vicissitudes preclude. Flux simply could never justify this word in Plato. In the *Laws* Plato may be conspicuously silent about Forms, but he does maintain the thesis about being that he originally affirmed with reference to Forms: that a thing is only truly in being when and insofar as it abides stably (ἔστιν δὲ ὄντως ὄν, ὁπόταν μένῃ: 894a) and does not flip over into a different state and cease to be that thing. It is just that here, as at *Sophist* 248e–249d, such abiding does not exclude motion *per se*. It excludes flux but not flow. Having said that, we must note a certain nuance in the argument of Book X. At 893e–894a forms of increase (combination) and diminution (separation) which do not prevent things from remaining in their established states (καθεστηκυῖα ἕξις) are distinguished from forms that entail a change of state and, *ipso facto*, the total destruction of the *thing* that was in that state. Here we have something very close to my distinction between flux *Mach* 1 and *Mach* 2. Manifestly 'everflowing being' is incompatible with *Mach* 2, but might it denote *Mach* 1 flux? No. Physical things that undergo alterations without this entailing their destruction may endure for a long time, but they surely do not have *eternal* being. In the *Timaeus* the only physical things to which everlasting existence is imputed are the cosmos and the celestial bodies, which are understood not to grow or diminish. It is, I believe, to the motions of these entities, motions that do not entail physical alteration in the above senses at all, that the phrase refers.

In England's translation, οὐσία is suppressed to avoid its incommensurability with a fluxist reading of ἀέναος. This is quite unjustified, for the opposition of οὐσία to γένεσις is an essential part of the statement.[10] Plato undoubtedly means everflowing *being*. And he just as certainly means ever-*flowing* being.[11] Since he specifically uses ἀέναος, which (as we saw in the Introduction) has always had the sense, before and in Plato (cf. *Phaedo* 111d), of an everlasting, reliable flow *of something*, instead of the (in Plato) more ambiguous ἀεὶ ῥεῖν, I see no basis for taking him to refer here to constant flux. England supposes that this 'fits in best with Plato's ontology', yet Plato's ontology no longer hinges on a dichotomy between purely intelligible being (unchanging Forms) and sensible flux. England seems to disregard Plato's important move in the *Sophist*, allowing motion (but not flux) into the category of being along with stability or rest.

A second problem is England's reading of the superlatives, both here and in the later recapitulation at 967d–e, as 'strong' comparatives (1921: vol. 2, 634, 631) on the grounds that Plato uses the same adjectives in the comparative form at 896b10. It is true that the Greek superlative has an ablatival usage resembling the comparative. However, this requires that there be no doubt that the bearer of the superlative does *not* belong to the class denoted by the genitive (Schöpsdau 2011: 596; Hackforth 1936: 5). This condition is in fact met in a later passage in *Laws* XII, as England rightly says. At 969a–b ἀνδρειότατος … τῶν ὕστερον means 'braver than your

successors', not 'bravest of your successors', since the addressee cannot be his own successor. But the situation is quite different at both 966d–e and 967d. Not only is there no logical or contextual indication that soul must be excluded from πάντων. We have indisputable evidence to the contrary. According to the argument of Book X that is reaffirmed here, soul is ultimately responsible for *all* motions (896a–b), both its own and those of bodies. If 966d–e is not to contradict what it is meant to restate, soul *must* be included in πάντων ὧν κίνησις …, where this motion *of* the things in question is the subject of the active verb ἐπόρισεν, whose direct object, ἀέναον οὐσίαν, is also a kind of motion. This means the superlatives must have a partitive function. That is, soul is 'the oldest and most divine *of* all the things whose motion … brings about everflowing being'.

We thus, thirdly, have no reason to circumvent the most straightforward sense of ἐπόρισεν here, 'brings about'.[12] Like the participle παραλαβοῦσα just before it, this is an active aorist, and is best read as a resultative aorist responding to an ingressive one. Everflowing being, the direct object of this verb, is very simply its result: an *intentional* result. The verb does not denote the beginning of an automatic or 'necessary' process. England's 'starts' is objectionable linguistically, because the adjoining text has to be fudged to allow it and to support his comparative reading.[13] It abets England's insertion of 'them' (i.e., πάντων) as direct object, when πάντων really belongs to the subject. To accommodate this intrusion ἀέναον οὐσίαν is shifted out of the accusative and treated as a dative adverbial. Substantively too this is problematic. On this reading the statement would only partly recapitulate, and possibly contradict, the relevant argument from Book X. It would fail to say that soul is not just older than material things but their *cause*. Even if soul is the implied source of their motion, we still lack the sense of its beneficent control of the physical world that is crucial in Book X, and is again stressed at 967a and 967d. What is the point of making soul such a cause if all it brings about is flux, or if flux is an *unintended side effect* of its generation of things? Why would this foster belief in the gods, and not lead us to see only 'necessary [material] processes', not purposive intelligence that aims to realise the good? And why should we take soul merely as an *implied* cause, in a statement that includes soul in its subject, has an active verb with a clear causal sense, and a direct object?

In consequence, finally, γένεσιν παραλαβοῦσα too cannot have the sense that England gives it. In Book X παραλαμβάνω is used at 897a5 to say that the primary motions of soul 'take over' or 'take charge of' the secondary motions of bodies, so as to 'drive' their becoming more or less, etc. At 966d–e the point is that soul brings about everflowing being *in the world of becoming*, which it 'takes over'. (In contradistinction to οὐσία, γένεσις surely means more than origin.) England compares the two uses of παραλαμβάνω, yet gives the word a sense at 966d–e that it clearly does not have at 897a. What makes England suppose that it means 'receive (origin)' rather than 'take over (becoming)' is both his exclusion of soul from πάντων (so that the latter is a passive recipient rather than an active subject), and, again, his assumption that flow must denote fluxist change rather than what comes about *when this is brought under soul's control*.

At this point it is necessary to take up the question of whether there is a material *archê* in the *Laws* corresponding to the Dyad or what the *Timaeus* calls 'necessity'. In the *Timaeus* necessity is not only present but has its own *motion* prior to 'the work of *nous*', i.e., the cosmogonical activity of the demiurge or divine craftsman. The *Laws*, in contrast, denies emphatically that there is any physical motion prior to soul's self-motion. I assume that here Plato does not suddenly deem matter *as such* to have been created *ex nihilo*, but still posits a pre-cosmic All before the ordering ascribed to *nous* or the generation of determinate physical *things* (ascribed to soul). This must it seems be quite static before the self-motions of soul initiate physical motions. Yet does this fit with Plato's use of παραλαμβάνω at 897a and 966d–e? In the former passage the 'primary' motions of soul are not said to initiate but to 'take over' the 'secondary' material ones. This suggests that the latter *already* occur and that soul's task is to control them. In the other passage soul 'takes charge of becoming', which again implies that processes of change are already at work but need to be taken in hand.

It seems to me that the way to deal with this contradiction is to take the uses of παραλαμβάνω to touch on an aspect of cosmology that Plato cannot go into without complicating his doctrine more than he thinks is warranted, given the exoteric level at which the *Laws* cosmology is pitched. In other words, while in terms of the doctrine of soul's primacy *all* physical motions are 'secondary', it seems better to regard the secondary motions as the motions of bodies *once* soul 'drives' their becoming. The flux that is already present could then be said (in accordance with the distinction at 897b) to be exacerbated if the soul doing the driving is unintelligent, but moderated if it is intelligent. This moderation could take the form of transforming a more rampant flux into the *Mach* 1 kind that we found at 893e–894a. Soul may take becoming in hand by creating physical *things* that are relatively enduring, not annulled as soon as they undergo alteration. The motions of these *things* would be secondary to those of soul, but not the fluxing stuff from which those things were generated. But this is not the only way that soul may control or manage flux. If we take literally the claim at 891e that soul is 'the first cause of the generation[14] and destruction of *all things*' (ὃ πρῶτον γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς αἴτιον ἁπάντων), then presumably at the top of divine or intelligent soul's to-do list is the generation of those bodies, such as the stars, that do not undergo alteration at all and are not just relatively enduring but everlasting. In this case it is not just a question of regulating 'becoming' but of transforming it into 'being', a being whose motion has nothing at all of chaoticness and flux, but the steadiness, regularity, and directedness of 'flow'.

There is a further point. Cherniss (1977: 403) endorses England's construal of 966d–e in his critique of Jaeger.[15] Jaeger's reading is doubtless wrong too. Plato does not specifically speak here of 'the everflowing being of the inner life of the soul' (1948: 161), but of the everflowing being that soul *brings about* in the physical world. And he is not referring to *our* souls, or soul as such, but (as I will argue) the class of divine celestial souls that are responsible for cosmic order. Nevertheless, Jaeger is not completely wrong, and Cherniss's claim, with a nod to England, that the *Laws* passage '*opposes* the ἀέναος οὐσία to the οὐσία of the soul' is, I think,

ultimately mistaken. True, in the first instance we must *distinguish* them, since the former is the effect brought about by soul. Yet, as will become clearer below, there is reason to think that the celestial souls can be said to *have* everflowing being themselves, not just to impart it to the physical world. In the second restatement at 967d–e, where ἀέναος οὐσία does not appear, the ἀεί is effectively transferred to the *immortality* of the souls that 'rule all bodies'. While of course all soul is immortal for Plato, 'everflowing being' can be read as glossing the exemplary *way* in which divine soul eternally carries itself. In what other way would it 'rule' but by imparting *its own* steady and regular motion to the physical things it inhabits?

On my construal of the text, then, soul 'is the most ancient and most divine of all the things whose motion, in taking charge of *becoming*, brings about everflowing *being*.'[16] Doubtless this does not fully divest the passage of its mysteries. For one thing, we still wish to know more precisely what everflowing being means. In what way and in what context does being flow? And what sense does this Nietzschean-looking notion of turning becoming into being have for Plato?

A second issue is that the statement implies that there are other things besides soul that in some way bring about everflowing being, yet it is not clear from Book X what these might be. Divine soul is said at 897b to work in collaboration with *nous*, which like many I take here as a higher divinity. But this is certainly not 'younger' or 'less divine' than soul, so it must be ruled out. The younger things must be certain physical things which in some way serve as 'auxiliary' causes, as the *Timaeus* puts it (46e).[17] In the *Timaeus* even elemental flux is deemed to serve a purpose cosmologically (see Chapter 4, section 1c), but it is questionable that this is the point left unexpressed here. My guess is that Plato may have in mind the spherical shape and inner cohesiveness of the cosmos and celestial bodies. These may facilitate soul's driving of their circular motions, enabling them to revolve easily without breaking apart. But this is only a guess. *Laws* X is so intent on asserting soul as cause of all motion that the issue whether there are aspects of the physical world that are not *just* effects of soul does not have room to emerge.

In the absence of other textual clues I will not pursue this second problem any further. But my construal does put us in a position to delineate more precisely what the statement at 966d–e recapitulates in Book X, and this will help us to resolve the first problem. What then does everflowing being essentially mean?

Although, as I said initially, this statement largely goes back to the argument at 891e–892c and 896a–d that soul is prior to material things as their cause, it says more than this. The claim that soul takes over becoming so as to bring about everflowing being, which corresponds to the claim at 967d that soul 'rules all bodies', in fact goes back to the argument starting at 896e that soul controls the *cosmos* and its motions. In other words, the first point is formulated in such a way that it segues into the second one, that the orderly motions of the celestial bodies reflect the ultimate rule of *nous* over the cosmos. This, I propose, is the key to understanding 'everflowing being'.

As I said earlier, Plato's continued insistence in the *Laws* that being entails stable abiding does not mean that he still opposes being to motion *simpliciter*. He has already rejected this at *Sophist* 248e–249d, but this passage makes doctrinally explicit a tendency that is salient in the late period generally. Even when he still adverts to the being-becoming opposition (as in the *Timaeus*), late Plato is more inclined to stress the element of stability *in* this world.[18] It is not exaggerating to say that his whole cosmology is centred on the *compresence* of stability and motion. The great exemplar of this, and its guarantor in the physical domain, is the motion of *nous*, which the *Laws* (898a–b) like the *Timaeus* (34a) defines as regular and uniform axial rotation on the same spot, without change of location. In the *Laws* it is stressed that axial rotation is a *symbol*, the best way of graphically illustrating the invisible motion of intelligence. Cherniss (1944: 405 note 332) is right that this symbol is meant 'to express the simultaneous aspects of motion and rest in the activity of the mind'. *Timaeus* 40a–b gives this the specific *noetic* sense of 'forever thinking the same thoughts about the same things'. Intelligence is both always thinking or moving – it never stalls in forgetfulness of its thoughts or their inherent entailments – and always at rest in that it never strays from these thoughts and holds itself, so to speak, in the fixed centre around which they turn. Far from being at odds with the stability and invariance of being, its very motion is the way that *nous*, and whatever ensouled things in this world have *nous* in an exemplary way, stay the same.

The motion of *nous* is crucial to the cosmological argument of *Laws* X. It is presented as proof that it is the intelligent kind of soul that drives around (περιάγει) the revolution of the cosmos and the orbits of the heavenly bodies (898c–d). Here, unlike the *Timaeus*, soul does not just *maintain* cosmic order but *produces* it, actively ordering (κοσμοῦσαν: 898c; cf. 899b) the world in driving it around. Let us take this ordering as a straightforward match for 'brings about' in the statement at 966d–e. We can then easily find a match for ἀεί, for once established these circular motions are eternal. As Plato has stressed in Book VII (822a), each of the heavenly bodies *eternally* (ἀεί) goes along its own singular path *in a circle* (κύκλῳ). It remains only to match this circular motion with νάω, *flow*, to see that it is *this* argument from Book X that is recapitulated in the claim that soul 'takes charge of becoming' in such a way as to 'bring about everflowing being'. Assuming that 'becoming' would just be 'flux' without the action of soul, and assuming that soul's responsibility for the *generation* of all physical things extends to the celestial bodies, flux is transformed into flow, and becoming into being, precisely when soul creates these bodies and gets them going in circular fashion in conformity with divine soul's own motion *qua* intelligent. Thus everflowing being is the being of these things which eternally move in a circle. As such, it is the very motion of *nous* as reflected in the physical world.[19]

2 Excursus: The crux at *Laws* 897b1–3

There is one place in Book X in particular to which *both* claims recapitulated in Book XII seem to refer: 897b1–3. The text here is unfortunately corrupt, and it is necessary to address at length the textual problem before considering (in section 3) how this

passage relates to 966d–e. The standard text of Burnet (1907), which follows the earliest surviving manuscripts (A and O),[20] is: νοῦν μὲν προσλαβοῦσα ἀεὶ θεὸν ὀρθῶς θεοῖς, ὀρθὰ καὶ εὐδαίμονα παιδαγωγεῖ πάντα. The manuscript variants of the corrupt (underlined) part are listed below (1–3), along with the most important emendations proposed by modern scholars (4–6) and my own alternative proposal (7).

1. Marginal in A and O:[21] … θεὸς οὖσα ὀρθὰ …
2. L, Eusebius, marginal in O: θεῖον for θεὸν
3. Marginal in Ox. (which derives indirectly from L):[22] θέων for θεὸν
4. Winckelmann:[23] … θεῖον, ὀρθῶς θέουσα, …
5. Bury (1926: vol. 2: 340): …, οἷον ὀρθῶς θεός, …
6. Diès (1956: 160): … θεῖον ὀρθῶς θεὸς οὖσα …
7. Mason: θέουσα (or perhaps θέον) for θεὸν.

In brief, I agree with the scribe of the Oxford manuscript and Winckelmann that a participle of θέω, 'run', is needed if the passage is to make good sense, but disagree with the former on its form (and subject) and with the latter on its location. What I wish to show in particular is that 'everflowing being' at 966d–e harks back to soul's 'eternal running' here at 897b.

First, what is wrong with the standard text? The problem is that the underlined portion of text is both obscure in itself and disjunctive with the remainder. Those who make do with it must resort to makeshifts like dashes (so Pangle 1980: 295; Mayhew 2008: 216 and 2010: 206)[24] or a 'mentally added' ὄντα (Schöpsdau 2011: 421)[25] to ensure coherence. The sense then, depending on how one renders προσλαβοῦσα, is that when soul 'joins with' (Mayhew), 'accepts' (Schöpsdau, Steiner), or 'takes as a partner' (Pangle) *nous*, *which is* 'god correctly for the gods' (θεὸν ὀρθῶς θεοῖς), 'it guides all things correctly and happily'.[26] Note also that νοῦν προσλαβοῦσα bears the same ambiguity we found in νοῦν τῶν ὄντων at 967e. It may refer to the intelligence of soul itself, or to intelligence as a divinity in co-operation with which soul acts.

But what would 'god correctly for the gods' mean? Dönt (1968: 370–371)[27] reads it in light of the claim at *Laws* 631b–d that, as human goods (health, beauty, strength, wealth) depend on divine ones (wisdom, temperance, justice, courage) and must have them in view, so the latter in turn must have *nous* in view as their leader or ruler (ἡγεμόνα). Yet Dönt's construal of θεὸν ὀρθῶς θεοῖς – that *nous* is 'rightly god for the *gods*' as it is for *men*, something the gods 'must recognise as their equal' – seems hard to square with the hierarchical tenor of this passage. Why should we not infer that *nous* is a higher god, in line with the arguments of Hackforth (1936) and Menn (1995) that *nous* is the true identity of the demiurge?[28] Mayhew (2010: 206–207) takes the point to be that *nous* 'is correctly called "god" when it refers to the reason (joined with soul) that directs the cosmos', rather than to reason as a human capacity. *Nous* is 'what makes the gods gods'. Although Mayhew seems to favour the view that *nous* is 'Plato's chief god' (2010: 216), he sees *nous* at 897b1–3 simply as the supreme *virtue* in which gods partake.[29] Schöpsdau

(2011: 419–421) provides a strong case for reading *nous* here as itself a god, independent of soul and higher than the celestial soul-gods, in line with the approach of Hackforth and Menn. His construal of προσλαβοῦσα, while it embraces the sense that divine soul acquires the virtue of *nous*, says a great deal more: in effect something akin to accepting god into one's life and entrusting oneself to his guidance. Hence, besides *hinzunimmt*, 'accepts', Schöpsdau also adopts '*zu Hilfe nimmt*' (416; cf. 419). By this, I take it, he means not only that soul 'uses' *nous*, i.e., acts rationally, but that it accepts the help of the *god* that *nous* is (compare Pangle's translation).

Even on Schöpsdau's construal, I am not persuaded that the standard text should be retained. An omitted ὄντα is not unheard of (cf. Smyth 1956: §945), but seems unlikely here. In an already frightfully long and complex sentence (it begins back at 896e), I do not see Plato undertaking the kind of grammatical convolution this involves (with one participial phrase qualifying another, and taking the object of the first one as its subject) without taking pains to clarify his meaning. That is, I do not see him leaving the reader to 'mentally add' ὄντα. There is also a substantive issue. As Schöpsdau says, the motion of the cosmos when guided by divine soul corresponds to the motion of *nous* (2011: 416), but on his construal 897b1–3 itself says nothing about this. The statement seems vague and incomplete if it does not speak, at least in an anticipatory way, to the crucial theme of circular motion. The good, intelligent kind of soul will be found to govern the cosmos for just the reason that the cosmos and the celestial bodies move in conformity with the motion of *nous*. Can it be that 897b1–3 says that soul *guides* all things correctly with the help of *nous*, but is mute about what motion such guidance involves or presupposes? If a participial form of θέω is read in place of θεός (in one of its two occurrences), the statement in fact gives very concrete information here.

Before addressing this, let us consider the other emendations referred to. On Diès's reading, 'every time soul joins itself with divine Intellect [νοῦν προσλαβοῦσα ἀεὶ θεῖον], it itself is in truth divine [ὀρθῶς θεὸς οὖσα] and guides all things to their proper rectitude and happiness'.[30] Thus Diès connects ἀεί with προσλαβοῦσα, θεῖον with νοῦν, and ὀρθῶς with θεός. This works philosophically, but linguistically Diès's emendation involves a grammar that his translation does not strictly follow. Diès's participle οὖσα appears in his translation as a first main verb co-ordinated with παιδαγωγεῖ. But in the Greek, if a second participle *relating to soul* must be supplied, should we not expect a conjunction co-ordinating it with προσλαβοῦσα en route to παιδαγωγεῖ, or commas either side of ὀρθῶς θεὸς οὖσα? As Diès's unpunctuated text still seems like shorthand, it is unsurprising that Saunders, in adopting it, treats this phrase parenthetically: '(soul itself being, if the truth were told, a divinity)'. When Carone takes up Diès's emendation (2005: 256 note 27) she gives προσλαβοῦσα the antecedent sense 'having acquired'. This would yield something like 'soul having acquired divine *nous* being correctly god guides all things correctly', which again is hardly a clearer alternative to Burnet's text.

Bury (1926: vol. 2, 341) reads νοῦν προσλαβοῦσα adverbially, 'in conjunction with reason', and has the passage saying, plausibly and certainly more fluently, that

in such a condition soul 'governs all things rightly and happily as [οἷον] a true goddess'. It would be good to know why Bury opts for 'in conjunction with' and just how this is meant. Does it simply mean 'joined with', or have the stronger sense 'in co-operation with' (cf. LSJ *s.v.* II.3) or 'taking to oneself as one's helper or partner' (I.3), the sense adopted by Pangle and, in places, Schöpsdau?[31] If these senses are in play, *nous* is not *just* a virtue soul can acquire but an independent being actively allied with it. Since Bury endorses the view that *nous* is the 'supreme Divinity' of the *Laws* (vol. 1, xiv), it seems likely that he embraces one of these senses.

Now it is tempting to say that, if this message can carry through whether we adopt the text of Burnet (*à la* Schöpsdau), Diès, or Bury, the textual problem does not matter all that much. However, while I agree that this conception of *nous* as supreme god holds here, I think 897b1–3 has more to say to us. To unpack this I begin with the word ἀεί, which I believe may throw light on how the text is syntactically chunked and even what it should be construed to be.

No one seems to know quite what to do with ἀεί here. Bury omits it in his translation, as does Dönt in his discussion. Schöpsdau connects it with παιδαγωγεῖ in the ensuing clause, which is forced even allowing for the flexibility of Greek syntax. Steiner, Diès, Pangle, and Mayhew connect it more plausibly with προσλαβοῦσα, but the latter three give it the sense of 'every time' soul joins with *nous*, which neglects its key function in Plato's cosmology. When the Athenian discusses the motion of *nous* at 898a–b he stresses its eternal nature. Axial rotation 'necessarily moves *constantly* [ἀεὶ] around some fixed central point' (898a3–4). In the *Timaeus* the revolution of the world-soul is associated with the '*unceasing* [ἀπαύστου] and intelligent life *for all time* [πρὸς τὸν σύμπαντα χρόνον]' of the cosmic creature (36e), and axial rotation is associated with '*always* [ἀεὶ] thinking the same thoughts about the same things' (40a–b). At *Cratylus* 397c–d the celestial bodies, the first gods known to men, are claimed to have received the name 'gods' (θεοί) because they were '*always* running' (ἀεὶ θέοντα) on their circular courses (δρόμῳ).[32] At *Laws* 822a the Athenian asserts that despite contrary appearances each of the celestial bodies *eternally* follows one fixed circular path of its own, not many (τὴν αὐτὴν γὰρ αὐτῶν ὁδὸν ἕκαστον καὶ οὐ πολλὰς ἀλλὰ μίαν ἀεὶ κύκλῳ διεξέρχεται). He goes on to adopt the specific language of the *Cratylus* passage, comparing these bodies at 822b to 'running' (θεόντων) racehorses or men running the long course (δολικοδρόμων). There is good reason to think that Plato is doing the same thing at 897b1–3, where the kind of soul at issue is certainly the divine souls associated with the celestial bodies. In other words, there is reason both to see a participial use of θέω here and to connect this directly with ἀεί.

That such a participle should be read here has been suggested before. In the mid-nineteenth century Winckelmann proposed emending θεοῖς to θέουσα, so that when soul is joined with divine *nous* it '*runs correctly*' (ὀρθῶς θέουσα). This undeniably makes good Platonic (and grammatical) sense. I do not know exactly how

Winckelmann construed προσλαβοῦσα, but some readings seem more likely than others. By supplying commas around ὀρθῶς θέουσα Winckelmann effectively makes this a second protasis,[33] which I presume he simply co-ordinates with the first, since in the case of subordination their order should be inverted (cf. Smyth 1956: §2368a); it is νοῦν προσλαβοῦσα ἀεὶ θεῖον that would explain ὀρθῶς θέουσα, not the reverse. This would rule out some (especially antecedent) senses of προσλαβοῦσα which seem to require inversion: for example, 'running correctly, having acquired *nous*', or 'having taken *nous* as its partner'. The most natural sense is perhaps 'eternally joined with divine *nous*, running correctly, [soul] guides all things correctly…', but this is very much a guess.

One problem with Winckelmann's proposal is that if there is a participial use of θέω here, νοῦν προσλαβοῦσα should certainly explain it, given the crucial theme of circular motion. If that cannot occur with two protases unless they are inverted, so much for two protases. Would it not have been more natural for Plato to use two apodoses: 'joined with *nous*, [soul] *runs* correctly and *guides*…'? Failing that, the only way Winckelmann's text can provide this explanation is if νοῦν προσλαβοῦσα functions adverbially, within the same clause, to determine soul's running (without the need of a comma after θεῖον): 'running correctly *in eternal co-operation with divine nous*'. A second problem is that, in making ὀρθῶς rather than ἀεί qualify running, Winckelmann departs from the *Cratylus* passage which provides the basis for seeing a participle here. I see it in the word directly following ἀεί, and I see the phrase ἀεὶ θέουσα (or perhaps ἀεὶ θέον) as a quotation of ἀεὶ … θέοντα in the *Cratylus*, with the same essential referent: the celestial gods.

There is partial support for this in the manuscript tradition. The Oxford manuscript emends θεῖον in the manuscript it copies to the masculine participle θέων. Post (1934: 29) regards this as 'a scribe's error' for θεόν, but it seems implausible that Ox. meant only to note this earlier reading but got both the accent and vowel wrong.[34] It is more likely that Ox. is conjecturing that a participle must originally have stood. In connecting this with ἀεί, Ox. seems to agree that Plato is referencing the *Cratylus* etymology. However, Ox. takes θέων to relate to νοῦν rather than ψυχή (given the gender), which is not strictly in conformity with Plato's usage. It is not *nous* itself that eternally 'runs' but the celestial bodies, and at *Laws* 897b the celestial souls. The motion of *nous*, axial rotation on the spot, is likened to that of a '*turned*' (ἐντόρνων: *Laws* 898a) or 'well-turned' (ἔυτροχος: *Timaeus* 37c) *wheel*. While τρόχος and its cognates also have a sense of circular 'running', this is different from that of θέω when Plato deploys it cosmologically. It is a matter of a *circular or spherical thing* revolving. The motion of a whole wheel is a τρόχος, whereas if, for example, we paint a dot on its rim, the motion of that dot corresponds to θέω as Plato uses it at *Cratylus* 397c–d and *Laws* 822b and 897b. That is, θέω here denotes *orbital* motion.[35] This involves change of location and thus is not itself the motion of *nous*, but it otherwise conforms with it.[36]

I propose that what is said at 897b1–3 is that when soul is 'eternally running in league with *nous* [νοῦν προσλαβοῦσα ἀεὶ θέουσα/θέον] as is proper to the gods [ὀρθῶς θεοῖς], it guides all things correctly and happily'. For 'eternally running',

as a qualification of the feminine ψυχή, the grammatically correct form is ἀεὶ θέουσα. On the other hand, it is difficult to see why manuscript A would change θέουσα (or rather ΘΕΟΥΣΑ) to θεόν, 'god', and much easier to fathom why it might transcribe ΘΕΟΝ into minuscule form in this way from what Post (1934: 12) infers was the common uncial ancestor of A and O.[37] For in that case all that would be involved is the assumption that the accent to be supplied falls on omicron rather than epsilon. I think there is a good *prima facie* argument for regarding this crossover from uncials to minuscules in the transmission of Plato's text as the source of the corruption here, although an earlier corruption of ΘΕΟΥΣΑ to ΘΕΟΝ cannot be ruled out.

If we suppose ΘΕΟΝ to have stood in Plato's original text, but in the sense of 'running' rather than 'god', we have to ask how the anacoluthon came about. There would be no serious problem if we were just dealing with the gender disparity between ψυχή and the neuter participle θέον, for agreement between a singular subject and participles is qutie flexible, especially, as Smyth says (1956: §1048), 'in statements of a general truth, where the subject refers to a whole class, not to an individual thing'. This is the case here. At 897b1–4 Plato is distinguishing the *class* of good souls from the class of bad ones. In the first case ψυχή designates a plurality of exemplary divine souls (hence θεοῖς) which guide things for the best; in the second case, a rabble of souls that have 'the complete opposite' effect (897b3–4). However, this does not explain why Plato would adopt the feminine for one participle qualifying 'soul', προσλαβοῦσα, but *not* this one.

The best I can offer, by way of an explanation, is that two of the common causes of anacoluthon identified by Smyth may have, as it were, joined forces at this point. One is 'the insertion of a brief expression of an additional thought not foreseen at the start' (1956: §3005). Plato's purpose at 897b is to distinguish good and bad kinds of soul by their association with *nous* and un-*nous* and their respective effects, and no doubt to avow the divinity of the good kind. ἀεὶ θέον might then be the additional thought, prompted by Plato's recollection of his θεός etymology in the *Cratylus*. Perhaps, after duly considering θέουσα, he found the neuter form 'more convenient', as Smyth puts it, because – and this is the second cause – it agrees with 'another way' that the subject 'may have been expressed' (§3008a). In the *Cratylus* passage, it is because the masculine θεοί have been specified as the variously gendered, collectively neuter, 'sun, moon, earth, stars, and sky', that we find the neuter plural participle θέοντα. If Plato recalls that passage here, he may well recall this nuance too, and so change θέοντα to agree with its new subject in number (as a class noun) but not gender. Thus, it can be argued, while the distinction between good and bad soul may have been intended formally at first, the additional thought makes explicit the specific exemplars of good soul which Plato doubtless had in mind in any case (the celestial gods), and brings its own grammar with it. Though an afterthought, θέον then organises the whole description of good soul around itself, binding νοῦν προσλαβοῦσα to itself adverbially ('eternally running *in league with nous*'), giving ὀρθῶς θεοῖς the sense that such

motion is proper to the gods (indeed is how they get their very name), and supplying the precise motion whereby soul 'guides' all things for the best.

This is, admittedly, highly speculative, and in view of the grammatical convolution involved it is no doubt safer to stick with ἀεὶ θέουσα. What I do insist on, however, is that a participle of θέω in some form be read, specifically after ἀεί, for the reason that it gives to a statement which is otherwise very awkward and obscure a clear philosophical sense and cosmological relevance which anticipates the argument to come, and which, as I will argue in the following section, has a strong resonance with 'everflowing being' at 966d–e.

An additional issue concerns the senses προσλαβοῦσα can have with the accusative νοῦν. 'Acquire', 'accept', and 'take as a helper' are all straightforward in this regard, whereas in LSJ's only example of 'co-operate with' the object is dative. However, we need not rush to invalidate any translation employing 'with', as if this automatically entailed a dative. λαβοῦσα itself is among the participles 'used where English employs *with*' (Smyth 1956: §2068a), and this can carry over into προσλαβοῦσα (with προσ- signifying 'in addition') when it takes a direct object. Thus Mayhew's 'joins with' is unproblematic, simply giving an active verbal sense to the notion of soul with *nous*. The same holds for *adverbial* construals such as Bury's 'in conjunction with' or my 'in league with'.[38] Moreover, νοῦν προσλαβοῦσα is opposed to ἀνοίᾳ συγγενομένη, and since the latter plainly means 'in company with un-*nous*', these construals form a clear and natural contrast to it. Admittedly ἀνοίᾳ *is* in the dative, but this may just be because the participle taking it is not one in which 'with' is already implicit.

Let us now return the statement to the long sentence it is part of. The Athenian argues first (896e9–10) that 'by its own motions soul drives [ἄγει] all things in the sky, on earth, and in the sea'. He then (897a1–4) supplies a list of these motions (κινήσεις; perhaps 'motive powers' is a better translation in context): willing (βούλεσθαι), monitoring (σκοπεῖσθαι), taking care of (ἐπιμελεῖσθαι), deliberating (βουλεύεσθαι), supposing, correctly or falsely (δοξάζειν ὀρθῶς ἐψευσμένως), joy and distress (χαίρουσαν λυπουμένην), confidence and fear (θαρροῦσαν φοβουμένην), hatred and loving regard (μισοῦσαν στέργουσαν). These and other such 'primary motions' are then said (a4–b1) to take upon themselves the secondary (material) ones and in this way to drive all bodies to increase and decrease, separate and combine, and thereby to generate heat and cold, heaviness and lightness, and other qualities. It is then said (b1–4) that soul 'uses' all of these motions μέν …, δέ …: 'both when, eternally running in league with *nous* as is proper to the gods, it guides all things correctly and happily, and when, in company with un-*nous*, it brings about the complete opposite of this'. The μέν and δέ clauses correspond to the good and bad souls distinguished at 896e5–7.[39] The motive powers of soul impact on matter *whether* soul acts with intelligence or unintelligence. It is specifically in the former case, I take it, when soul gives 'the whole heaven and all it contains' a motion that is 'akin to the motion and rotation and reasonings of *nous*' (νοῦ κινήσει καὶ περιφορᾷ καὶ λογισμοῖς ὁμοίαν: 897c5–6) that its 'driving' of bodies has the character of 'bringing about everflowing being'.

3 Everflowing being and the eternal running of divine soul

Among everything in Book X that is recapitulated in the two points in Book XII, 897b1–3 has pride of place, for it is the one passage that speaks to the relationship between 'good soul' and '*nous*' understood as distinct *agencies*. The emphasis throughout the cosmological argument of Book X is on the agency of soul. It is not explicitly argued that *nous* itself, as a divinity distinct from the divine souls, is the orderer of the cosmos and the controller of the celestial motions, as is stated at 966e. Rather, the motion of *nous* is brought in to vindicate the view that the cosmos is ordered and controlled by the kind of soul that is 'intelligent and full of virtue' (897b8–9). Only at 897b1–3 is *nous* spoken of in a way that suggests it is not *just* the intelligence of the divine souls, but an intelligence with which they are allied and whose work they do.

Were it not for this passage we might get the impression that *nous* is *soul's* 'instrument', not the reverse as held by Menn (1995: 18). That soul is generated before physical things obviously implies a cause prior to *it*, which can only be *nous*; in the *Timaeus* soul is created by the demiurge. Conversely, Menn is somewhat evasive of the tension, or at least the shift in emphasis, between Books X and XII, when he says (1995: 37) that in the *Laws* 'Plato continues to regard *nous* as the proper cause of *order*' but is now 'willing to say that soul is the primary cause of *motion*'. Book X, and the first point at 966d–e, make intelligent soul responsible for *both*. A similar point can be made of Verlinsky, who endorses Menn's approach to *nous* in Plato and holds that, as in the *Timaeus*, it is *nous* that *creates* cosmic order while cosmic *rule* passes to soul (2009: 248 note 76), despite the fact that both ordering and controlling are ascribed to *nous* at 966e, and, at the same time, both creating order and ruling are ascribed to soul.

In spite of this, on the strength of 897b1–3, as well as a passage later in Book X to which I will come shortly, I am inclined to agree with their stance and to see the tensions just mentioned as *largely* a reflection of Plato's avoidance of 'controversies about the status of particular divine principles' in pitching the theology of the *Laws* at a more 'general and popular' level (Menn 1995: 36).[40] Their stance is more subtle than my above remarks may have implied. On Menn's reading the essential point is that *nous* does not govern the cosmos by directly impinging on matter, as Anaxagoras had made out, but 'by influencing the way soul acts to move itself and other things' (42). Likewise Verlinsky takes 897b1–3 to yield the sense that *nous* 'rules in the universe only as far as the soul follows it'. I think this is right. Since I do not read θεόν at 897b2, I don't agree with Verlinsky that *nous* is 'called' god here, but I agree that it *denotes* the highest god with whom the divine souls are in partnership. Although the parties to it are given different names, this relationship corresponds quite precisely to the one at 903b between the 'caretaker of the cosmos', who 'set all things in order for the sake of the preservation and excellence of the whole,' and the 'ruling powers' to whom he delegated control of its parts.[41]

But these are preliminaries to the main point I wish to make here. There is an additional reason to see 897b1–3 as the focal point of the recapitulations in Book

XII. If my reading of this passage is right, the eternal circular 'running' of soul whereby it 'guides all things correctly and happily' is clearly linked to the 'everflowing being' said to be brought about by soul at 966d–e, which as we have seen also entails circular motion in conformity with *nous*. The task now is to try to determine more closely the connection between these two statements.

There are two key points. First, it is the celestial *souls* that run in circular fashion at 897b. If 'everflowing being' harks back to this, flow is first a motion these souls *have* and bring about *in themselves*, a *self*-motion which they then impart to the bodies they are generally (but not always) viewed in the *Laws* as inhabiting. As we saw in section 2, shortly before 897b1–3 Plato lists the motive powers of soul whereby it 'drives' all living things from within,[42] be they in the sky, on earth, or in the sea (896e–897a). The list in part goes back to *Republic* 353d (cf. Cherniss 1944: 434), which refers to ἐπιμελεῖσθαι and βουλεύεσθαι alongside ἄρχειν, 'ruling', as essential functions of soul. But otherwise it looks like a selective synopsis of *Cratylus* 419c–420c, where soul's motions are generally grasped in terms of *flow*. Of those listed at *Laws* 897a, only joy (χαίρουσαν) *directly* follows this pattern, being grasped as an easy and releasing 'flow of the soul' (419c). But we can easily imagine Plato similarly seeing ῥοή in confidence (θαρ-ροῦσαν), which is untreated in the *Cratylus*. Among the others, willing (βούλεσθαι), deliberating (βουλεύεσθαι), and supposing (δοξάζειν) are viewed at 420b–c in terms of an aiming or shooting (βολή) at things. Such shooting is also expressed by ἱέμενος, which at 420a is offered along with ῥοή as the etymology of ἵμερος, longing. That is, longing is a specifically 'rushing' or 'shooting' kind of 'flow'. Thus, when Plato at 897b moves from soul in general to the divine kind of soul, glossing its motion as eternal running, there is some reason to think that he is inwardly conceiving this as an eternal *flow* of soul.

Secondly, however, 'everflowing being' has a broader reference than 'running in league with *nous*'. The latter refers specifically to the orbital motion of the celestial gods. The former, as cosmic flow, must embrace both this and the cosmic rotation, since according to Book X (898c–d) both are brought about by soul. This presents us with a problem, if the above point holds that flow is first a motion of soul which is then imparted to bodies from within. In the case of the cosmic rotation, it seems the only way this can stick is if Plato posits a singular *world*-soul along with the plurality of celestial souls, as in previous late dialogues. In the *Timaeus* it is because the soul that is stretched throughout and around the cosmic body (34b) has *nous* (30b) and thus the revolving motion of *nous* (36e, 37a) that the body keeps rotating without changing location. In the case of the celestial gods, the *Timaeus* gives them too an axial rotation *as* they orbit (40a–b), and regards this as their *self*-motion. Their orbital motion is not strictly theirs; in this respect they 'follow' and are 'ruled' by the revolving of whichever of the world-soul's circles the demiurge 'set' them into (the Same, for the fixed stars, the Different for the sun, moon, and planets). The problem is that we cannot *straightforwardly* transfer any of this to the *Laws*. Here Plato goes out of his way to avoid referring to a world-soul. Outside a very indirect allusion at 821b–822b, he makes no attempt to deal with the axis of the ecliptic, which in the *Timaeus* was the (cosmological) motive for the world-soul's division into two circles.

And he never gets around to saying that the celestial bodies rotate axially, although it is implicit in the claim that good soul is intelligent that the celestial *souls* do.

At the same time, it is important to set what remains essentially unchanged in relief against these differences. Two points in particular should be stressed. Firstly, when the stars are said at *Timaeus* 40a to 'follow' (ξυνεπόμενον) the intelligence that rules the cosmos (the world-soul's circle of the Same), this does not just mean that their orbits *mechanically* obey the cosmic rotation. The Greek ξυνέπομαι, like our 'follow', has a sense of 'understand' or 'follow with the mind'. Since Plato grasps axial rotation, the motion of *nous*, as 'forever thinking the same thoughts about the same things', he gives the stars *this* motion as well as their orbital one so that they are *of one mind* with the world-soul. The second point is that this unanimity matters *ethically* as well as cosmologically. The celestial gods are charged with the *guidance* of mortal creatures (42e), which consists in helping us make the circle of the same in our own souls the ruling principle (cf. 47b–c), that is, helping us live intelligently, not at the mercy of what the *Timaeus* (43a) calls the 'mighty river' of bodily processes such as nourishment and sensation, or indeed psychical ones like desire.

For all the difficulties involved in inferring from the *Timaeus* to *Laws* X, this much at least has a close analogue at 897b1–3, barring the reference to the world-soul. Firstly, although it is orbital motion that is denoted by 'running', and although axial rotation is not expressly attributed to celestial bodies in the *Laws*, it must be the fact that the celestial *souls* have the latter motion *as well* that makes their running an actively willed *partnership* with *nous*, not just a blind conformity. Secondly, here too it falls to these souls to 'guide' (παιδαγωγεῖ) all things in an ethical rather than solely physical sense,[43] and it takes essentially the same form. In itself the motion of *nous* is invisible. Strictly speaking we can only know it by thinking the same about the same ourselves. Similarly we cannot actually *see* the cosmos itself rotating. But if it does, as Plato supposes it must, the visible movements of the stars enable us to *envision* this, to infer, as it were, from the dots to the invisible wheel those dots 'adorn' (cf. *Timaeus* 40b). By making the motion of *nous* visible for us, the stars provide a model for how to conduct our lives correctly and to our own ultimate happiness as parts of the cosmic whole. Thus their co-operation with *nous* seems to be a two-way process. As they operate or run with the help of *nous*, so *nous* enlists their services to make itself known to us. The difference, to repeat, is that the intelligence they follow is not the world-soul's, but *nous* itself *qua* supreme god. Nor is the world-soul among the souls that follow and run in league with *nous* at *Laws* 897b.[44] The middle man in this tripartite scheme has (for better or worse) been removed.

So where does this leave us? In the absence of the world-soul two questions in particular are left without any clear answer in the *Laws* cosmology. First, even assuming that the celestial souls have a rotational motion which they impart to the celestial bodies, it remains unclear how, by means of their rotation, they impart to those bodies their *orbital* motion, given that the world-soul's circles are no longer invoked in this regard. Second, it is not clear how the axial rotation of an indefinite number of souls housed within the celestial bodies can be collectively responsible for the rotation of the whole cosmos.

These problems would essentially disappear if only the *Laws* did maintain the world-soul thesis, as some hold it does. Had conclusive evidence for this been given I would gladly accept it, as it would make my task in this chapter a great deal easier. But it has not, and there is too much that speaks against it. I will go into this point in detail in Chapter 5. It is much more central to my concerns there than it is here to show that Plato's affirmation of 'everflowing being' suppresses the other aspect of flow that I referred to in the Introduction, the errant side that cannot be associated with the motion of *nous*, and I will argue that this is intimately connected with the noiseless jettisoning of the world-soul. For this to become clear the *Laws* will need to be set in the context of the series of modifications in late Plato's cosmotheological scheme leading up to it. In this first chapter my basic purpose is simply to call attention to the affirmation and clarify exactly what it is that it affirms. Doing so has brought us to some obscurities that remain in the *Laws* cosmology, and I apologise for the fact that these will be left hanging until Chapter 5. Counterweighing that, since we will have traversed the thought of flow in Plato through to his final work by then, it will be easier in Chapter 5 to illuminate in a concrete way how these problems are related to the one-sidedness of the affirmation of 'everflowing being'.

4 Looking backwards

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, one of my reasons for starting with the *Laws* is the retrospective light that this affirmation may cast on his earlier thinking. I close with some observations on this theme.

Let us imagine for a moment that the problems just mentioned *did* disappear. Then the *Laws* would maintain the cosmological notion of 'everflowing being' in what I would call its ideal, its clearest and most systematic, form. There would be no obscurity about, or divergence in, how the psychical and physical aspects of everflowing being fit together in the respective cases of the cosmos and the celestial bodies. Both would be ensouled beings, spherical in shape. In each case the rotational self-motion of the indwelling soul would be conveyed to the body, and the orbital motion of the celestial bodies imparted by the circles of the world-soul. But if that is so, does not the *Timaeus* give us this ideal form? Can we not regard the phrase 'everflowing being', understood as a basic description of a teleologically ordered cosmos, as applying retrospectively to the *Timaeus* cosmology? Above all, can it not be argued, firstly, that the world-soul *has* everflowing being in its constant circling back on itself (37a), its axial rotation? And secondly, although the world-soul does not 'bring about' the same in the cosmic body in the *Timaeus* (the cosmic rotation is established by the demiurge and then placed in its care), can it not be said to *maintain* everflowing being at the physical level through its own circular motion?

I must put this in the form of a question, because in the *Timaeus* the cosmic and celestial motions, be they physical or psychical, are never identified with 'flow'. In fact ῥοή/ῥέω sees virtually no cosmological service here. In contrast, it is central in Timaeus' accounts of human physiology and the mechanics of perception. In both

accounts flow is only addressed at a physical level, and in the former at least it has a partly fluxist sense. Our bodily flow is not only contraposed to our soul's 'circles', but is said to mangle them (43a–d). Since the *Timaeus* treats the human being, body and soul, as a microcosm, it seems that at the cosmic level flow could at most relate to the bodily aspect. Taking 'everflowing being' to apply retrospectively to the world-soul would therefore seem unwarranted. I will elaborate on all these points and propose a way through the difficulty in Chapter 4. Here I simply signal the problem that confronts us. Why is it that Plato is not free in the *Timaeus* to speak of the circular motions of cosmic and celestial soul especially, but also body, in terms of flow? And what is involved in the removal of this obstacle in the *Laws*?

Regarding the first issue, it is not that Plato has simply not yet entertained the idea of cosmic flow, for it is a key theme in the *Cratylus*. This is the other text which I think the retrospective light of *Laws* 966d–e may especially illuminate. Reading the *Cratylus* in this light will not only help to make more visible the non-fluxist valencies of ῥοή in the etymologies, but will enable us to see that already here, in however nascent and tentative a way, Plato is thinking flow in connection with *being* and with what he will later speak of as the motion of *nous*. Now I also want to argue that the retrospective implications of *Laws* 966d–e for the *Timaeus* cosmology are met by the *prospective* ones of the *Cratylus* etymologies. In the first instance, admittedly, the latter seem purely negative. That is, to return to our question, I take the disappearance of flow as a denomination of orderly, circular cosmic motion in the *Timaeus* to have essentially to do with the ambiguity of ῥοή in the *Cratylus*. However, that is not to say the *Timaeus* simply presupposes the strange reduction of flow to flux later in the *Cratylus*, and for *that* reason only deploys the term with regard to physical processes. If we look at the way Plato uses ῥοή and ῥέω in the later middle dialogues, it is very much the *flow* sense that predominates (see Chapter 3), and this largely continues in the *Timaeus*. Indeed, the *Timaeus* has much to say about elemental flux, and steers clear of denoting *it* by ῥοή. So it must be something else about the *Cratylus* that explains Plato's reticence. I will argue that it is the ambiguity *within* its operative notion of flow, flow's regular and wandering aspects or faces. In short, Plato does not explicitly mobilise 'flow' cosmologically in the *Timaeus* because it does not wholly belong on either side of the distinction between *nous* and necessity. *Implicitly*, I will propose, these two sides of flow are parsed into those very terms. The notion of flow structures the *Timaeus* cosmology while remaining in the background.

These are bold claims that I expect will be met with great skepticism in some quarters. I will endeavour in Chapter 4 to provide grounds for relinquishing that skepticism. Here I will just say this. The fact that flow is thought in connection with *nous* not only before the *Timaeus* but after it gives us reason to think that it *may* inform the *Timaeus* even as its role is not reflected terminologically. Additionally, the fact that in the *Laws* flow is affirmed *only* in connection with the motion of *nous*, i.e., one-sidedly, shorn of its negative face, itself gives an insight into what Plato will always have wished for. In other words, flow is not rehabilitated as a cosmological term until Plato is confident that it can be pressed wholly into the service of his teleology.

This brings us to the second question raised above. I am afraid to say that, as I see it, the removal of the obstacle to this cosmological rehabilitation of flow has more to do with the evasion of thorny philosophical problems than with their resolution. Whereas in the *Statesman* the world-soul is in effect made to own both aspects of cosmic flow, in the *Laws* they are hypostasised into two, good and bad, *classes* of soul. The former approach is an attempt to grapple with the problem of natural disorder, the latter an attempt to *quarantine* it. In short, the price of the affirmation of everflowing being here is an avoidance of the *problem* flow will always have been for Plato. But we are going to have to take the stairs, so to speak, to this result.

Notes

1 Mostly following Bury's translation (1926: vol. 2, 561).
2 Cf. 891c in Book X.
3 Bury's translation (1926: vol. 2, 563) seeks to fill out the grammatical shorthand by making the statement governed by ἄρχει in point 1, so that *nous* 'controls what exists among the stars'.
4 Especially given the idiom 'in the stars', not simply 'in the heavens'.
5 Pangle (1980: 508) claims there are significant differences between the two recapitulations, but this is exaggerated. I do not see that at 967d–e the Athenian 'conspicuously drops the claim that soul is divine' (it is called 'immortal'), or that there is a 'failure' to call *nous* itself divine and a 'certain reluctance to claim that it is in fact "in the stars"'.
6 Bury has 'when developed into becoming', which seems to speak to the demiurge's construction of soul into the cosmic body at *Timaeus* 30b.
7 For example, Hackforth 1936: 5–6; Vlastos 1965b: 414 note 1; Guthrie 1978: 366–367; Schöpsdau 2011: 596.
8 For example, England; Cherniss 1944: 429–431, note 365.
9 Saunders too contorts the text in keeping with this assumption, if in a somewhat different way: '[soul] is far older and far more divine than all those things whose movements have sprung up and provided the impulse that has plunged it into a perpetual stream of existence'. Note that while here Saunders follows England's 'comparative' reading, he rejects the ungenerated soul interpretation in his translation of Book X, where he (rightly) has soul as 'one of the first creations' at 892a and 892c.
10 This is reflected in Bury's translation, in which soul 'is the most ancient and divine of all the things whose motion, when developed into "becoming", provides an ever-flowing fount of "being"'. But 'fount' seems an unhelpful flourish.
11 As England (1921: vol. 2, 631) recognises, previous editors and translators (such as Schneider, Wagner, and Jowett), as well as Liddell and Scott, read 'everlasting'. England notes that among modern commentators a fluxist sense of ἀέναος was first proposed in Ast's 1814 *Laws* commentary. But why should the sense 'everflowing' be equated with flux here rather than 'everlasting', contrary to general usage? England seems hasty in identifying with Ast's fluxist reading the translations offered by Ficino (*semper fluentem*) and Susemihl (*immer fliessendes*).
12 Pangle (1980: 371) renders it in the passive, and makes soul the *recipient* of 'ever-flowing existence'. I am afraid I cannot make much sense of this. Menn (1995: 35) has '*supports* an everflowing existence'. This is plausible (LSJ list 'carry, bring' as the most basic sense of πόρίζω, with 'bring about' as sense II), but in conjunction with Menn's antecedent reading of παραλαβοῦσα it is used to make a claim that I do not think is faithful to the text: that before soul moves itself and other things it is 'the thing that is *moved first* (temporally or logically) when *nous* sets the world in order' (1995: 37). That is, soul

receives not only its birth but its motion from *nous* or the demiurge, and then 'transmits' its motion to the physical domain. Yet the first motion in the world, in the very passage that Menn cites to support his claim (895a), is the self-generated motion of soul. That said, I will complicate this tenet myself in a different way later.

13 The same holds *a fortiori* for Saunders' translation (see note 9).

14 Bury has 'becoming' here, presumably because he has qualms about the tension between this claim and the world-ordering role of *nous qua* supreme god, which in the *Timaeus* is intimately related to the formation of the cosmic body and of the stars as instruments of time. This is understandable. Nevertheless, in contrast to φθορά, γένεσις almost certainly means 'generation', unlike at 966d–e where it is set off against οὐσία.

15 Cf. Cherniss 1944: 485, where he takes 'everflowing' 'to designate material phenomena as contrasted with soul'.

16 Besides Bury's, my translation agrees with Schöpsdau's, perhaps with the exception of 'hinzunehmend' for παραλαβοῦσα: 'daß sie das älteste und göttlichste von allen Dingen ist, deren Bewegung, das Werden hinzunehmend, ein ewig strömendes Sein hervorgebracht hat' (2011: 157). Compare also Mayhew's (2010: 211), although I think 'being', not just 'existence', is warranted here for οὐσία.

17 Schöpsdau (2011: 596) says that *kinesis* in the passage comprises both the active self-motion of soul and the passive motions of bodies. The latter can indeed have effects on other bodies, but the question is under what conditions they can have the good effect denoted by 'everflowing being'.

18 And, conversely, to some extent, even to see motion in Forms. As I noted earlier (see Introduction, section 4), I do not think the point of the *Sophist* passage is to extend motion (and with it life, soul, and intelligence) to Forms generally. But there are places where motion of some kind seems implicitly ascribed to specific Forms, such as the Form of Beauty in the *Phaedrus* (see Chapter 3). Another possibility is *nous* itself. If Menn (1995: ch. 3) is right that *nous* in Plato denotes a *virtue* in which ensouled things can partake, then it must like the other virtues be deemed a Form. But *nous* is characterised essentially by a certain kind of motion. It must also be stressed that, as a divine *agent, nous* is not simply a Form in the sense of an objective paradigm (cf. Menn, ch. 7). If *nous qua* Form and *qua* God are the same entity, we would need to distinguish *nous* as a subject-Form (= the demiurge) from the object-Forms the demiurge 'looks to' in his cosmogonical activity, such as Living Thing at *Timaeus* 30c–d, and the Best, i.e., the Good, at 46c–d, 68e. But we would also need to ask why Plato never got to the point of explicitly making this seemingly crucial distinction.

19 I must disagree with Schöpsdau's view that ἀέναον οὐσία denotes 'the pulsating existence of all that has come to be' (2011: 596). That seems to imply that what Plato has in mind is something like the life-blood of living creatures generally, but it is the cosmic and celestial motions that provide the context for understanding the phrase.

20 With one small change, the comma after θεοῖς.

21 Probably by later hands, as England says (1921: vol. 2, 476).

22 See Post 1934: 28–29. Post comments that he knows of 'no mention of this manuscript' since Priestly's 1826 edition of Bekker's Plato. The Oxford manuscript's important marginal variant at 897b2 goes unmentioned not only in Burnet, England, and Bury's notes *ad loc*, but, as far as I am aware, in any edition, translation, or commentary on the *Laws* since Post's discovery.

23 As cited by Burnet, England, Bury, and Hermann (1877: xx, 330), who adopts Winckelmann's text, as does Cherniss (1944: 607). See also Müller (1968: 88 note 1). Unfortunately none of these indicate the source. It is not the *Laws* volume (14) of *Platonis Opera Omnia*, which has θεὸν θεὸς οὖσα! (Baiter et al, 1841: 328).

24 Pangle's translation of the whole statement reads: 'every time [soul] takes as a helper Intelligence – god, in the correct sense, for the gods – it guides all things towards what is correct and happy'. Mayhew's mostly follows this, excepting the different rendering of προσλαβοῦσα, where he sides with Diès. 'God correctly for the gods' is his version of the 'not completely intelligible' text between the dashes.

25 Schöpsdau's translation, which mostly follows Steiner's (1992: 162): 'die Seele, wenn sie die Vernunft hinzunimmt, die ein Gott mit Recht für Götter ist, denn immer alles zum Rechten und zum Glück hinleitet'.
26 That is, happily for them, but also for the whole of which they are parts. Compare the claim at 903c–d that we exist for the sake of the whole, and should regard whatever befalls us as what is best both for the whole and for the part that we are. See also *Phaedo* 97c, where what especially attracts Socrates to the doctrine that *nous* rules the world is the implicit idea that *nous* orders things in whatever way is best both for them and for the whole.
27 Dönt says this formulation is 'rare' later on in the *Laws*, which suggests at least one later example. I have no idea which passage he might have in mind, nor do I know of any comparable formulation in Plato's other works.
28 In other words, the demiurge just *is nous*, while ensouled things can *have nous* to a greater or lesser degree (Hackforth 1936: 7; Menn 1995: 18 and ch. 4).
29 Mayhew leaves open whether the 'greatest god' (821a) of the *Laws* is the ensouled cosmos or its creator (2010: 202), saying only that Plato does not clarify its relation either to the demiurge or the world-soul of the *Timaeus* (214). Mayhew does endorse Menn's account of Plato's late-period theology generally (214 note 30), but adds that where the *Laws* specifically is concerned it remains speculative. I will argue that we can go a step further on my construal of the passage.
30 'Toutes les fois qu'elle s'adjoint l'Intellect divin, est ell-même vraiment divine et guide toutes choses à leur propre rectitude et félicité'.
31 England too seems to lean towards this sense in construing the passage to say that good soul acts 'under the (divine) guidance of *nous*' (1921: vol. 2, 27).
32 Recall too the use of ἀεί in connection with θέω (and ῥέω) in the discussion of aether, the upper or celestial air, at *Cratylus* 410b.
33 It is justified to speak of protases and apodoses here since, in context, the statement is the first part of a kind of double conditional: 'both when …, …, and when …, …' (or alternatively 'whether …, …, or whether …, …'). See the last paragraph of this section.
34 Bear in mind that, unlike Plato's uncial Greek, all the surviving manuscripts are in minuscule text with accents, breathings, etc., supplied. I will come back to this.
35 To be sure, these would be *spinning* dots, if as in the *Timaeus* the celestial souls have their own axial rotation as well as the orbital one. I will address this in section 3.
36 This is not to say that 'running' inherently denotes circularity, although the Greek word often does (for example, the rim that 'runs' around Hector's shield (*Iliad* 6.118), or the just and unjust men who at *Republic* 613b 'run' a lap race, with the former overtaking the latter on the home straight). There are places in the *Laws* where the term has more errant connotations. At 905a, if we are to read a participial θέων rather than θεῶν, it must have the sense of an errant human soul vainly trying to run *away* from the eschatological law of the gods. For discussion of this textual issue see Mayhew (2008: 219). At 691c neglect of the rule of proportion is said to run (θεῖ) to illness in the body and injustice in the soul. But Plato certainly deems running *in league with nous* to be circular (orbital) and orderly. He would not frown on us inferring that a human soul that does not neglect the rule of proportion continues running in circular fashion, since in the *Timaeus* all soul is made up of the two circles of the Same and the Different, and the 'stuff' of soul just is a system of numbers and proportions.
37 I only mention A here because from Book VI on manuscript O is directly copied from A (Post 1934: 5).
38 Also Karfik's 'mit begleitet werden' (2004: 237). However, Karfik does not seem to allow this the sense that the *nous* with which soul is accompanied is an independent being, for on his view in the *Laws* the world-soul and *nous* become hard to distinguish (243–244).
39 Besides the fact that πάντα αὖ τἀναντία τούτοις ἀπεργάζεται deliberately echoes the prior description of bad soul (τῆς τἀναντία δυναμένης ἐξεργάζεσθαι), there is simply no other sense that the *men … de* contrast can have if that distinction holds. Schöpsdau holds that it is 'one and the same soul which does good or otherwise according to

whether it accepts Reason or Unreason' (2011: 417). I will argue against this when I return to the *Laws* in Chapter 5.

40 Menn denies that there is 'confusion' on Plato's part here. I agree if this means incoherence, but it may fairly be said that the exoteric nature of the *Laws* theology is not the only reason for Plato's slipperiness on this and other 'controversies'. Mayhew (2010: 215) comments: 'But I think a likely additional (though related) source of vagueness [in the theology of *Laws* X] is that not only is theology difficult to convey to or discuss with citizens generally, it is an extremely difficult topic in its own right – even for philosophers.' He adds (216) that a number of issues at the heart of Plato's theology remain unresolved for Plato himself in his last work. I agree entirely. I will go into this point in more detail in Chapter 5.

41 Taking care of things is what all gods do (900d), but an active sense of ἐπιμελέομαι can be distinguished from a less 'hands on' sense of supervision or oversight, and that the latter is *the* caretaker's role post-creation is suggested further by οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἔργον at 903d.

42 At this point in the argument 'from within' is justified, since this passage is still speaking from the viewpoint expressed at 896d10–e1 that soul controls all bodies by dwelling in them (ἐνοικοῦσαν). Later (898e–899a) the Athenian will equivocate on this point. See Chapter 5 for further discussion.

43 As Schöpsdau points out (2011: 419), more is meant by παιδαγωγεῖ at 897b than soul's 'driving' (ἄγει) of things at 896e.

44 In contrast, say, to *Statesman* 273b. Here the world-soul would 'follow' *nous* as such when it 'recalls the teachings of the demiurge'.

2

THE PURSUIT OF FLOW VIA ETYMOLOGY IN THE *CRATYLUS*

Having addressed the cosmological place of 'flow' in Plato's last work, I turn to what, in a way, may be termed the beginning. Of course Plato wrote many dialogues before the *Cratylus*, but this is the first of the 'middle' ones. Here we see the *announcement* of Plato's metaphysical standpoint (which receives its first *elaboration* in his next dialogue, the *Phaedo*). But before it announces the doctrine of Forms the *Cratylus* pursues another line of thought which, although rejected as incompatible with that doctrine, will not go away so easily. In this regard, i.e., the thought of flow, the dialogue has an added significance. It is a wellspring on which Plato will often draw in later works, to retrieve what his Forms-based metaphysics tends to occlude.

The *Cratylus* is quite a labyrinth, and the space devoted to it in this chapter (long as it is!) is by no means enough to cover all of its intricacies. My focus is the middle, etymological section of the dialogue (for ease of reference I refer to the three sections as *Cratylus* 1, 2, and 3). I want to let the etymologies speak for themselves, for I believe their true importance has been missed precisely because this section has been interpreted too much in the light of the sections which enframe it, especially *Cratylus* 3. We must of course address the passages in *Cratylus* 2 that set down its methodology, as well as the various *asides* that pepper the etymological analysis, especially those that concern the flux doctrine. But if we look closely the latter are at odds with the analysis itself. Inasmuch as they assume the reduction of flow to flux, they speak more from the standpoint of *Cratylus* 3 than from the perspective actually in play in the etymologies.[1] It is crucial that we free up this perspective from its entanglement with the caricature of universal and radical flux.

1 The status of the etymologies

Etymology, as Plato practises it in the *Cratylus*, presupposes that names are not merely conventional, but designed to make manifest the *nature* of what they name. Though he will admit that convention plays a part, Plato is willing to extend this

naturalist conception of names much further than we generally would today. We can happily go along with it in cases of onomatapoeia (for example, gurgle), or compound words such as egg-whisk or suitcase, or, in many cases, words that share the same root, such as circum-spect or in-spect. But we are typically not inclined to think that even such roots (not to mention the letters they comprise) *naturally* signify something. We allow that it was simply by convention that 'spect' (from Latin *specere*) came to designate looking, seeing, or watching, or that the letters b, l, u, and e came to designate the colour blue. The signifier, as the modern linguist says, is unmotivated.

Although the etymological analysis is undertaken to support naturalism, there is an important question as to whether this applies *de facto* or *de jure*. Is it that names *do* reveal the nature of things, or that they *should*? At the *de facto* level, Greek words are found to reflect quite consistently a view that 'what is' means what flows or moves,[2] and that *good* things have a flowing motion, bad things an impeding or impeded one. Plato is famous for upholding, and will assert at the end of this dialogue, the contrary view that whatever truly 'is' is eternally stable and changeless. What, then, is the status of the etymologies based on the principle of flow? Does Plato have any commitment to them?

Opinion is divided here. To many modern scholars – but, as Sedley (2003: 39–40) points out, no ancient ones – the etymologies are offered in jest, with the aim of parodying the very etymological enterprise.[3] Some of them are undeniably ludicrous. Others are at best implausible, and come with comments indicating Socratic and/or authorial distance. Socrates intermittently sends up not only those who subscribe to the flow principle but himself for getting carried away by the flow of his etymological inspirations. Conversely, many of the etymologies are both plausible in themselves and carry no ironic overtones. We have reason to believe that many are endorsed or at least seriously entertained by Plato, for he adopts or adapts a number of them in later works without any hint of irony,[4] such as those for φρόνησις (at *Timaeus* 40a–b) and θεός (at *Laws* 897b). In these cases he clearly *shares* the view that good things (here the celestial gods) have an exemplary fluency of motion. The thesis that the very names of things presuppose this notion is a brilliantly imaginative one, and it is hard to believe that Plato does not have *something* invested in it.[5]

Two questions should of course be distinguished: (1) does Plato believe in flow *qua* ontological principle? (2) does he believe the namegivers did? Answering no to (1) and yes to (2), as in fact Socrates will at 439c, seems the *simplest* way of getting a handle on the serpentine course of the *Cratylus*. We can then say that Plato is (largely) committed to the etymologies *descriptively* but not *prescriptively*,[6] or that etymology turns out to be doxography, to lay bare *opinions* about things, not truth (Ademollo 2011: 199–201).[7] Names as they are do presuppose the principle of flow, but what they *should* presuppose, if they are to fulfil the naturalist project, is *Forms*. Forms alone can provide the ontological foundation for naming, for to name something is to confer a stable identity on it, and how are names to reveal the natures of things if they are stable while the things themselves are in flux? This view tallies with the stance adopted in *Cratylus* 3, and with certain remarks in *Cratylus* 2, but it seriously oversimplifies what occurs in the etymological inquiry. Sedley adds an

important nuance when he says that Plato generally regards the etymologies as correct exegetically but *not necessarily* philosophically (2003: 28). That is, they do not lie *wholly* on the 'descriptive' or 'doxographical' side. Rather, the namegivers were philosophically on the right track in some ways but not others. For Sedley the division is marked by the transition from the cosmic etymologies to the ethical ones (108). In the former context Socrates speaks 'as if he is *assuming* that the decoded messages are true ones' (92).

Sedley's approach has not won universal assent, particularly among those who take the parodist view. According to Trivigno (2012: 43), Plato cannot coherently do what Sedley has him doing in *Cratylus* 2 *and*, at the end of the dialogue, uphold his own principle against the flux doctrine. Since that doctrine is pilloried in both places, and the namegivers are found to presuppose it in *both* cosmological and ethical contexts, how can Plato see them as philosophically on the right track anywhere? The key problem with this objection is that it assumes flux exhausts what is at issue here. To be sure, this assumption is abetted by Plato's own failure to distinguish clearly between flux and flow. But it is hard to see how Plato could have flux in mind when discussing the motion of the heavenly bodies, for example, or when he draws on the important but neglected theme of 'going with the flow'. How do you go with a flux?

Sedley's case would be stronger if informed by this distinction. That Plato finds philosophical common ground with the namegivers is much clearer once we see that the cosmic etymologies have essentially to do with *flow*. As Sedley says, the accord centres on the 'transmission of intelligence into the world order' (2003: 92). Plato may not yet have arrived at the precise conception of the motion of *nous* that we find in the late period, but the connection between *nous* and circular motion broadly conceived is not only present in *Cratylus* 2 but crucial to it. This motion, as we have seen, can be thought as flow but certainly not as flux. Yet Sedley too only sees flux in the *Cratylus*.[8] 'Flow' gets a handful of mentions, but it is just another way of saying 'flux'. Sedley not only tends to run them together, but expressly (and wrongly) refers to flow as 'an essentially unstructured or chaotic form of motion' (106) over against the 'running' of the celestial bodies and aether. I should add that Sedley sees Plato as operating with a very broad notion of cosmic flux, comprising both of these forms and the ordered changes of the life-cycle. If Plato is cramming all of this into one category, he is making a mistake, one with the philosophical consequence of generating a counterconcept of being which he will later realise is far too narrow. But we needn't see the whole of the *Cratylus* as making this mistake. The etymologies operate with a notion of flow which is distinct from flux, in association with a notion of being which in fact is closer to Plato's later one than that of *Cratylus* 3.

Finally, I do not think the turn to the virtues constitutes the sharp divide that Sedley says it is. I will argue that *part* of Plato wants to agree with the namegivers in this context as well. Besides, this is not simply a turn *away* from the cosmological *topos*, but in important respects a continuation of it. Plato is seeking the virtues not just in us but in the cosmos, and pursuing the inquiry into cosmic flow by way of the various ways in which we might be said to 'go with' it. If the field of common ground can be expanded in this way, then as a general rule we have all the more

reason to assume the etymologies are intended seriously, and not just at a descriptive level. There are exceptions, and with these Plato no doubt means to make a point about the limits of etymology. But we should not distend this point by willing away the difference between the rule and the exceptions.

2 The structure of the etymological discussion

Without a map of the long and intricate etymological inquiry we are liable to get submerged in all the detail and lose its drift. I begin with a break-down which broadly follows Ademollo's (2011: 189).[9] The square brackets indicate the major 'asides'. The fancy ones are used for a theme which is both substantively and structurally crucial to the whole inquiry, but is only discussed, not etymologised, at this place. I explain the underlined terms below.

1 Prologue: genealogy of the Atreidae. Orestes – Agamemnon – Atreus – Pelops – Tantalus – Zeus – Cronus – Uranus (394e–396c)

   [discussion of methodology: human proper names ruled out] (396d–397c)

2 Names of certain classes of beings. Gods – spirits – heroes – humans – soul {*nous*} – body (397c–400c)

   [methodology again: a second kind of correctness] (400d–401a)

3 Mythic gods. From Hestia to Pan (400d–408d)

   [discussion of universal flux doctrine, introduced via Hestia and continued via Rhea, Cronus, Ocean, Tethys] (401c–402d)

4 Natural gods. The celestial bodies (408d–409c) – the elements (409c–410c) – seasons and year (410c–e)

   [dismissal of universal flux as ontological delusion] (411b–c)

5 Names concerning virtue. Virtues and values (411c–416d) – the advantageous and the harmful (416e–419b) – the passions (419b–420b) – mental acts or states (420b–c) – the voluntary and the necessary (420d–e)

6 The greatest names: logic and ontology (421a–c).

This is what we might call, after David Bohm, the 'explicate order' of the discussion. Nested within it is an 'implicate' one which is crucial, I think, for understanding the direction and goal of the investigation.[10] Let me first provide some background.

As is often pointed out, the overall sequence scans like an abbreviated resume of Greek thought from Homer and Hesiod, through the *phusikoi*, tragedians, and Sophists, to Socrates and Plato.[11] An important but often neglected aspect of this history is the *allegorisation* of the gods as non-anthropomorphic forces or principles of the cosmos, even in Zeus' case the cosmos itself. The allegorisation of Zeus, though it takes various forms, is prevalent and sustained enough to warrant being

called a countertradition, embracing at the least Pherecydes, Heraclitus, certain strains of Orphism, the Pythagoreans, Empedocles, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Plato himself in *some* dialogues (*Cratylus, Statesman, Philebus*), Xenocrates, and later on the Stoics and Neo-Platonists. This is not just a development *away* from Homer and Hesiod in a new direction. It seeks to excavate under their (derivative) Zeus to an *original* one, in some cases prompted (*inter alia*) by *linguistic* clues.

At the end of the 'prologue', Socrates says he is unable to trace Hesiod's genealogy beyond Uranus, since he has forgotten the latter's 'still higher' ancestors (396c). There is an obvious dig at Hesiod here. As Socrates well knows, the next god back is Earth, which is not higher than 'Sky'. In effect Hesiod is being castigated for not knowing when to stop (and of course for not grasping that the highest is the *first*). But there is also a feint of another kind. Plato is not aborting Hesiod's regress but continuing it in a different way: not by skipping from one god to another, but by tracing 'Zeus' (and the mythic gods in general) back to Zeus proper: in short, cosmic *nous*. This thread is pursued virtually throughout *Cratylus* 2. To bring this out I propose three interventions in the 'explicate' structure. The first hinges on the underlined terms in parts 1–4.

1. Embedded within the sequence in parts 1–2, and again in parts 3–4, we can discern the same three-stage regress. In what I will call the first traversal, we have: (1) the traditional Zeus (and forebears); (2) the first gods known to mankind, the celestial bodies, and (3) the cosmic intelligence of Anaxagoras and other *phusikoi*. The second traversal starts with the other gods of myth, then addresses individually the natural *theoi*, which now include, besides the celestial bodies, the elements, the seasons, and the year. All readers of the *Cratylus* will recognise the repetition of stages (1) and (2). But the crucial thing is that of stage (3). The year corresponds to *nous* in the first traversal. What it amounts to is a temporal designation of the *cosmic* Zeus that Plato already seems to envisage in the *Cratylus*.
2. As the cosmological thematic is not left behind when the discussion turns to the virtues, nor is the cosmic Zeus/*nous*. This becomes clear in the discussion of justice, which, however, is aporetic and does not *attain* the projected destination of the regress.
3. This failure is implicit at the end of the etymological inquiry, inasmuch as 'divine wandering' has a cosmological reference. Here, however, the failure is more than a 'not yet'. The project implicitly driving the etymological investigation has broken down, for reasons which are not obvious and will need to be examined closely.

It is worth enlarging a little on the bearing of point 3. Ademollo (2011: 187) rejects Sedley's view that the final etymologies relating to logic and ontology belong within the 'ethical' group (part 5), and in terms of the 'explicate' structure I agree. Yet while I would not go so far as to say that logic and metaphysics constitute a 'subdivision' of ethics (Sedley 2003: 157), I have sympathy with the view that Plato's ethical concerns are not regional but in a way extend over the whole of his thought. It is just that cosmology provides a better theatre for this 'umbrella'

ethics than the Forms (i.e., logic and metaphysics) really can. From this point of view, it may be suggested that, in terms of the 'implicate' structure, the final etymologies do in a way belong in the ethical group, but only because the ethical etymologies themselves still belong in a certain way to the cosmic ones.

A last point is that it is noteworthy how the appearance of ῥοή (etc.) maps onto the structure of the investigation. ῥοή sees no etymological service at all in the first traversal. It does its first etymological duty at the start of the second, but even in the second traversal its appearances are few and far between. It is not until part 5 that the etymologies are predominantly organised around it. What should we conclude from this? Is it only in the human context, when as Sallis (1996: 240) puts it the investigation falls from heaven to earth, that ῥοή has a decisive role? No. As we will see, Plato envisages just that cosmic sense of flow in connection with the motion of *nous* which he will later aver in the *Laws*. The difference is that he is unable yet to *establish* what he envisages. By the end of this chapter we will be in a better position to understand why.

3 Cosmic flow: The divine/cosmic etymologies

There is an awful lot to chew on here, and we are unlikely to digest it well if we follow the two traversals point by point and, as it were, return for a second entrée after dessert. In section 3a, to bring the overall movement into relief, I focus on Zeus' appearances in the two traversals and beyond. In 3b I address stage 2 in each traversal, and in 3c the gulf between 'flow' in these passages and 'flux' in the 'asides'. 3d highlights some important themes and complications in stage 1 of the second traversal.

3a. Zeus in the Cratylus

I disregard the Atreidae as so many stepping stones to what Plato really wants to talk about, and start with the account of Zeus' name at 395e–396b. Or rather with his two names, Ζεύς (genitive Διός, dative Διί, accusative Δία), and Ζήν (Ζηνός, Ζηνί, Ζῆνα), which Socrates traces to διά, 'through', and ζῆν, 'to live' (or 'life'). When both are brought together into a kind of sentence, Socrates says, without any apparent irony, they do what a good name should: 'make manifest the nature of the god' (δηλοῖ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ θεοῦ). It is the nature of Zeus, as 'the ruler and king of all things', to be 'the cause of life for us and all others whatsoever'. Hence Zeus 'is correctly named' *Dia* and *Zêna*, as the god '*through* whom *life* is ever granted to all living beings' (δι' ὃν ζῆν ἀεὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ζῶσιν ὑπάρχει).

The first thing to say is that this etymology is erroneous. We know now that 'Zeus' derives from the Indo-European root *dī*, 'to shine', and belongs in a family of words which, across many Indo-European languages, refer to the 'sky' or 'day'. Zeus gets his name as the god of the bright sky (Cook 1914: 1). Cook also argues (2–6) that before being anthropomorphically cast in this way, 'Zeus was at first conceived … simply as the bright sky itself'. Alongside the 'fully anthropomorphic' Zeus of the poets, traces of this earlier Zeus survive in some of the words they use, such as δῖος ('bright'), ἔνδιος ('in broad daylight' or 'at mid-day': i.e., 'in the Zeus'),

ἔνδιαν ('to live in the open air'), ἐνδιοῦν ('to grow up into the air'), and εὔδιος ('with a clear sky, tranquil'). A further claim of Cook's (25–33) is for an ancient, 'half-forgotten' zoïstic belief that *Zeus* = *aether* (which he takes as 'the blazing sky'), which gets taken up later by such figures as Pherecydes, Heraclitus, Euripides, and the Stoics.[12]

The interesting thing, however, is that even though his Zeus etymology does not itself reflect this, in the *Cratylus* Plato is on the way to a similar conception of Zeus – not as the sky grasped as a region over against the earth, but as the *cosmos*. The equation of οὐρανός with κόσμος, so salient in Plato's later works and already apparent at *Phaedo* 109b, is prefigured here. The *Cratylus* will suggest, like the words ἔνδιαν and ἐνδιοῦν, that Zeus is the *milieu* of living things generally, and moreover that this cosmic Zeus is alive itself, as Cook's sky-Zeus is a 'living sky' (1914: 11). There is a third notable feature of the *Cratylus*' Zeus, but to get at it we need first to address the issue of Plato's sources.

Baxter (1992: 144–145) points out that Aeschylus speculated on the derivations both of Διός from causal διά (*Agamemnon* 1485), and Ζηνός from ζῆν, with the sense that Zeus is φυσι-ζόου, 'life-giving' (*Suppliants* 584–585). The Zeus-*zên* connection has a still earlier antecedent in Heraclitus B 32. Heraclitus' cosmic god, the strictly impersonal (grammatically neuter) ἕν or 'One', is 'unwilling' to be called Zeus (*Zên*) if Zeus be a personal god, but 'willing' if Zeus is conceived otherwise, i.e., if *Zên* has the meaning 'life'.[13] Moreover, Heraclitus seems to have clued in to the true origin of Zeus' more common name, for in B 120 αἰθρίου Διός denotes the bright sky pure and simple. As Lebedev (1985: 131f.) has shown, οὖρος αἰθρίου Διός refers to the autumnal equinox, 'the end of fair weather'. Summer and winter, according to B 67, are alternating forms assumed by the cosmic god, which is ultimately what Διός would signify here (i.e., 'bright Zeus' = the cosmos in its 'summer' season). Putting together these two halves of the ring, Heraclitus' Zeus is both the unified, all-encompassing *field* of life, and the unifying, all-animating *force* of life that constantly traverses this field, that 'steers all things through all things' (B 41) and generates new things from their conflict and interplay.[14]

Clement, our source for B 32, asserts that 'Plato bears witness to' it (*Stromateis* 5.115.1). The *Cratylus* is the only dialogue he could have in mind. His claim may seem unlikely if he is referring to the Zeus etymology, which in its sense seems closer to Aeschylus' play on Ζηνός and ζῆν than Heraclitus'. However, if we broaden the reference to the way Zeus is treated in *Cratylus* 2 *overall*, a case can be made that Plato has both B 32 and B 120 in view. For the cosmic Zeus intimated here has the very two dimensions of field and force separately attested in those fragments. Regarding the force aspect, the *Cratylus* will later flesh out its Zeus 'sentence' further by conjoining the causal sense of διά with the graphic one, 'through' as a preposition of movement (cf. Heraclitus B 41), in a pan-cosmic sense.[15] This is my third point.

Of course, at 395e–396b Zeus is still the personal god of tradition, the father of Tantalus. Plato *begins* with this, but he starts transcribing it even in stage 1, when he moves on to Zeus' forebears. Regarding the name Κρόνος, Socrates says first that it *seems* to have been given with the 'insolent' sense, 'intelligence of a boy' (κόρου-νοῦς), when the 'reasonable' thing would be to regard Zeus, as the cause of

life, as 'descended from some great intellect' (μεγάλης τινὸς διανοίας ἔκγονον: 396b). Now the poets' tales about Cronus are nothing if not suggestive of 'his Majesty the baby'. Nevertheless, Socrates bends over backwards to read the reasonable sense into the name they gave him, deriving this from the 'pure' (καθαρὸν) and 'unblemished' (ἀκήρατον) nature of his *nous*.[16] Such purity of mind, according to the astronomers, is acquired by 'looking at the things above' (ὁρῶ τὰ ἄνω), which is then posited as the etymology of Οὐρανός (Aeolic Ὄρανός) at 396c.

Sedley (2003: 91) remarks that these etymologies anticipate 'a genuine Platonic insight' that astronomy, if it is not practised merely empirically, 'is a privileged route to the perfection of a pure intellect'. He says further that this passage 'closely prefigures' the allocation of different creative roles to the demiurge (= *nous*) and the lesser (celestial and mythic) gods in the *Timaeus*. I agree with the first point[17] but not the second.[18] Whatever Plato is getting at here, it is not that Zeus is charged with the task of creating mortal creatures by a higher god who created *him*. The point cannot be that Uranus once looked up, that this brought about a pure intelligence in his *son* Cronus, who in turn had a son who, thanks to his *father's* intelligence, is cause of all life. The logic demands the same subject throughout. Zeus is cause of all life from his *own* pure intelligence, which derives from his *own* 'looking at the things above'. Zeus *is* 'Kronos', because Zeus *is* 'Ouranos' – or rather 'ouranos', for at 396c Socrates concludes that οὐρανός, *the sky*, is correctly named.[19] Even without the etymological information available to us today, Plato in his own way arrives at an *identification* of Zeus with the sky.

But what can the things above mean now? If Zeus *is* the sky he cannot look *up* at it, as we do. Can he get *his* purity of mind from astronomy? Only if he does not just practise it empirically – if he looks not just at the celestial bodies *within* him but *up* at the pure mathematical ratios (Forms) their motions reflect. It need not be *only* these Forms that are pertinent. A cosmic Zeus may look up to Beauty, Justice, and Self-Restraint, as the *intra*cosmic, personal Zeus of the *Phaedrus* does when he proceeds to the hypercelestial region.[20] As a cause, Zeus will look to the Form of what he intends to produce (as the demiurge looks to Living Thing in fashioning the cosmos at *Timaeus* 30c–d), and of course to the Good, to ensure he acts for the best (cf. *Timaeus* 46c–d, 68e). We should of course be cautious about bringing in these later dialogues, particularly since Forms can play no part in the *namegivers'* thinking. But it does make sense of the text. Indeed, this is the only way that the name οὐρανός can be strictly correct, for unless it is the looker it should simply be called 'the things above', and it can only look *up* at hyper-celestial things.

In running together sky and cosmos here I have admittedly run ahead of the text, but this is very much where things are headed. We skip stage 2 for the moment and dash ahead to stage 3 of the first traversal.

At 400a, when Socrates invokes Anaxagoras' doctrine that *nous* 'orders and holds together' (διακοσμοῦσαν καὶ ἔχουσαν[21]) 'the nature of all other things', he unmistakably recalls the Zeus etymology. To hold (ἔχειν) and carry (ὀχεῖν) the nature of a thing,[22] so that it is whole in itself and distinct from other things, is to enable it 'to *live* and go about' (ζῆν καὶ περιέναι). Clearly we are to infer that

Zeus, as cause of life for all things, just is Anaxagoras' *nous*. But how is *Plato* thinking this? In the previous chapter I took up the important distinction made by Hackforth and Menn between the *nous* that the demiurge *is*, and the *nous* that ensouled things can *have*. These authors assume that wherever Plato refers to *nous* in its order-*creating* role he means the demiurge. But this is not always true. I have argued elsewhere (Mason 2014) that in the *Philebus* he means the world-soul, which there takes over several of the demiurge's functions.[23] *Nous* seems to have a similar reference in the *Cratylus*. Socrates does not say so expressly, but it can be inferred from his remarks that *nous* is not just at work *in* the cosmos, as Anaxagoras holds,[24] but intrinsic *to* it, or more precisely, to a *cosmic soul*. [25] The *nous* doctrine is brought up in the context of the second derivation of ψυχή – from φυσέχην, 'that power which carries and holds [ἔχειν] nature [φύσιν]' (400b). If we take this in isolation, soul could be meant in a distributive sense as the said power in *each* ensouled nature. But it is hard to see how Anaxagoras could be invoked without a cosmic sense being intended. In that case we may be looking at a single soul which holds and carries the whole universe – long before the *Timaeus* posits a world-soul that is not only placed in the centre of the cosmic body but extended throughout and *around* it (34b).[26]

Note also Plato's use of περιέναι. In the context of a discussion that has dwelt on the circular 'running' of the celestial bodies (in stage 2), more is meant by this than an innocently idiomatic sense of 'going about'. The verb responds, if not exclusively then primarily, to Anaxagoras' περιχωρέω, the 'revolving' whereby *nous* forms things out from the pre-cosmic soup and holds them on their respective orbits. The things *nous* causes to 'go about' are first of all the stars, sun, moon, air, and aether (B 12), and the *Cratylus* passage seems to invite us to extend this to the rotation of the whole cosmos. This is significant. In the Zeus etymology there was no suggestion of Zeus causing, or having, such circular motion. But if Zeus = *nous*, this must be pertinent to how Zeus is conceived in the *Cratylus*, and we should be on the lookout for it.

We jump ahead to stage 3 in the second traversal. Like *nous, year* is linked back to Zeus. As Socrates says, it too has two names which 'seem in fact to be one'; some call it ἐνιαυτός, others ἔτος. Again he makes a sentence out of the two names that displays its nature. The year is τὸ τὰ φυόμενα καὶ τὰ γιγνόμενα ἐν μέρει ἕκαστον προάγον εἰς φῶς καὶ αὐτὸ ἐν αὑτῷ ἐξετάζον: 'that which leads forth into the light and examines within itself whatever is born and grows, each in its turn'. It gets the name ἐνιαυτός 'because all this occurs "within itself" [ἐν αὑτῷ]', and ἔτος 'because it "examines" [ἐτάζει]' (410d). That Plato is aiming at more than a formal similarity with Zeus is suggested by the *causal* slant of this passage. Driving forth into the light (προάγον εἰς φῶς) all that grows (τὰ φυόμενα), or in Greek idiom all that 'comes to light' (εἰς φῶς ἰέναι), recalls the causal force of Zeus. If to live is 'to see the light of the sun', as Homer says, to *drive* things into the light is to bring them to *life*. An additional, if unspoken, point is the year's cyclicality. Like the seasons, in another favourite expression of Homer's, it comes around again. As a cyclical whole, the year says temporally what a spherical, revolving cosmos says graphically. Thus, as Plato earlier cast Zeus as cosmic *nous*, his implied point now is that Zeus *is* the year, the ordered whole of a cyclical cosmic time within which all living beings emerge

and live for their allotted span. Here life is specified as an *examination*, but this does not come from a god who rules the world from outside. It is the year, the *whole*, which examines all things 'within itself', presumably in an intelligent way.

Now compare *Timaeus* 37a–b, where the world-soul is depicted as constantly monitoring the goings on within itself, i.e., in the world-body. As it revolves back upon itself and so traverses that body, it constantly tells itself how its body is the same or different here in comparison with there, or here now with here then, and how it is that whatever is going on anywhere occurs. Note too that in the *Timaeus* the cosmic Great Year is the *period* of the world-soul.[27] Doubtless there are significant differences between the two passages. If the *Cratylus* thinks of the cosmos as having a soul, it does not expressly attribute circular motion to *it*. Moreover, in the *Timaeus* the world-creature seems concerned only with its own homeostasis, not with the living things like us that inhabit it, a little bit like bacteria. In the *Cratylus* it is these things that are 'examined', and presumably this has to do with justice,[28] as Zeus' next appearance would suggest. But it is striking that, even if Plato is still a long way from the world-soul thesis of the late dialogues, thoughts that will go into that thesis, and are absent in all the subsequent middle dialogues, are already stirring here.

We jump ahead again. At 412c 'justice', τὸ δίκαιον, is brought up to explain the admirable (ἀγαστόν) and swift (θοός) motion which has just been offered as the etymology of τὸ ἀγαθόν, 'the good'.[29] As that motion was said to pertain to 'nature as a whole' (τῆς φύσεως πάσης), so justice is at issue as a force which 'goes through' (δια-ϊόν) the All (τὸ πᾶν) and everything in it.[30] Here Plato brings in the graphic sense of διά that I referred to earlier, but the causal one is still in play. Justice goes 'through' everything else as 'the quickest and subtlest thing' (τάχιστον καὶ λεπτότατον), and it is 'through' this (δι' οὗ) that 'all that comes to be is generated' (412d). This again recalls the Zeus etymology, as Plato promptly remarks. As the *cause* through which (δι' ὅ) there is coming to be, justice, it is said, 'is rightly called Zeus [Δία]' (413a). Note the transformation of 'through whom' (δι' ὅν) at 396b to 'through which' (δι' ὅ).[31] Zeus' transcription as cosmic justice has consequences – the very impersonality we found Heraclitus intimating in B 32. But what does this justice consist in? It does not seem especially punitive. Its passing through things does not destroy them (like Zeus' lightning bolt). Rather, its generative power is emphasised. Is this cosmogonical, or continuous generation as part of the process of *maintaining* order? Does justice operate by force, or get into our souls when we have gone astray and persuade us back on track?

None of this is clear. We may perhaps assume that *circular* motion is implicit: *cosmologically*, because assuming a spherical cosmos (as the remark at 410b about aether running *around* air would seem to justify) that is the most natural sense of justice traversing the All; *doxographically*, because λεπτότατον, 'subtlest', quotes Anaxagoras just where, in B 12, he is explaining how *nous* can control *everything* through its revolution; and *ethically*, inasmuch as justice implies the notion of things coming full circle (as in the lap-race metaphor in *Republic* X). But the passage certainly does not bring this out. Indeed, just after the connection is drawn with Zeus, Plato has Socrates throw up his hands and ask, in his trademark fashion: what then is *justice*, if

justice be Zeus? From there he reviews a number of contenders (the sun, fire, heat, Anaxagorean *nous*), before abandoning the question with the complaint that he is more confused than ever about the nature of justice (413c–d).

I will address this second part of the passage in section 4. The point here is that, while it continues the thread we have been following, it also leaves the Zeus regress in a kind of limbo, rather than bringing it home. My last jump ahead brings a similar implied message. At 421b, when ἀλήθεια is laughably derived from θεία ἄλη, 'divine wandering', this seems to me to have implications for the regress that are not restricted to whether the *names* of things are reliable. The unreliability may relate to the things themselves: above all, the cosmic Zeus.

3b. The natural gods and being

We now scurry back to 396c–d. Socrates has just given his etymologies of Cronus and Uranus. He refers to 'this wisdom which has suddenly been sent to me just now, without me knowing whence', and wonders if this wisdom will 'fail' (ἀπερεῖ), i.e., 'flow away', stop flowing. This is the first appearance of 'flow' in the dialogue. When Hermogenes agrees that Socrates seems 'to be uttering oracles, like someone suddenly inspired', Socrates blames Euthyphro, with whom he had spent the morning, for taking possession of his soul with his 'daimonic wisdom', and proposes the following 'duty': today they should 'make use of this wisdom and complete the investigation of names', but tomorrow 'conjure it away and purify ourselves' (396d–e).

Why does Socrates feel dirty just where the astronomers say you should feel pure? On a parodist reading he is simply presensitising us to the lesson that etymology *will* fail to get us to the nature of things. It is not pure wisdom, but at best insight mixed with delusion, true belief with false. Yet why then make use of it for so long? It cannot be merely to drive that point home *ad nauseam*. Given the regressive nature of the investigation, it may be that Socrates wants to *track down* the 'whence' of his inspiration. If the latter comes as a 'flow', going with this flow would be the way to its own 'whence', for flow will turn out to be the principle of the etymologies! If flow is to be known, we can scarcely expect to know it without flowing ourselves. But how are we to flow or be inspired unless we let flow *be* something that can come to us and take us with it, unless we are at least provisionally open to it being something real?

A more likely reason for the sense of impurity is that an allegorical approach to the gods risks offending religious orthodoxy. This would gel with the decision to make use of the 'dirty' wisdom, for Socrates goes on to unfold that approach as far as it will go. The issue now is where and how that thread, the Zeus regress, intersects with the slowly introduced theme of flow.

The 'prologue' had addressed both human and divine names. Plato of course has independent reasons to make the latter his focus, but at 397b–c this is couched as a methodological issue. The names of heroes and men can be deceptive. They may be inherited from ancestors and inappropriate to a specific individual, or express what parents *hope* their child will be like. The investigation should thus focus on the names of 'the things that are always in being by nature' (τὰ ἀεὶ ὄντα καὶ

πεφυκότα: 397b), for such names 'should have been given with the utmost care, and perhaps some of them by a power more divine than that of men'. This looks like an invitation to take the ensuing etymologies seriously.

A great deal hinges on what the phrase just quoted refers to. In this first traversal, stage 2 involves a shift from *proper* names to generic ones. The question is not why this or that god is named such and such, but why gods are called 'gods', spirits 'spirits', etc. This has led scholars to think that the things at issue here are the *Forms* of such things (Sedley 2003: 88; Ademollo 2011: 188). There are grounds for this. Plato often expresses the participation of things in a Form in terms of their sharing its *name* (for example, *Phaedo* 78e). Additionally, although πεφυκότα can mean 'things begotten' (i.e., Platonic 'becoming' rather than being), Plato's use of 'nature' (φύσις) and 'by nature' does not exclude Forms. At *Republic* 501b the Form Justice is 'the just in nature' (τὸ φύσει δίκαιον).[32] Forms transcend the sensible domain, but not nature as such. Rather, they *are* nature at its most basic level. Finally, *Cratylus* 3 will assert that only eternally stable and unchanging Forms, over against all that moves or flows, can properly be said to 'be'. Thus, it seems, Forms must be meant by 'the things that are always in being by nature'.

Yet I think this is wrong. Motion is key to at least two of the classes discussed here: *theos* and *psuchê*. It may be countered that Plato can hold that the *Forms* 'God' and 'Soul' do not move, but that it is somehow encoded in them that individual gods and souls *will*. But even if that is true, it ignores what is actually said about why the gods are called *theoi*. Socrates says (397c–d):

> It seems to me the first men in Greece believed only in those gods in whom many foreigners believe today – sun, moon, earth, stars and sky [οὐρανός]. Seeing that all these *were always going around in their courses and running* [ἅτε οὖν αὐτὰ ὁρῶντες πάντα ἀεὶ ἰόντα δρόμῳ καὶ θέοντα], they named them 'gods' [θεοί] from this 'running' [θεῖν] nature. Later, when they came to know the other [i.e., mythic] gods, they invoked them all by the same name.

If this is an etymology that Plato regards as revealing the nature of these gods (which surely it is), they are characterised by *eternal* motion, and this can hardly be opposed to eternal being when these gods are brought up to exemplify just this. Eternal being is not restricted to a Form 'Natural God'. It belongs to these specific gods that we see in the sky,[33] and is inseparable from their circular 'running'.

In stage 2 of the second traversal the individual names of these *theoi* are taken up. Not all of them are found to convey the above information (in many cases because they are said to be of foreign origin), but several do:

1. The second derivation proposed for 'sun' (ἥλιος, Doric ἅλιος): ἀεὶ εἱλεῖν, 'always winding',[34] namely 'around the earth' (409a).[35]
2. The (admittedly absurd) etymology of 'moon' (σελήνη or σελαναία, the latter taken as short for σελαενονεοάεια). In waxing and waning the moon 'always [ἀεί] has a new [νέον] and an old [ἔνον] gleam [σέλας]' (409b–c). Here the

moon's circular motion is not mentioned. But Socrates does refer to Anaxagoras' thesis that it is because the *sun* 'moves continuously in a circle around the moon' (κύκλῳ ἀεὶ αὐτὴν περιιὼν) that the moon always has a new gleam, while the one from the previous month persists.

3. The second etymology of 'air' (ἀήρ): ἀεὶ ῥεῖ, 'always flows'. In the third Socrates equates 'air-flow' (ἀητόρρουν) with 'wind-flow' (πνευματόρρουν), noting that the poets call winds 'blasts' (ἀήται) (410b). There is obviously a sense of violent or turbulent motion here, in contrast to the uniform circular motion at issue above. Nevertheless, from a cosmological point of view we should not exclude the latter. As mentioned in section 3a, Anaxagoras (B 12) includes air among the things that *nous* causes to 'go about' the earth in circular fashion, and it is a corollary of Plato's geocentric, spherical cosmos that, if air flows, it flows *around* the earth.[36] Sedley's distinction (2003: 106) between the 'essentially unstructured or chaotic' *flowing* of air and the fixed, circular *running* of aether is much too sharp.
4. The ensuing derivation of αἰθήρ from ἀεὶ θεῖ περὶ τὸν ἀέρα ῥέων, 'forever runs flowingly about the air'. We see at once what is wrong with Sedley's attempt to drive a wedge between 'flow' and 'run', for as Ademollo says (2011: 197) aether does *both*. But while flow is not a chaotic motion here, nor is it a 'generic' one, as Ademollo claims. It characterises the specific *way* that aether runs, which is precisely the way that the celestial bodies 'run': regularly and smoothly, in a circle. Hence περί, 'around' the air, which in turn would flow around the earth, albeit not with the same smoothness or 'fluency'.

As I pointed out in the Introduction, there is also no sense of aether undergoing transformation here. Like the celestial bodies, it lasts, and as such '*is*'. Where these natural *theoi* are concerned, a conception of being is in play which does not exclude motion and flow, if only it be the eternal motion of a self-same thing. The discord between this and the position at the end of the dialogue should not be explained away on the basis that *this* conception is merely doxographic, while that of *Cratylus* 3 is doctrinal. Although the latter will indeed be Platonic doctrine in the middle period, Plato will in the *Sophist* recognise the need to correct it to include motion (and in the *Laws* flow). In *Cratylus* 2 he seems to have a premonition of this. At any rate he is open to a broader concept of being, akin to that of the *Sophist*.

Of the four examples, aether is in a way the most important, for this is the first etymology to show unequivocally that the *Cratylus* thinks *flow* in connection with circular motion. Yet it is the most tenuous from a doctrinal viewpoint. Does Plato *believe* in aether, or is this just 'doxography'? The account is simply too brief for us to say. The evidence of other dialogues is equivocal. At *Phaedo* 109b–c Socrates reports that many *phusikoi* equate *ouranos* with aether. He seems to give tentative assent, for his next remark, which states his own view, reads best if 'this' denotes a heavenly *stuff*: 'the water, mist and air are the sediment of this, and flow together [ξυρρεῖν][37] into the hollows of the earth'.[38] In the *Timaeus*, in contrast, aether is merely a translucent *kind* of air (58d), contrasted with a 'misty' and 'dark' kind.[39] The *Phaedo*, being of the same vintage as the *Cratylus*, is probably a better guide to his

thinking here. Yet it is notable that in the *Phaedo* 'flow' is not used for aether itself. Then let us take the worst case scenario, and assume that Plato has no commitment at all to the existence and therefore the flow of aether. Must we then disregard the link between flow and circular motion established here? Is that too mere doxography?

Not if the aether etymology has retroactive force for the *theos* one, which is not just doxographic.[40] If aether can run *and* flow, why not the celestial bodies whose milieu (if it exists) it would be? Or is flow reserved for the motion of loose 'stuff' rather than bounded spherical bodies like stars and planets? Intuitively that sounds right, but there are reasons to resist it. As we have seen, in the *Laws* 'everflowing being' does not exclude the 'running' of the celestial bodies. The point of 'flowing' there, as here, is to stress the *smoothness* and uniformity of orbital motion *per se*.

I suggest, finally, that this connection between cosmic flow and circular motion extends from stage 2 of the regress to stage 3. As I argued in section 3a, both *nous* (at 400a–b) and the year (at 410d) speak in their own ways to the theme of circular motion. Both bring us from the celestial gods to the *cosmic* one, which is implied to be Zeus and is presumably the *ultimate* referent of 'the things that are eternally in being by nature' at 397b. Plato does not refer to flow in either passage, but what prevents us from linking flow not just to orbital motion but to the cosmic *rotation*? Not the broad tendency in the *Cratylus* to partner 'flow' with 'motion', for at 400a–b it is the motion of the soul which 'holds' and 'carries' *any* body that explains the 'living' and 'going around' of that body; if flow = motion, the cosmic rotation intimated in that passage will be a cosmic flow. And certainly not the determination of flow as a good *kind* of motion, for what is a better motion for Plato than axial rotation? The only thing in our way is the flux caricature for which the *Cratylus* is famous. How then are we to negotiate this terrain? Where – and why – does flux come into it?

3c. Flow or flux? Or: Can you step twice onto the same celestial body?

It is time to address the two 'asides' at 401c–402d and 411b–c. I do not dispute that these passages address a doctrine of flux, but the question is what this means in the context of the etymological investigation. The answer Plato wishes to impress upon us is that it is this doctrine that has been presupposed at some level in the naming of things. My argument is that Plato is simply wrong here. He is muddling flux and flow.

It will be useful to recall the difference (cf. Introduction, section 2). Flow does not *entail* intrinsic change, only motion. Flux entails both. In its more radical versions it entails further that change is chaotic and precludes the existence of any abiding thing. This corresponds to the viewpoint of the asides. But in the etymologies themselves the distinguishing marks of flux – intrinsic change, fleetingness, and chaoticness – are virtually never even hinted at, and what hints there are do not seem to extend beyond flux *Mach* 1. On Plato's own conception of flux as outlined in the asides, it is *not* flux that his etymologies hinge on.

In one sense 401c–402d is not an aside, for its remarks about flux are directly tied to the names taken up at the start of the second traversal. What makes it one is the way it signals that etymology is a theatre for a 'battle of the giants over being'

(as Plato will put it in the *Sophist*). Socrates begins with Hestia, not just for the stated reason that she is the first born of the Olympians, but because embedded in her name is the basic question of what it means to say that something 'is' (ἔστιν) or 'partakes of being [οὐσία]'. Socrates claims that οὐσία is called ἐσσία by some, ὠσία by others.[41] He does not seek to make a sentence out of the two in this case, since they are meant to represent opposed views. On the one hand, if 'the being of all things' can be called ἐσσία, and if it is what 'Hestia' gets at, then the steadfastness traditionally imputed to Hestia applies to *beings* (an inference Plato leaves us to make for ourselves). On the other, 'those who say ὠσία would agree well enough with Heraclitus that all beings move and nothing abides'. They would call 'being' ὠσία to denote that which *pushes* (τὸ ὠθοῦν) all things as their 'cause and ruler' (401d). Socrates goes on to find an accord between Heraclitus and the poets (Homer, Hesiod, Orpheus). The latter all 'tend towards' the doctrine of universal flux that Heraclitus is said to express through the river simile, for they name the ancestral gods Cronus, Rhea, Ocean, and Tethys after rivers (402b–c). The implied point here is stated at *Theaetetus* 152e: 'all things are the offspring of flux and motion'. Plato thus gives us to understand that he is up against a formidable opponent. The poets are already proto-Heracliteans, so that in fighting with Heraclitus he is also fighting with them and with the long-ingrained bent of his own language.

In the Introduction we saw that in this passage Plato misquotes and misrepresents Heraclitus. Let us set this aside. Irrespective of whose doctrine it is, what does universal flux entail? According to Socrates at 401d, this: τὰ ὄντα ἰέναι τε πάντα καὶ μένειν οὐδέν. Ademollo (2011: 202–203) translates: 'all the beings are on the go and nothing is at rest'.[42] But this is only half of what is meant. μένειν οὐδέν can also mean 'nothing lasts'. When the statement is repeated at 402a, ἰέναι is replaced by χωρεῖ, which *can* simply mean 'go' but in its most basic sense means 'give way', 'withdraw' (LSJ). The contrast is not just between motion and stability, but between passing away and lasting. This is key to the doctrine Plato puts in Heraclitus' mouth. If it is impossible to 'step twice into the same river', and if 'beings' are comparable to a river's flow (ποταμοῦ ῥοῇ), the point is that from one moment to the next we cannot encounter the same being. It has already *gone* and become something else. Moreover, note the assymetry in Socrates' remarks about the two variants of οὐσία. Whereas ἐσσία would refer to the abiding being of beings themselves, ὠσία is something other than them: their 'cause and ruler', what initiates their existence and motion and drives their transformation. The 'beings' are inessential. What matters is the force driving the succession of fleeting manifestations. *That* is being, not them.

The distinction is an interesting one, but outside of this the passage is quite frustrating and careless, seemingly deliberately provocative and superficial. The argument for the poets' complicity with Heraclitus is very glib. It is perfectly possible for them to name gods after rivers without having the thought that 'all things make way and nothing abides'. Indeed, this is not how Homer thought of rivers at all, as we have seen. There is also the matter of the second etymology of Κρόνος (from κρουνός, 'spring') hinted at here, without any reference to the earlier one. The lack of comment is telling, I think. The two Κρόνος derivations could be said to mark two aspects of Plato's thought – the cosmological role of *nous*, and sensible flux – which he does not

yet see a way to knit together (this is just what he will do in the *Timaeus*). They stand either side of what seems a missed opportunity to think ῥοή and νοῦς in direct conjunction. Which is not to suggest that this is the true etymology of Κρόνος, with a k added for euphony! What I mean is that, had the operative notion of flow, linked to regular circular motion, become more than just operative – had it been thought more explicitly in connection with *nous* – we might not see the *Cratylus* silently pass over the dehiscence between flow and the radical flux discussed in the two asides.

We turn now to the other aside, which occurs just where the discussion turns to the virtues. At 411b–c Socrates takes aim at both the namegivers and contemporary thinkers of a presumably neo-Heraclitean bent, dismissing their ontological principle as a hallucination. The thought occurs to him, again as if by oracle,

> that the very ancient men who invented names were quite like most of the learned crowd of today, who always get dizzy as they turn around and around in their search for how it stands with beings, so that the things themselves seem to them to be moving around [περιφέρεσθαι] and moving in all ways [πάντως φέρεσθαι]. They think the cause of this belief is not some affliction within themselves, but that the things themselves are by nature such that nothing is in any way lasting or stable,[43] but everything flows and moves and is at all times full of incessant motion and becoming [ἀλλὰ ῥεῖν καὶ φέρεσθαι καὶ μεστὰ εἶναι πάσης φορᾶς καὶ γενέσεως ἀεί].

Motion is at the forefront here. Change is only mentioned at the end, almost as an afterthought. It is not, of course. Besides the earlier aside, the end of the *Cratylus* confirms that change is key to flux: all things 'flow like leaky pots' (440c), lose bits of themselves and with that their integrity and identity; they 'are always slipping away' (ἀεὶ ὑπεξέρχεται) and 'becoming other' (ἄλλο γίγνεσθαι: 439d). But the question remains as to why motion is stressed at 411b–c. Another point is that the ridicule seems to extend to the idea of *circular* motion. This need not be the only, or even primary, sense of περιφέρεσθαι here; in connection with the namegivers' *confusion*, and with πάντως φέρεσθαι, 'moving around' is probably meant to denote *chaotic* motion. But can it be excluded?

It needs to be stressed, with Ademollo (2011: 207) and against Barney (2001: 73) and Sedley (2003: 108–109), that here the flux theory is rejected *tout court*. Barney and Sedley argue on the basis that elsewhere Plato accepts sensible flux. For Barney the critique hinges on the impertinence of flux to non-sensible objects. For Sedley its positioning 'at the watershed between the cosmic and the ethical etymologies' signifies that Plato accepts flux in sensibles but not in the ethical context. Neither view, as Ademollo says, accords with the way Socrates speaks here. He castigates the fluxists for believing that *anything* is in flux. Now, as I noted in the Introduction, in the only other dialogue in which we see a *tout court* dismissal of flux, the *Theaetetus* (181c–183c), Plato's strategy is to collapse all versions of flux into the most extreme, what I call *Mach* 3. Here all things are always simultaneously subject both to locomotion and alteration, so that there is never even one speck that moves without changing or changes without moving. The upshot is that there are no such things

as 'things'. 411b–c implies this when it says that every 'thing' is 'full' (μεστά) of motion and becoming. It is just a bundle of motions and changes, no more stable or lasting as a whole than the 'things' inside it. Here I diverge from Ademollo.

In Ademollo's view, the reason motion is stressed is that Plato deems the fluxists to regard it *as* 'the basic kind of change'. Alteration, generation, destruction, etc., are derivative kinds of movement, consisting in the spatial 'combination and separation of certain basic constituents of reality' (2011: 212). By the latter Ademollo means the atoms of Democritus and Leucippus, which are always moving in the void and combining to form aggregates which sooner or later must break down, leaving the atoms to continue on their merry way. It is primarily this, he thinks, that Plato has in mind at 411b–c. The point of the flux doctrine is then that 'things' are always in motion *because* their constituent atoms are, and that the atoms are the real 'things' or 'beings', not the 'compound things of ordinary experience' (214–215).

One objection to this is that Plato develops his *own* atomic theory of matter in the *Timaeus*, drawing on and developing the atomists' work.[44] This objection is not fatal, for Plato could later embrace an approach he rejects here. But is that what he does? It is not. The theory of the *Timaeus* is less radical than the doctrine lampooned at 411b–c, precisely on account of its *affinity* with atomism; elemental transmutation involves the recombination of 'atoms' (the triangles) which do not *themselves* change.[45] A more serious objection, then, is that if Plato had the atomists in mind at 411b–c, he would have had to express himself more subtly, for they do not believe that *everything* is in flux and *nothing* lasts. They may believe that every *compound thing* 'flows and moves and is at all times full of incessant motion and becoming', but for this to hold for *all things*, the atoms too must be subject to constant *becoming*, not just motion, which is just what they deny. Democritus' atoms are 'indivisible and incorruptible', 'unqualified' (for example, colourless) and 'impassive',[46] and free of all becoming, be it generation or destruction, division, growth or diminution, or qualitative change. From the point of view of the *Theaetetus* argument which is so saliently paralleled at 411b–c, the atomists are still Sunday fluxists, not fully committed to what the doctrine (supposedly) entails.[47]

Aside from the fact that neither this passage nor the *Theaetetus* ever draws a distinction between atoms and compound things, there is another compelling argument against the view that this is integral to the two critiques of flux. For Democritus, over against the unqualified and *real* atoms, the colours and other qualities of compound things do not really exist, but 'are' only 'by convention'.[48] In the *Theaetetus*, when the *reductio* of flux moves from things to qualities, this is not the point. The flux doctrine is taken to preclude *determinable* qualities. In the same process wherein every 'thing' is in flux, qualities such as 'whiteness' must be deemed not just to 'flow' (ῥεῖν) but to 'change' (μεταβάλλει: 182d).[49] The absurd consequence this is said to generate is that colours are too fleeting and changeable to be accurately nameable, not that they only 'appear' 'in opinion', not 'in reality'. The flux doctrine, as Plato presents it here, certainly holds that there are no 'stable' qualities, but also that *there really is* quality-flux, indeed that thing-flux and quality-flux are all there really is. *Cratylus* 411b–c does not yet extend the point to qualities, but other than

that its kinship to the *Theaetetus* critique is clear. I note, finally, that in this respect too the flux affirmed in the *Timaues* is less radical, in that, while it precludes that the elements are identifiable as things, it allows them to be identified as qualities.

Let us now address the crucial issue. How can the cosmic etymologies possibly be regarded as underpinned by the flux doctrine? In Ademollo's view, although it is only after 411b–c that the etymologies have the express purpose of bearing out the doctrine, Plato means this to apply also to the earlier ones. He cites as examples of 'change' (2011: 205) the very things I addressed in section 3b – the sun's movement around the earth, the flowing of air and aether – along with the 'decreasing' month and the 'begetting' earth. He concedes that the etymologies of 'seasons' and 'year' 'make no explicit reference to flux', and that none of the cosmic etymologies 'adverts to, or implies, the *general* flux theory'. Yet the striking thing is surely that none of them implies change even in the sense of a *specific* thing becoming something else. Many do not even imply *Mach* 1 flux. The stars, sun, and moon are not said to change as they run. We do not read of them 'leaking', of bits flying off one and sticking to another. The phases of the moon are obviously apparent changes; the 'old light' is the still dimly visible part of the moon's full face that is not directly illuminated by the sun. The variability of air (in contrast to aether) *is* implied by 'blasts'. But it is still air. Not a whiff of air *becoming* water or fire here. In sum, to answer the question in my title, everything suggests that one *could* step twice – indeed, an infinite number of times – onto (or into) the same star, sun, moon, air, or aether, and that is exactly why they can be referred to as 'eternally in *being*' even as they 'move' and 'flow'.

But what about the effects of these beings on *earthly* things? Let us take the first air etymology at 410b: ἀΐρει, 'raises', because air 'raises things up from the earth'. It is less of a leap from here to flux, especially if raising involves a mixing of air with, say, motes of dust and water vapour. We *might* then read the second air etymology, 'always flows', in the sense 'is always in flux', but this is very tenuous. Why would air get its name from its *not* being simply air? The sun is also particularly relevant here. Besides the one discussed in section 3b, two other derivations of ἥλιος are proposed at 408e–409a: ἁλίζειν, 'collecting' (since the sun collects men when it rises); and αἰολεῖν, 'variegating' things that grow from the earth, such as grapes. The latter involves intrinsic change,[50] but radical flux? Socrates does not get a chance to say which is the more likely derivation before Hermogenes changes the topic to the moon, but his remarks about the latter suggest that he wants to accept all three as a unity. In moving around the moon, the sun might be said to 'variegate' it in a way, but also to 'collect' this diversity. (This unity of the moon throughout its phases resonates with the tenor of Heraclitus' thought more than the remarks at 401c–402d.) Similarly, it is easy to infer that the year generates diversity and at the same time gathers it in its ongoing concern for the whole.

In sum, when Plato speaks of air and aether as flowing, he uses ῥοή and ῥέω in a very different way than when he is dissing the flux doctrine. The perspective of the two asides is a far cry from flow as regular circular motion, releasing and gathering difference, generating things in the time proper to them, and suggestive of a cosmic intelligence, which the regress brings into view over the two traversals. It is true, as we will see, that from time to time this hits a speedbump, something which leads

one to wonder whether flow is as exemplary as all that. But there is a big difference between this, which may impugn the wisdom in flow but not its very being, and what is said at 411b–c: that flow/flux is just an internal 'affliction' which men project onto the world. If Plato intends his claim that the namegivers presuppose flux to apply to the cosmic etymologies, he has simply forgotten the way he was using 'flow' there for some reason. It may be that scoring a polemical point against his opponents comes at the cost of suppressing the common ground he shares with them. Or it may be (cf. note 1) that the etymological analyses stem from an earlier time than the rest of the dialogue, including these asides. In any case, it is an error that it will take Plato a long time to recognise clearly and correct.

3d. Intimations of flow's double nature

I will not address all the names taken up in stage 1 of the second traversal, but it is important to highlight certain threads that have a bearing on the whole inquiry. I begin by noting a subtle piece of signposting at 400d, when Hermogenes asks Socrates to consider the other gods' names 'in the same way that you were speaking about Zeus *just now*'. If we take νῦν δή literally, it refers to what Socrates said very recently, not to the Zeus etymology at 395e–396b. Hermogenes has twigged to what Socrates was really saying at 400a–b regarding *nous*; he was speaking about Zeus without naming him. He wants Socrates to do more of this, to undertake the regress to cosmic *nous* again starting from the other mythic gods. Individually these gods are typically not treated in an obviously allegorical way, but by the end the allegorical exigency is fairly transparent. This time, however, it produces more mixed results.

First thread: flow and impedence. After introducing the key issue of what 'being' means (via Hestia), and the flow principle (via Rhea, etc.), Socrates introduces the counterprinciple of impedence via Poseidon and Hades. But this has a different tenor in the two cases. 'Poseidon' would denote 'foot-bond' (ποσί-δεσμόν), because as lord of the sea he 'restrains' one's step and thwarts one's advance (402e). Naturally we are meant to think of Poseidon's impeding of Odysseus' homeward journey in the *Odyssey*. The tenor here is negative, *vis-à-vis* flow.[51] But Hades represents a good bond. To keep the souls of the dead in the underworld, he must bind them with the 'strongest bond' (403c), which is the desire for virtue: 'the thought of becoming a better man by associating with another' who is wise (403d–404a). If name reveals nature in this case, Ἅιδης is not derived from τοῦ ἀειδοῦς, 'the invisible', as most believe, mistakenly viewing death as an evil to be feared (403a) and failing to appreciate that 'no one has been willing to come away from that place' (403d). It rather stems from 'knowing [εἰδέναι] all noble things' (404b).[52] Here impedence is a matter of *holding* souls *fast* (κατέχοι) through their desire for virtue, something Hades understands is only possible once the soul is free of the body's 'agitation and mania' (πτοίησιν καὶ μανίαν: 404a).[53] This obviously lines up with the 'steadfast' take on 'Hestia' (that is, *being*).

To summarise, impedence is bad if the flow it impedes is good; but if flow is bad, what holds one back from it is good. Note, however, that the sheer opposition of

flow and impedence can obscure a third alternative. At least insofar as it is linked to circular motion, cosmic flow itself may be restrained and still be flow, as the celestial bodies are 'bound' to their orbits, uniform speeds, and so on.

Second thread: cosmic motion. One of the derivations proposed for 'Apollo' is ὁμο-πολέω,[54] 'to go around together' harmoniously, both in a musical (sym-phonic) sense and cosmically: 'in the sky around the so-called poles [πόλους]' (405c).[55] Socrates adds at 405e that a second lambda was inserted to avert the sense of 'ruin' (ἀπολῶ: 'destroy utterly'). It seems that now Apollo, not Zeus, is doing duty as cosmic *nous*: 'this god directs the harmony, making all go around together, among both gods and men' (ἐπιστατεῖ τῇ ἁρμονίᾳ ὁμοπολῶν αὐτὰ πάντα καὶ κατὰ θεοὺς καὶ ἀνθρώπους: 405d). Later it is Hermes. After proposing that Hermes gets his name from 'contriving speech' (εἴρειν ἐμήσατο: 408b), Socrates turns to Hermes' father *Pan*, and makes the curious remark that 'speech makes manifest the All [ὁ λόγος τὸ πᾶν σημαίνει] and always *makes it circulate and move around* [κυκλεῖ καὶ πολεῖ ἀεὶ], and is twofold, true and false' (408c). The surface sense is perhaps that chatter tends to circulate things outside their contexts and distort them. But Socrates gives 'circulation' a specifically cosmic reference. Speech (λόγος) not only makes τὸ πᾶν (not πάντα) manifest, but makes *it*, the cosmos, wheel round in a circle.[56] The re-use of πολέω underscores that this harks back to the discussion of Apollo, but with a twist. For whereas Apollo was linked to the simple (ἁπλοῦς: 405a), this circular motion is now grasped as twofold or duplicitous (διπλοῦς). Not only can it be true or false, but Hermes, the apparent 'contriver' of this cosmic 'speech', is a 'trickster' and 'deceiver' (408a).[57]

The point here is not that Apollo is better than Hermes. In the poetic tradition Apollo too is duplicitous, and Plato's reason at *Republic* 383a–b for rebuking Aeschylus in this respect is that he misrepresents the divine as such, not Apollo specifically. Moreover, it is significant that the twist occurs in connection with Pan, who is not by accident the last mythic god addressed. Since he is both anthropomorphic and wears his natural origins on his appellative sleeve, Pan is the ideal transition to the natural gods, and this status indicates the point of the whole discussion of the mythic gods. They are part of the same regress which primarily goes by way of Zeus; their names are pointers to the principle of cosmic flow. The implicit point at the end of stage 1 is that *this flow* is coming into question. It may not be *univocally* regular and orderly.

Third thread: wisdom and irrationality. At 404d Socrates muses that Persephone's name would originally have been Pherepapha, since she is wise and wisdom consists in 'touching what is in motion' (ἐπαφὴν τοῦ φερομένου) and being able to 'grasp' (ἐφαπτόμενον) and follow it.[58] He observes that this presupposes that whatever is moves, but another presupposition goes unmentioned. Why is it wise to follow what is in motion if not because there is wisdom in that motion? Once we bracket the two fluxist asides this inference is hard to resist. It is implied by the broad structure of the investigation – from the mythic gods to cosmic *nous*, by way of the circular motion of the natural gods. In turning the discussion directly from Persephone to Apollo, Socrates almost begs that we make the connection between wisdom and following the concerted circular motion of the heavens. In this respect it can certainly be said that the *Cratylus* prefigures the *Timaeus*.

However, it is also possible to infer a connection between flow and wisdom's contrary. If there were a Greek god of 'going with the flow' it would of course be Dionysus. In treating his name, Socrates does not highlight *Dio* (from or of Zeus), perhaps because he is unsure about *nusos* (as we still are today). Instead he derives 'Dionysus' from 'giver' (διδούς) of 'wine' (οἶνος), and adds that wine might be called οἰό-νους 'because it makes most drinkers think [οἴεσθαι] they have *nous* when they do not' (406c). That is, Dionysus gives one a false sense of intelligence. It is worth trying to extrapolate from these brief remarks. Motion is not mentioned, but can't be far away, given the ritual significance of wine in the Dionysian rites. Everything here – wine, drumbeat, dance, etc. – is geared to inducing a trance state, a deindividuation and ecstatic oneness with all things. Euripides (*Bacchae* 726–727) has the whole mountain and all the animals joining in the Maenads' rite; 'nothing was unmoved by their whirl' (οὐδὲν δ' ἦν ἀκίνητον δρόμῳ). As the giver of wine, Dionysus gives one over to the flow of life. We might then infer from Socrates' remark that, if one entrusts oneself to this flow as a higher wisdom in which one partakes by *being* rather than by thinking, perhaps those in possession of *nous* are those who step aside from this flow. Like Athena, perhaps, who was born from Zeus' head and whose name, we are told at 407a–b, would mean 'the intelligence of god' (ἡ θεοῦ νόησις), 'knowing things divine' (τὰ θεῖα νοούσα), or 'intelligence in character' (ἐν τῷ ἤθει νόησις).

Given Plato's firm commitment in other dialogues to the doctrine that the gods are perfect in virtue and the cause only of good, the etymologies of their names in the *Cratylus*, which reveal about as much bad as good in them, seem purely doxographic. Yet the allegorical approach gives Plato a certain leeway to think cosmologically what he proscribes theologically. This is not a false distinction, however intertwined cosmology and theology are in the late dialogues. In the *Timaeus*, where nothing is said that might impugn the world-creature's capacity to govern itself, Plato has no hesitation calling it a god. Not so in the *Statesman*, where that capacity is seriously limited. In Chapter 5 I will argue that the double nature of cosmic flow in the *Cratylus* etymologies reappears much later in the flawed world-soul of the *Statesman*.

4 Going with the flow: The words concerning virtue

After 'year' the discussion turns to the 'noble' words 'concerning virtue' (περὶ τὴν ἀρετήν). Hermogenes wants to know 'with what correctness in the world' these names are 'given' (τίνι ποτὲ ὀρθότητι κεῖται: 411a). It can be asked if this carries a note of incredulity, so that the 'dramatic change of tone' that Sedley (2003: 108) discerns at 411b–c is already signalled here. A related question is whether the inquiry, in taking leave of the natural gods, is *ipso facto* no longer concerned with 'the things that are eternally in being by nature'. *Cratylus* 3 indicates that it is only as *Forms* that the virtues can have that status. The anti-flux aside at 411b–c occurs at just this point, it seems, to make the point that the virtues were named on the false assumption that they are 'inherently fluid and unstable' (Sedley 2003: 28) rather than always the same. This is why Sedley sees a 'watershed' here. The consensus in the cosmological domain does not extend to the ethical one.

But this is not the whole story. There is a competing voice in Plato that wants to agree with the namegivers in this context too. We should not be surprised by this. After all, in the late dialogues Plato grasps intelligence as a virtue that intrinsically has an exemplary kind of motion. *This* Plato is already nascently there in the *Cratylus*, along with the one who is insistent upon, even stuck on, the incompatibility of being with all motion. When he addresses the names of the virtues, Plato *reverts* to using ῥοή in the non-fluxist way we found in the cosmic etymologies. If 411b–c brings a change of tone, it does not actually *set* the tone for these analyses. Since moreover the concern with cosmic flow continues into this discussion, a possible inference is that this flow is itself virtuous, and that the virtues in us, if they 'go with' anything, go with *it*. Ultimately the issue for us is why this Plato does not prevail in the *Cratylus*. My suggestion will be that he may well have done, had he been able to associate flow with virtue *univocally*.

As indicated in section 2, the account of the virtues embraces a number of terms which are not virtues in themselves but are in some way relevant to virtue. In this section I address three such groups of terms, where the notion of going with the flow is particularly salient or important: the names of the virtues proper (4a), those relating to advantage or benefit (4b), and those of the passions (4c). The two other groups included under this heading in the breakdown I gave in section 2 will be addressed in section 5.

4a. The virtues

When the turn to the virtues is announced at 411a, it is the *intellectual* virtues that are specified, such as φρόνησις.[59] Socrates presents his aside at 411b–c as a revelation about *these* names. They presuppose, he says, that things 'are moving and flowing and becoming' (φερομένοις τε καὶ ῥέουσι καὶ γιγνομένοις: 411c).[60] Here 'flow' mediates motion and change, suggesting that it comprises both – i.e., that it is 'flux'. But note that if this is to conform to 411b–c, it must concern a flux so extreme that identifiable 'things' are precluded. Furthermore, the word for 'things' that Socrates uses at 411c is ambiguous, and Socrates exploits this. *Pragmata* can refer equally to the things we do (in this context, mental acts) and the things we 'have to do with' (the *objects* of knowledge, etc.). At 411c the dative τοῖς πράγμασι denotes the things *on* which the names at issue 'are imposed' (ἐπίκειται). That is, the intellectual virtues themselves are 'moving and flowing and becoming'. The analysis at 411d–412b will confirm at least that they move, but will also specify that they move *with* 'things' more broadly. It does *not* say or imply that in going with their objects these virtues *themselves* are in flux, unstable and always changing.

At 404d wisdom (σοφία) was defined as touching, grasping, and being able to follow things in motion. This is the *Leitmotiv* of the etymologies here. σοφία itself is derived at 412b from the 'touching' (ἐπαφή) of motion (σοῦς, 'rush'; cf. σοῦμαι). In a similar vein, φρόνησις (intelligence[61]) is the 'apprehension [νόησις] of motion and flow [φορᾶς καὶ ῥοῦ]' (411d). Socrates derives ἐπιστήμη, 'knowledge', from ἔπειμι, 'go after' or 'follow'.[62] The name 'indicates that a soul worth speaking of', i.e., a *knowing* soul, is 'one that follows [ἑπομένης] things in their motion, neither falling behind nor running ahead of them' (412a). In the case of σύνεσις he has only to point

out (412a–b) that in Greek 'to understand' (συν-ιέναι) is *literally* to 'go with'. The theme of *change* is not apparent in these etymologies, but is introduced at 411d with γνώμη ('consideration[63] of generation': γονῆς νώμησις) and νόησις, which through the antique form νεόεσις is read as a 'seeking of the new' (τοῦ νεοῦ ἕσις).

Sedley (2003: 120) cautions against regarding these etymologies as unserious on the grounds that 'the Greek cognitive vocabulary', as Plato sees it, carries much the same tenor as our own (his examples include 'be up to speed', 'be in touch', 'keep abreast', 'get the drift', 'follow'). There is nothing outlandish, he argues, in Plato's view that underlying all this are the twin 'convictions' of a world in constant change and the need to keep up with that change intellectually. This is well said, but it is also a somewhat one-sided reading of our passage, where change is not nearly so central. Sedley would argue that the φρόνησις etymology is a third one bearing on change, since he reads ῥοή there as 'flux'. This is justified if we see a seamless transition from 411b–c, but this is just what I dispute.[64] If the namegivers proceed on the assumption of *extreme* flux, as 411b–c holds they do, how can they maintain the conception of wisdom (etc.) imputed to them? If there are no things lasting enough to warrant the name, what exactly does one go with? And what does 'go with' even mean, if everything is moving around every which way at once? The very notion seems null. The namegivers' apparent 'conviction' that we are wise to go with things tells against the assertion that they subscribe to extreme flux.

Having said that, I do not rule out that *Mach* 1 flux is in play. We *can* speak meaningfully of going with a thing that endures as it changes. To understand it is then to follow these changes without losing sight of it. It is notable that when he discusses σύνεσις Socrates associates it with συλλογισμός. Here this could mean 'reckoning together' the successive states of a thing, gathering what it is now to what it has been. If so, Plato is now allowing the namegivers the very ontology – unity in change – that he denied them at 411b–c and failed to see in Heraclitus at 402a. But another reading is possible, which bears not even on *Mach* 1 flux but on cosmic *flow*. Is the object of συλλογισμός necessarily a *single* thing? If we recall the discussion of Apollo, it may be the harmonious 'going around together' of the celestial bodies. To go with *them* in understanding is to see past phenomenal discrepancies. They may be 'reckoned together' as exemplifying uniform circular motion in spite of the fact that some of them *seem* at times to slow down, speed up, or even go into reverse, relative to each other (cf. *Timaeus* 39a–b).[65] If this motion is linked to flow, as I argue it is, then understanding means going with things that *flow* without intrinsically changing or 'becoming' even in a *Mach* 1 sense.

But what of the motion the intellectual virtues *have*? The analyses have shifted the focus from this to the motion of their objects. Clearly, since they 'follow' this, the virtues will be in flux if the 'things' are, and will flow if the latter flow. The latter surely is more coherent. If someone asks me why I say Uncle Harry is the wisest person I know, my answer isn't going to be 'he's so in flux', or 'he's so in touch with universal flux that he changes his mind every moment'. I would sooner say that for him being alive isn't being churned about in a washing machine, that he has won a perspective which enables him to take things in his stride and see through to what endures in the masks of change and daily circumstance. But we do not have

to rely on what just sounds right to us. The *Cratylus* provides clear information about the motion of the virtues, independent of the 'going with' motif.

The account of the virtues reaches its 'peak' (415a) when Socrates addresses virtue and wickedness *as such*. Regarding the latter, which is treated first, he says that 'inasmuch as things are in motion, all that moves badly [κακῶς ἰὸν] would be evil [κακία]', adding that 'when this bad motion as regards things is present in the *soul*' it has the sense of κακία as 'wickedness' (415b). What characterises this bad motion? Socrates explains this through a couple of anti-virtues. 'Cowardice', δειλία, is a 'strong' 'bond' of the soul (δεῖν, 'to bond', + λίαν, 'excessively'). 'Perplexity', ἀπορία, is the privation (ἀ-) of 'passage' (πορεύεσθαι). It is an 'evil' just because 'it is *in the way* of motion and passage' (ἐμποδὼν ᾗ τῷ ἰέναι καὶ πορεύεσθαι), and this, it seems to Socrates, would be how the namegivers understand *every* obstacle to motion (415c). We might object that perplexity is less what *impedes* our understanding than a *state* of impeded understanding. No matter. For as Socrates goes on to say, it is not just what impedes motion that is evil, but also those things whose own passage is 'halting and impeded' (ἰσχομένως τε καὶ ἐμποδιζομένως). Why? Because 'the soul that is checked [ἔχῃ] in this way becomes filled with wickedness', presumably out of resentment, spite, or vengefulness.

So then, if ἀρετή is the 'opposite' (415c) of κακία, and if all things are in motion, it must have a motion that is the precise contrary of this. What might this be? After giving ἀρετή the broad sense of '*ease* of passage' or 'faring well (εὐ-πορία as opposed to ἀ-πορία), Socrates says the name signifies 'that the *flow* of the good soul [τὴν ῥοὴν τῆς ἀγαθῆς ψυχῆς] is always released [λελυμένην: unyoked, but also relaxed or loose]'. He concludes that ἀρετή gets its name because it '*always flows*' (ἀεὶ ῥέον) 'unchecked and unhindered' (ἀσχέτως καὶ ἀκωλύτως) (415d). The point is not that virtue is a good *rather than bad* 'flow of the soul', but that it has a flowing and *ipso facto* good motion, not an impeded or impeding one.

Plato goes out of his way here to read ἀεί (taking ἀρετή as a 'compressed' form of ἀιρειτή) instead of an alpha-privative. The latter would of course signify that virtue is *without* flow, which corresponds to the position asserted at the end of the dialogue in opposition to the flux doctrine. Yet the etymology proposed for ἀρετή no more hinges on flux than do the similar ones for air and aether. As I argued in the Introduction (section 1), that would make the account nonsensical. How could virtue be marked by 'ease of passage' or an ongoing sense of 'faring well' if it were 'always in flux'? The contrast with 'halting and impeded' motion gives its flow the sense of smooth, effortlessly maintained motion, along the lines of Portia's 'the quality of mercy is not strained,/it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven'. The implication is that virtue is not something we constantly have to fight for, against the tide of natural inclinations. It has a *facility* which suggests that *it* may be a natural inclination itself. It can be questioned whether its flow has a *regularity* corresponding to that of the celestial bodies or aether, since ἀσχέτως ('unchecked') can mean wild and ungovernable. But here I think it simply means unretarded.[66] Given the nature of the cosmic etymologies, it is unlikely that Plato is now ascribing to the namegivers a view that *wildly* flowing motion is virtuous.

Now this easy, flowing motion, as the mark of virtue as such, must apply to the intellectual virtues. In that case there is a tension between 415c–e and the claim at

411c that these virtues not only 'move' and 'flow' but 'become'. 'Always flowing' does not intrinsically entail change, and implies rather that virtue has an enduring self-sameness *in* its motion. As earlier remarked, even the analyses of the intellectual virtues never actually said that *they* become, only that (some of) the things they go with do. Had Socrates said only that these virtues 'move and flow', there would be no discrepancy, but the addition of 'become' gives 'flow' a sense it does not have in the ensuing analysis, or for that matter the cosmological one. This statement is in thrall to the anti-flux aside just before it. The *etymologies* are not.

On this basis let us return to the theme of 'going with'. Why should the good motion that characterises virtue not already be present in the 'things' the intellectual virtues follow? Insofar as these are sensibles, they will of course come and go, but this may be part of something greater that 'always flows'. The year, for example, is always there, always 'coming round again'. As we saw in section 3a, it designates the cosmic 'order of things' from a temporal point of view – and not just an objective order but a self-maintaining one which 'examines' all that it brings into being. This implies that the world (however much flux it may comprise) *has* the intellectual virtues and the flow that characterises them. The soul that goes with this flow will then participate in a cosmic virtue. Is this to read something extraneous into the text? Not at all, for this is the point of the etymologies of 'the good' and 'justice' that fall between the two passages we have examined. Both, as we saw, are treated in terms of a *pan-cosmic* motion, and δικαιοσύνη, 'justness' as a character of the soul, is grasped at 412c as 'the understanding of justice' (τῇ τοῦ δικαίου συνέσει) in precisely the sense of 'going with' that motion.

Hence the point of the virtue etymologies is not simply that the namegivers (and their allies such as Homer and Heraclitus) view *change* as 'a force for the good' and 'the basis of positive values' (Sedley 2003: 114). It is not just or even primarily change that they have in view. They may not have arrived at the thought of *Forms*, or grasped that these are what we look to intellectually, but they do grasp intelligence as seeing past what is present to the senses and envisioning its ground. Recall von Fritz's point (1993: 23–26) that in Homer the fundamental sense of *noein* (the verb corresponding to *nous*) is discerning with the mind's eye the true nature or meaning of a situation, person, action, etc. As he also points out (1993: 38–42), Heraclitus gives this a cosmic extension, wherein what intelligence sees through to is 'the divine law that governs everything', the 'hidden harmony' binding things that are overtly in conflict, or in other words the *logos*.[67] Heraclitus sees his *logos* in everything, but not with his eyes. He claims that we only understand the things we see when we 'see' them from and in the *logos*, the structure or law of unity in opposition. While the aside at 411b–c may treat these men as idiots whose world is simply the whirling fog of their own thinking, the actual etymologies grant them a richer and more interesting perspective which is more in harmony with the way they actually think.

All of these remarks, however, must now be set on one side. They pertain to the *projected* destination of the regress, Zeus as cosmic *nous*. The account of justice at 412c–413c recalls this but does not *accomplish* it. Ostensibly the reason it ends in aporia is that the *dikaion* etymology does not disclose the *nature* of justice, telling us neither what this all-pervasive cosmic force is nor what makes it just. Making the

connection with Zeus (*Dia*) merely begs the question (however Zeus be conceived): what makes Zeus just? At this point, Socrates says (413b), the consensus among the advocates of this view breaks down. They variously identify justice with the sun, fire, heat, and *nous*,[68] leaving him more at a loss than ever. His aporia is, I think, a touch disingenuous. He has them do no more than *identify* justice with something, which *of course* is going to beg the question anew. He does not take on the actual *conceptions* of cosmic justice that may be found in the *phusikoi*, such as requital (Anaximander) or strife (Heraclitus). It may be countered that this would take him too far afield. His business here, after all, is just etymology. Yet if the whole investigation has cosmic *nous* as its target, surely we are at a crucial juncture here which demands that he pursue further the nature of justice, and indeed the justice of nature. As we will see, justice crops up again in later etymologies, in quite thought-provoking ways, but the text itself does not respond to the provocation. It hints at an *ontological* problem, while retaining the option of dismissing it as a fault in the namegivers' *beliefs*.

In what follows I will argue that the non-fulfilment of the regress hinges on the *ontological* duplicity of flow. There is already a clue to this effect in the account of the virtues. At 413e Socrates derives 'courage' (ἀνδρεία) from ἄνω (or perhaps ἀντί)[69] ῥεῖ, on the grounds that it got its name in battle – 'a battle in what is, if this latter flows, being nothing but an opposing flow' (μάχην δ΄ εἶναι ἐν τῷ ὄντι, εἴπερ ῥεῖ, οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὴν ἐναντίαν ῥοήν). ὄντι is singular, and it is tempting to think of opposed flows within a 'conflicted' being, but more likely it means 'in what is' as a class. Fowler's 'in the universe' is plausible in this sense, since Socrates goes on to connect courage with justice, whose cosmic flow has just preoccupied him. Not every opposing flow is courage, he says, but only the one which opposes 'the flow that is contrary to justice' (τῇ παρὰ τὸ δίκαιον ῥεούσῃ: 414a). Evidently this too begs the question. Courage may be found on both sides in any battle. Which one has justice on its side? Is the more courageous *ipso facto* the more just?

The clashing of *opposed* flows is not typical of the way flow's duplicity emerges, which has more to do with an ambiguity in its inner nature. Nevertheless, inasmuch as the discussion of courage leaves us with the question of how to tell the just flow from its contrary, it does in its way allude to this. Socrates does not address that question here, other than by distinguishing an 'upward' (ἄνω) 'male' (ἄρρεν, ἀνήρ) flow from a female one. Yet since this recalls the 'hard', 'unbending', ultra-male Ares at 407d, we must be wary of identifying the 'male' flow with justice, which passes through *easily* and without constraint. It may just be the more powerful flow, and going with it just a capitulation to the glib facility of 'might is right'.

4b. Advantage

After the 'peak' reached with the etymologies of 'virtue' and 'wickedness', Socrates takes up a number of words pertaining to advantage, which are 'related to the good and the fine' (416e)[70] without denoting virtues proper. He tends to downplay the financial senses of these words in order to make a connection with virtue as going with the flow. So συμφέρον, instead of an amassing of money, simply means

'the *motion* [φορά] of the soul *in company with* [μετά, = συν-] things' (417a) – just like *epistêmê*, as Socrates remarks. The next two words he relates to the cosmic motion previously associated with the good and justice, which the virtuous soul would follow. κερδαλέα, 'gainful' (κέρδος, 'gain') is derived from 'mingling [κερ-άννυται] with things in passing through [διεξιόν]' (417b); διεξιόν was used with regard to justice at 412d, and Socrates (strangely) seeks to force a link with the good by replacing the delta in κέρδος with nu. Regarding λυσιτελοῦν, 'profitable', Socrates rejects the derivation, 'setting free' (or discharging) an 'outlay', proposing that the original meaning was 'freeing' (or releasing: λύον) the 'end' (τέλος) of motion (417c). As the namegiver valorises motion, he calls *the good* λυσιτελοῦν because it 'immortalises' motion. A link with justice is implied when Socrates refers to this as 'the *fastest* of all beings', which 'does not let things stand still' and won't brook any attempt to bring about an end of motion, even a pause.

It is not made clear whether the extant senses of these words – advantage in general – emerged *in place of* or *on the basis of* their etymological ones. If the good is λυσιτελοῦν, for example, does this mean solely that it 'frees the end', or that its *advantageousness* consists in this? I think the latter. Advantage is the theme that unifies this group of words, so it is natural to suppose that Plato intends to keep it in play. Besides, it is probably co-intended when he refers to 'the good'. Bearing in mind the association of the good with flowing motion, his purpose seems to be to bring to mind those individuals who have such a canny knack for turning things to their advantage that they seem blessed, as if the way of things were on their side. The συμφέρον etymology especially suggests that it is those who 'are carried around' (συμπεριφέρισθαι), in sync with the flow of life, who forever find things conducive to their advantage.[71] They 'get it' somehow, as if some invisible Athena were giving them over-the-shoulder advice.

There is an obverse side to this, however, and while the other two etymologies do not directly speak to it they do hint at it. First, κέρδος has definite overtones of gain *by deception*. In the plural it can just mean 'wiles' (LSJ *s.v.* II), a sense Homer naturally uses for Odysseus (*Iliad* 23.709, *Odyssey* 13.291).[72] Even if it remains at the level of innuendo, this puts the notion of going with the flow on a slipperier footing. Are we concerned with individuals who simply conform with cosmic flow, who act for the best in the understanding that what is good for the whole is good for them? Or with individuals who pursue their own advantage at others' expense in some parallel universe where deception is needful and the wicked seem to have the wind at their backs? At what point does pursuing my own good veer off from pursuing the good as such? I put the question in this way because Plato does not generally regard the latter as simply opposed to the former. Pursuing virtue rather than wealth is not 'selfless'. It is driven by the desire to be a better person (recall the earlier discussion of Hades) and to 'get on' in life in *this* sense. Moreover, if the point that it is the virtuous (not the wicked) who 'get on', i.e., who 'flow' and are not 'impeded', carries into the discussion of advantage, we might infer that wealth comes naturally to those who do not seek it but just get on with being virtuous. Interestingly, in the *Critias* (121a–b) this is just how Plato imagines things were with the Atlantans, *before* they succumbed to hubris. Their example seems to answer our question. Once I clue

into this curious logic whereby I get the thing I don't seek, it is easy enough to 'milk' it cynically and pursue my own advantage *under cover of* contributing to the social fund of virtue from which I draw. From there it is hardly a leap to the hubristic notion that getting ahead *per se* is the mark of the virtuous.

Implicitly, then, the introduction of κερδαλέα seems to threaten to take the guiding theme of going with the flow into much murkier waters. Besides the ambiguity over whether it is the wise or the merely clever, the virtuous or the wicked, who go with the flow and are naturally advantaged, there is a question as to whether going with the flow itself may *turn* one from the former into the latter. It may even be asked whether cosmic flow even cares who goes with it, whom it advantages. I will return to this shortly.

Regarding λυσιτελοῦν, although Socrates severs its etymology from the sense it has among traders, it can be asked whether the circulation of *money* is still in play. Motion freed of any end is suggestive of the fact that capital has to be perpetually 'alienated' to be augmented, and augmented to be preserved. It might also be said that what is 'freeing' for it is different for us, who may be locked into a rather wild and capricious ride (more rollercoaster than ferris wheel). Admittedly the text allows for different readings of perpetual motion here. When Socrates summarises his account of the advantage words at 419a, he says that they signify not just motion but 'that which sets in order' (τὸ διακοσμοῦν). This must relate specifically to the cosmic *activity* imputed to the good in the discussion of λυσιτελοῦν, and in using the key Anaxagorean term, διακοσμέω, Socrates clearly connects this activity with *nous*. However, we should bear in mind where the investigation ultimately leads: not the regularity of *nous* but 'divine wandering'. Is there not a presentiment of this here?

The summary referred to occurs in connection with the discussion of δέον ('obligation'), which is a significant juncture in the dialogue. It complicates the neat correspondences between the advantage words and flow, and between their contraries and the negative principle of impedence. As Socrates says (418e), δέον seems to be a 'bond' (δεσμός) even though it is 'a form of good' (ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα). He circumvents the problem by replacing the epsilon with iota in accordance with older forms of speech. Read as διόν, 'going through', the word belongs among those denoting advantage, which 'signify that which sets in order and moves'. Now Socrates seems to *replace* the 'bond' sense with this contrary one, yet can it be this simple? Yes, if δέον entails a retarded motion that *mars* order, but as we have seen (section 3d) there is a *good* bond alongside this bad one. This must surely be the case here, given the transparent allusion to Anaxagorean *nous*. The ordering *nous* achieves through its revolution is evidently a kind of binding of things into a system. Inasmuch as cosmic flow involves a harmonious moving together, it needs the good bond to ensure its own positive status *vis-à-vis* the bad bond associated with obstructed motion and things moving 'at cross purposes'.

To try to bring out what remains in the background in this passage, it is worth consulting Socrates' discussion of Anaxagoras in the *Phaedo*. The word δέον crops up at the end of his rebuke of Anaxagoras for not thinking through what his own thought of *nous* entails. In substituting a mechanical how for the teleological why of cosmic order, Anaxagoras and other *phusikoi* 'do not really believe that the good and

obligatory [τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ δέον] binds and holds all things together' (99c). As we saw in section 3a, on Plato's reading Anaxagoras does maintain that *nous* 'holds' things together. It is not that he doesn't really believe that *nous* orders everything. Rather, he only thinks this as *physically* binding for things. They are not obligated *morally* to take up the good as their own concern and bind themselves to it as the standard of their own actions.[73] Cosmic order then threatens to be merely the chess-board on which clever schemers like Odysseus make their moves, with the gods' blessing in Homer, and perhaps with *nous*' in Anaxagoras.[74] The passage ends with Socrates admitting his ignorance about how *nous* can have 'daimonic force'. By this, I take it, he means not just how the immaterial can impact on matter, but how the effects of *nous* in the physical world can also impact on the soul and convert it to a different way of 'going about' things, and a different perspective on what is for its own good.

What bearing does this have on the *Cratylus*? Simply that this ignorance is no less Socrates' plight here. He wants to believe in *nous*, and with it flow, but he does not see a way through. The difference is the absence of a critique in this part of the dialogue. Socrates does not latch on to δέον as the weak spot in the conceptual scheme he imputes to the namegivers. He does not berate them for ascribing to their flow principle a moral neutrality – or perhaps even worse, a moral *ambivalence* – with regard to human behaviour. He lets this slide throughout the discussion of advantage, with no more than passing hints at the issues lurking in the background. I suggest that the reason is that these issues are not simply weapons he might use against them. He himself is in a predicament here, which does not just have to do with etymology. How is it that both just and unjust people seem, in different ways or at different times, to go with the flow of life and be favoured by it? This issue will exercise Plato in the *Republic*, as we will see in Chapter 6, but it is more than he is ready to tackle head-on in the *Cratylus*. Nevertheless, the next group of words he addresses offers a different and significant insight into the problem of flow's double nature.

4c. The passions

How does it stand with 'flow', if not only the virtues but the passions 'go with' it? If it is itself virtuous in the former case, why would it not be impassioned, even manic, in the latter? This is the simplest way to express the problem that the passage at 419b–420b provokes. It is an oversimplification, for *some* of the passions are said to share the easy motion of virtue, but the problem remains that flow is not univocal in character, so that it is unclear how going with it can be normative. The *Cratylus* does not get to the point of raising this problem explicitly. It is not even clearly stated that this passage concerns 'passions' as distinct from virtues. Socrates turns to pleasure (ἡδονή) on account of a link to advantage (ὄνησις),[75] and runs through various other affective states by the bye. When Hermogenes comments on the rushed nature of all this at 420d, Socrates explains that he is 'running the last lap' of his race to finish his etymological speculations while his inspiration lasts. Some would read this as an invitation to take the passage with a grain of salt. Yet Plato must have taken it seriously, for important claims in the two love dialogues of the

middle period, the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, clearly draw from it. That there is *some* kind of innuendo in Plato's metadiscursive gesture at this point is hard to doubt. But its target, I think, is not the etymologies but the nature of flow. Both performatively and constatively the discussion of the passions points ahead to 'divine wandering'.

At first Socrates proceeds as if the 'good' passions received their names in accordance with the principle of flow, the 'bad' ones with that of impedence. So 'sorrow', ἀνία, is the privation (ἀ-) and thus 'impedence' (ἐμποδίζον) of 'motion' (ἰέναι), and 'vexation', ἀχθηδών, is modelled on the 'weight' (ἄχθος) that vexation imposes on motion (419c). He might have gone further and distinguished the sluggishness of sorrow from the somehow fast but still impeded motion of vexation, but the general point is clear. In contrast, 'joy', χαρά, speaks to the 'flow of the soul' as a 'melting', 'relaxing', or 'outpouring' (διάχυσις). Joy is also linked to εὐπορία, 'ease of passage', which at 415c was posited as the mark of *virtue*. Along similar lines, 'delight' (τέρψις) is derived from the easy 'gliding' (ἕρψις) of the soul (419d). And 'good cheer,' εὐφροσύνη – or εὐ-φερο-σύνη, as it should be called 'by rights' – is deemed self-evidently to denote the soul's 'moving' or 'faring' (φέρω) 'well' and 'rightly' (εὖ), that is, 'moving in harmony [ξυμ-φέρεσθαι] with things' (like *epistêmê* and *sumpheron*).

It is a shame that all of this is run through so quickly, without broaching how these last passions may be connected substantively with virtue. Insofar as the virtues have to do with restraining certain passions, we might after all place them in the 'bad' category of impedence. But not if there are certain 'flowing' passions that naturally go hand in hand with partaking in the good or beauty. This connection is not denied in Plato's later work. At *Symposium* 206d–e Diotima affirms that, for all the indigence, illness, and pains associated with love, there is a moment when, drawing close to the beautiful, the lover 'relaxes' or 'melts' (διαχεῖται) and becomes 'gracious' (ἵλεών) and 'cheerful' (εὐφρ-αινόμενον). This state is what makes it possible to beget in the beautiful. It releases the lover, who is not himself beautiful, into a harmony with the beautiful beloved so that he partakes in beauty in his fashion. This reads much like an explication of what the *Cratylus* passage only hints at. So too do key passages of the *Phaedrus*. But in both cases it must be stressed that this fluid state of joy and good cheer is grasped as an essential moment of *love*. In the *Cratylus* by contrast it is more or less sharply set off from the more manic or viral flow that constitutes love. The *Phaedrus* in particular will seek to account for how it is that the experience of love can comprise both of these moments (see Chapter 3). The *Cratylus*, as it were, provides the raw materials for this, but there is much here that has not yet been worked through.

Socrates goes on to address other passions whose names do not conform to the general pattern, in that they point to a flow which is unimpeded but not unequivocally good. These have to do with *desire*. ἐπιθυμία itself names τῇ ἐπὶ τὸν θυμὸν ἰούσῃ δυνάμει, 'the power that goes to[76] the θυμός'. θυμός is often roughly synonymous with ψυχή, but it has the specific sense of 'the heart's desire', or 'passion' in the sense of vehement emotions like anger, from which it gains the general sense of 'spirit', 'courage', or 'pluck'. Heraclitus (B 85) distinguishes θυμός sharply from ψυχή on this basis; the former's gain is the latter's loss. In contrast, Plato refers here to θυμός as θύσεως καὶ ζέσεως τῆς ψυχῆς (419e). Here θυμός *is*

the soul, *when* it is in the state of 'raging and boiling', i.e., when the force of desire invades it. Note that this power pre-exists the soul it 'goes to'. Presumably it has a raging and boiling nature in itself which it then imparts to the soul.

In view of the repeated reference to Zeus in *Cratylus* 2, we might wonder whether Plato paused at the verb ζέω ('boil' or 'seethe') and pondered a link to ζῆν and Ζεύς. A seething Zeus is not unheard of in the poets, whose kinship with the namegivers has been something of a subplot in the *Cratylus*. The *Phaedrus* will not specifically speak of this, but it will impute to Zeus an erotic longing which is not at odds with how it addresses the seething of the soul in love. The question can be asked whether the *cosmic* Zeus of *Cratylus* 2 has desire as well as *nous*, and with that a seething motion somehow juxtaposed with its orderly one. To be sure, my speculation that Plato's usage of ζέω might have given him pause is not much of a basis for this. Yet consider this. If desire goes *into* the soul, *whence*? Our first thought may be from the *object* of desire, yet both the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* suggest otherwise. It is clear at *Symposium* 209b that the erotic urge pre-exists any specific love object, since it sets us on the quest to *find* one. In the *Phaedrus* the source of the flow of desire that inundates the lover's soul is not the beloved but the antenatally experienced Form of Beauty which the sight of the beloved recalls. I do not claim that this is the case in the *Cratylus*. But in keeping with the regress from mythic to natural gods, there may be a cosmic version of the claim in both later dialogues that love is divine in origin, that the lover is 'engodded' (ἔνθεον). It may not be elaborated, but a notion is in play here of desire as a supraindividual force (i.e., flow) traversing the world, entering us, and then (perhaps) getting individuated as *our own* desire for this or that.

The next two etymologies also suggest this supraindividuality, but in a slightly different way (hence Socrates introduces them with ἀλλὰ μήν, 'but'). Instead of an invasive flow into the soul, 'longing', ἵμερος, constitutes a flow which draws the soul *into itself*. It is 'the flow which *most* draws the soul' (τῷ μάλιστα ἕλκοντι τὴν ψυχὴν ῥῷ), 'because it flows with a rush and an impetuous shooting towards things' (ὅτι ἰέμενος ῥεῖ καὶ ἐφιέμενος τῶν πραγμάτων: 419e–420a). Etymologically, then, ἵμερος derives from a 'rushing' (ἰέμενος) 'flow' (ῥοῦς). The implication is again that this stream of longing *pre-exists* the soul, which it draws into itself and which 'it draws *on* vehemently through the doggedness of its flowing (ἐπισπᾷ σφόδρα τὴν ψυχὴν διὰ τὴν ἔσιν τῆς ῥοῆς: 420a)'.[77] 'Yearning', πόθος, is grasped as the name for this same impetuous flow when it relates not to what is present but what is 'absent' (perhaps what no longer exists: ἀπόντος) or 'somewhere else' (ἄλλοθί που). Just what this longing and yearning might involve before it is ours is anyone's guess, but a place seems to be left open for it by Plato's text.

Finally, love is called ἔρως 'because it *flows in* [ἐσρεῖ] from without [ἔξωθεν]'. Underscoring the point, Socrates adds: 'this flowing is not inherent [οἰκεία] in him who has it, but introduced [ἐπείσακτος] through the eyes' (420a–b). Love then is in us as something foreign, not homegrown. It doesn't intrinsically belong to our 'house' (οἶκος). We 'have' (ἔχειν) it, as Socrates says, but perhaps it is more that it has us. As the love dialogues will say, the lover is 'engodded', divinely possessed. But if this renders the lover capable of great acts of bravery, for example (*Symposium*

179a–b, 207b), what about the 'rash and bloody deeds' to which such mania may lead us? The *Phaedrus* says of the followers of Ares that, 'if they fall prey to love and think they have been injured by the object of their passion, they thirst for blood and are ready to sacrifice both their own lives and their favourite's' (252c). To go with *this* flow would plainly be to alienate oneself from the good, not to partake in it. With this in mind it is easy to understand why Plato stresses the role of *nous* as 'pilot of the soul' (*Phaedrus* 247d). In the face of such overwhelming passions, it is intelligence that keeps the psychical house in order and enables the soul to remain sober and self-possessed. Nevertheless, even the mania of love is not enough to make Plato denigrate it, at least in the *Phaedrus*. Plato deems it a species of *good* mania, his point being (as I will argue in Chapter 3) that we need to be shaken free of our usual self-possession in order to learn to love in a non-possessive way.

To recapitulate: as a smooth and easy motion of the soul, flow has been linked with virtue and with passions such as joy, but in the above etymologies flow is a more impetuous motion, about which the least that could be said is that we cannot be sure *a priori* that it is wise to go along with it. Are there, then, two distinct flows, either or both within the soul (parcelled out, say, into its intelligent and desiring parts) and at the supra-individual or cosmic level? If so, what is the status of each relative to the other? Is one of them more truly 'flow'? Passages such as *Timaeus* 41d and *Philebus* 29b–c, which stress the inferiority of our psychical and somatic constitution to that of the cosmos, would incline us to think that flow is exemplary at the cosmic level, and only becomes manic or impetuous once it enters our soul, and even then only on the condition that the soul goes with it too keenly and uncircumspectively, improperly egging on the motion it receives. But the etymologies just discussed do not give this impression. They imply that there is already something of this impetuosity in flow before it affects the soul. Why then should this flow appear at some times as impetuous or manic, at others as smooth, effortless, and regular?

This is not a problem Plato takes up directly, but I think we may justifiably say that it is there in the text, and not just 'in itself' or 'for us' (as Hegel would say), i.e., behind Plato's back. For what else is it but this double nature of flow that paves the way for him to have the pursuit of cosmic flow culminate in 'divine wandering'? As I said earlier, I believe there is a performative pointer here too. On a simpler reading, it is just because Socrates sees the end in sight that he rushes through this part of the investigation. But suppose the reverse is true. 'Rushing' is a significant theme not only in the passion etymologies but in those that follow, and is even implicit in 'divine wandering' itself. Precisely in rushing, Socrates is doing what he is saying, being what he is describing. That, I suggest, is why the end of his pursuit is in sight – because he can now see the ambiguity of flow from his own experience of going with it.

5 Divine wandering

At 421b we meet perhaps the strangest of all the etymologies. The discussion has turned to 'the greatest and finest names' (truth, falsity, being), and the very name 'name'. Socrates declares that ἀλήθεια, 'truth', 'has been put together like the other

names [τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔοικε συγκεκροτῆσθαι], for the divine motion of what is seems to have been called by the name ἀλήθεια because it is *a divine wandering* [ἡ γὰρ θεία τοῦ ὄντος φορὰ ἔοικε προσειρῆσθαι τούτῳ τῷ ῥήματι, τῇ ΄ἀληθείᾳ΄, ὡς θεία οὖσα ἄλη]'. Can this possibly be meant seriously? And what does it mean? What does Socrates mean to say by divine wandering? What does he mean to do in linking it with truth? And what is the function of this remark in the etymological investigation overall?

As is well known, the actual etymology of ἀλήθεια is 'un-concealment' (alpha-privative + λήθη). It would be surprising if this simply never occurred to Plato, since the metaphorics of the cave allegory in *Republic* VII lean heavily on the word having its actual etymological sense.[78] But even if it didn't, he surely does not believe in the etymology proposed. It must be a joke, and the point must be to say something *about* the namegivers and their principles. Admittedly Socrates gives the appearance of still employing those principles. That ἀλήθεια is 'like the other names' clearly means that it presupposes that to be is to move or flow, and that what has a flowing motion is *good*. This is implied both by 'divine' and by the positive status of 'truth' *vis-à-vis* 'falsity', ψεῦδος, which is found to imply impedence. Yet if this seems to yield a simple explanation for why Socrates seizes on ἄλη rather than the alpha-privative, this appearance is deceptive. If ἀλήθεια were fashioned in this way, the namegivers would in fact contravene the principles imputed to them.

For ἄλη is not just any motion. LSJ give its basic sense as 'wandering or roaming without home or hope of rest', referring primarily to *Odyssey* 10.464, where the 'wanderings' of Odysseus are qualified as 'troublesome' or 'rough' (χαλεπῆς) and linked to his 'withered and dispirited' condition. Here we might sooner associate ἄλη with the bad principle of impedence. At 15.342 Odysseus says there is no greater evil for mortals to endure. Homer often associates wandering with beggary, and at 14.124–125 connects both with *lying*. For the sake of alms wanderers recklessly (ἄλλως, here a play on ἄλη) invent all manner of tales about Odysseus to please Penelope. Truth is the last thing on their minds. Here and in other cases ἄλη denotes an impetuous and errant rather than impeded motion. Hippocrates (*Breaths* 8) speaks of wanderings of the blood in *fever*. Euripides (*Medea* 1285) associates Ino's wandering across the world with a mental ἄλη, a god-sent madness in punishment for killing her children. It ends with her wandering off a cliff into the sea. Parmenides (B 14–15) speaks of the moon as 'wandering' (ἀλώμενον) about the earth, constantly seeking out the sun's rays because it has no light of its own by which to find its way in the night. 'Straying' is not *directly* signified here, since the moon's motion *is* a 'circling' (B 10), but it seems co-intended; the moon *would* stray were it not for the orientation provided by the sun. Its waning and waxing might in this context suggest a falling behind and catching up in its quest to stay on track.

Whatever specific sense of ἄλη is intended at 421b, it seems at odds with the steady, easy 'flow' that the namegivers have been found to valorise. What is more, far from helping to reveal the nature of *truth*, ἄλη suggests that truth does not have a definite nature, that *it* 'wanders'. It is not just that motion = being and being = truth, but that truth/being is variable, is whatever motion happens to be. Now Plato's point cannot seriously be that the namegivers *saw* truth thus and

named it accordingly, for then their valorised principle would be more akin to a regulatory ideal than a description of reality. But it *can* be that they did not see it very clearly, that their endeavours were not underpinned by a rigorous notion of truth. From this point of view the ἀλήθεια derivation is less an etymology based on their principles than a *comment* on those principles.

Before we examine further what that might involve, we should observe how this passage handles the theme of *being*. Here again Socrates refers to 'what is' in the singular. Truth is the divine motion τοῦ ὄντος: either 'of what is' as a class, or 'of *the* being' – the universe in Fowler's translation. Against the former, not everything that is (i.e., moves) is divine.[79] If the motion at issue is divine, so must be the ὄν. Yet while the reference is certainly cosmic, it is not restricted to the universe itself. As I have previously argued, both it and the celestial bodies are primarily meant by 'the things that are always in being by nature' at 397b. These divine ὄντα are now denoted as a class by ὄν. The connection with wandering is thus transparent, for the Greeks called the celestial bodies πλανῆται, 'wanderers', and we have seen Parmenides use ἄλη itself for the moon. Like ἄλη, this term has clear overtones of straying, and the reason it was not taken up in the discussions of the celestial *theoi* is obviously that this sense is inapposite to the message conveyed by θεός: that the celestial gods 'always run' on fixed circular courses. For just this reason Plato rejects the term πλανῆται at *Laws* 822a–b, arguing that these bodies only *seem* to 'wander' or change their paths.[80]

In this light the implicit 'comment' at 421b seems straightforward. The namegivers are stuck at the level of 'appearance' and have nowhere else to look for truth. Such a comment betokens Plato's (pre-*Sophist*) alliance with Parmenides.[81] For Parmenides truth is motionless, 'untrembling' in its 'heart' (B 1.29), although (unlike Plato's Forms) it is not *ipso facto* extra-cosmic. The description of truth in the same passage (in Simplicius' version) as 'well-rounded', and the description of being in B 8 as a 'well-rounded ball' (43) and an 'unmoving' (26, 38) and homogeneous 'whole' (4), suggest an identification of truth and being with the cosmos. Cosmic *motion* is then a veil. To peer behind it is not only to discover a cosmos still and unchanging, free of generation and destruction, but at the same time to see that, on this side of the veil, it is necessary that things appear to us as they do. This seems to me the best way to make sense of the much disputed lines 31–32 of B 1: 'how the things which seem had *seemingly* to be forever traversing everything'.[82] Plato's namegivers would not have seen beyond this veil. Since they identify being with motion, they are bound to take as true what, for Parmenides, is only appearance.

The advantage of reading 421b in this way is that it seems to maximise the cohesion of the *Cratylus* as a whole. Even if part of Plato is drawn to flow, we still need to explain how we get from the (fundamentally) earnest pursuit of it in *Cratylus* 2 to the stance of *Cratylus* 3. The message at 421b, on top of the accumulated innuendo concerning flow's double nature leading up to it, is transparently that flow cannot be relied on. But what is it exactly that is unreliable, the namegivers' *concept* of being as flow, or flow *itself*? It is important to see that there is a fork in the road here for Plato. He takes the former route in *Cratylus* 3, divorcing being from motion and flow *simpliciter*. Later, as we know, he retracts this. In the *Timaeus* this does not yet

occur, but already there cosmic motion is not *just* an appearance dissimulating a true stillness ('a moving image of eternity': 37d). Rather, the *apparent* variations in the celestial motions dissimulate a *true motion*, that of *nous*. Plato does of course recognise an aspect of cosmic motion that is *actually* errant: the 'wandering' (πλανωμένης) cause (48a) that is material 'necessity'. But the scope of its wandering is sharply curtailed; necessity 'complies' with *nous* 'for the most part'. Much greater scope for cosmic waywardness is avowed in the *Statesman*, however, and it pertains to the world-*soul*, not simply to matter. It is here that Plato ventures furthest down the other 'fork'.

I will address all this in detail in Chapters 4 and 5. Here I simply suggest that this whole philosophical drama is contained in germ at *Cratylus* 421b. The ἀλήθεια etymology is not *just* a bit of satire at the namegivers' expense. Plato's own thinking is pulled in different directions here, and *could* have gone down a quite different road than the one taken in *Cratylus* 3. To develop this I shall first go back a little and address the etymologies between the passions and truth. The words addressed here have to do with intention and volition over against compulsion or *necessity*. Leading up to 'divine wandering', this continues the implicit problematisation of cosmic flow that we found in the account of the passions.

The words δόξα (opinion, supposition), οἴησις (belief), and βουλή (intention, both as 'willing', βούλεσθαι, and 'planning', βουλεύεσθαι), are understood in terms of 'aiming' (ἐφίεσθαι) and 'shooting' (βολή) at something. This seems like a return to the terrain of the intellectual virtues, for it is a matter of the soul's 'pursuit' of 'knowledge of how it stands with things' (τὸ εἰδέναι ὅπῃ ἔχει τὰ πράγματα: 420b), its 'motion' (οἶσις) 'towards each thing with a view to what kind of being it is' (ἐπὶ πᾶν πρᾶγμα, οἷόν ἐστιν ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων: 420b–c). Yet the theme here is not *acts* of knowing or what it is like to *be* intelligent. It is the *desire* to know. Desire is the link with the previous group of etymologies (recall that longing was also grasped in terms of ἐφίεσθαι at 420a). But what does this have to do with opinion or belief? If I am set in my beliefs, won't I think I already know and lack the desire to push deeper? Is it then that my beliefs merely reflect my desires, what I *want* to be so? There is a third alternative. The point may be, not the desire implicit in opinion, but the opinion implicit in desire. Expressed *à la* Heidegger, desire is in itself a mode of disclosure. It aims at what it in some way already has in view, and takes aim on the basis of certain fore-conceptions about it which may be true or false, and which the shooting itself aims to validate. Hence, as Socrates unsurprisingly goes on to say, opinion and belief can be 'ill-advised' (ἄβουλος), or fail to hit what they aim at (420c).

Socrates does not say whether this too is a case of going with the flow, whether flow itself is a bit 'hit and miss'. It may be that opinion and belief await admission into the flow which would allow them to go with things, and so to *be* knowledge, wisdom, etc. But the question of course is whether this positive perspective on flow which informed the discussion of the virtues still holds at this stage of the inquiry.

The words addressed next *seem* to suggest that it does. 'Voluntary', ἑκούσιον, simply denotes 'following' or 'yielding to' (εἶκον) the 'motion' (ἰόν) which 'occurs in accordance with the will' (420d). Conversely, 'necessity' or 'compulsion' (ἀνάγκη), or 'the compulsory' (τὸ ἀναγκαῖον), is 'opposed to the will', hence to motion or flow.

It is named from its likeness to 'passing through ravines [ἄγκη], because they are hard to traverse [δύσπορα], rough and dense, and retard motion' (420d–e). Socrates further associates it with ἁμαρτία, 'error' or 'failure', and ἀμαθία, 'ignorance'. It seems we only err and fail when our motion and will is thwarted. But bear in mind that if this passage conforms to the view attributed to the namegivers hitherto, the will at issue is not primarily *ours* (*pace* Reeve's translation). The motion that I 'yield to' will be the cosmic flow, whether the will involved in this is an intelligent or a desiring one. If I insist 'wilfully' on my own way against the headwind of this will, my volition will in fact be compulsion as it is understood here.

However, is cosmic flow simply the standard by which volition and necessity are distinguished in *us*? The impending theme of divine wandering could lead us to think that in the *Cratylus* Plato is thinking 'necessity' *cosmologically* as a 'wandering cause', as he will in the *Timaeus*. There necessity involves a 'fight' (μάχη) between particles and masses of fire, air, water, and earth – and in the case of a particle of one kind trapped within a body of another, a fight to *escape* (57b). This seems to resonate with the *Cratylus* imagery of bush-bashing one's way through ravines. Yet there is also the difference that here it is the *soul* that fights its way through recalcitrant matter. As volition is the soul's shooting at things (successfully or not), its contrary must denote the soul's retardation, its inability to shoot. Obviously too soul is the bearer of 'ignorance'; as matter cannot know, it also cannot, properly speaking, be ignorant. The *Cratylus* has defined soul, perfectly consistently with Plato's later cosmological thought, as 'the power that carries and holds [bodily] nature'. In section 3a I inferred that this extends to the cosmic body itself. If the cosmic and virtue etymologies aimed ultimately at orderly, circular cosmic flow as the product of an intelligent cosmic soul, 'divine wandering' would then, it seems, denote the *errancy*, and 'necessity' the *retardation*, of this soul.

Additionally, at the cosmic level these characters of errancy and impedence seem to be intertwined. This is suggested by a remark at 437c (in *Cratylus* 3). The context is Socrates' quest to persuade Cratylus that names are fallible. At 437a–b he adduces several words, such as ἐπιστήμη, which can equally be read as affirming motion or rest. He then refers to words which, although customarily denoting 'the worst things', have an *etymological* sense corresponding to virtue as 'going with'. Included here are two words which were linked with necessity at 420d–e. Socrates reads ἁμαρτία, 'error', as ἅμα-ῥέω, 'flow together', and ἀμαθία, 'ignorance', as ἅμα-θία, 'with god,' or more fully: τοῦ ἅμα θεῷ ἰόντος πορεία, 'the journey of one who goes with god' (437c). Etymologically this is just silly, but in terms of content it corresponds exactly to divine wandering; to go with the flow is to err with the flow. It is less a matter of knowing and understanding in following that which knows, than of believing in belief itself, entrusting oneself to a power that only *thinks* it knows. Moreover, if error and ignorance are linked both to necessity and to flow, necessity cannot simply fall on the side of impedence. The wandering and impedence of cosmic flow are somehow bound up with each other, as if cosmic soul gets in its own way, comes up against its own past works and builds detours around them to 'free the end' of its motion.

In piecing together in this way the hints scattered over the last few passages, there is undeniably the danger of saying more than is in the text. I stress that I am not

extrapolating a covert cosmological *doctrine*, or even a clearly staked out *problem*, but an inchoate problem which Plato is not ready for yet, which he chooses to treat as a deficiency in the namegivers' beliefs. It is only once Plato has elaborated a positive cosmology of his own that its glitches are exposed. The problems facing Plato after the *Timaeus* show a certain correspondence with the situation at the culmination of the pursuit of cosmic flow in the *Cratylus*. 'Divine wandering' may seem something Plato would never dream of taking seriously. In his terms it is a pure contradiction. But it speaks to an ambivalence in the late dialogues over whether the ensouled cosmos warrants the description 'divine', which is closely linked with the issue of whether cosmic disorder is due to a 'wandering' merely of matter or of soul.

6 From flow to flux: The argument and the aporia at the end of the *Cratylus*

In this last section I jump to the closing pages of the *Cratylus*, bypassing two long discussions[83] which are important with regard to the dialogue's stated theme (the correctness of names), in order to focus on how its underlying *ontological* theme is finally treated. I pick up at 438d–e, where it is concluded that names are not reliable guides to 'the truth of beings', since they are conflicted over whether things are in motion or at rest. This seems to mean that the inquiry into their correctness can now be wound up, freeing thought to learn about beings simply through themselves and 'without names'. But Socrates is not done with names yet. An inquiry into beings is to settle whether the names indicating motion or rest are the ones that reveal how beings really are.

The course the *Cratylus* takes from here is itself strangely conflicted, both stridently dismissive and timid. On the one hand, Plato wants to launch a full assault on flow. At 439c Socrates opines that the namegivers did after all operate 'in the belief that all things are forever moving and flowing [ἰόντων καὶ ῥεόντων]', and that they did so wrongly, that this is not the way things actually are (οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει).[84] His language is tentative; both points are introduced by 'if', and οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει is qualified by 'perhaps'. But his intention is not. The dismissal of flow at 411b–c as a hallucination gets an encore here. It is the namegivers who 'are swirled about, as if they have fallen into a kind of vortex', not the things themselves. At just this point the Forms are introduced as a rival theory of being with the clear purpose of repudiating flow, which again is reduced to *flux*. Yet at the end of the dialogue Plato opts for a fallback position: that names and those who gave them are unreliable *in any case* – whether it is the theory of Forms or the flux theory which accords with 'the way things are' (440c). He even concedes that 'perhaps' the latter holds true (440d). Why does the *Cratylus* take this course? I will argue that the aporia is a product of Plato's own argumentative strategy, and has centrally to do with the dehiscence between *Cratylus* 2 and 3 regarding the sense and philosophical import of ῥοή.

But let us first ask why flow does not simply come down to flux in the end, given where the pursuit of flow terminated (divine wandering) and how it got there (the intimations of flow's double nature). Presumably this must have been Plato's own

thought. Why is it wrong? Essentially because the flux under attack is *radical*. I argued in section 3c that this paradigm, which precludes anything having enduring existence, is totally at odds with the use of 'flow' in the cosmic etymologies to denote the regular and ongoing motion of things which are not even (at least not expressly) subject to *Mach* 1 flux. This is still the case now that flow has a double nature, for what this means is that it is not *always* or univocally orderly. It could never show that orderly face at all if it equated to radical flux. Moreover, the slippage in *Cratylus* 3 relates not only to how ῥοή is used, but which issues are associated with it. *Cratylus* 2 leaves us with a thorny cosmological problem, once it is allowed that variability in cosmic motion is not merely apparent. As troubling as the shift from orderly to errant motion is, it may be just as disconcerting that cosmic flow seems to win back that orderly face as if nothing had happened. There is nothing of this at the end of *Cratylus* 3. The only place where this passage has any clear cosmological bearing is in the reference to a 'vortex', and even this is satirical; the vortex is in the namegivers' own heads.[85] The passage addresses flux in abstraction from cosmological themes. It is concerned with a different problem.

Just what the problem is presents difficulties of its own. In setting it up Socrates invites Cratylus to accept two hypotheses:[86] that Forms *exist* and that they are *unchanging*. Both are expressed in question form. Socrates first asks 'whether or not we shall say that there is a Beautiful *itself*, a Good *itself*, and so on for each one of the beings' (πότερον φῶμέν τι εἶναι αὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἓν ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων οὕτω, ἢ μή: 439d–e).[87] That the Forms are meant is clear from the *auto* formula, from the reference to 'the beings' (the things that really are), and from Socrates' next step, which is to distinguish Beauty itself from the various beautiful things which, in the parlance of other dialogues, participate in it. He proposes to focus on the Form, disregarding 'whether some face or some such thing is beautiful, and whether all *these* things seem to be in flux'.[88] The question is whether *Beauty itself* is in flux. Or as Socrates puts his second hypothesis: 'Shall we not say that Beauty itself is always such as it is' (ἀλλ' αὐτό, φῶμεν, τὸ καλὸν οὐ τοιοῦτον ἀεὶ ἐστιν οἷόν ἐστιν: 439d)?

Note that this formulation does not go to the *motionlessness* of Forms (we might also say that the eternally flowing or running stars and aether are always such as they are), but to their changelessness. Later, however, Socrates will assert that, *qua beings*, they *are* without flow and motion – in stark contradiction to the celestial and cosmic exemplars of 'being' in *Cratylus* 2. The focus on Forms thus brings with it a twofold shift: not just in what ῥοή signifies or implies but in what is deemed to count as 'being'. Both the fact that there are 'beings' that fulfil the criterion of eternal qualitative constancy *while* moving or flowing, and the resonances of ῥοή that are compatible with being rather than flux, are lost sight of.

Socrates goes on, then, to launch an attack on the idea that Beauty (and Forms in general) could be in flux. His purpose is ostensibly to refute the doctrine that *everything* is in flux simply by singling out one thing, or class of things, that is not. The unfortunate consequence of this procedure is that it leaves unclear whether other things, specifically sensibles, should be deemed to be in flux – whether, in

Crombie's words (1963: vol. 2, 323), Socrates would simply 'hand over the physical world to the Heracliteans'. I will revisit this later.

Socrates still proceeds by asking questions, but they now have assertoric force. His first argument is that, *if* Beauty 'is always slipping away [ὑπεξέρχεται]', we cannot 'correctly say of it, first, that it is *that* [ἐκεῖνό], then that it is *such* [τοιοῦτον], for even as we speak it must necessarily become other [ἄλλο γίγνεσθαι] and withdraw [ὑπεξιέναι] and no longer hold in this way [μηκέτι οὕτως ἔχειν]' (439d). I take the point of 'that' and 'such' to be that we cannot even *identify* Beauty, let alone *describe* it.[89] We cannot say *what* it is, that it is X rather than Y, for it has no stable and single nature *as a thing*; as soon as we identify it as X it has ceased to be X. And we cannot say what it is *like*, what qualities it has, for these change too; whatever is there once it has withdrawn is not there 'in this way' (οὕτως).[90] Regarding ἄλλο γίγνεσθαι, the usual rendering is 'become something else', but there is an argument for reading ἄλλο as an adjective here rather than an indefinite pronoun.[91] It seems straightforward that 'something else' emerges when Beauty 'withdraws', but if Beauty is not itself a determinable thing, it can hardly become *a different thing*. This may seem a quibble, but it has an important bearing on a contentious issue here: whether Socrates conflates different notions of flux in his various arguments, or simply unfolds the one in play in this first argument.

Another notable point is the shift from ὑπεξέρχεται to ὑπεξιέναι. Ademollo (2011: 465) sees them as 'very close', but there is room for doubt here since Plato uses them differently elsewhere. At *Phaedo* 103d and 106a ὑπεξιέναι, the 'withdrawal' of snow from heat or fire from cold, is contrasted with their *perishing*. At 106a the idea is entertained of snow withdrawing 'intact and unmelted'. Between this (rejected) possibility and perishing, the sense is that snow 'recedes' and loses something of itself *quantitatively*, but remains both existent and qualitatively identifiable. But ὑπεξέρχεται, the slipping away of a thing, expresses precisely its ceasing to be, both at *Cratylus* 439d and, for example, at *Theaetetus* 182d. However, the latter passage uses this term just where the former uses ὑπεξιέναι! It asks how we can even name properties of things like colours, if they too are in flux and 'always slipping away even as we speak'. This suggests that the two words *are* synonymous at 439d. In that case the different usage of ὑπεξιέναι in the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* may reflect a difference in standpoint. In the *Phaedo* Socrates does not seem driven to conjure away *Mach* 1 flux. But in *Cratylus* 3, not only is extreme flux the target of his critique, it is the only flux he countenances. On the latter point my reading is at odds with others' such as Calvert's, but let us start with the first one.

It is clear that the flux at issue in the first argument is not *Mach* 1, but might it embrace *Mach* 2 as well as *Mach* 3? The notion of things slipping away even as we refer to them is compatible with either, and in later dialogues it appears in connection with both. At *Theaetetus* 182d it is regarded as an absurd consequence of the flux doctrine, but *Timaeus* 50b *affirms* (through the gold simile) that the so-called 'elements' 'change even as one mentions them'.[92] The simple explanation is that the flux Plato means to affirm here is *Mach* 2, and the one he rejects in the *Theaetetus* is *Mach* 3. The *Timaeus* indeed denies that fire, etc., are identifiable *things*,

but not that they are identifiable *qualities* (and certainly not that there simply are no things at all). The flux attacked in the *Theaetetus* dissolves both. Now in the *Cratylus* this is already apparent in Socrates' *first* argument.[93] The flux doctrine precludes from Beauty either any definite identity as a thing or any definite qualities. In his second argument he infers that, if it 'never stands in the same state',[94] it simply 'cannot *be* anything' (οὖν ἂν εἴη τι: 439e). His third argument infers from this that it cannot be in *any* state at all (440a). Socrates is not taking us from one flux to another, more radical one. Rather, he is spelling out the more and more absurd consequences of the already fully radical flux of his first argument.

It is crucial to see that there is a friction between the notion Plato is seeking to convey and the language he must use to make it. He is discussing Beauty, and so must keep referring to 'it' (αὐτό), when his point is precisely that there can be no 'it' (be it an entity or a quality) at any time in a process of constant, radical change. If we assume this grammatical 'it' corresponds to an existent one, we will struggle to see how Plato reaches his conclusions without conflating distinct notions of flux. But this is a product of our own initial assumption.

This I think is Calvert's mistake. He claims (1970: 38), firstly, that Plato's argument depends on a conflation of (1) 'something being in a process of change from one state to another', and (2) 'something never being in any state at all, not being anything'. Secondly, he deems the argument 'self-refuting' in that, with the reference to a changing thing 'always becoming something else', 'Plato implicitly recognises the difference' between (1) and (2). This distinction is of course important, but it is not one that Plato wishes *here* to recognise. It disappears if we read ἄλλο γίγνεσθαι as 'become other', not 'become *something* else'. Moreover, it is only compelling if we accept an *original* 'something' that then changes. Yet from the outset it is just this that the flux doctrine is taken to undermine. There is, admittedly, one brief gesture at 439e towards the possibility of a thing remaining in the same state *for a while*, but this is in hypothetical mode and is brought up to support the claim that what is *never* in the same state can't 'be' anything. Calvert assimilates it to ἄλλο γίγνεσθαι in the first argument, abetted by his misconstrual of ἐκεῖνό and τοιοῦτον as 'this' then 'that'. He also merges it with his *objection* to the first argument: that even if we cannot name the state that a thing undergoing continual and rapid change is *presently* in, we can still say that at time 1 it *was* A, at time 2 B, etc. But what, 'it'? The point only holds if we assume that the doctrine under discussion allows that there is an 'it' in the first place.

It is strange that the passage only addresses flux in this extreme form, if its purpose is simply to exempt Forms from flux. For one thing, Forms must be exempt from *any* flux, and focusing on radical flux hardly brings this out. For another, such an aim implies an *acceptance* of radical flux in *sensibles* over against Forms, contrary to Socrates' remarks at 411b–c and 439c. It would make much more sense if he were denying that extreme flux applies also to sensibles, which as Ademollo points out (2011: 461) are central in the parallel arguments in the *Theaetetus*. And in fact there are signs that Plato does intend his critique to have this broader application.

Firstly, there is a subtle referential shift in the second argument. In the first the subject is simply the Form of Beauty, denoted anaphorically by αὐτό. But the

second argument relates more non-committally to ἐκεῖνο ὅ, '*that which* never stands in the same state'. This does not seem restricted to Beauty.[95] Socrates is certainly drawing an inference (hence οὖν) from his previous point about Beauty, but this inference (that it cannot be anything) applies to *whatever* never stands in the same state. Admittedly the contrast he goes on to draw with an 'it' (αὐτό) which 'always stands in the same state' and 'is always the same' is strongly suggestive of Forms, and it may be thought that the appearance of ἰδέα at the end of this sentence rules out anything else. Yet Socrates speaks here of what *has* a Form, not what *is* one. Whatever never stands in the same state cannot be anything because it cannot 'change or move without relinquishing its own Form' (μεταβάλλοι ἢ κινοῖτο, μηδὲν ἐξιστάμενον τῆς αὑτοῦ ἰδέας) – that is, the thing that makes it an identifiable instance of X rather than Y. If 'it' denotes the Form of Beauty here, this in turn has a Form and can (hypothetically) lose it.[96] The text reads more straightforwardly if the 'it' denotes a sensible that 'participates' in a Form.

In any case, the shift becomes fully explicit in the fourth argument. The third was that there can be no knowledge of whatever stands in no state. Socrates then adds (440a) that there can be no knowledge at all, 'if *all things* change and nothing abides (εἰ μεταπίπτει πάντα χρήματα καὶ μηδὲν μένει)'. He goes on to say that for knowledge to 'be' *it* must abide (both endure and be stable) and not change.[97] But his point is not simply that *its* non-existence follows from its being a thing, so that 'all things change' applies also to it. Here 'all things' means all possible *objects* of knowledge. It is because these change, because change is so radical that there are no such objects, that the knowledge that would 'follow' them must change and likewise not be anything. Hence Socrates' conclusion: 'by this reasoning there can be neither that which knows nor that which is known' (440b).

Thus the arguments do not involve a shift between different *kinds* of flux, but a broadening in the range of the critique. Plato's purpose is to show the absurdity of holding that radical flux applies to *anything*. What should we infer from this? Since the passage has referred, however briefly, to the distinction between Forms (Beauty) and sensibles (beautiful faces, etc.), and since this (in other dialogues) is a distinction of *degrees* of reality, it seems natural to suppose that Plato means to accept *a more moderate* flux in sensibles which does not preclude them from participating in or instantiating Forms.[98] This would put the *Cratylus* in harmony with other middle dialogues. Yet there is no indication in our passage that this is Plato's intention. Everything suggests rather that flux just means extreme flux. The etymologies of *Cratylus* 2 provide ample scope to distinguish from this not only *Mach* 1 flux but a motion that does not entail a thing changing its nature at all. But Plato seems blind to all this. Just how far he is from wanting to aver either is clear from the way he runs together change and motion. In the second argument we found the pairing μεταβάλλοι ἢ κινοῖτο, 'change or move', apparently meant synonymously with 'move and flow' at 439c (cf. 440b–c). In the fourth argument the earlier flux formula, 'all things move (or give way) and nothing abides' (401d, 402a), is repeated with μεταπίπτει, 'change', in place of 'move' or 'give way'. And at 440c–d 'flow' is reduced to a sickly 'leaking' of things, like catarrh.

Surely the aporetic conclusion of the dialogue is bound up with this state of affairs. I agree with Calvert (1970: 38) that it reflects Plato's 'instinctive feeling that something has gone astray', but I do not think the error is *internal* to the argument we have been addressing. Rather than a logical error, based on a conflation of different levels of flux, it has to do with the way the argument is framed, what Plato means to say by it. The conclusion reached at 440b–c is that there is an absolute dichotomy between the doctrines of Forms and flux. Socrates says that, assuming the eternal (and unchanging) existence of the Forms ('Beauty, the Good, and all the other beings'),[99] 'it does not appear to me that these beings which we now mention are in any way like flux or motion' (οὐ μοι φαίνεται ταῦτα ὅμοια ὄντα, ἃ νῦν ἡμεῖς λέγομεν, ῥοῇ οὐδὲν οὐδὲ φορᾷ).[100] It seems less important to him to determine which of the theories is true than to assert that they cannot *both* be. He grants that 'it is not easy to investigate' which is right: whether it is the Forms that correspond to 'the way things are', or 'those things which those around Heraclitus and many others assert' (ἐκείνως ὡς οἱ περὶ Ἡράκλειτόν τε λέγουσιν καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοί), i.e., flux, motion, change. He even allows that it *may* be the latter. But he has no doubt that there is no common ground. If you believe in Forms you cannot subscribe to the 'Heraclitean' doctrine.

But it is here, where Plato is least hesitant, that he is most wrong. The error lies in the very setting up of the dichotomy, and with that the polemic with Heraclitus. We have seen that Heraclitus does not use ῥέω in the sense Plato imputes to him, but rather to stress the ongoing identity of a thing throughout its changes. Much the same holds for the verbs Plato equates with ῥέω in the course of the passage. In B 88 μεταπίπτω denotes the switching of the same entity between opposite (and relatively enduring) states such as waking and sleeping, or life and death. In B 84a Heraclitus directly conjoins μεταβάλλω with ἀναπαύω specifically to affirm that there is rest right there in change itself, not at the end of it. 'Changing, it rests' is the same as 'in differing from itself, it agrees with itself' (B 51).[101] In all of this Heraclitus is clearly a long way from 'indicting' all things as 'unwholesome' and 'flowing like leaky pots'. Plato should know this, and in some dialogues he does show some awareness of it, as we saw in the Introduction. But the problem is not just an exegetical one,[102] for a certain *philosophical* laxness goes with it. Had Plato taken on Heraclitus' actual thought, he would have had to question whether, apropos the nature of being, thought does in fact confront a sheer either/or of motion and rest, change and stability. The doubt he *expresses* – that the radical flux doctrine may be true – seems to me to stand in for, in order to conjure away, a deeper anxiety as to whether this dichotomy will really stand up to rigorous philosophical scrutiny.

It seems then that it is the polemical motivation of the passage, and the concomitant caricaturing of Heraclitus, that blinds Plato to the sheer disparity between the flux he attacks here and the flow pursued in *Cratylus* 2. But let us look at this from a different angle. A feature of the passage that is easily overlooked is the slight difference between Cratylus' ascription of the flux doctrine to 'Heraclitus' (440e), and Socrates' reference to 'those around Heraclitus', his followers. Similarly the

Theaetetus (179d) refers to the comrades (ἑταῖροι) of Heraclitus, and describes them as a disparate bunch who don't agree on anything or learn from each other (180b–c), from which Colvin (2007: 764) infers that they do not constitute a 'school'. Perhaps we should not make much of this, since Socrates too has hitherto ascribed the doctrine specifically to Heraclitus. Yet it is not inconceivable that, at the end of the dialogue, just where Socrates admits his aporia, Plato means to imply that he is more circumspect than Cratylus about whether Heraclitus is in fact 'followed' by his latter-day followers, who are described at *Theaetetus* 180b as engaged in total warfare against the stationary. If so, we might see in this nuance a suggestion, however slight, of Plato's 'instinctive feeling that something has gone astray'.

At the beginning of this chapter I made two broad statements about the place of the *Cratylus* in Plato's oeuvre: that it announces the theory of Forms elaborated in subsequent middle dialogues; and that it constitutes a wellspring that Plato will often go back to when he needs to develop themes to which the Forms/sensibles opposition by itself cannot do justice. The first point, inasmuch as it concerns chronology, I leave to the Appendix, although in the next chapter I will speak to what distinguishes the other middle dialogues from the *Cratylus* regarding sensibles and their relation to Forms. Our primary interest in the remainder of this book is the second point. What we will find in Plato's subsequent philosophical journey is not just the retrieval of a more moderate flux. Prior to the reduction of all flux to extreme flux in *Cratylus* 3, there is the reduction of flow to flux *per se*. The story I wish to tell primarily concerns the retrieval of flow and its disentanglement from flux. At the same time, let us not forget that the thought of flow in *Cratylus* 2 is closely associated with a thought of *being* quite different from the one offered at the end of the dialogue.

Notes

1 It is tempting to speculate that the etymological analysis constitutes an earlier text which Plato then set in the broader framework of an inquiry into 'the correctness of names' (the dialogue's subtitle). The said asides would then be among the ways that Plato seeks to integrate the older text into the new one. My argument does not depend on this, but it seems one way of accounting for the disparity.

2 Underpinning this is the closeness of the Greek words for 'am' (εἰμί) and 'go' (εἶμι). This is referred to at 421b, and is in play at 401c–d, but otherwise this crucial point remains curiously in the background.

3 So, for example, Baxter 1992, Keller 2000, Trivigno 2012.

4 In addition, there are several etymologies which, even if they are not later taken up as such, embody themes integral to Plato's later work. Cf. Sedley (2003: 90–97) and Ademollo (2011: 191–195).

5 For additional arguments against the parodist interpretation, see Sedley (1998: 141–147, and 2003: 25–50) and Ademollo (2011: 238–241).

6 Baxter's terminology, though he does not embrace this view. He argues (1992: 43) that Plato does not really care about the descriptive level, but is only interested in 'the prescriptive ideal model of what a language should be'.

7 Note that this is distinct from whether the etymologies are *serious*. Ademollo himself regards them as a serious attempt to lay bare the original intentions in naming things, even if those intentions are philosophically dubious or plain wrong. See also Barney

(2001: 69ff.), for whom contest is the crucial thing motivating Socrates to do etymology seriously. If he is going to take on his opponents effectively he had better do so on their turf and prove himself to be an expert etymologist. There are arguments for both approaches, but I think Sedley is right that there is also a philosophical dimension to the etymologies' seriousness.

8 I do not mean to single Sedley out. *All* commentators on the *Cratylus* have assumed that flow = flux. Just taking other recent monographs on the dialogue in English, this tendency is amply apparent in Baxter (1992), Barney (2001), Riley (2005), and Ademollo (2011). My point is that Sedley adopts an approach to the cosmic etymologies which can and I think should allow the irreducibility of flow to flux to emerge.

9 See 182–188 for Ademollo's justification of the groupings. The most important point is that the actual virtues do not exhaust part 5. The four other subgroups concern terms that have something to do with ethics without denoting virtues themselves. I suggest that what unifies all five subgroups is the theme of 'going with the flow'.

10 Not that this textual explicate order is *generated from* the implicate one, as Bohm (1980: 14) has his physical one forming out of and dissolving into the flowing 'holomovement' of the energy plenum. Plato simply needs *some* framework within which to embed it.

11 So Baxter 1992: 91–93, Sedley 2003: 156–157, Ademollo 2011: 189. Ademollo refers to Goldschmidt as the first to highlight this.

12 This holds in the last two cases, at least. Cook admits (27f.) that the tradition that Pherecydes identified *Zas* with aether 'is so mixed up with Stoic phraseology that it would be unsafe to build upon it'. Unfortunately he does not take the same precautions with Heraclitus, whose appropriation by the Stoics is no less dubious.

13 The close connection of Heraclitus' One with life (*contra* Kirk 1954: 392) is borne out by its other aliases, such as *bios* (in B 48), 'ever-living fire' (B 30), and *aiôn*, 'life-force' (B 52).

14 I recognise that a much longer analysis is needed to ground these claims, but that will have to wait for another occasion.

15 Besides Heraclitus, the notion of Zeus as the 'life' which moves 'through' all things has other precedents in the allegorising countertradition. In Orphic poetry (fragment 21a Kern; cf. 168) Zeus is referred to (among many, indeed too many, other things) as 'the breath of all things'. The closing lines of Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* suggest a Zeus that is immanent in the doings and sufferings of mortals, as if these reflected Zeus' going through them.

16 Reeve (1998: 23 note 36) explains that these terms imply a derivation from κορεῖν, 'to sweep'.

17 See *Republic* 527d–e, *Timaeus* 47b–c, 90c–d. In the *Republic* Plato is of course also scathing of astronomy, even denying that gazing up at the stars is a 'looking at things above', since the mind is still directed to visible things rather than Forms and engaged in a vain search for constancy and exactness in them (529a–530b). Still, even there it is said that 'the heavens and the heavenly bodies have been put together by their maker as well as such things can be' (530a). The other side of this coin is that they are a *pointer* to the eternal, and hence that seeing them is elevating. Besides the description of time as 'the image of eternity' (with reference to the cyclical movement of the heavens) at *Timaeus* 37d, there is the important comment at 47a that 'not a word of all we have said about the universe could have been said if we had not *seen* stars and sun and heaven'. In the *Philebus* too we find the *nous* doctrine affirmed for precisely the reason that 'it does justice to the order we *see* in the universe, in the sun, moon, stars and the whole vault of heaven' (28e).

18 Trivigno (2012: 57) is right that the cosmic etymologies lack the scope of the *Timaeus*, but I do not see how this supports the view that they are purely parodic. Plato is simply not ready for the monumental project of the *Timaeus*. Besides, Trivigno misses the point when he notes that over half of the cosmological discussion is taken up by the names of the traditional gods, 'who are hardly even mentioned in the *Timaeus*'. The *Timaeus* perfunctorily drops them into the class of lesser gods whose main referent is the heavenly bodies. The *Cratylus* does something different, but not radically different.

It allegorises them, not simply as the heavenly bodies, but nevertheless in a way that goes through them on the way to *nous*.

19 Ademollo (2011: 192 note 28) wants to capitalise οὐρανός, but that would obliterate the point.

20 Zeus there (246e) is referred to as ὁ ἡγεμὼν ἐν οὐρανῷ, 'the ruler *within* the cosmos', and at 247a it is said that Zeus and the other gods have their home somewhere within it. Possibly the reference is to the 'Tower of Zeus' which some Pythagoreans placed at the centre of the earth. See Chapter 5, section 1 on this theme.

21 διακοσμέω is a key Anaxagorean term, but I am not aware of him using ἔχω specifically to describe the actions of *nous*. It may be that Plato is misapplying the term from the claim in B 12 that *nous* controls all things that 'have' (ἔχει) soul. But it may be a canny piece of interpretation. For Anaxagoras the revolution *nous* instigates does not just bunt around extant bodies, but first creates them by separating out the primeval commixture of all in all. 'Ordering' them then includes, besides their creation, 'holding' them on their respective orbits.

22 Reeve translates 'sustains and supports', reflecting the fact that ὀχέω is the frequentative of ἔχω. Doubtless this is part of Plato's meaning, but with Fowler and LSJ I think ὀχέω has its motile sense of 'carry', in keeping with the reference to motion later in the sentence.

23 Note further that the ensouled cosmos is identified at *Philebus* 30d with Zeus, as recognised by Zeller (1875: 598–599 note 3; cf. 558) but not by many later commentators.

24 Unlike Plato's demiurge, Anaxagoras' *nous* does not transcend the cosmos. While that might seem to follow from his remark (B 12) that *nous* is 'alone by itself' and 'not mixed with anything', Anaxagoras also stresses that it is nowhere else but 'where all the other things also are' (B 14).

25 *Pace* Sedley (2003: 97), who strangely does not place the ψυχή etymology among the ones that bear out the cosmological importance of *nous*. Ademollo (2011: 192 note 26) rightly counters that as this etymology centres on soul being the mover of the body, it must have some bearing on this. This becomes more concrete once we see that *cosmic* soul is in play.

26 It is remarkable how much the passage foreshadows *Sophist* 248e. The characters the latter includes in the concept of being – motion, life, soul, intelligence – are just the ones in play here. In the *Sophist* it is above all the cosmos that is to be deemed a genuine 'being' on the basis of having these characters. In *Cratylus* 2, similarly, the cosmos and celestial bodies are the primary referents of τὰ ἀεὶ ὄντα καὶ πεφυκότα at 397b (see section 3b).

27 It is not simply the cycle in which all the celestial bodies return to the same relative positions, for these are set into the world-soul's two circles, the Same (in the case of the fixed stars), and the Different (divided into seven circles corresponding to the orbits of the sun, moon, and the five planets). The Great Year is the time it takes for these 'eight circuits' to 'finish together' (39d). Not that the *Cratylus* has anything so complex to offer. But I do think the year has a cosmological sense that at least broadly envisions an ensouled cosmos, as the earlier discussion of soul and *nous* does.

28 Especially if we bear in mind Anaximander (B 1) on the penalty all things must pay for their mutual injustices, in accordance with the ordinance of *time*.

29 On the textual crux in this passage see Ademollo (2011: 211 note 67).

30 This derivation (with the k added 'for euphony' *within* διά, producing an αι diphthong as from a hat) is obviously risible. But the *idea* of an all-pervasive justice is one in which Plato is very heavily invested. This opens up the problem of etymology being used to confirm pregiven assumptions. I agree with Trivigno (2012: 50) that it is part of the lesson of the *Cratylus* that language avails one to find just about anything one is looking for, but I think it is a lesson Plato came to from his own experience, and its consequence for him is a more guarded interest in etymology, not its rejection as a total farce.

31 The genitive οὗ at 412d can be either neuter or masculine, but context favours the former.

32 We see a similar gesture in *Cratylus* 1 (389c–d), as remarked by Shorey (1935: 72 note b).
33 The sore thumb here is of course Earth, *around which* everything else in Plato's geocentric cosmos turns, runs, or flows. All things considered, the best comment on its inclusion is perhaps '(!)' (Sedley 2003: 103).
34 Fowler has 'turns'. εἱλέω (= εἴλω) can also have a sense that corresponds to axial rotation rather than orbital motion, as at *Timaeus* 40b (see Chapter 5, section 1). But at *Cratylus* 409a it clearly has the *orbital* sense previously denoted by θέω.
35 I will come back to the other two sun etymologies in section 3c.
36 In the *Phaedo* a central spherical earth is already a firm piece of Platonic doctrine (108e–109a). I am assuming that Plato's thoughts incline this way in the *Cratylus*.
37 I will return to this passage and the meaning of 'flow together' in Chapter 3, section 1.
38 Socrates goes on in the *Phaedo* to place sea, air, and sky in an analogical relation. We dwell in the air and call it heaven, just as someone who lived in the sea and saw the sun and stars through the water would think the sea was the sky. As Vlastos (2005: 114) points out, if the equation of sky with aether holds, aether is just as distinct from air as air is from water.
39 *Pace* Vlastos (2005: 114), I don't think Plato is 'undecided on this point' in the *Timaeus*, or that this is what ἐπίκλην expresses. His point is simply that 'the so-called aether' is a misnomer *if* used in contradistinction to 'air'. Vlastos's reading leans on external considerations: the inclusion of aether as a fifth element in Xenocrates' account of Plato, in Philip's *Epinomis*, and in Aristotle's *de Caelo*. The same holds for Sedley's proposition, in arguing for a late dating of the *Cratylus*, that it *adds* aether to the fourfold of the *Timaeus* (2003: 14–15). See Appendix.
40 Cf. Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 375C–D. Much is faulty in this discussion, but Plutarch is right that in the *Cratylus* Plato attributes intelligence, goodness, and virtue 'to things that flow easily and run' (τοῖς εὐροοῦσι καὶ θέουσι), and that this links back to the 'running' gods at 397d. Plutarch is castigated by van den Berg (2008: 50–51) for failing here to get 'one of the central messages of the *Cratylus*'. Yet presumably Plutarch is well aware of the tension between this and the standpoint at the end of the work, but still thinks the earlier passages need to be highlighted because they resonate with essential themes (above all the circular motion of the world-soul and celestial souls) in Plato's mature cosmology. The issue is also skewed by van den Berg's translation of θέω as 'rush' rather than 'run'.
41 Ademollo (2011: 202 note 54) observes that the former is unattested, the latter attested only in 'late pseudo-Pythagorean forgeries'.
42 Cf. Fowler: 'all things move and nothing remains still'. Reeve has 'flow' and 'stands fast', Sedley (2003: 104) 'are on the move' and 'remains'.
43 οὐδὲν αὐτῶν μόνιμον εἶναι οὐδὲ βέβαιον. Fowler has 'nothing is at rest or stable', Ademollo (2011: 206) 'steady or stable'. But both μόνιμος and βέβαιος have a sense of 'lasting' alongside 'stable', and Plato may use both terms to clarify that he does not just mean the latter.
44 See Vlastos's excellent discussion of this point (2005: 66–69).
45 When Timaeus says at 81c that they 'slacken' over time, this is a slackening in the *bonds* between them in the constitution of particular substances.
46 As reported by Plutarch, *Against Colotes* 1110E–1111A.
47 Note further that Ademollo wants to regard the atoms as the 'pusher' referred to in the first aside, and as the 'justice' later described as 'the subtlest and quickest thing'. Yet both are linked to Zeus, the latter explicitly, the former by clear implication, since the pusher of beings is their 'cause and ruler'. Zeus appears in many forms in Plato's dialogues, but an atomistic Zeus is, well, pushing it.
48 Cf. Plutarch (*loc. cit.*) and Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.135.
49 If we look closely and without flux-coloured spectacles, we must surely be struck by the fact that even here Plato's usage of ῥέω and ῥοή is not strictly fluxist. To specify flux he must add ἀλλὰ μεταβάλλει to ῥεῖν ('the flowing thing flows white, but changes'), and καὶ μεταβολή to ῥοή ('there is a flow of the very whiteness and a change to another colour').

50 There may even be an implication of fast and frenetic change (although the grape example does not suggest this), since ἀιολεῖν can signify 'shifting rapidly to and fro'.

51 It is presumably to counter the repugnant suggestion of a god that causes evil (impedence) that Socrates adds a second (more dubious) etymology of Poseidon, from 'knowing' (or 'having known', εἰδότος) 'many things' (πολλά). A third derivation from ὁ σείων, 'the shaker', is also suggested.

52 Here etymology is more than 'doxography'. The namegivers themselves are deemed to have hit upon the true nature of Hades. The majority view of *their intention* is what is held to be mistaken.

53 πτοίησις can refer to any vehement excitation that resembles the fluttering of wings (πτερά), but principally denotes terror. Note that the restriction of this and mania to the body here is not a fixed tenet of Plato's thought. He also characterises the *soul* in this way in the *Phaedrus*, where it does not have a simply negative sense. I address this in Chapter 3.

54 Plato avoids reading an alpha-privative here (as he will often do), and instead takes α- to mean 'together' (ὁμο), adducing other words which take either prefix without a change in meaning.

55 The other etymologies, corresponding to Apollo's other traditional 'powers', are: ἁπλοῦς, 'simple' (in relation to soothsaying); ἀπολούω, 'to wash away' or 'purify,' and ἀπολύω, 'to absolve' from evil (healing), and ἀεί βάλλων, 'ever-darting' (archery). Trivigno sees here an 'absurd and Aristophanic accumulation of Apollo's powers' as the 'simple, always shooting purifier, who makes things move together', and adds that this very complex contradicts 'simple' (2012: 48). The latter claim seems forced, since surely there is a simplicity which embraces complexity, but that is not really the point. Socrates is offering a number of *possible* derivations, not saying that the name Apollo has to unify all the traditional functions of Apollo. Plato can (and does) deny that etymology has that kind of *systematic* reliability, without this entailing that he simply finds it ridiculous, barren of any insight, and not broadly structured by certain prevailing tendencies that are not without philosophical interest.

56 This passage again seems to invite comparison with *Timaeus* 37a–b. The two verbs with which Plato there describes the order-maintaining activity of the world-soul are 'touch' or 'contact' (ἐφάπτω) and 'say' (λέγω). It is tempting to speculate that Plato is also drawing on Heraclitus' special cosmic use of λόγος, but as far as I know there is no evidence that Plato is aware of this usage.

57 Admittedly at 408c it is also said that 'the true part' of speech is the divine, the false part the human. This is trademark Plato, yet is it sustainable in this context? These parts of speech are further specified as 'smooth' (λεῖον) and 'rough' (τραχὺ) respectively, yet might the deceptiveness of speech not be proportional to its smoothness? Besides, are we to ignore the way that Hermes has just been labelled?

58 Again I suggest a precursor here to Plato's language apropos the world-soul at *Timaeus* 37a–b.

59 With the possible exception of δικαιοσύνη, but at 412c it too is treated as one. In his reply Socrates certainly takes Hermogenes to be asking specifically about intellectual virtues, since he adds γνώμη and ἐπιστήμη to the list.

60 I read γιγνομένοις principally as 'becoming' here in view of Socrates' preceding remark. But the other sense, 'being generated' (adopted by Fowler), is co-intended, as is clear from the etymologies of γνώμη and νόησις.

61 Bear in mind that many of the words dealt with here have multiple senses and tend to overlap. Under φρόνησις LSJ list: I. purpose, intention (thought, sense, judgement), II. practical wisdom, prudence. LSJ locate Platonic usage under sense II, but often enough Plato uses it synonymously with *nous*.

62 In a temporal sense, but more precisely with the meaning that attendants stay behind the one they follow. On the derivation, Socrates inserts an epsilon to read ἐπεϊστήμη (cf. ἐπήϊεν and ἐπήϊσαν, imperfects of ἔπειμι). Later (437a) he will propose an alternative etymology of ἐπιστήμη based on ἵστημι, 'stand still' or 'make to stand'.

63 Or 'observation'. Along with νώμησις Socrates says σκέψσις, which confirms both readings. 'Observation' would perhaps relate to γνώμη as 'judgement', 'consideration' to γνώμη as 'purpose'.

64 It is worth referring to the *Timaeus* here. The statement at 40a that the stars intelligently *follow* the world's ruling φρόνησις not only draws on the *Cratylus* etymology (cf. Bury 1929: 84 note 2) but supplies what seems to me its implicit presupposition: that the motion the stars *follow* is itself intelligent, and this is *why* it is intelligent to follow it. That motion is not flux. It is the turning of the world-soul's circle of the same. As I will argue, the underlying thought in the account of the virtues in the *Cratylus* is similar. The virtues in us 'go with' the cosmic ones.

65 It is tempting to suppose further that συλλογισμός is an epistemological analogue to the λόγος said at 408c to *make* the world go round.

66 The issue is somewhat complicated. ἀσχέτως is an adjectival antonym of ἔχω in the sense of 'check' (as used at 415c), but Socrates also used this verb at 400a in connection with *nous*, which 'holds' everything that it carries in its revolution. Such things are 'checked' in the sense that they are prevented from leaving their circular tracks, but they are not prevented from moving smoothly *on* those tracks. Virtue's advance along its own track is 'unchecked' in this sense.

67 Although von Fritz is among those who deny that Heraclitus uses this word in a special, cosmic sense (1993: 42).

68 The turn from the sun to fire, on the grounds that identifying justice with the former entails a lack of justice when the sun goes down, is a transparent allusion to Heraclitus B 16: 'How could one escape the notice of that which never sets' (i.e., 'ever-living fire': B 30). Sedley sees Archelaus as the intended advocate of heat (2003: 118), and Anaxagoras is named in the text in connection with *nous*. An alternative view (cf. Baxter 1992: 161) is that Socrates is reporting on debates he has heard *among soi-disant* Heracliteans: the sun being championed by a rather stolid one; heat by one who perhaps sees Heraclitus' thought through its Hippocratic refraction, and *nous* by one who wants to emphasise the parallel between Heraclitus' 'wise' One and Anaxagoras' *nous*.

69 He does not make clear which, but he probably means ἄνω. I don't know why Ademollo (2011: 228 note 104) finds this inexplicable. Besides the sense of 'upward flow' that Socrates will go on to mention at 414a, ἄνω ῥεῖ can refer to a *contrary* flow, an *inversion* of the usual course of affairs (cf. Euripides, *Suppliants* 520).

70 τὸ ἀγαθόν τε καὶ καλόν, in other contexts 'the good and the beautiful'. Here (416c–d) the moral resonances of τὸ καλόν are more in play than the aesthetic ones, since it is identified with the praiseworthy works of intelligence.

71 Compare Reeve's translation: '[*sumpheron*] expresses the fact that what is advantageous is nothing other than the movement of a soul in accord with the movement of things'. This captures the sense better than Fowler's more literal rendering.

72 Also for Athena (*Odyssey* 2.118, 13.299), Penelope (2.88), and Telemachus (18.216).

73 For a fuller discussion of this passage see Mason (2013: 207–208).

74 In an exceptional discussion of Anaxagoras, Sedley (2007: 21–24) argues that *nous* is a cosmic farmer concerned with creating the ideal 'hothouse conditions' for life to flourish, whose main purpose is to generate intelligent human beings that it can 'occupy'. Sedley's admission that its ultimate purpose may be 'pure self-interest', a desire for more of itself, seems compatible with my reading that it is the moral neutrality of *nous*, with regard to the things human beings do to flourish, that Plato finds especially objectionable.

75 There is a substantive connection here, however weak the etymological one: ὄνησις also means 'enjoyment', as when in English my 'enjoyment' of a thing denotes my use of it.

76 Reeve takes ἐπί in the sense of 'against', and has Plato saying that *epithumia* (which he renders 'appetite') 'opposes the spirited part of the soul'. It would make sense for *Plato* to say this, given his theory of the soul's constitution in *Republic* IV. But he is not stating his own doctrine here, but what is straightforwardly evident to any Greek

(hence δῆλον and οὐδ' … χαλεπόν). As LSJ make clear, in ordinary usage nothing obliges *epithumia* to stand for *appetitive* desire over against desires of the spirit, for example, for conquest (Thucydides 6.13), revenge (Antiphon 2.1.7), and restored citizenship (Andocides 2.10). In the *Cratylus* itself Plato has already spoken of Artemis' 'desire' to remain a virgin (406b). The sense at 419d is simply that any strong desire invades the soul.

77 ἔσις was used at 411d in connection with the etymology of νόησις. There I rendered it 'seeking'; I go with 'doggedness' here to convey the sense of a persistent exigency.

78 As Heidegger showed in 'Plato's Doctrine of Truth'. I refer particularly to his point (1998: 172) that only this sense is specially adapted to the image of an undergound cave which, at the same time, both 'is open within itself' and encloses or hides things within itself from the *more* unconcealed region above.

79 Moreover, if 'truth' equated to the 'being' or 'motion' of *all* that is, over against the 'falsity' of what is at rest and held back from being itself, there would be little scope to distinguish a true from a false motion, besides the fact that a thing will be *less* true or real the more impeded it is.

80 Plato does not say there why this appearance is deceptive, but presumably it has to do with the 'corkscrew' effect touched on at *Timaeus* 39a–b.

81 Compare *Theaetetus* 152e, where Parmenides is the one exception to the supposed unanimity among past sages and poets on universal flux.

82 This reading relies on the adverb δοκιμῶς having a sense in keeping with its origination from δοκέω as 'seem', rather than the usual sense 'really' (or 'reliably'), which would stem from δοκέω as 'be an established opinion'. As Parmenides rejects that man's tried and tested opinions count for truth, I think his use of δοκιμῶς is pointed, a more or less aggressive intervention in ordinary usage.

83 Namely, the discussion of 'primary' names at the end of *Cratylus* 2, and the examination of the naturalist theory taking up most of *Cratylus* 3. The primary names are those like 'flow', 'go', and 'bind' which have been found to be the elements of other names. Their own correctness is said to be a matter of *imitation* of the nature of the phenomena they name by means of their letters and syllables (423e–424b). Such an onomatopoetic approach to word-formation *in general* is, of course, untenable. The ensuing discussion of letters is certainly suggestive – for example, when rho is taken to denote motion, since 'the tongue is least at rest and most agitated in pronouncing it' (426e) – but such things can never be *more* than suggestive. In a sense this is precisely Socrates' point. In any case this is where his qualified naturalism diverges from Cratylus' position; the name is not an exact replica of the named, but more an 'image' (εἰκών) which can lack some elements but still bear the 'stamp' of the thing itself (432b–e). However, there is also a sense in which this discussion is a wrong turn. Mimesis at the level of the letter is a very abstract way of approaching the question of whether names reveal the nature of things or deceive us (cf. 436a–b). More specifically, it renders abstract the thought of flow which has hitherto guided the investigation.

84 The phrase οὕτως ἔχειν recurs many times in these final pages, and it is difficult to find one translation that fits for each usage. Where it is a general formulation relating to 'all things' (as here), reading ἔχειν as 'be' seems unproblematic: hence 'the way things are'. But where Plato's point is to show that things in flux cannot have being, we should consider that he uses ἔχειν precisely to avoid saying 'be'. All the same, the alternative translations that seem most suitable with the adverb οὕτως, such as 'stand', 'hold', or 'go on', may still carry overtones at odds with Plato's intention.

85 As Ademollo (2011: 450) rightly says, the vortex image clearly alludes to the cosmogonies of several *phusikoi*, such as Empedocles, Anaxagoras, and the atomists. Plato treats it with similar disdain at *Phaedo* 99b. Yet it can be asked if Plato's attack there is aimed at the very idea of a vortex embracing the earth and holding it in place. It may be that he is criticising the *phusikoi* for not grounding this physical theory teleologically, not simply for holding it. See Mason (2013: 206–207).

86 Which Cratylus instantly and rather strangely does. The mystery is not how he could even be familiar with the theory, for Socrates had introduced Forms at 389b. It is

rather why he would endorse it, having already laid his fluxist cards on the table (437a; cf. 440d–e). Reeve (1998: xlv) argues that Cratylus is committed to it by his very acceptance of the 'Heraclitean etymologies'. Even as names reflect motion they can unchangingly express unchanging Forms; *epistêmê always* means the soul's following things. The question then, for Reeve, is whether Cratylus' commitment to Forms is consistent with his espousal of flux as 'the best account of reality as a whole'. I don't know that this removes the obscurity. The issue of the historical Cratylus aside, isn't Plato saddling Cratylus with something of his own confusion apropos *flux and flow*? If Cratylus is a true (i.e., radical) fluxist he indeed cannot rigorously be committed to Forms. In the above example, there can simply be no such enduring thing as knowledge to be named (as Socrates will go on to argue). But accepting the 'Heraclitean etymologies' does not *actually* commit one to radical flux. It leads us rather to think of flow as the ongoing motion of an identifiable thing, and this is not incompatible with the thought of Forms, even if the Form that thing instantiates does not itself flow.

87 With Sedley (2003: 167 note 35) and Ademollo (2011: 457 note 9) I follow Reeve's translation, taking τι αὐτὸ καλὸν to stand in for the more definite (and more usual) Platonic formula αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, rather than reading τι with εἶναι in conformity with another such formula for the Forms. As Ademollo points out, that would require a definite article; *the* Beautiful 'is something'. But terminology aside the point is the same; besides the things that 'are beautiful', Beauty itself is a thing that exists.

88 That ῥεῖν has the sense 'to be in flux' here is clear from what follows. Note that the second clause is governed by εἰ in the first, and also hypothetical. Here Socrates does not *assert* that sensibles are in flux by way of explaining why the topic is not to be whether sensibles are beautiful, as argued by Gulley (1962: 72–73). Why speak of sensible flux in the hypothetical mode? Calvert (1970: 36) supposes that Plato has an open mind about whether sensibles are in flux, but this is questionable, despite his awkwardness at the very end of the dialogue. He has just as much intention of pillorying the flux doctrine here as at 411b–c. Nor is it just that he wants to discuss something else, as we will see. It is rather, I think, that he does not quite see *how* to speak about sensibles. Unlike in later middle dialogues, he does not seem to have at his disposal a middle ground between the true being of Forms and the non-being that he will show is entailed by radical flux.

89 Fowler mistranslates 'this, then … that', and is followed by Calvert (1970: 37). For extended discussion of the sense, see Ademollo 2011: 464–467.

90 Compare *Theaetetus* 152d on both points.

91 Compare ἄλλο καὶ ἀλλοῖον γίγνοιτο at 440a. Translators may render ἄλλο 'something else' in order to contrast it with the unequivocally adjectival ἀλλοῖον, but does Socrates mean to add 'becomes different' to 'becomes something else'? That seems more strained than conjoining two adjectives, viz. 'becomes other or different'.

92 In this simile the lump of gold corresponds to the receptacle, the successive shapes it is twisted into correspond to the successive fiery, airy, etc., appearances in a given part of the receptacle. This may seem like *Mach* 1 flux, but the simile is an imprecise one precisely on this score. The appearances do not belong *to* the receptacle; the changes are not its 'self-changes'.

93 I do not mean that here Plato has already clearly distinguished these forms of flux, and means implicitly to accept my *Mach* 2 while rejecting *Mach* 3. Rather, he is rejecting flux *per se*, which he only acknowledges in this extreme form.

94 Following Ademollo's (2011: 473) rendering of μηδέποτε ὡσαύτως ἔχει. On ἔχει see note 84. Regarding ὡσαύτως, a literal rendering would be 'just so' or 'in like manner', but the latter might suggest that Beauty varies in manner while still being Beauty, which is what the argument denies. I will stick to the usual rendering 'in the same state' for argumentative purposes.

95 *Pace* Sedley 2003: 170. See Ademollo's rebuttal (2011: 474, and note 47).

96 On that reading the passage would inadvertently open up the can of worms known as the third man problem. In the *Parmenides* Plato will of course recognise this as a serious

challenge to his theory of Forms. But the theory needs to be developed a lot more than it is here for that problem to emerge.

97 He also speaks here of a change of the very Form of knowledge (τὸ εἶδος μεταπίπτει τῆς γνώσεως) 'into a Form other than knowledge' (εἰς ἄλλο εἶδος γνώσεως, following Ademollo's translation: 2011: 482 note 65).

98 The stance adopted, for example, by Calvert (1970: 37), Ademollo (2011: 470), Vlastos (1991: 70 note 111), and Ackrill (1997: 52). For Ackrill, although 'ordinary' sensibles 'are not given a place' here, there is 'no doubt' that they belong 'between Forms and absolute flux'.

99 And of both knower and known; I will not address this here.

100 On the translation, Reeve's 'flowings and motions' is wrong, as the iota subscript indicates the dative singular. Reeve also misconstrues the point of the relative clause, as pointed out by Ademollo (2011: 485 note 74). But Ademollo's 'these things we are now saying' is not right either. Plato would not use *onta* here if that were his meaning; he would just refer to *ta nun legonta*. The reference is to things rather than statements: things mentioned, not things said.

101 Also relevant is B 125: 'The barley drink falls apart if it is not stirred'. As Colvin (2007: 760) rightly says, the point here is that motion is 'productive of stability'.

102 Colvin (2007: 765–766) argues that this is not really exegesis at all. The flux thesis is a Platonic posit, a problem he 'takes over' in order that it 'serve as one half of a dialectical opposition with the thesis of total stability ascribed to Parmenides and Melissus'.

3

FLOW AND THE FORM OF BEAUTY IN THE *PHAEDRUS*

The *Phaedrus*, or Socrates' second speech to be precise, constitutes Plato's first extended and philosophically significant rehabilitation of 'flow' as distinct from 'flux'. It takes an interesting and surprising form. Flow here does not really concern the motion and change of *sensibles*. What Socrates calls the flow or stream of beauty or longing goes directly to the soul, only impinging on the body indirectly. Moreover, it is not a characteristic of sensibles *over against Forms*. Far from incommensurable with the Form of Beauty, this flow into the lover's soul is in synergy with it, even *intrinsic* to it. To borrow Butler's phrase (2011: 77), flow is its 'delivery device'. Not only does it have its source in Beauty itself, it is even, in a certain sense, the flow of that Form. In this way the *Phaedrus* opens the way for Plato's later reconception of 'being' to allow such things as motion and flow, although it does not provide a direct parallel with it.

While this sets the *Phaedrus* apart from previous middle dialogues, there is a degree of continuity too. In section 1 I briefly review how flux in sensibles is handled in the *Phaedo, Symposium*, and *Republic*. In brief, flux is deradicalised (in keeping with the doctrine of participation), and ῥοή/ῥέω all but completely disappears from Plato's vocabulary in *this* context, while being retained in others in a non-fluxist sense. Section 2 focuses on how Beauty is conceived in the *Phaedrus*, and what makes it special among the Forms. Section 3 addresses Plato's phenomenology of 'higher love' in the second speech, and argues that the centrality of 'flow' there is directly related to the special character of Beauty. Section 4 considers the place of the dialogue in Plato's development overall.

1 Flux and flow in the middle dialogues

At *Phaedo* 78d–e Socrates distinguishes Forms and sensibles in language that recalls *Cratylus* 3. Such things as Equality itself or Beauty itself are not 'otherwise at

different times' (ἄλλοτ' ἄλλως) but 'remain always the same thing in the same way' (ὡσαύτως ἀεὶ ἔχει κατὰ ταὐτά), not admitting any change (μεταβολή) or alteration (ἀλλοίωσις) at all – 'anytime, anywhere, anyhow' (οὐδέποτε οὐδαμῇ οὐδαμῶς).[1] But sensibles, 'wholly to the contrary' (πᾶν τοὐναντίον), 'are never, so to speak, in any way the same, either in relation to themselves or each other' (οὔτε αὐτὰ αὑτοῖς οὔτε ἀλλήλοις οὐδέποτε, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, οὐδαμῶς κατὰ ταὐτά). For Vlastos (1991: 70) the qualification 'so to speak' shows that Plato is not imputing to sensibles the *radical* flux he rejects in the *Cratylus*. We may doubt that the phrase carries that much weight, but I think Vlastos's reading is right. Plato's doctrine in the *Phaedo* that sensibles participate in the Forms they are named after simply does not add up if they are in radical flux, but it does if they are always changing 'in some ways while remaining constant in others' (1991: 71). In the *Phaedo* it is this *Mach* 1 flux that is Plato's paradigm.[2]

At 74b Socrates considers sensibles that are not (overtly) undergoing change at all. In contrast to Equality itself, he says, 'equal sticks and stones, even as they remain the same [i.e., don't change], sometimes appear equal in one respect [τῷ μὲν], but not in another [τῷ δὲ]'. Tredennick translates 'to one person', 'to another', which implies that the variance is only perspectival. That it belongs to the things is clear from the remark that they 'strive' for their Form, i.e., for perfect equality, but 'fall short' (74d–e). Socrates excludes change to make the point that this falling short does not hinge solely on it, but that is not to say it is only by excluding change that he can speak of sensible *things* without quotation marks, as it were. A thing that undergoes change while still being that thing, such as the humans and horses mentioned at 78e, can equally be said to strive for its Form but fall short. Of course, unlike the soul, bodies can't exist forever; being composite, they are 'liable to dispersion' (78b–c). But this is a distinct issue. Dispersion here is *linked* with the fact that sensibles are 'otherwise at different times and never the same', but it is not *identified* with it. It would be, if Socrates said they are different *things* at different times, but his use of the adverb 'otherwise' (ἄλλως) avoids that implication. He is talking about changes of state, not transformations.

In an earlier passage, 70c–d, Socrates refers to the Orphic doctrine that 'the living' come into being again from 'the dead' as an example of things being generated from their opposites. This suggests transformation, yet it is not. The issue is *the soul's ongoing existence* through the reversals between 'being alive' and 'being dead', as Socrates also puts it (71c).[3] It is clear from his other examples too that what concerns him is the generation of opposite states or properties *in*, for example, a human, animal, or plant (70d), such as wakefulness and sleep (71c–d). Some of the examples (such as big and small, hot and cold) suggest the 'indefinite dyad' of Plato's later thought, but they are not brought up here with regard to any flux of primordial matter. It is a matter of some particular thing (τι) becoming bigger or smaller, etc. (70e–71b).[4] There are also two pairs that denote qualities of *soul*: just and unjust, noble and base.[5] Inasmuch as it is variable in these respects, the soul too falls short of the immutable being of Forms, which is why at 79c Plato takes care to say that it is '*more* like' them than sensibles. He goes on to attribute its 'wandering'

(πλανᾶται), 'confusion', and 'dizziness' to its being embedded in a body, which 'drags' it to the things that never remain the same. Eschewing sensibles and dwelling with Forms, it becomes like them (79d). But this denigration of the body and sensibles still does not entail their total abandonment to flux. A body that becomes hot participates in the Form of Heat, no less than a soul that becomes just does in Justice. Here we cannot make the move from never being in the same state to being in *no* state that we met in *Cratylus* 3. It is a matter of a given thing first having one identifiable quality, then the contrary one.

The situation is more complex for the kinds of change that admit of degrees. Something that becomes *warmer* could be said not to relinquish the Form of Cold altogether, but to participate both in it and Heat, as roughly equal sticks and stones participate in both Equality and Inequality, or as Simmias has in him both Bigness and Smallness (102b). There are additional complications here,[6] but the point is that Plato is not opposing unchangingly self-identical Forms to total flux, but to identifiable if changing things with identifiable if changing qualities. The Socrates who 'receives' Smallness is 'still the same person, smaller' (102e).

The *Symposium* and *Republic* address flux in much the same way. Diotima argues at *Symposium* 207d–208b that mortal beings can only partake in immortality through generation, by replacing the old with the new. Besides procreation, she means this to apply *within* individuals over their lifespan. Here identity seems to be placed in quotation marks: 'a man *is said to* be the same person [ὁ αὐτός] from childhood to old age', yet 'he never has the same constituents, but is always being renewed in some respects and experiencing loss in others, such as his hair, skin, bone, blood and his whole body' (after Gill's translation). Hamilton renders νέος ἀεὶ γιγνόμενος 'is continually becoming a new person', but that is too strong. Plato's meaning is only that he is not the same *in the absolute sense* that Forms are.[7] When Diotima extends the point to the soul, affirming that the same process of loss and replenishment may be found in one's habits, opinions, desires, and so on, her point is certainly that the soul changes, but not that it changes into another soul. Far from undermining identity, these constant changes are how mortal creatures 'maintain themselves' (σῴζεται: 208a), physically and psychically.[8] As Irwin (1977: 6) remarks, the 'self-changes' discussed here 'are regular and maintain a close qualitative similarity between the man at one time and at another'.

The key passage in the *Republic* is 477a–480a, where Plato consigns sensibles to a category *between* 'that which entirely "is"' (τὸ παντελῶς ὄν), and 'that which in no way [μηδαμῇ] "is"' (477a).[9] The former denotes the Forms, the latter suggests the non-things of the radical flux doctrine, the 'things' which change so radically and constantly that they 'cannot be anything' (*Cratylus* 439e). Sensibles, then, 'both are and are not' (477a, 478d–e); they have *some* stability, but not the absolute, immutable self-identity of the Forms in which they participate. The deficiency, as in the *Phaedo* and *Symposium*, is that beautiful things (such as tones, colours, and shapes: 476b) 'are all bound to seem in a way [πος] both beautiful and ugly (479a–b; Lee's translation), and likewise for just and pious things, and so on. Clearly, as Irwin (1977: 4) says, this concerns the compresence of opposite properties; there is

no explicit claim that such ambiguity is due to the fact that sensibles *change*. Nevertheless, we should see this as implicit. In Book VI Socrates refers to this in-between realm of sensibles as the realm of 'generation and destruction' (τὸ γιγνόμενον τε καὶ ἀπολλύμενον: 508d; cf. 525b, 534a), not that of compresent properties.

In none of the passages discussed above do we encounter ῥοή or ῥέω. The explanation, it might be thought, is simple. Plato uses these in the *Cratylus* and *Theaetetus* because he associates them with the *extreme* flux he wants to reject there, not the milder flux accepted in these other dialogues. Yet this can't be right. As we have seen, in the *Cratylus* Plato also used 'flow' in a way that lacked *any* fluxist connotation. Similarly in these three dialogues Plato still uses ῥέω in other contexts, and in all but one case there is no unequivocal connotation of flux. The exception is at *Phaedo* 87d, where ῥέω is paired with ἀπόλλυμι. The body, Socrates supposes, is 'constantly flowing [Fowler has 'changing'] and being destroyed even as a man still lives'. Without the soul's work of 'constantly reweaving what wears out', the body 'would quickly vanish in decay'.[10] Here I agree that 'flow' means change, and not just in a neutral sense (such as the body's flowing back and forth between, for example, hotter and colder)[11] but deleterious change, a kind of breaking down and dispersion that seems akin to the 'leaky pots' of *Cratylus* 440c–d.

But this is atypical. At *Phaedo* 109b–c water, mist, and air are said 'to flow together' (ξυρρεῖν) into the hollows of the earth as sediment from the aether. We should not *exclude* flux here, given the fluid boundaries between water, mist and air, over against the 'purity' ascribed to sky and earth. But Plato's *point* is not that in between sky and earth there is this impure, always changing stuff. 'Flowing together' does not seem to mean mixing. Rather, ῥέω seems to have the sense of 'fall' (LSJ *s.v.* I.3). The three stuffs 'fall out' from aether *together*, and on the way down this sediment *separates* into water, mist, and air. When Plato describes what happens in the hollows (111d–113a), it is precisely not flux that is conveyed. He speaks of 'extraordinarily great, *everflowing* rivers [ἀενάων ποταμῶν] under the earth' (111d), some of hot water, others of cold, and some of fire, along with rivers of mud and lava (111e), and an air-flow that 'accompanies' the liquid ones (112b). These are not just distinct but *enduringly* distinct. Even when *they* 'flow together' (συρρέουσι) into Tartarus (112a), they seem to keep their identity and 'flow out of it again', each one having the nature of the specific kind of earth 'through which it flows'. This is the only passage in Plato that uses ῥέω with νάω, and it is not to establish a contrast. ἀενάως at the beginning means 'everflowing' in the sense of 'everlasting' or never failing. As ῥέω relates to the rivers' circuits from and back to Tartarus, it similarly entails the constancy of their flow.[12]

This is likewise the tenor when ῥέω is used in the *Symposium* and *Republic* in relation to *immaterial* things. At *Symposium* 175d Socrates chides Agathon for supposing that he might partake of wisdom simply by sitting next to someone wise. Wisdom is not the sort of thing that 'flows' from the fuller to the emptier merely by contact, as water does if two cups are joined by a piece of wool. The quip relies on this (imaginary) flow being the flow of a self-same wisdom. It would not work

if ῥέω meant that wisdom changes or passes away from Socrates to Agathon (although no doubt that is what Plato insinuates *really* happens!).

At *Republic* 485d *desire* is likened to a stream (ῥεῦμα) which is diverted from other channels to the thing one desires most. The metaphor seems designed precisely to get away from the notion that desire is always changing. In the first instance, it is the constancy of desire *as such* (whichever channel it takes) that is signified. When Socrates adds that in the true philosopher desires 'have come to flow towards the things of learning [τὰ μαθήματα]', it is the constancy of *these* desires, rather than physical ones, that is denoted by their 'flow'. At 495b 'flow' appears again in a similar connection. Here Socrates is explaining that the philosophical nature is not incorruptible. Excessive ambition and pride can lead those of this nature to do the greatest harm, but it is also such persons who do the greatest good, 'if they [i.e., their desires] happen to flow in this direction [οἳ ἂν ταύτῃ τύχωσι ῥυέντες]'. Again it is the *ongoing* nature of the desire for good through thick and thin that flow denotes.

Finally, we find an interesting use of ῥέω in the sun-simile. The capacity for sight 'flows to' the eye as a dispensation from the sun (ἐκ τούτου ταμιευομένην ὥσπερ ἐπίρρυτον: 508b).[13] If the simile holds here, the capacity for knowledge similarly 'flows' to the soul 'from' the Form of the Good (cf. 508e). I don't mean this simply in a logical or causal sense of 'flowing from' (the *Republic* tells us that much directly at 509b); the Greek word lacks that sense. I mean that flow may *literally* belong somehow to the Good, that the latter radiates throughout the intelligible realm as the sun does in the sensible one. This may seem forced, and the qualification of ἐπίρρυτον with ὥσπερ, 'as it were', suggests we shouldn't read too much into the term. Yet I don't think it should be excluded, for on this view the *Republic* would prefigure, however hesitantly, precisely what Plato does in the *Phaedrus* apropos the Form of Beauty. As we will see, this 'flows' in a way that is strongly redolent of the 'overflowing treasury' of the sun (in Grube's translation) at *Republic* 508b.

2 The Form of Beauty in the *Phaedrus*

More than any other Form, Beauty is Plato's go-to example when he is elaborating the nature of Forms in distinction from sensibles. Why? It is not that Beauty is the highest Form – that privilege is reserved for the Good – but nor is it simply a matter of illustrative utility. The reason is partly motivational. If Plato looks to soul to 'straddle' the 'disparate realms' of Forms and sensibles (Vlastos 2005: 31), it is to love that he looks to *motivate* their relation in the middle period, and love is first of all love of beauty. Beauty then may be the stimulus for a turning of the soul towards Forms in general, and love of beauty a stepping stone to love of wisdom, philo-sophy. But there is also something about the Form of Beauty in itself that sets it apart from other Forms, and that is what concerns us now.

In both the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* the vision of Beauty itself is the ulitmate *goal* of love's quest, but a notable development in the *Phaedrus* is that Plato now says

outright that it is also its *origin*. No doubt, in the *Symposium*, the soul that ascends the 'ladder' from beautiful things to Beauty itself must in some way already have the Form to be able to recognise those things *as* beautiful. Even before they provide hints of it, one must have some intimation of it to be struck by their beauty at all. But there is no explicit meditation here on the conditions of possibility of this fore-having of the Form. Here and there we find gestures which *might* suggest an antenatal knowledge of Beauty. Diotima affirms that there is something 'divine' and 'immortal' 'indwelling in mortal living beings' (τοῦτο ἐν θνητῷ ὄντι τῷ ζῴῳ ἀθάνατον ἔνεστιν: 206c). This is referred to as a 'pregnancy', and Diotima's remark, 'when we reach a certain age our *nature* [φύσις] desires to beget', seems to imply that it is a *connatal* one which silently grows in us to the point where the internal pressure compels us to give birth. It may be that what we are pregnant with is an antenatal memory of the Form of Beauty. Plato simply does not say. But in the *Phaedrus* this point is crucial for him. Hence the phenomenology of love in Socrates' second speech is prefaced by a myth of the cosmic and extra-cosmic tour undertaken by souls prior to their first incarnation.[14] In short, we simply would not be lovers, in the elevated sense intended here, unless we had had some experience of Beauty itself on the tour, and had a memory of sorts of that experience.

This is, up to a point, a species of an argument regarding Forms in general. Beauty is of course not the only Form seen on the tour. The first ones mentioned in this respect (at 247d) are actually Justness (δικαιοσύνη), Self-Restraint (σωφροσύνη) and Knowledge (ἐπιστήμη).[15] Plato stresses that, unlike the gods, the non-divine souls in their train do not get a perfectly clear vision of all there is to see beyond the vault of heaven. Even those that manage to keep their heads above water, so to speak,[16] only manage to see the Forms with difficulty, due to the distractions of their 'horses' (spirit and desire, the two other parts of the soul besides *nous*, which is the part capable of seeing Forms), while those that rise and sink on account of the struggle with their horses see some Forms but miss out on others altogether, and below them there is such wrangling that other souls never rise to the upper region at all (248a–b). But *whichever* Forms a soul has seen, its 'wings' will have been 'nourished' by them, and it will, in its earthly life,[17] recognise traces of them in the sensible multiplicity around it, devote itself to the 'unforgetting' (ἀνάμνησις) of them by striving for the unity in the multiplicity, and in this way soar upwards towards them (or at least desire to do so), beyond the sensible and transient things with which others concern themselves (249b–d).

It is in the inspired mania of this upward movement that Plato wishes to locate the essential nature of love, *no matter which* Form is its target.[18] Thus at 248d a distinction is drawn between the lover of wisdom, the lover of beauty, and a third type described as μουσικοῦ τινὸς καὶ ἐρωτικοῦ.[19] Similarly there is nothing in principle preventing a *love* of Justness or Self-Restraint. The question then is why such things are rare. Why do Justness and Self-Restraint lose their lustre (φέγγος) in their earthly 'copies', so that only a few can see them, and only with difficulty (250b)? Why should these, or Wisdom, not regularly elicit the 'fearful' or 'overwhelming' (δεινοὺς: 250d) love that Beauty does? Why should it come about so naturally that the word 'lover' is typically reserved for the lover of beautiful things (249e)?

Part of the explanation would be that not everybody saw these other Forms on the tour. If we were not nourished and rendered happy (247d) by the vision of Justness, we may have a sense *that there is* Justness, but we will not know what it is about it that makes us happy, will not really love it, and will not devote ourselves to drawing its unity from the multiplicity of just deeds or characters in a desire to reappropriate that vision, for there is nothing to unforget besides that vague sense that there is Justness. But the more complete answer is that there is something special about the Form of *Beauty*. On the one hand, this relates to the fact that, *here on earth*, we perceive beautiful things through sight, the 'clearest' (ἐναργεστάτης) and 'sharpest' (ὀξυτάτη) of our bodily senses (250d). By virtue of this, Beauty itself is 'shining most clearly' (στίλβον ἐναργέστατα) in sensible things. It is of all Forms the '*most outshining*' (ἐκφανέστατον), and for that reason the 'most loveable' (250d–e), the one we are most driven to get closer to.[20] Thus the explanation given for why Wisdom does not elicit the same kind of awed regard is that no such 'clear image' (ἐναργὲς εἴδωλον) of it is afforded through sight. The same point explains why there is no 'lustre' in the earthly copies of Justness and Self-Restraint. On the other hand, Socrates emphasises that even in itself, in the extra-cosmic realm of Forms, Beauty has this distinction. At 250b he singles out Beauty as λαμπρόν (shining, bright, radiant) at the time of the tour (for a purely *noetic* seeing). At 250d, to leave us in no doubt about his meaning, he adds that it 'was shining bright among those apparitions' (μετ' ἐκείνων τε ἔλαμπεν ὄν, with ἐκείνων referring back to φάσματα at 250c4), i.e., in comparison with the other Forms.

It is worth exploring the implications of these twin points for souls both on the tour and once they have fallen to earth. We might infer from the first point that not every soul actually saw Beauty antenatally, but it shines through so strongly in its mundane copies that we do not need to have seen it then to see it now in its sensible instantiations.[21] I don't think this is right. Socrates has already avowed that 'every human soul by its nature has beheld τὰ ὄντα', for this is the condition of soul coming into human form (249e–250a).[22] Yet even if we take this to mean only that every soul has beheld *some* Forms, how can this hold for those souls which never got to poke their heads up into the region where Forms are? How can they have seen any of them? I share Hackforth's view that Plato *means* to say that even they saw *something*.[23] But how? I can see only one way out here. Every soul must have at least seen *Beauty*, the Form that is 'most outshining'.[24] Beauty may of itself shine out from the extra-cosmic into the cosmic sphere, so that even those stuck there could see it. It is true that when it is described as ἐκφανέστατον at 250d9, the context is our earthly life; Beauty most shines forth *in* the things partaking in it. But given the remarks referred to in the previous paragraph, I believe it has the additional sense that, considered purely in itself, Beauty is the Form that most shines out *of itself*. In section 3 I will address some remarks later in the speech which support this view.

In connection with this we need to examine more closely the passage at 250b where Socrates first refers to Beauty as 'shining'. He has just said (250a) that on earth few souls retain a strong enough memory of Forms for them to be sent into a

flutter when they see anything resembling them. The long sentence that follows *seems* to pertain to this select class. As the μέν clause relates to the 'few' who, with difficulty, discern the Forms of Justness and Self-Restraint in their earthly copies, so the δέ clause seems to relate to these same few souls who had no such difficulty seeing *Beauty on the tour*. Fowler thus renders this clause: 'But at that former time they saw beauty shining in brightness, when, with a blessed company – we following in the train of Zeus, and others in that of some other god – they saw the blessed sight and vision and were initiated into that which is rightly called the most blessed of mysteries…'. Fowler is generally on the literal end of the scale as a translator, and the second 'they saw' exactly renders εἶδόν at 250b9. But in the first clause governed by δέ Plato speaks differently, using an active (present) infinitive with an imperfect of εἰμί to establish a past reference. Nichols translates: 'But at that time Beauty was bright to see [ἦν ἰδεῖν λαμπρόν]'.[25] The participle λαμπρόν may have the more verbal sense of 'shining bright' (cf. Fowler), in keeping with the active verb ἔλαμπεν at 250d. In any case, the sense, I think, is akin to 'there *for all* to see'. That is not to say there for all to be *initiated into*; that is reserved for those souls who manage to stay aloft in the hypercelestial region. In the subordinate clauses Plato reverts to this restrictive 'they', but he need not be doing so in the main one. At this broad level μέν and δέ seem to organise a threefold distinction: between the few souls who discern Justness and Self-Restraint now (in their copies) and *all* souls for whom *Beauty* shone bright *then*, even if they did not all accede beyond the celestial vault.

However, this seems contradicted by a later remark. At 251a Plato stresses that only those who got a good look at the Forms on the tour, who saw much or many (πολυθεάμων), can experience authentic love in their earthly lives. Regarding those who either were not 'initiated' or have been 'corrupted' (250e), what is missing from their experience is the feeling of awe, an awe which for Plato presupposes the soul's unforgetting of the vision of Beauty. Because they 'are not quickly borne off from this world to Beauty itself in the other' (οὐκ ὀξέως ἐνθένδε ἐκεῖσε φέρεται πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ κάλλος), they 'give themselves up to pleasure and mate like beasts' when they behold someone beautiful. Did these souls, then, not see Beauty after all? Not necessarily. The argument allows for the possibility that they did, but their earthly lives involve a forgetting so egregious that the earthly experience of beauty does not truly reawaken it. At 250a such forgetfulness is ascribed to falling into the wrong kind of company. But this oblivion is a secondary one (cf. Verdenius 1955: 279). An oblivion (λήθη) of Forms can also afflict the soul on the tour, due to its inability to follow its god into the extra-cosmic region, and this is held up as the reason for its becoming heavy and falling to earth (248c). λήθη would be a curious word in relation to what one simply failed to see to begin with. If these souls saw none of the Forms, forgetting would seem to have to relate to the (thwarted) *desire* to see them. The other possibility is, again, that they did at least see *Beauty*, but, since they were unable to see it closely in its own sphere or in all its implications, especially its connection with the Good, it did not leave such a strong impression on them, or they simply gave up trying to get closer to it and 'forgot' about it in this more despairing sense (which may account for their 'heaviness').

At the end of the *Cratylus* Plato, reducing flow to flux, drove a wedge between it and Forms. The reference to Beauty as ἐκφανέστατον brings a first hint that in the *Phaedrus* he is rethinking this. It may be objected that this is to overinvest the graphic sense of ἐκ- here. This would hold if it were only a matter of how the Form of Beauty metaphorically goes 'out' into beautiful things, but the *Phaedrus* is not solely concerned with the participation of beautiful things in Beauty itself. In fact it tends to presuppose this as a stepping stone to something else. What is of central interest to Plato here is that Beauty goes into the *lover* by way of the beloved whose beauty he beholds. 'Flow' is invoked to explain how it gets there. Being opened up to the Form of Beauty is at the same time being opened up to the 'flow' or 'stream of beauty' which, I will argue, issues not simply from the beloved but from that Form.

3 The role of flow in the second speech

Before we address how the experience of love is depicted here, we should recall what has been driving the second speech from the outset. Socrates' first speech had emphasised the negative in love. Love leads astray, it demeans lover and beloved alike, primarily because it is prone to a manic jealousy or possessiveness. A second speech is needful, and a palinode at that, because this does not exhaust or do justice to love's nature.[26] There is also a good mania; when it comes as 'a gift of the gods', mania is not an evil but the occasion for the 'greatest goods we receive' (244a).[27] The love 'sent from god' (ἐκ θεῶν ἐπιπέμπεται: 245b) is one, along with divination, purification rites, and poetic inspiration from the Muses. What makes mania good in such cases? The answer seems to be that it can shake us out of our customary self-possession and self-centredness and open us up beyond ourselves, possessed rather than possessive. But possessed by what? Mania must come from the divine to open us up *to the divine itself*. In grasping mania as in-spiration or en-thusiasm (ἐνθουσιάζων: 249d, ἐνθουσιῶντες: 253a, ἔνθεον: 255b), Plato obviously means to say that the divine is *in* us. But what does divine mean here?

On the one hand, it certainly means the gods. The god one followed on the tour is *in* one, as the model to be followed in one's conduct and choice of beloved (253b), but it is in one connatally rather than coming into one in an earthly *event*. Plato does speak of inspiration in the context of the attempt to recall 'the nature of one's god' by 'pursuing its traces' in oneself (253a), but this is secondary. The inspiration on the basis of which the whole development of love between persons occurs is the lover's vision of Beauty in the beloved. On the other hand, then, since Forms are also 'divine', it is a matter *first of all* of being opened up to and possessed by the divine Form of Beauty. This too involves a kind of remembering of prenatal experience, but it is beholding another's beauty here on earth which prompts this.

In fact this is Plato's new explanation for love's aspect of terror. In the *Symposium* (206e; cf. 207a–b) panic flight[28] is associated with an urge to beget which, as is made clear at 209b, pre-exists any specific love object. In the *Phaedrus* it is associated

with the *experience* of beauty. What explains it is the sense of the transcendent and otherworldly *in* the mundane (if beautiful) other. To be reminded by something in *this* world of Beauty itself in the other – this is what renders one beside oneself, frightened out of one's senses (ἐκπλήττονται: 250a), and makes one grow wings in a manic attempt to be reunited with the original (249d). Juxtaposed with this terrible aspect in the *Symposium* was the happier moment in which love is all joyous ease and melting, dissolving, outpouring[29] (206d). A central task of Plato's account in the *Phaedrus* is to account for the compresence of the two. It is in the process of clarifying this that Plato gives us to understand, as if in answer to the *Cratylus*, that there is a partnership between Form and flow where beauty and love are concerned. For, as previously mentioned, one has to have got a decent look at the Forms during the tour to have genuine access to this puzzling experience which Plato is about to bring under the rubric of flow.

For the 'initiated', Socrates says, the experience of 'a godlike face or a bodily figure which reflects Beauty well'[30] makes him *shudder* (ἔφριξεν), as 'something of the awe he felt at that former time comes over him' (τι τῶν τότε ὑπῆλθεν αὐτὸν δειμάτων: 251a). Here we get a first intimation of love as an invasive force, in keeping with the *Cratylus*' remark that it 'flows in from without' 'through the eyes' (420a–b).[31] Plato's language is noteworthy. As Lebeck points out (1972: 274), ἔφριξεν 'is a common metaphor describing the effects of fright', and this is reinforced by δειμάτων, with its strong overtones of dread. However, many prefer to render the latter word 'awe' here, and with reason, for when seen on the tour Forms were 'calm and happy apparitions' (250c). Yet if terror is out of place here, it is entirely fitting apropos the reminder of Beauty *now*. Since ἔφριξεν is related to φρίκη, chill, which is often associated with divine visitation, it may attest with poetic economy to the transcendent origin of this force which overwhelms (ὑπῆλθεν). This is perhaps reinforced by the comment that the lover is predisposed by this disturbing experience to revere the *beloved* as a god. This chill of terror then passes into 'sweat and an unfamiliar [ἀήθης] heat', which seems again to suggest the uncanny origin of the forces at work.

Clearly drawing on the *Cratylus*, Plato describes the subject of this experience as a reservoir (δεξάμενος) which receives the *out-flow* (ἀπορροήν) of beauty 'through the eyes' (251b). But why out-flow rather than in-flow? Part of the explanation (cf. Lebeck 1972: 274) is that Plato is drawing from Empedocles' theory of vision, in which this term is central.[32] To this it may be added that here Plato is more explicitly concerned than he was in the *Cratylus* with the *source* of this flow.

This inflow (from the lover's point of view) is what 'warms' him (251b). Plato is no doubt associating this warming with a joyous melting, as he associates chill with terror, but his account is a little more complex than this, for we learn that the former is not an altogether warm and gooey experience. The trope of love as the regrowth of the soul's 'wings' is now developed feathers and all. The warming inflow irrigates (ἄρδεται) the feathers which lie implicit in the soul, and clears their 'hardened' and 'choked up' passages so that they may grow again. This brings a certain 'itchiness and irritation' (κνῆσις τε καὶ ἀγανάκτησις: 251c) akin to that of

children cutting their teeth, which causes the whole soul to 'boil and throb' (ζεῖ, ἀνακηκίει: 251b). By an itchiness and irritation of *soul* Plato clearly means *desire*; recall that at *Cratylus* 419e ἐπιθυμία, when it 'goes to the soul', was said to make it 'rage and boil' (θύσεως καὶ ζέσεως: 419e).[33] More specifically, he means the desire to *see* the beloved, seeing whom made one itchy to start with. Yet if Plato is alluding, again very economically, to a tendency to perpetuate this itch by the measures we take to alleviate it, this is not all he is doing; for while this suffering is an effect of the warming inflow, Plato is at pains to make the latter its cure as well. When the soul gazes (again) upon the beauty of the beloved, 'it receives *shares that rush and flow from there*' (ἐκεῖθεν μέρη ἐπιόντα καὶ ῥέοντ´… δεχομένη), by which it is 'irrigated and warmed, released from its distress and joyous' (ἄρδηταί τε καὶ θερμαίνηται, λωφᾷ τε τῆς ὀδύνης καὶ γέγηθεν: 251c–d). Later Plato will complicate this scenario still more, but there is much to dwell on here, particularly regarding what flow is flow *of* and flow *from*.

A first issue is the sense of μέρη. Many translate 'particles', but I doubt this can be right.[34] It is true that flowing particles (μόρια) are integral to the theory of perception in the *Timaeus*, and that there (67c–d) Plato equates μόρια and μέρεις (= μέρη, 'parts' or 'shares', differing only in gender). But it does not follow that Plato is equating shares with particles in the *Phaedrus*. Particles are necessarily material, but there is no question of the beloved's *beauty* physically entering or rubbing off on the lover. Furthermore, the matter at issue in the *Timaeus* theory is fire. The perceptibility of anything requires that the fire within us is akin to daylight, so that when it flows out of our eyes it coalesces with its like,[35] 'forming a single uniform body in the line of sight' which 'strikes the external object' (45b–c). The *Phaedrus* passage is simply not about these physical mechanics of perception. Here Plato is drawing *from* Empedocles' theory rather than *on* it. In the *Cratylus* the passions in general are treated as flows *of the soul*, and the description of both love and desire as flowing *into* the soul through the eyes should be understood in line with this. In the *Timaeus* and *Philebus* Plato does speak of bodily flows impacting on the soul, but that is not what he is talking about here either. As the precondition of this whole experience is the antenatal vision of Forms perceivable only by intelligent soul, he is rather speaking about a flow into the soul which then impacts on the body. Here everything hinges on the fact that *what* the lover perceives in the beautiful other is Beauty itself, even if he misconstrues this and seeks to make a physical idol of this quality (251a). It is because the beloved's physical beauty recalls this original purely noetic vision that the lover experiences it with 'something of the awe' he felt 'at that time'.

While the notion of material particles of the Form of Beauty is nonsensical, sense can be made of the lover receiving 'shares' of Beauty. This recalls the theme of *participation*, which though unmentioned must be presupposed. It is initially the *beloved* who has a share in Beauty, but this share *overflows* him, and *part* of it flows into the lover so that he too partakes in Beauty. His appearance is not physically changed, needless to say, but he is *transfigured* in the light of the Form, which now shines in him as well. The shares that 'rush and flow' into his soul are not shares in

the beloved's beauty but in Beauty as such. Certainly they flow 'from' the beloved, but ultimately they come from the Form of Beauty, *by way of* the beloved whom *Beauty* overflows. Thus Plato says ἐκεῖθεν, not 'from him' but 'from that place', echoing the *temporally* distancing language used for the Forms seen τότε, 'at that time'.

This 'outflow' of Beauty itself is, I believe, integral to the sense of ἐκφανέστατον at 250d. Transcendent Beauty not only shines *in* and *into* the things of this world more than any other Form, but keeps shining *out of* them, uncontainable. It is in regard of this that flow is mobilised in the *Phaedrus*. Flow here is the flow *of* Beauty *from* Beauty, the self-overflowing of the Form of Beauty from those that bear it, or struggle to 'bear' it.

A later remark will confirm this, but we are not yet done with 251c–d. When I first cited the passage I omitted a parenthetical remark which we are now in a position to take up. In passing Plato strangely proposes that the word ἵμερος, 'longing', derives from the key words of the preceding phrase: 'shares' (μέρη) that 'flow' (ῥέοντα) and 'rush' (ἐπιόντα) into the soul. What he is doing is building the word from the ἱ of ἱέναι (to send forth, shoot, let flow),[36] the μέ of μέρη and the ῥο of ῥοή. This accords with the breathing of ἵμερος, and with the *Cratylus* inasmuch as it grasps ἵμερος (420a) as a 'rushing' (ἱέμενος) or 'shooting' (ἐφιέμενος, = ἐπιόντα) kind of 'flow' (ῥοή). However, in the *Phaedrus*, not only is μέρη introduced but it is clearly expected to carry the bulk of the load. The ταῦτα in ἃ δὴ διὰ ταῦτα ἵμερος καλεῖται, 'because of which *these* are called longing', can only refer to the shares, as odd as that seems. Identifying longing with the inflowing shares reverses what we would ordinarily consider the direction of a flow or stream of longing: from ourselves to what we long for. We can understand how the inflow of beauty may *provoke* a flood of longing, but not so readily how it could already *be* that longing.

As we saw in Chapter 2, the *Cratylus* suggested that such things as love, desire, and longing are older than I am, that they do not begin when I desire or love, but are somehow already at large before they enter anyone's soul (in the first two cases) or, in the case of longing, before it 'draws' the soul into it. It is difficult to know what to make of this. If longing pre-exists the soul, does it originally meander without an *object* as well as a subject, before it is specialised as *my* longing for *this*? There is not enough in the *Cratylus* account to go on. Elsewhere in Plato we seem at most to get only half of this idea: the remark at *Symposium* 209b that *my* desire precedes any specific object. But even this no longer applies in the *Phaedrus*. In any case, the *Cratylus* seems at least to do justice to the directedness of longing out to the thing longed after (or in search of such a thing). The contrary suggestion in the *Phaedrus*, that it flows from the 'longee', is strange however one looks at it. If the flow of beauty is already longing before it enters me and becomes *mine*, and if the above notion of original longing is foreign to Plato, it must be *someone's* longing. It cannot be the beloved's, for it is not until the stream flows *back* from the lover to the beloved that the latter finds himself in love (255d). But if the source of this flow is the Form of Beauty, there is the stranger consequence that this Form is the original 'subject' of longing, and that the content of *its* longing is simply *that I long*. Either way, in trying to give a content to the claim that longing flows *into* the

lover's soul we have had to contradict it as a definition of longing in relation to its other putative subjects, and it is difficult to see how that could be avoided without having recourse to the idea of an original, subjectless and objectless, longing.

Nevertheless, that Plato does actually mean this is reinforced by the text. At 251e, when the lover sees the beloved again after a painful period of absence, his soul is 'bathed in a flood of longing' (ἐποχετευσαμένη ἵμερον ἔλυσε) which is clearly brought to bear *on* him. This is also very much the case at 255c, where the 'stream' of longing is clearly equated with the 'stream of beauty' (τὸ τοῦ κάλλους ῥεῦμα). Here the scenario of 251c–d is repeated and extended at a later stage in which the lover and the beloved have become intimate friends, and touch is added to sight. When he touches the beloved, 'the wellspring of that stream [ἡ τοῦ ῥεύματος ἐκείνου πηγή] which Zeus, when he was in love with Ganymede, called "longing" bears down full tilt upon the lover [πολλὴ φερομένη πρὸς τὸν ἐραστήν]'.

Here too there is much to dwell on. Most importantly, what is meant by the wellspring (πηγή)? The ensuing remarks seem at first to suggest the beloved. While some of this flood 'goes into' (εἰς ἔδυ) the lover, 'some, when he is full to the brim, flows back out [ἔξω ἀπορρεῖ]' and 'is carried back whence it came [ὅθεν ὡρμήθη]', entering the beloved 'through his eyes' (255c) so that he too finds himself in love, without knowing with whom or understanding his condition (255d).[37] This is not simply an unconscious narcissism, notwithstanding the mirror metaphor that Plato deploys in this passage. As Yunis (2011: 164) says, this coming back of beauty's stream upon the beloved 'arouses *eros* in him just by virtue of being a likeness of the Form of beauty, not because of the particular origin or nature of that likeness'. In line with my earlier claims, I think we can go further and identify the 'wellspring' or 'source'[38] of the stream *as this Form*. Two points recommend this. Firstly, the wellspring metaphor is a suggestive one, implying a source that simultaneously goes out of itself and stays back in itself. This is particularly apposite to the Form of Beauty, which is 'out-shining', radiant, and overflowing, while, of course, not itself *going* anywhere. Significantly, it is the wellspring of the stream, not the stream itself, that is said to overwhelm the lover in all its force. Beauty itself is even more powerfully present when touch is added, which suggests that it could still be to some extent contained in the vision of the beloved.[39] Purely as a spectacle, the beloved is a gateway that denies access to Beauty itself as well as admitting it.

The second point is that this view yields a decent if incomplete interpretation of Zeus' appearance here. In the *Phaedrus* Zeus is the *philosophical god* (252e), the one who led the procession to the 'hypercelestial place' of the Forms and exemplifies the knowledge of and pure attention to Forms characteristic of divine soul (246e, 247c–e). Since it was thanks to following Zeus above all on the tour that non-divine souls were able to get a clear vision of Beauty shining, it makes sense to refer to him here; it is a kind of homage. Stated in reverse, the reference to Zeus *qua* philosophical god supports the view that the wellspring is this Form, the essential philosophical object where love is concerned.

Beyond that, we face a number of questions. Why is the Ganymede story referred to, and why in this form? Plato's version corresponds to later views of

Ganymede as Zeus' beloved (Euripides says 'bedfellow': *Orestes* 1392) rather than the simple 'cupbearer' of Homeric tradition (*Iliad* 20.234, *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 202ff.).[40] But that Zeus referred in this context to a stream of longing is not attested anywhere else[41] and is almost certainly Plato's own invention. Lebeck (1972: 279) sees in Ganymede's pouring of wine for Zeus an image of 'the flood of desire which also flows from him to the god'. As Zeus is drawn by the beauty of Ganymede, whom he then carries to the heavens, so 'the philosopher consecrated to Zeus first follows the beloved, then raises him closer to the god'. That makes good sense, but it does not resolve all our concerns. This stream characterises the mania which is 'sent from god', the point of which is to open us up to and help us rise closer to the divine (Forms). Yet the gods are already there. Indeed, their very divinity is due to their pure 'dwelling upon' Forms (249c).[42] Why then is Zeus erotically disposed to Ganymede, and subject to a mania the purpose of which is to help him get to where he already is? Why would he *long* for even the most beautiful of his followers, if he is purely intent on the knowledge of Forms and the far from trifling matter of maintaining cosmic order (246e) on that basis? That goes far beyond the sense of the gods 'caring' about us that is axiomatic for Plato. In section 4 I will try to situate the *Phaedrus* in Plato's development in a way which may shed some light on this point.

One last passage from Socrates' *Bildungsroman* of higher love is relevant to us here. At 253a the stream image is taken up in a different way and context: not the initial experience of the beloved's beauty but what Griswold (1986: 125) identifies as the lover's subsequent attempt to divinise him. When the lover worships the beloved as a god, what he is really or unconsciously doing is 'contriving' (τεκταίνεται: 252d) the beloved after the model of his own god. With regard to the formation of his own character and way of life, the lover in fact 'draws the waters of inspiration'[43] from his god: here 'from Zeus'. He then 'pours them out [ἐπαντλοῦντες] over the soul of the beloved, making him as far as possible like that god' too (253a).

Different interpretations are possible here. Note first the active verbs, drawing and pouring, in contrast to the lover's pure reception of the stream of beauty. There may be an element of receptivity in the unconscious 'drawing' of character traits from a god who is in one connatally (λαμβάνω, used at 253a5, can mean both take and receive), but Plato stresses the active aspect. It is through the lover's efforts to *recall* the nature of his god by its traces in him that he is inspired (252e–253a), which here presumably means inspired to become the kind of person who is fit to be lover to the beloved, to become what he essentially (antenatally) is; that is why, as I said earlier, this inspiration is secondary to the one involved in the experience of Beauty in the beloved. But what is meant by 'pouring'? For Hackforth (1952: 100 note 2), the point is that 'the immediate subject of possession' (the lover) 'infects' another (the beloved); hence the comparison with Bacchic ritual. This is part of Plato's meaning, but that there is another sense is clear from Socrates' remark that the lover takes the beloved to be the *cause* of his inspiration. Pouring also seems to signify that the lover, labouring under this delusion, *projects* from himself (the god whose traces are in him) into the beloved the noble qualities he wants to find.

Griswold is justified, I think, in speaking of the lover's 'transference' here. He argues further (1986: 126) that this is complemented by a countertransference at 255d, when the beloved finds himself in love but does not know with whom, being unaware (λέληθεν) that what he sees in the lover is himself 'as in a mirror'. In Griswold's view the beloved's desire is aroused *because* he is desired, so that in going with it he buys into 'the lover's fantasy about him'. I won't exclude this, if only because it does seem a feature of love generally.[44] But I would say that here Griswold is in danger of blurring the distinction between the seeing of Beauty and the making of *character* that guides his own analysis, particularly when he says that the beloved 'pours' into the lover the stream of beauty that then returns to him, as the lover 'pours' character traits into the beloved. On that reading even the initial seeing of Beauty would be delusional. But the beloved does not pour this stream; *it pours* from him. It seems that Griswold is led into this by his understandable expectation that this whole account of love be informed by the argument at 245c–246a that all motion is ultimately to be traced back to soul. For him the way the account highlights the role of imagination in love shows 'how the soul can move itself through the excitation of eros'. It is just that there is nothing in the account which authorises the application of this point to the origination of the stream of beauty.

This is not simply to point to a tension in Griswold's interpretation. It reflects the transitional nature of the *Phaedrus*. Between the *Phaedo*'s assertion of Forms as causes and the rehabilitation of the *nous* doctrine in the *Timaeus*, the *Phaedrus* moves away from the former in linking cosmic order to divine soul (245e, 246c), while still apparently retaining something of it in connection with Beauty. The stream of beauty is not set in motion by any kind of soul, but is the sheer self-overflowing of the Form.

4 The *Phaedrus* in the development of Plato's thought

With regard to the broader issue of Plato's development, what is the significance of this move in the *Phaedrus*? Looking backwards, it is clearly an attempt to get beyond the *Cratylus* aporia, the total incommensurability of Forms with flow. Moreover, it is definitely flow, not flux, that is at issue. Admittedly, here too Plato does not expressly distinguish them, and one might at times get the impression (from the use of μέρη, for example) that he is speaking of flux. But he is not. The effects of the flow of beauty on the lover, such as chill and heat, might be fleeting, even chaotic, but this is not really the point. At no time are we given the sense that this stream is too fleeting to be designatable, that it has become other by the time we refer to it, that it is beautiful one moment, ugly the next, or beautiful for one person, ugly for another. While it may come and go, or vary in intensity, this says more about our receptivity to it than about the stream itself. In itself Beauty may well be described as 'everflowing', and its streaming remains throughout a stream of beauty. It is this continuity that most essentially distinguishes what flows from whatever is in flux. Finally, whereas flux in Plato has to do with *material* vicissitudes, the flow of beauty is not material. It goes *directly* into the soul, rather than by way of bodily affections.

There is a further point. A feature of the etymological inquiry in the *Cratylus* was the increasing ambiguity of flow. It may be errant or wandering as well as

regular and orderly, manic and seething as well as smooth and easy. I argued in Chapter 2 that it was this duplicity that led Plato to dismiss flow as an ontological fantasy and to caricature it as radical flux. The *Phaedrus* can be seen as getting beyond the *Cratylus* in this regard as well. Rather than implying that if flow is not entirely reliable it *is not* period, it effectively subsumes the negative aspect under the positive. The suffering caused by the inflow of beauty is necessary if the soul is to be opened up and freed for a life that has room for both real intimacy with another and devotion to the pursuit of wisdom. That pursuit hinges on the knowledge of Forms, and it is the soul's more immediate receptivity to Beauty, for all the irritation as well as joyousness of that experience, that stimulates its quest to unforget other, less 'outshining' Forms.

But what is the significance of this synergistic convergence of flow and Form looking forward? As argued by Bett (1986: 17–21), in certain respects the *Phaedrus* seems closer to the late dialogues than to the *Phaedo* and *Republic*. Besides the parallel between its proof of soul's immortality and *Laws* X apropos soul as constant self-motion, Bett sees in the *Phaedrus* myth a 'shift' (1986: 21) towards the argument in the *Sophist* that 'being' is not to be restricted to things that are entirely changeless. Crucially, as we know, it is argued there that to do this is to exclude 'life, soul, and intelligence' from the sphere of what is (248e). This remark presupposes, as Bett (19) points out, both that soul is an ὄν and that it changes, views which were incompatible in the early statements of the theory of Forms. Bett (21) grants that the *Phaedrus* never refers expressly to soul as an ὄν, but seems to reserve this term for Forms. But he counters that, in saying that soul is 'nourished' by Forms, the *Phaedrus* implies that it 'is not basically alien from that which nourishes it'. His key point, in any case, is that here the soul's final destiny is not 'freedom from all change', but 'constant, albeit regular, motion'.

Now it may seem, in view of 'everflowing being' in *Laws* XII, that the use of flow in connection with Beauty in the *Phaedrus* is a form of this 'shift'. Yet the *Sophist* passage moves within a quite different thematic horizon. For one thing, there is no reference to flow here; Plato uses φέρω and κινέω,[45] rather than pairing φέρω with ῥέω as he typically did in the *Cratylus*. But even if he did refer to flow, it would not necessarily have the same tenor, depending on what one takes to be the main point at *Sophist* 248a–249d. Is it that Forms do not exhaust the category of 'being', or that *Forms* specifically have life, soul, and intelligence, and thus motion? In the latter case, we may well see a resemblance between this and the flow of the Form of Beauty in the *Phaedrus*. Yet the contextual background informing the *Sophist* argument is *cosmological*. At 249c–d, as previously remarked, τὸ ὄν is identified with τὸ πᾶν. In the late dialogues (excepting the *Laws*) the cosmos *has* life, soul, and intelligence, and Plato's primary concern in the *Sophist* passage is that *it* ought to be recognised as an ὄν, albeit a generated one which in various ways is subject to change (though not dissolution). In Plato's cosmology the circular motion of *nous* is crucial. If *nous* is a Form, it is one to which this motion belongs intrinsically. Yet it is quite a different thing to say that *all* Forms are not only intelligible but intelligent, that they all have the motion specific to intelligence, that they have life and soul as well, and with them any number of other motions. I do not see Plato

making this claim, or needing to make it, for excepting *nous* the role of Forms in his cosmology is to be models for an intelligent cause.

From this point of view we ought to highlight the difference between the *Sophist* and the *Phaedrus* more than the similarity. The flow of Beauty is a different kind of motion than the one Plato takes to characterise intelligence. The closest we get to the notion of circular motion here is the claim that this flow returns from the lover back to the beloved. More broadly, in the *Phaedrus* we see only a few furtive and rudimentary steps towards a cosmology, and it is in that context, with reference to the eternal circular motions of the heavenly bodies and the cosmos, that Plato will speak of 'everflowing being'.

At *Phaedrus* 247c *nous* is referred to as the 'pilot of soul' (ψυχῆς κυβερνήτῃ), in a passage that at least touches on the world-ordering role of divine soul previously asserted at 246c. Zeus is the ἡγεμὼν ἐν οὐρανῷ in the twofold sense that he *leads* the cosmic tour of souls, and that he *rules* 'within the heaven' (cosmos), or 'orders and takes care of everything' (διακοσμῶν πάντα καὶ ἐπιμελούμενος: 246e). Yet there is no clear association here between *nous* in its piloting role and circular motion, even when cosmic rotation is referred to at 247b. We simply are not told the cause of this. It is not Zeus' doing (he is pointedly called the ruler *within* the cosmos, and like the other gods he is passively carried around by its revolution when he stands atop the cosmos). Nor is it ascribed to a *nous*-endowed world-soul, or to the soul-transcending *nous* which Hackforth and Menn take the demiurge to be. Plato is of course aware that a kind of circular motion is integral to Anaxagoras' claim that *nous* orders the universe. But he has not joined all the dots here. The remark at 247c is not really made from a cosmological viewpoint. It is a matter of the soul *seeing* Forms, and the piloting of *nous* is simply a matter of controlling the soul's unruly horses so that one may *rise* into the realm of Forms. As Bett (1986: 21) remarks, on its own *nous* here seems 'relatively inert'; it is the horses, the lower parts of the soul, that as it were do the grunt-work.

In connection with this, I suggest that it is not by chance that the two love dialogues fall between the *Phaedo* and the *Timaeus*, between Plato's bracketing of Anaxagoras' *nous* doctrine and his rehabilitation of it in his own, highly original form. Unsure how to ground the doctrine in the *Phaedo*,[46] Plato resorted to a makeshift approach to causation in terms of Forms and participation, but because participation could not suffice to *motivate* the relation between the sensible and intelligible realms in the morally significant way that Plato demands from a theory of causation, love had to fill this void in the middle period. Doubtless it is a constant of Plato's thought that cosmic order implies love among other things (cf. *Gorgias* 508a, *Timaeus* 32a, *Laws* 897a), but in the *Symposium* (202e) love appears as *the* force mediating between gods and men 'so that the All is bound together into a whole' (ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὑτῷ συνδεδέσθαι). Although it is not expressed, it is easy to assume the idea informs the *Phaedrus* too, if we put together the erotic Zeus of 255c with the world-ordering Zeus of 246e. Yet however important the mania of love may be to the philosophical quest in other respects, love cannot adequately fulfil this cosmological role just because it is manic. What makes the world go round should already be in that perfect form which it takes

the mania of love to transport us to. It may have been Plato's recognition of just this point that forced him to make the *nous* doctrine his own in the *Timaeus*.

On this basis let us return to our question. We cannot say that the convergence of flow and Form in the *Phaedrus* provides a direct parallel either with the *Sophist* passage or the 'everflowing being' of the celestial bodies and the cosmos in *Laws* XII. Nevertheless, this move is a highly significant one in that it opens the way for Plato to reconceive the relationship between flow and being in other ways, and in contexts which do not hinge so much on our own finite experience. Here it is useful to take our bearings once again from the *Cratylus*. As we saw in Chapter 2, there flow is often treated in terms of the soul moving or being 'in sync' with things, ultimately with the world as a whole. The most natural sense is that the soul *flows*, has a fluent and easy motion, when it 'goes with the flow' of the world, or indeed being. This point seems to me both to unite and divide the *Phaedrus* and the later dialogues.

In the *Phaedrus* flow is needed, as it were, to jump-start a human soul that is entombed (250c) in a body and remind it of its otherworldly origin and destiny, and just so flow must itself have an extra-cosmic origin. Here it is a question of the embodied soul becoming in sync with true being *qua* transcendent Forms. In the *Timaeus*, where the human being is a microcosm of a living, ensouled cosmos, this is no longer necessary, because it is now a question of becoming in sync with the exemplary cosmic creature. Flow in its cosmic sense does not need to *enter* our souls experientially for us to become aware that *nous* rules the world (we have only to look to the sky, and to infer from the motions of the celestial bodies in conformity with it the governing motion of *nous* itself), or for us to awaken to our essential calling on earth, which is not to love but to actively model ourselves on the cosmos so that *nous* becomes the governing principle in us as well (47a–e). Nor need flow now be flow of and from a Form. But it *is* the flow of a *being* (on the *Sophist* definition), a thing which, though embodied, has 'everlasting life' (*Timaeus* 36e), soul and intelligence, and an eternal circular motion which entails that, throughout its changes, it remains self-same. It must be admitted, however, that in the *Timaeus* this circular motion is not yet linked with flow, as it is in the *Laws*. Why this might be is one of the issues that confront us in the next chapter.

Notes

1 He adds that they are 'uni-form' (μονο-ειδὲς) and exist 'by themselves alone' (following Vlastos's reading of αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό at 1991: 305), i.e., independent of all that participates in them. For comparison of the theory of Forms in the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*, see Appendix.

2 Note also 90c. Here Socrates, again in language that recalls *Cratylus* 3 (although note the use of στρέφω rather than ῥέω), is *reporting the view* of disputatious types who think they are wisest because they alone understand 'that there is nothing wholesome [ὑγιὲς] or stable [βέβαιον] in anything', that 'all things turn about [στρέφεται] back and forth like the tide in the Euripus, and never remain in any place for any time'. Mohr (2005: 156) misreads the passage as Platonic doctrine.

3 He uses nominal infinitives here (τὸ ζῆν, τὸ τεθνάναι), in contrast to the plural participles τὰ ζώοντα and τὰ ἀποθανόντα at 70c.

4 He is not of course saying that any such property *causes* its opposite, only that when I become one I come to it *from* the other.
5 τὸ καλόν, τὸ αἰσχρόν: possibly 'beautiful', 'ugly' (as physical properties as well), but the juxtaposition with just and unjust suggests their moral connotations.
6 Simmias has these properties *relative to* Socrates and Phaedo. This amounts to Irwin's aspect-change, rather than any 'self-change' in him. This passage seems a case of Plato failing to distinguish these clearly; Socrates goes on at 103b–c to stress that the *generation* of opposites from each other only applies when they are properties of things (that is, not *qua* Forms), but it is not their generation that is at stake here. Conversely, at 74b, discussed earlier, Socrates does seem to make just this distinction.
7 Cf. *Symposium* 210e–211a, Plato's fullest list of the ways that Forms are distinguished from sensibles.
8 The example Diotima gives is studying in order to replace the knowledge that we forget. This 'preserves our knowledge so that it seems to be the same'. She then extends the point to cover physical changes as well.
9 Following Shorey's translation; alternatively, 'that which is entirely real' and 'that which is in no way real'. Vlastos argues that Plato is distinguishing 'degrees of reality', not 'degrees of existence' (1973: 44–49 and 65f.; 1991: 254f.). I don't dispute the first point, but Vlastos seems to adopt a narrow conception of 'existence' which makes the idea of it having degrees absurd; a thing either exists or it doesn't. Plato definitely maintains that Forms exist, and that on the thesis of radical flux *there are* no 'things'. But if the existence of a Form is its enduring 'thereness' or 'presence', sensibles have *something* of this, only *less* enduringly. From this point of view I don't see a problem with translating τὸ παντελῶς ὄν 'that which fully exists'.
10 The verbs in this sentence are optative because Socrates is considering a theory he regards as unlikely: that the soul merely lasts longer than the body, rather than being immortal. This doesn't affect the sense of *rheô*.
11 The sense at *Philebus* 43a. See Chapter 5, section 2b, for discussion of this passage.
12 Not, however, their constancy *at* any particular place. The rivers flow back and forth between the deeper hollows and the upper ones in which we dwell, so that the flow fills our rivers when it leaves the underground ones and *vice versa* (112c).
13 I translate freely here to emphasise the sense of motion radiating from the sun. Strictly speaking ἐπίρρυτος is an adjective used here as a noun; Lee has 'an infusion', Shorey and Grube 'an influx'. Note also Grube's alternative senses of ταμιευομένην (treasury) and ὥσπερ (which he does not take as a qualification).
14 The reference to a first birth (πρώτῃ γενέσει: 248d) is enough to dispel the view (Bluck 1958) that the fall of soul is not original but due to certain defects owing to a prior impure earthly life. For a comprehensive critique see McGibbon (1964).
15 Beauty is named with wisdom (σοφόν) and goodness (ἀγαθόν) at 246e, but the context there is somewhat different. Socrates is explaining why the wing partakes of divine nature. He does not refer to these three qualities of the divine as Forms here, or as Forms beheld on the tour, but this is implicit in his claim that the wings of the soul are 'nourished' by seeing them, for this is just what the encounter with Forms involves in the tour myth (247d–e).
16 On the implicit water metaphor here see Lebeck (1972: 270–271).
17 Provided it has not been so corrupted in its fall as to lose all memory of this vision (250a).
18 In contrast to Socrates' first speech. There (238b–c), in discussing what turns out to be the bad kind of love and of mania, love is defined as one among many ways in which innate and irrational desire for pleasure can lead us astray and triumph over our better selves, specifically that way which 'is led away towards pleasure in *beauty*' (πρὸς ἡδονὴν ἀχθεῖσα κάλλους).
19 Fowler translates 'one of a musical or loving nature', Nichols 'someone musical and erotic', Hackforth and Hamilton 'a follower of the Muses and a lover'. Given 245a, where possession by the Muses is outlined as one kind of divine mania, it seems likely

that here μουσικός has its original sense 'of the Muses' (although it cannot refer to the poet or artist as such, who falls in the sixth rank of souls). While the phrase is obscure, what seems clear is that three types are being distinguished. The καί makes plain the contrastive sense of ἢ (φιλοσόφου ἢ φιλοκάλου ἢ μουσικοῦ τινὸς καὶ ἐρωτικοῦ). This tells against Hackforth's attempt (1952: 83) to equate them all, so that the others are simply 'aspects' of the philosopher. As White (1993: 114–115) objects, while every lover of wisdom is probably also a lover of beauty, the reverse does not straightforwardly hold. The third type would seem to have to be lovers of a third kind of Form. A possible construal is those with a fondness for, and an acute sensitivity to, the Forms of *numbers* and their complex interrelationships, as reflected, for example, in musical works.

20 Cf. Yunis (2011: 151): 'it is the vividness of our perception of a Form that determines the intensity of our desire for it'.

21 As proposed, for example, by White (1993: 125).

22 This restates the claim at 249b, but both of these passages seem to contradict the earlier claim (248c) that whichever soul has won a vision of any (τι) of the Forms does not fall to earth at all. However, Socrates goes on there to say that, of the souls that fall, those that have *seen the most* are destined to be one of the three types distinguished at 248d, and presumably the sense of the eight lower ranks is that each will have seen less than the one before. Perhaps the way to resolve this tension is to recall the point at 248a: even those souls that keep their 'heads' up in the outer region see τὰ ὄντα only μόγις, 'scarcely' or 'with difficulty'. These souls 'see more', since they do not fluctuate in and out of the hypercelestial region, but they do not win the kind of 'vision' that the gods do. For White their 'difficulty' pertains not just to seeing specific Forms, but seeing them 'in their fundamental relations to mind and the good' (1993: 134). There is much to recommend this, but I think White goes too far when he says, regarding the claim at 249d that to see beauty on earth is to be reminded of 'the true' (τοῦ ἀληθοῦς), that the latter refers not to 'true Beauty' but 'the entire realm of reality' held together by the good (1993: 124). At 248c Forms are referred to as 'the truths' (τῶν ἀληθῶν: 248c) instead of τὰ ὄντα.

23 Hackforth (1952: 83 note 2) argues that μὴ ἴδῃ at 248c5 does not denote their utter failure to see, and that ἀτελεῖς at 248b4 gives the intended sense: 'without full success'.

24 Nichols and Hackforth have 'most manifest', Fowler has 'most clearly seen' (cf. Hamilton, Yunis, Nehemas and Woodruff). While ἐκφανής can mean either 'shining forth' or 'manifest', the former is more accurate here, given the repeated emphasis on Beauty's active shining. This sense of shining out, or forth, is integral to Plato's attempt to account for the overwhelming effect of Beauty on the soul.

25 Cf. Nehemas and Woodruff. See also Vlastos (1991: 79): 'Radiant Beauty was there to see'.

26 The relationship between the two speeches is a complicated issue. For Demos (1997: 238–244), Socrates gives the first speech without any actual commitment to its claims; it is merely an attempt to give Phaedrus a better version of Lysias' speech. Demos points to the Isocratean resonances of the first speech, and Brown and Coulter (1971) go so far as to say that Isocrates *is* in effect the speaker there. In my view the two speeches reflect that Plato is himself somewhat divided on the issue of love. The price of treating the good and bad loves in separate speeches is the lack of an integrated conception of love that embraces its good and bad aspects. The two do not get to meet and recognise themselves in each other. The bad, jealous love, since it lacks the transcendental dimension underpinning the good one, cannot recognise the latter as its own retarded essence and lift itself into it; there is 'no way from here'. But nor can the good love recognise the bad as a possibility that still haunts it. It is said to be 'without jealousy' (οὐ φθόνῳ: 253b), but it is not clear how possessiveness can be excluded *a priori* when the lover, losing and then refinding the beloved, 'is not willingly left behind again' (251e–252a), or when the beloved 'clings' (ἀσπαζόμενος: 256a) to the lover to stabilise himself.

27 The *Phaedrus* differentiates itself from Plato's previous accounts of love in allowing mania into love's essence. In the *Symposium* this essence is only supplied at the top of love's 'ladder,' in a purely noetic apprehension of the Form of Beauty (210e–211e). The *Republic* holds that love proper (ὀρθὸς ἔρως) has nothing μανικός about it, but 'naturally

loves order and beauty soberly and harmoniously' (πέφυκε κοσμίου τε καὶ καλοῦ σωφρόνως τε καὶ μουσικῶς ἐρᾶν: 403a).

28 The term used at 206e1 is πτοίησις, combining πτερόν (feather, wing) and πτόα (fear, terror).

29 διαχεῖται, which Lamb translates, not without justification, 'flowing over'. In the *Cratylus* (419c) this word was invoked in the etymology of χαρά, joy, grasped as a 'flow of the soul'.

30 θεοειδὲς πρόσωπον κάλλος εὖ μεμιμημένον ἤ τινα σώματος ἰδέαν. My translation is similar to those of Fowler, Hackforth, Hamilton, and Nehemas and Woodruff. Nichols has 'the *idea* of a body', but ἰδέα simply means shape or figure here (compare the use of εἴδεσί at *Timaeus* 53b).

31 In his first speech in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates proposes a different derivation of ἔρως: from ῥώμη, the 'force' by which love is impelled and carried away. He forces the connection through the adverb ἐρρωμένως, 'powerfully' (238c). Is Socrates committed to this? In contrast to both the *Cratylus* and the second speech, love is here understood as 'innate' rather than as flowing in from without. Moreover, in opposing this innate and irrational desire only to 'acquired opinion that strives for the best' (237d), Socrates does not embrace the doctrine of tripartite soul as he will in the second speech. Brown and Coulter (1971: 409) see this as evidence for Isocrates as the implicit speaker here. Conversely, what the *Cratylus* has to say about love and desire accords with a *general* conception of ἔρως as an impetuous 'force' that carries away like a river. Indeed, the latter suggests the derivation from 'flow' in the earlier dialogue. This is indirectly signalled at *Phaedrus* 238c. Asked whether he thinks Socrates' etymology of ἔρως is inspired, Phaedrus replies that Socrates has 'an unusual *fluency* [εὔροιά]', which reprises the running gag in the *Cratylus* about Socrates' inspirations themselves being a case of going with the flow, but also harks back to flow as the *principle* of etymology.

32 Empedocles uses it both with regard to the outflow of vision through our eyes (B 84), and, according to Aristotle (*De Sensu* 438a4–5), the outflow from the thing seen. It is clearly the latter sense that is in play here.

33 θυμός, which for Plato in the *Republic*, and by broad consensus the *Phaedrus*, is the spirit or passionate *part* of the soul, is here understood as the soul itself *when* it is 'raging and boiling'. Cf. Chapter 2, section 4c.

34 Hamilton has 'emanations', but as this is his rendering of ἀπορροήν at 251b it sidesteps what Plato could mean by μέρη here.

35 Plato draws from the other aspect of the Empedoclean theory at *Republic* 508b, discussed in section 1.

36 Cf. Yunis (2011: 153), Lebeck (1972: 279), Hackforth (1952: 97 note 1). Not the ἰ of ἰέναι (to go), *contra* Nichols (1998: 56 note 111) and Nehemas and Woodruff (1995: 40 note 99).

37 In this passage we find, in place of teething, a new image of physical irritation: ophthalmia. It is as if the beloved has somehow contracted an eye-disease from the lover (255d). As Lebeck (1972: 279) points out, in Hippocrates a discharge from the eyes is called ῥεῦμα, and the use of this word for the 'stream' of longing at 255c may be seen as foreshadowing the point at 255d. Here as elsewhere Lebeck takes the stream of desire itself as flowing *from* rather than into the eyes.

38 In the opening scene of the *Phaedrus* πηγή is used simply for the spring that 'flows' under the plane tree where Socrates and Phaedrus agree to rest (230b). But the term is used in a metaphorical sense of 'source' at 245d, and it must have this sense at 255c, as the πηγή *of* a stream.

39 There is an obvious source here for the later myth of Cupid and Psyche.

40 *Pace* Yunis (2011: 164), who says that Plato 'recasts' the 'traditional rape of Ganymede' in the Hymn as 'the model of divine *eros*'.

41 For a survey see Smith (1867: vol. 2, 230).

42 Adopting Hamilton's translation of πρός. The plain sense is that it is pure engagement with Forms that makes a god a god. Butler (2011: 78) claims that the *Phaedrus* 'never

expressly indicates' that the Forms are distinct from the gods, yet it has the gods standing *atop* the cosmos so as to behold Forms *outside* it (247b–c). Forms such as Beauty, Wisdom, and the Good may be eternally *instantiated* in the gods, but it is overstretching to say they have 'an eternal substrate' (76) in them, that the 'heat' of the Forms would not be there without the 'fire' of the gods. Butler may be right that Forms are 'properties of the supercelestial place itself', but his view of this place as 'uniquely defined by the presence of the Gods' (79) is wrong. In seeking to annul any gap between Forms and gods he passes over the fact that the gods' 'home' is *within* the cosmos, and that they return to their duties here refreshed by the vision of what lies beyond.

43 Following Fowler's translation of ἀρύτωσιν at 253a8, referring back to ἐνθουσιῶντες at 253a4.

44 Nevertheless, from a purely textual point of view, I think Yunis's reading of the passage, referred to earlier, is more accurate.

45 Fowler's translation of φερόμενα, 'things in flux', at 249b is misleading.

46 Not only in view of Anaxagoras' sloppy default to material causation, but owing to Plato's own difficulties at this time reconciling any kind of motion or flow with his Forms-based metaphysics.

4

FLUX AND FLOW IN THE *TIMAEUS*

In this chapter and the next our focus returns to the cosmological dimension of Plato's thought, beginning with the *Timaeus*.[1] Inasmuch as it is premised on the antithesis of being (Forms) and becoming (sensibles) (27d–28a), the *Timaeus* reads like a middle dialogue, but this distinction is now set within a broader framework, freeing Plato not to over-rely on Forms. First and foremost the *Timaeus* is Plato's rehabilitation of the *nous* doctrine. In the *Phaedo* it was because Plato could not yet see how to ground that doctrine that he resorted to the 'makeshift' of Forms as causes.[2] While there is something of this in the *Timaeus*, the real role of Forms here is that of 'models' that the divine craftsman 'looks to' in his creative, ordering activity (28a). This cause (*nous*) is set off against a purely material one, which Plato calls 'necessity' (ἀνάγκη). This is a retrieval of the distinction between intelligent cause and material condition which the *Phaedo* (99a–b) had insisted on before resorting to the makeshift. Since both *nous* and necessity are characterised by *motion*, a key advantage of this new framework is that it frees Plato from the awkward claim that motionless, unchanging Forms *cause* ever-moving and changing sensibles.

I will argue that the *nous*-necessity distinction also retrieves something from the dialogue immediately before the *Phaedo*, the *Cratylus* – namely the two sides of *flow*. The *Timaeus* in effect hives off flow's errant aspect to the side of necessity, while the regular one corresponds to *nous*, or more precisely the motion of cosmic soul and body in conformity with *nous*. It then seeks to subsume the negative under the positive, with *nous* 'controlling' necessity by 'persuading' it 'to lead what is generated for the most part towards the best' (νοῦ δὲ ἀνάγκης ἄρχοντος τῷ πείθειν αὐτὴν τῶν γιγνομένων τὰ πλεῖστα ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιστον ἄγειν: 48a). My thesis is that flow is present not only in necessity by itself but in its compliance with *nous*. In other words, its relevance is teleological, not just physical. At the same time, necessity has also to do with elemental *flux*, and we will need both to distinguish its flux and flow aspects and to grasp their relation.

This approach is admittedly not directly supported by Plato's terminology. Strangely, while ῥοή, etc., is central to Timaeus' accounts of human physiology and perception (see sections 2 and 3), it sees almost no cosmological service. Where it does appear it denotes the fluidity of water (49c) or of metals (58e), specifically under the influence of fire (61b), rather than any encompassing cosmic motion. We have seen that both before the *Timaeus* (in *Cratylus* 2) and after it (in the *Laws*) flow has a cosmological place that is connected with *nous*, relates to soul as well as matter, and is irreducible to flux. My surmise is that this is *covertly* in play in the *Timaeus* cosmology too. Flow helps to establish the *nous*-necessity distinction (in the cosmos) while remaining in the background. I don't mean that it is a kind of master concept embracing both. Rather, the double nature of flow in *Cratylus* 2 is a 'hinterthought' (as I put it in the Introduction) informing the argument without finding a place *in* that argument. Whatever the obstacle is that prevents Plato from speaking cosmologically of flow here, it is removed by the time he writes the *Laws*. Just what is involved in its removal I will address in Chapter 5.

1 Necessity and its compliance with *nous*

Before we can assess how flow and flux are in play in necessity, we must address exactly what Plato means by this term. Firstly, it is defined by what it is set off against. At 47e Timaeus distinguishes 'the things that come about through necessity' (τὰ δι' ἀνάγκης γιγνόμενα) from 'the *works* [δεδημιουργημένα] of *nous*', i.e., the end-products of a goal-oriented activity. Necessity refers to what just happens, without any kind of intention or purpose, good or bad. It is the lack of beneficent purpose that makes it, in contrast to *nous*, a source of evil or disorder. Things are 'generated' by it, but not 'crafted' by it; by itself it cannot bring about a complete final product, but constantly dissolves whatever it generates. This process – in a word, flux – is not *just* a source of evil, as we will see, but it is that *too*.

Under the rubric of what comes about by necessity, Timaeus will describe two different kinds of motion. One is a 'winnowing' whereby fire, air, water, and earth are separated out from each other. The other is the transformation of these bodies (or at least the first three) into each other. The first motion already characterises the pre-cosmic state of the All.[3] The second presupposes the demiurge's intervention, at least in the form in which it is presented. This means we need to distinguish a pre-cosmic 'necessity in itself' (N1) from necessity *in its compliance with nous* (N2). I stress that N2 does not denote the second motion alone but the conjunction of both, for the first one survives in the cosmos proper.

In broad terms I agree with Johansen (2004: 95) that N1 corresponds to the description of necessity as 'the wandering cause' at 48a, and N2 to the claim at 46e that material causes are 'auxiliary' to intelligent ones. However, Johansen sees *both* as cosmic. Necessity *as such* is 'a product of the creation, not a pre-condition' (97). This startling claim is bound up with his view that, while necessity may produce disorder, it is *regular* in the sense that effects follow causes *necessarily*.[4] In the pre-cosmos there are no such 'necessitating causes', since there is not yet anything

'real' enough to *be* a cause. In support Johansen points out that the term ἀνάγκη is not used in the account of the pre-cosmos,[5] but only re-emerges in the context of the demiurge's construction of geometrical particles, where it is used with reference to the 'degree of mobility that *necessarily* follows from' the respective shapes of the four bodies (97–98). Johansen's N1 involves the 'necessary processes that arise out of the nature of the simple bodies' *created by the demiurge*, who *then* works with these processes in persuading necessity to comply with his aims (96).

There are several problems with this view. One issue is whether Plato uses ἀνάγκη solely in the sense of what *necessarily* happens. At *Cratylus* 420d–e the term is derived from ἄγκη, ravines, and linked with compulsion and *error*, suggesting a straying off track. Timaeus' description of necessity as 'wandering' (πλανωμένης) similarly indicates that it is *errant*, not just *aimless* (unpurposive) as Johansen claims. In the *Laws* Plato's complaint about the designation of the celestial gods as πλανήται is that it implies that they 'never follow the same path' (821b), i.e., that they *stray*. Moreover, both at *Laws* 889b–c and *Timaeus* 46e necessity is linked specifically with 'chance' events. These points suggest a certain arbitrariness and unpredictability.[6] Necessity is not *just* chance, for it has inherent tendencies, but it is not law-like regularity either. Certainly the demiurge ensures that certain basic rules are followed (for example, when two particles of fire break down their constituent triangles can recombine as precisely one particle of air), but not even he can plot out in advance the full curriculum vitae of any given triangle.[7] Plato calls his material principle necessity, I think, not because it is lawful but because it is compulsory from the point of view of will; what is subject to necessity doesn't have any say in whatever happens to occur.[8] And he calls it the 'wandering cause' because whatever happens is different each time. Trap the same mass of fire within the same mass of air a thousand times; although the possible outcomes are *broadly* foreseeable, the exact result will never be the same.

A second problem is that Johansen's stance does not make very clear sense of the statement at 48a that the cosmos 'was generated from the combination of *nous* and necessity'. If necessity *as such* is a product of the demiurge, the cosmos really has only one cause, not two, yet the implication at 48a is that necessity is already there, independent of the demiurge. Thirdly, Johansen's view relies on dismissing motion from the account of the pre-cosmos as a mere 'approximation' or a 'retrojection' from the cosmic state (2004: 96); as there are not yet any real entities here, there is no real motion or 'determinate behaviour'. Yet the pre-cosmos is given a very specific kind of motion, and since this pre-exists the work of the demiurge it can only belong in the class of 'what comes about by necessity'.[9]

Another issue requiring comment is the architecture of the account. For my purposes it is necessary to distinguish the following passages:

A (48a–52d): a long prefatory discussion turning on two themes which are apparently fundamental for all that follows: elemental becoming (flux) and the receptacle.

B (52d–53b): the account of the pre-cosmos (first motion of necessity).

C (53b–57c): the description of the demiurge's geometrical rationalisation of the four bodies, and of the second motion of necessity facilitated by this.
D (57d–58c), which brings the two motions together.

There is an important question regarding how A relates to B and C, i.e., whether *flux* as discussed in A pertains to the pre-cosmos, the cosmos, or both. I uphold the view that A speaks to *cosmic* flux. I don't exclude that there is flux in the pre-cosmos, but the interesting thing is that Plato does not expressly say so, and says something else in B which, to my mind, is suggestive of *flow*. There is also disagreement as to how D relates to the other passages. I will argue that it constitutes a *teleological* account of the cosmic synergy of the two motions. Here, that is, we see what necessity's 'compliance' with *nous* actually means cosmically. Alongside flux, we will again find a cosmic flow alluded to in D, but in a more significant sense.

In short, then, N1 appears in passage B, and N2, while it is introduced in C, appears in its full cosmological sense in D.

1a. Elemental flux at 49b–50b

There is no doubt that in this passage Plato, while using ῥέω only once and not in a fluxist way,[10] is concerned with elemental flux. But how radical is this flux, and what point is Plato trying to make by it? On the traditional construal of the passage (which I favour), his point is that because they are in flux fire, air, water, and earth should not be referred to as *things* but as *qualities*. Since this flux does not preclude the latter, it is less radical than the flux discussed in *Cratylus* 3 and *Theaetetus*. Critics of this construal (for example, Cherniss 1954: 129–130, Mohr 2005: 109–110) typically make the mistake of equating it with the *Mach* 3 flux of those texts.[11]

At 48b–c Plato signals that fire & co. should not be regarded as the 'elements' or 'letters' (στοιχεῖα) of the All, or even as its syllables, and 49b–50b tells us why. In short, they do not have the stable being required of such building blocks, since they are always changing into each other (49c). The kind of change Plato intends here is clearly more radical than the changes of a man over time (*Mach* 1), but nor is it just a change of one definite thing (for example, water) into another one (air). The issue is precisely that it is hard to identify each of these 'things' in the first place in a 'reliable and stable' way, to say which one is 'really' water rather than fire, or why one warrants one name rather than another or even all four (49b). Any sample of water cannot be called water without further ado, whatever might happen to it later. This is beginning to sound like *Mach* 3 flux, but Plato does not mean to go that far. I think Zeyl (1975: 128) is right that in what follows Plato's purpose is not to proscribe 'our ordinary references to phenomena' but to defend them, to show that we *can* reliably refer to fire, air, etc., if only we refer to them as qualities, not as things.

The passage that follows is very hotly contested. The debate hinges largely on a point of grammar: whether fire is subject or predicate of a statement at 49d5–6,[12] and so whether Plato there distinguishes right and wrong ways of referring to

phenomenal fire (the traditional view),[13] or a right and a wrong *thing* (or type of thing) to identify as fire. The alternative construal is very strained from a textual point of view, but its main problem is that its advocates have not presented a persuasive case for what the right *thing* to call fire is supposed to be, if not the fire we see in flux. This applies, I will argue, even to Mohr's version, which overcomes the defects of earlier ones.

At 49c7–d3 Timaeus infers from elemental flux as follows: 'Therefore, since each of [the four 'elements'] never presents the same appearance [οὕτω δὴ τούτων οὐδέποτε τῶν αὐτων ἑκάστων φανταζομένον], of which of them can one confidently assert without embarassment that it is any definite "this" and not some other thing [ποῖον αὐτῶν ὡς ὂν ὁτιοῦν τοῦτο καὶ οὐκ ἄλλο παγίως διισχυριζόμενος οὐκ αἰσχυνεῖταί τις ἑαυτόν]'?[14] Denying (οὐκ ἔστιν) that they can be properly designated as a 'this', he proposes a 'much safer' way *of referring to them*, in view of the fact that they are all 'constantly coming to be in different ways at different times' (ἀεὶ … ἄλλοτε ἄλλῃ γιγνόμενον: d4–5).[15] He says, using fire as his example, that 'each time' we see fire we are 'to call fire, not "this", but "the suchlike"' (μὴ τοῦτο ἀλλὰ τὸ τοιοῦτον ἑκάστοτε προσαγορεύειν πῦρ: d5–6). This construal of the text is immune, I think, to the grammatical objections aimed at it. It is consistent with the predicative use of ἐκεῖνό and τοιοῦτον at *Cratylus* 439d.[16] But above all it makes clear sense of this passage, in contrast to the alternative.

Cherniss (1954: 116) argues that τοῦτο cannot be a predicate here when it is the subject of ὄν at d2, but there is no strong reason to accept the latter claim, and good reason not to (see note 14). Regarding τὸ τοιοῦτον, it is not true that the article is only appropriate in the subject position, as Cherniss thinks. As a predicate τοιοῦτον also requires it here, although not for the reason given by Zeyl. It is not that it refers to 'the "what" in "what is such and such"' (Zeyl 1975: 132), for that blurs the distinction between phenomena and the receptacle. Rather, the τό serves to make the expression *demonstrative*, only of a quality not a thing. The proper mode of speaking that Plato has in mind probably runs something like this: 'Remember that fiery quality over there yesterday? Well look, the fieriness is now over here'. Regarding πῦρ, Cherniss claims that if it is subject its appearance at d6 is 'worse than redundant', given ὡς πῦρ at d5. Mohr (2005: 86 note 6) claims similarly, *contra* Zeyl, that it 'is obviously not resumptive' (of ὃ καθορῶμεν…, ὡς πῦρ), without addressing Zeyl's argument that πῦρ is added at d6 because of the isolated position of ὡς πῦρ. I am inclined to agree with Zeyl that the 'slight anacoluthon' this entails is 'a small enough price to pay for the clarity gained' (1975: 133).[17]

At 49d7–e2 Timaeus elaborates his point more generally. We should not refer to anything which does not 'have any stability' (because it is always becoming) as if it *did*, and this is just the mistake we make when we 'indicate' such things with the words 'this' and 'that'; 'we think we are making manifest some definite thing [δηλοῦν ἡγούμεθα τι]'.[18] He explains further (e2–4): 'For it flees, without abiding the "that" and "this" and every such expression which exhibits them as being stable' (φεύγει γὰρ οὐχ ὑπομένον τὴν τοῦ τόδε καὶ τοῦτο καὶ πᾶσαν ὅση μόνιμα ὡς ὄντα αὐτὰ ἐνδείκνυται φάσις).[19] What flees is evidently fire & co.; it is these which

eschew the terms 'that' and 'this', as it has been from the start. Hence Timaeus concludes (e4–7) that the right term for 'each' of them, for fire 'and everything else that is generated', is 'the suchlike', the broadly similar (ὅμοιον)[20] quality of fieriness, for example, that 'eternally recurs' (ἀεὶ περιφερόμενον) 'in this way' (οὕτω), i.e., by the 'fleeing' wherein each *changes* into another broadly identifiable quality in the elemental cycle.[21] The terms 'this' and 'that' are to be reserved, Timaeus says (49e7–50a2), for the abiding regions of the receptacle (i.e., space) *in which* (ἐν ᾧ) such qualities are perpetually born (ἐγγιγνόμενα) and appear (φαντάζεται) for a while, and *from which* (ἐκεῖθεν) they vanish (ἀπόλλυται).

Plato supplements this account with an analogy (50a4–c6), loosely comparing the receptacle to a lump of gold moulded into a succession of different shapes. If, pointing to one of these figures, we ask what it *is*, the safe answer is that it is gold (a7–b2), not, for example, a square or a triangle. The figures themselves are not answers to the question, for they are not properly referred to *as being* (ὡς ὄντα), 'since they change even as they are made' (ἅ γε μεταξὺ τιθεμένου μεταπίπτει: b3–4).[22] They warrant the term 'suchlike', as do the elemental qualities (fieriness, etc.) as which a given region of the receptacle 'appears' at different times (50c3–4).

We thus have a clear and cohesive interpretation of our passage. Conversely, advocates of the alternative reading have an uphill battle saying what τὸ τοιοῦτον is supposed to designate, i.e., what the prescribed referents of fire, etc., are over against the proscribed ones. For Cherniss (1954: 128) they are 'self-identical characteristics that enter and leave the receptacle', images of the Forms of fire, etc., which are ontologically distinct from the phenomenal flux in which fire, etc., cannot even be distinguished. Mohr (2005: 88–89) rightly points out that the text contradicts this directly by treating the images and the phenomena in flux as 'extensionally equivalent'.[23] Mohr agrees with Cherniss that fire & co. cannot be identified at all inasmuch as they are in flux, and that τοιοῦτον denotes images of Forms. But for Mohr these images are not different entities than the phenomena, but are the phenomena under another aspect which enables their identification as to type (2005: 87).

Yet even this subtler distinction is more than the text can sustain. The 'images' don't just cover the same *range* as the 'phenomena' – they are the phenomena.[24] As such they are not exempt from flux. They themselves ἀεὶ φέρεται (52c), 'always fleet away'. This is nothing distinct from the appearing and vanishing of the constantly generated qualities of fieriness, etc., at specific places in the receptacle at 49e8, which Timaeus has just recalled at 52a. What reason could Plato have then to distinguish the phenomena *qua* images and *qua* in flux? Mohr (2005: 92) proposes that 'vanishing' just means 'that the image's original stops being projected into space', but that seems evasive and arbitrary. The vanishing of a fiery quality is simply its turning into a different quality at the same place. Thus I do not find Mohr's reading any more persuasive than other versions of the alternative construal. Plato is not saying that it is only under their image aspect that phenomena can be named. He is saying that we can identify the phenomena in flux, but as intermittent qualities not as things.

Three broader points should be made about passage A. First, the reference at 49e7 to 'everything else that is generated' (ἅπαν ὅσονπερ ἂν ἔχῃ γένεσιν) suggests

that Plato's remarks relate not only to the elements but to *all* sensibles. So too does the restriction of his account to three factors: Forms, sensible copies, and space (51e–52b), for this implies that all sensibles are a 'suchlike' rather than a 'this'. Yet surely there are not the same problems in referring, for example, to this liver. Livers don't change into lungs as fire changes into air. It seems that, in allowing what I call *Mach* 2 flux into his scheme, Plato blurs it with the *Mach* 1 flux we found in the middle dialogues. Elsewhere, however, the *Timaeus* gives the clear impression that Plato recognises this distinction.

Secondly, the discussion of elemental flux relates to the world as we know it, not the pre-cosmos (*contra* Mohr 2005: 84). The giveaway is not the 'now' at 49b7, for with ὠνομάκαμεν this means 'what we *have just now called* water' at b3 (cf. Zeyl 1975: 126). It is rather the 'we see' (ὁρῶμεν) in the same sentence at c1, and the fact that the question throughout is how *we* are to refer to the water, fire, etc., that we see in flux.[25] In the pre-cosmos (if we were able to see it) this question would not emerge, for then 'there was nothing worthy of being called by the names we *now* use, like fire, water, and all the others' (69b). The question this raises is whether elemental *change* is pertinent to the pre-cosmos.

The third point is Plato's insistence on the utter heterogeneity of the receptacle or space to its contents.[26] This is why the gold analogy is a loose one, for fire & co. are not made of space as the figures are of gold. While space 'receives' impressions of fieriness, etc., it is conceived as essentially free of them in keeping with its invisible character (50b–c, 50e–51a). Plato says it '*appears* different at different times' (50c); 'each time a part of it is made fiery that part *appears* as fire' (51b). Here 'appearing' (φαίνομαι) has a sense of *mere* appearance. Space is not really on fire, it just looks that way. Without space, the fieriness could not appear at all; space is what 'grants a site for all that comes to be' (ἕδραν δὲ παρέχον ὅσα ἔχει γένεσιν πᾶσιν: 52b). But it itself does not appear; we only apprehend it in its difference from what appears in its place. Space (χώρα) is, as it were, what 'makes way' (χωρεῖ) for it to appear.[27] It is seen noetically, not with the senses; it 'partakes of the intelligible' (51a–b). But it does so 'in an extremely perplexing and elusive way', for it is somehow apprehended *out there in the world*. When Plato turns to the pre-cosmos in passage B, his account does not hinge on, and if anything contradicts, this ontological disjunction between space and its contents.

1b. The pre-cosmos

At 30a Plato imagines the All in its original state as 'not at rest but in jarring and disorderly motion'.[28] Both this, and the description of necessity as a 'wandering cause' (48a) generating 'random and disorderly effects' (46e), lead us to expect in passage B an account of unmitigated chaos, the better to explain why the demiurge intervened. We may also anticipate a universal flux at least as rampant as that outlined in passage A: constant, rapid, dramatic *change* in which nothing lasts more than a moment. Both expectations are to a greater or lesser degree rebuffed.

At first disorder is emphasised. The receptacle has a 'motley' appearance (παντοδαπήν: 52e1), implying that its contents, the 'formations' (μορφάς) of fire, air, water, and earth, are strewn about randomly. And because these 'powers' (δυνάμεων), as Plato calls them, are 'neither alike nor evenly balanced', the receptacle 'is without equipoise [ἰσορροπεῖν] anywhere, but sways irregularly throughout [ἀνωμάλως πάντη ταλαντουμένην], shaken by their motions, and by its own motion shakes them in turn' (52e1–5). But then Plato highlights the degree of order already present here:

> Being moved in this way, they are perpetually carried away [ἀεὶ φέρεσθαι] to different places and separated, as with the things shaken and winnowed by a winnowing basket or an instrument for cleaning grain, the dense and heavy things going one way, the light and insubstantial being carried to another place and settling there. So, at that time, the four kinds [γένη] are shaken by the receptacle, which is able to move itself like a shaking instrument [κινουμένης αὐτῆς οἷον ὀργάνου σεισμὸν παρέχοντος]. Those most unlike, it bounds off [ὁρίζειν] from each other, and those most alike it thrusts together [ξυνωθεῖν]. For this reason they occupy [ἴσχειν] different regions of space, even before the ordered whole arranged from them [τὸ πᾶν ἐξ αὐτῶν διακοσμηθὲν] comes to be.
>
> (52e5–53a7)

Commentators refer to this as an account of primeval 'chaos', but the demiurge, who is said at 30a to intervene for no other reason than to establish order, does not simply impose it on chaos. He improves upon a proto-order that is already there. The All he confronts is already articulated into *enduring* fiery, airy, watery, and earthy *regions*, arranged, as Bury (1929: 140 note 1) surmises, 'in concentric strata of space' with earth at the centre. The four kinds, 'bound off' from each other, 'hold' (ἴσχειν) their respective places. This is in direct conflict with passage A, which gave them only the most fleeting purchase on any given part of the receptacle.

Now the reason for that was that the elements are in flux; fieriness does not appear for long at any given place *because* it changes, for example, into airiness. Scholars also generally regard passage B as a description of universal flux,[29] yet there is no clear indication here of elemental transformation. The most we can say is that a couple of words suggest it *may* be co-intended. One is πάθη at 52d6; receiving the four kinds, the receptacle is also 'subject to' (πάσχουσαν) the 'affections [πάθη] that accompany them'. Plato does not say that these affections are *vicissitudes*, be they deformations or transmutations; they could just be 'states' (LSJ *s.v.* III.1) or associated 'qualities' (III.3) such as hot or dry. But equally he does not expressly deny it. The other word is παντοδαπήν. I rendered this 'motley', but while a synchronic 'manifold' appearance is most likely meant, we should not exclude a diachronic one; at *Ion* 541e Plato uses this term to describe the shape-shifting Proteus.[30] I am inclined to think that flux probably does characterise Plato's pre-cosmos. The demiurge's intervention makes more sense as the *regulation* of a flux already present than as its sheer instigation, even though elemental flux serves a purpose, as I will argue in section 1c.

A related issue is whether the pre-cosmic *morphai* are already *particulate* matter: whether the geometric shapes which the demiurge assigns to the four bodies improve on shapes they already have. Cornford (1935a: 200–203) argues against this, holding it to be based on a misconstrual of *morphê* as 'shape' (his translation is 'character').[31] I find the particle view more plausible.[32] In particular, Mohr (2005: 111–117) provides a compelling case for pre-cosmic particles which the demiurge then works up into regular forms by ironing out deviations, rather than simply stamping geometric forms onto 'formless matter'. Note that this is a separate issue to whether the elements are qualities or things. In the cosmos they are both particulate and non-things (because they are in flux), and I don't see why this would not also be true in the pre-cosmos. They may not break down into a precise number of triangles of a certain form, but they may well break down into something. Cornford seems to conflate the two issues, when he speaks of the chaos as 'a flux of shifting qualities' as opposed to particles (1935a: 181).[33] The *Timaeus* offers us no other sense of how flux occurs besides the breaking up of particles into their constituents and the latter's reformation into different kinds of particle.

Let us now change our focus from flux to *flow*. I suggest that, as described in passage B, N1 has *more* to do with flow. The natural connotation of the winnowing is a *circular* motion, particularly if the masses are arranged concentrically. Archer-Hind (1888: 187) takes Plato to derive the winnowing idea from Democritus (B 164), who speaks of different kinds of seeds being sorted like unto like by the 'whirl' (δῖνον) of a 'sieve' (κόσκινον). Cornford objects that Plato's winnowing basket (πλόκανον) is not a sieve, and that such baskets were 'jerked and shaken', not twirled (1935a: 201–203). But even granting this, there are reasons to think that Plato has something like a whirl in mind. One is that when one alternately jerks such an instrument up and down and shakes it from side to side, there is a natural tendency to combine these motions and generate a circular one which exacerbates itself (as Anaxagoras' revolution describes wider and wider circles in B 12). Another is that B is written with the *Phaedo*'s critique of Anaxagoras in view. It is notable that Plato's description of the primordial state combines features of Anaxagoras' account both of that state *and* of how *nous* works on it. For Anaxagoras it is the revolution of *nous* that alone separates things out from the primeval jumble. What Plato does in B is to recast this revolution, which Anaxagoras *says* is due to *nous*, as simply a *tendential circulation* that can be accounted for in mechanical terms and distinguished from the *real* work of *nous*. Cornford's view that circular motion is excluded here because it is reserved for *nous* is unnecessarily strict. The *perfectly* circular motion of *nous* is not in play, since the pre-cosmos is obviously characterised by the six rectilineal motions distinguished from it at 34a. For Skemp (1987: 88–89), it is because of this 'erratic and erroneous' motion in departure from *nous* that necessity is called the wandering cause. Nevertheless, the emphasis in B ultimately falls on its tendency towards rudimentary order, and I think there is something of this in the *motion* of the pre-cosmos. A roughly circular motion, not excluding change of location, emerges through the combined effect of the six rectilineals.[34]

This is why flow is pertinent. When the receptacle, set in motion by the imbalance of its contents, conveys this motion in a kind of amplifying feedback back upon them, this doesn't just have the effect of *sorting* them into four concentric masses. It also means (although this is not stated) that these concentric masses, insofar as they are established, receive a tendentially *circular* motion of their own, in something like the way that, as the *Cratylus* had it (410b), aether flows *around* the flow of air. This would explain how and in what sense they 'hold' their places (relative to each other) in a pre-cosmos in which even space is jumpy. I stress that this flow would not *cause* their separation; it would simply maintain it once it has come about.

Some commentators, such as Cornford (1935a: 176) and Cherniss (1944: 421–422, 444), read the pre-cosmos non-literally, as an attempt to imagine what the cosmos *would* be like if 'the works of *nous*' were subtracted. Their rationale is that an *original* physical motion contradicts the doctrine of the *Phaedrus* and *Laws* X that all motions derive from motions of soul. The latter point is true, but it is no argument for the former one. This is to let the desire for a unified Platonic corpus trump analysis of the *Timaeus* on its own terms. The doctrinal tension here is irreducible,[35] and what we should do is ask why these different views are held in different places. I will pursue this in Chapter 5. Here I simply point out that, for a brief moment, this tension flashes before us in B. At 53a the receptacle is said to be *able to move itself* (κινουμένης αὐτῆς … παρέχοντος), rather than *simply* being moved by the momentum of its contents.[36] For Plato *self*-motion *is* consistently the mark of soul. That the receptacle is ensouled is certainly not what Plato *means* to say, for the motion at issue pre-exists the creation of souls. But it is, in effect, what he says. Why? I will suggest an answer at the end of section 1c.

The non-literal take on the pre-cosmos in B generates problems when it comes to passage D, because it cannot provide a clear sense of how or where the account of necessity turns from N1 to N2. If necessity's *cosmic* compliance with *nous* is not to be found in D, just where are we to find it?[37] Cornford at least recognises teleology in D, but at the level of physical description he (1935a: 246), like Cherniss (1944: 448–450), misconstrues both separation and flux as effects of the cosmic rotation which they rightly see in D.[38] If we take the pre-cosmos literally, and see that a rough and purely mechanical circular flow is present there, we are in a better position to see that, as C elaborates on the demiurge's improvements upon particulate matter so as to regulate elemental *flux*, so D speaks to an improved and regulated cosmic *flow* which at once perpetuates and contains that flux.

1c. What the compliance of necessity amounts to cosmically

I don't think anyone would deny that, as B describes the first motion of necessity and C addresses the second, D seeks to show how they operate together. I think it is just as straightforward that the separation in B is pre-demiurge, the transformation outlined in C is post-demiurge, and their synergy in D is also post-demiurge, and so purposive. It is a mystery to me why Plato would revert to the pre-cosmos in D and retroject into it the post-demiurgic flux of C. That is what Mohr effectively has Plato doing.

Passage C begins with a broad indication of how the demiurge intervened. The four bodies were originally 'altogether disposed[39] as one would expect anything to be that god has not touched': 'without proportion and measure' (53a–b). Accordingly the demiurge 'gave them distinct configurations with regard to shapes and numbers' (διεσχηματίσατο εἴδεσί τε καὶ ἀριθμοῖς: 53b).[40] While εἴδεσί here does not refer to Forms, it is used with them in mind. The demiurge establishes geometrically rational particles or 'seeds'[41] for each body which are *proper* instantiations of the Forms Fire, etc. Prior to this the bodies merely 'had some traces of themselves' (ἴχνη μὲν ἔχοντα αὑτῶν ἄττα: 53b), i.e., of their respective Forms. There is a pre-cosmic copying of these Forms in the receptacle (cf. 50c–d, 51e–52b), but it occurs so poorly that they only really play a role as the models the demiurge looks to in correcting the extant particles. To an intelligent cause these Forms dictate: firstly, that the seeds should be pyramidal for fire, octahedral for air, icosahedral for water, and cubic for earth (55d–56b); secondly, that the first three should be composed of a definite number of half-equilateral triangles (24, 48, and 120, respectively: 54d–55b) into which they can break down, and thirdly, that the seeds of earth should be made up of, and resolvable into, elemental triangles of a different (isosceles) kind (55b–c), which therefore *cannot* recombine as seeds of air, water, or fire.

Although the demiurge is rarely mentioned after 53b, the remarks there govern the whole of C. Recapitulating at 56c, Timaeus avers that 'the god' brought 'the masses, motions and other powers' of the four bodies into numerical proportion, with necessity's 'compliance'. In the absence of any comment to the contrary, compliance is surely also the tenor of the account of *transformation* that ensues. The demiurge's act then serves the purpose of 'stabilising' (Jelinek 2011: 297) the pre-cosmic flux, by laying down basic parameters of change: for example, that the dissolution of one particle of air forms precisely two of fire. In the case of earth there is a further restriction on flux that has an obvious purpose cosmologically. The heterogeneity of its triangles to those of the other bodies makes transmutation impossible when the particles break down; these triangles merely drift around until they reconvene as earth. This ensures a stable cosmic core of earth, which might fray a little at the edges but is not itself subject to rampant flux. But beyond this, flux *itself* serves a cosmological purpose. It is not simply a problem which must be minimised for the demiurge to realise his aims. This purpose emerges in D.

Admittedly, this view seems at first difficult to square with the fact that Plato addresses flux in C in terms of the warlike *contention* (μάχη) of the bodies. As this contrasts sharply with the 'amity' (φιλία) which the demiurge is said at 32a to establish between them, we could be excused for thinking that it reflects the residual recalcitrance of matter to his purposes. This seems reinforced by the fact that the incessant becoming-each-other of fire, air, and water seems necessarily to *unwork* the original process of separation which the demiurgic ordering is apparently meant to reinforce. In fact, however, it is through this (quintessentially Heraclitean) theme of contention that Plato bridges the two motions of necessity, in order to show how it is compliant with *nous*.

Two modes of contention are described, each of which relies on features of the geometrical figures assigned to the bodies. On the one hand, the fewer faces a particle has, the sharper its angles and edges are, which allows the particles of fire, especially, to 'cut up' the larger ones. This is the form contention takes when a mass of another body is 'enveloped' in fire (57a). On the other hand, as the smaller particles settle in the gaps between the larger ones (cf. 58b), contention occurs when these are trapped and struggle (μαχόμενον) free. In this case fire, as the weaker body, will always be overcome and broken up into its triangles (56e), but these still have two courses open to them. They can either recombine in the form of the surrounding mass and blend into it, or 'escape out to their kindred' (ἐκφύγῃ πρὸς τὸ ξυγγενές: 57b).

At the end of C Timaeus relates this to the first motion of necessity described in B. He starts by saying that 'in the course of these vicissitudes [παθήματα] all the bodies interchange their locations' (57c1–2). The use of παθήματα rather than πάθη may be innocent,[42] but whereas πάθη at 52d left us in doubt about whether changes or states were meant, 'these' παθήματα are clearly the transmutations just discussed. Timaeus goes on (57*c*2–6):

> For although the bulk of each kind has come to stand apart in its own region because of the motion of the receptacle, the portions which at any time are becoming unlike their kind and like one of the others are carried by the shaking to the place of that kind.

Thus transmutation does not simply undermine the tendency of the four bodies to separate into distinct regions.[43] It serves it by further purifying each mass from within. Even when it does work in the opposite way, it is more a matter of 'constantly modifying' (Cornford 1935a: 226) that tendency, in that the 'reformed' particles 'change the region towards which they drift'. Cornford (227) is right to see this as a 'check' preventing the separation from becoming *too complete*, and to regard this as integral to *nous*'s subordination of necessity 'to its purpose of keeping an ordered world in being'. Passage D will tell us why: a complete separation would result in a stagnant cosmos.

In D Timaeus speaks at first (57e–58a) as if it is simply (as in passage B) the disequilibrium of the receptacle's contents that accounts for perpetual motion. He asserts (in a way that recalls *Phaedo* 108e–109a) that in conditions of uniformity motion never gets a look in. The association of uniformity with rest, and non-uniformity with motion, is cut from the cloth of the being-becoming dichotomy, but, as I said before, while the *Timaeus* cosmology is premised on this it is not hamstrung by it. In fact it has already given us something that complicates it. The axial rotation of the cosmos is precisely a case of perpetual motion occurring in uniformity. Later in D Timaeus will allude to just this factor, and in fact at 58a1–4 he already indicates that *in the cosmos proper* the mechanical explanation of perpetual motion is insufficient. Something other than non-uniformity and inequality is needed to explain πῶς ποτε οὐ κατὰ γένη διαχωρισθέντα ἕκαστα πέπαυται τῆς δι' ἀλλήλων κινήσεως καὶ φορᾶς:

'how it is that the bodies have never been completely separated according to their several kinds, and so ceased to pass through one another and change their place'.[44] What he goes on to say in seeking to explain this is again a matter of dispute.

The main bone of contention is περίοδος at 58a5, which can refer either to the revolution of the All or to its circumference. This is the subject of the verb σφίγγει, which can mean either 'embraces' or 'compresses'. This too is contested, since the former sense is crucial with 'circumference'. In any case the effect on the bodies is unambiguous, and I will discuss this first, then assess what is responsible for it and how. The effect is to proscribe any empty space between the differently sized and shaped particles, by constantly 'pushing together' (ξυνωθεῖ: 58b5) the smaller (outer) ones, such as fire, into the interstices of the larger ones. This perpetuates the processes of contention described in C, and the particles newly generated in this way renew the separation, shifting up and down to the regions proper to them (b6–c1). This, Timaeus concludes, is why 'the generation of non-uniformity is perpetually preserved [διασῳζομένη], and accordingly why the bodies are in perpetual motion'.

Now διασῳζομένη, with its clear connotation of being kept enduringly safe (cf. σώζω, σωτηρία), is a dead giveaway that this occurs for a purpose. It is a 'safeguard' (Cornford's translation) against stagnation. Any doubt on this point is removed by a comparison with 88d–e. There it is said that to maintain health a man must 'imitate' the receptacle and never, if possible, allow the body to be at rest, but keep producing 'moderate shakings' (μετρίως σείων) so as to order 'the affections and particles wandering about in the body, according to their affinities'.[45] Given the correspondence posited between macro- and microcosm, this process can hardly be purposive and beneficial in one context but mechanical and retrograde in the other.[46] Whatever the cosmic equivalent of gangrene is, we can be sure that the cosmic creature is intent on preventing it.

We thus have a good reason to regard D as essentially concerned with cosmic self-maintenance. But as we know from 37a–b, this the world-soul carries out through its rotation. This favours reading ἡ τοῦ παντὸς περίοδος at 58a as 'the *revolution* of the All',[47] not its circumference.[48] What Cornford (1935a: 243) calls the 'new factor' introduced here, 'which imposes conditions on the movement of the primary bodies', is not just the spherical shape of the cosmos but its axial rotation. Mohr (2005: 135) is right to say, *contra* Cherniss (1944: 449 note 392), that the use of περίοδος for this at 34a does not 'prove' that it has this sense at 58a. However, both of them should have noted that Plato has routinely used this word for the *world-soul's* rotation (38c, 39b–d, 47b), and for the revolving of our souls' circles (42c, 43a, d, 44a–b, d, 47d). If he is now departing from this usage we should expect a clarification.

Mohr insists that context must determine the sense at 58a, yet he is rather selective in this respect. He focuses on κυκλοτερής, endorsing Cornford's point that this is better suited to a round *shape*. In isolation I agree, but this term is in apposition to πρὸς αὐτὴν πεφυκυῖα βούλεσθαι ξυνιέναι; the περίοδος is circular 'and naturally wills to return on itself'. For Mohr (2005: 136) this just means that the round figure is 'closed', but that ξυνιέναι has an *active* sense of 'coming

together' (or in context, returning) is strongly suggested by the way that πρὸς αὑτὴν… ξυνιέναι echoes the world-soul's ἀνακυκλουμένη πρὸς αὑτήν, 'circling back upon itself', at 37a. Above all, Mohr neglects βούλεσθαι. What place can *willing* have in a purely mechanical process? At *Laws* 897a βούλεσθαι is among the motive powers whereby soul is said to drive all bodies. Granted, the *Timaeus* does not share with *Laws* X the tenet that soul is the source of *all* motion, but even so this term surely refers here to the world-soul's *intentional* motion. πεφυκυῖα does not contradict this and give βούλεσθαι the sense of a *natural tendency*. Because the demiurge endowed the world-soul with *nous* (30b), it belongs to its nature to turn in a circle and to *will* to do so.

Cherniss also sees the rotational and rational motion of the world-soul in D, but he regards 'the general flux' as an 'incidental' spin-off of this, due to the fact that any body moved by the world-soul's motion moves other bodies in random ways outside its control (1977: 258; cf. 1944: 444–445, 448–450). Yet how then could the world-soul form 'firm and true' opinions about the things it comes into contact with within its body, as at 37b? It would be in a position akin to the quantum physicist whose observation changes what he is trying to observe. Its perpetuation of the pre-existing flux is not an *unintended* consequence, for the reason stated above. Cherniss's reading presupposes that flux has exclusively negative connotations in Plato (as does Mohr's), but the perpetual disequilibrium explained in D is not pejorative. Here it is not the mark of disorder so much as of orderedness *qua process*.

In what way then does the revolution impact on the bodies to perpetuate their flux? That is, what is meant by σφίγγει? The compressive sense should be retained, since it is echoed by πιλήσεως at 58b4–5; ἡ τῆς πιλήσεως ξύνοδος means 'the coming together, i.e., tightening, *of the compression*' (cf. Bury). But this can't have the sense of a centripetal force (*contra*, for example, Archer-Hind 1888: 209, Bury 1929: 57 note 2), for a rotating sphere would by itself exert a *centrifugal* force on the bodies, as Taylor (1928: 397–398) and Cornford (1935a: 243–244) point out. An alternative emerges if we recall that the world-soul not only extends throughout the cosmos but is wrapped *around* it (34b). A clear if unstated consequence is that its rotation *hems in* the shaking of the receptacle (which I presume to be coextensive with the cosmic body). It does not altogether annul the shaking; that it still occurs in the cosmos proper has been indicated at 57c. But when the receptacle's roughly circular motion bumps up against the unwavering one that embraces it and fails to affect it, there must be a counterforce, and since this occurs from all sides the effect would be constantly to compress the four bodies. It may be said that if this is Plato's meaning he could have said so more clearly, but this applies to every interpretation of the passage.

We can now begin to see more clearly the place of *flow* in the *Timaeus* cosmology. I argued in 1b that, while there is probably something of flux in the pre-cosmos, there is also a tendential circular flow of the four masses one about the other. This continues in the cosmos, but it is taken in hand by the world-soul, subordinated to its intelligent motion, namely axial rotation on the spot. Besides reining in the

shaking of the receptacle, this motion must also be imparted to the whole cosmic body throughout which the world-soul is 'stretched'. It is not as if it applies only to the circumference, within which processes entirely unconnected with it hold sway. Imparted to the concentric masses, it makes them *less* subject to rectilinear motions than in N1, so that they (in the main) flow about each other more evenly. Even as its constrictive force perpetuates fluxist 'give and take' between them, the world-soul's motion also perpetually secures their separateness, which was originally established by the motion of the receptacle.

In N1 there was an intimation of flow at the physical level, but as the *Cratylus* has shown flow is also a motion of soul. But as soul is invisible (36e), its flow can only *come into view* inasmuch as the rule of soul-*nous* is reflected in a regular flow at the material level. I argued in Chapter 1 (section 4) that the cosmological place of flow in the *Laws* may lead us, even in the absence of the world-soul from that dialogue, to see flow in the way, in the *Timaeus*, the motions of the stars and planets *make visible* the world-soul's circles of the same and the different. What I am arguing here is that we may also see cosmic flow in the circling of the elemental strata, likewise in obedience to the world-soul. By virtue of this *flowing* motion, elemental *flux* is both perpetuated and kept in check, allowing exchange between the strata that flow around earth without subverting them in *real* chaos. But they are distinct motions. The flux is *now*, to some extent at least, a product of the flow.

Once we delimit the flux aspect in this way, it is clearer how the distinction between *nous* and necessity corresponds to the two faces of flow in the *Cratylus*, and how the task of the *Timaeus* cosmology is to relate them so that they do not just face off. To be sure, neither *nous* nor necessity is explicitly referred to as flow, and no doubt Plato would never dream of describing *nous qua the demiurge* as flowing. Yet the *nous* implanted in the world-soul (30b), so that it could have 'unceasing and intelligent life for all time' (36e), is another matter. Even in this case Plato may well have had misgivings about making *nous* and necessity room-mates in the category of flow. Yet since the connection between cosmic flow and the motion of *nous*, which was already a strong motive in the *Cratylus*, will be asserted outright in the *Laws*, we have reason to suppose that it quietly informs the *Timaeus*, in which case it is relatively straightforward that necessity takes up flow's 'wandering' or 'errant' aspect.

Nevertheless, there remains the question of why, in the pre-cosmos, Plato supplements this 'irregular' motion with a basic tendency to order. If his strategy is to parse the orderly and disorderly aspects of cosmic flow into *nous* and necessity and bring them together in N2, why make them already compresent to some extent in N1? It is as though necessity is willing to comply with *nous* in advance of *nous*'s arrival on the scene. This in my view is the significance of the attribution of self-motion to the receptacle at 53a. It is not that Plato wishes here to impute *disorder* to an irrational aspect of the world-soul,[49] for it is invoked to explain the *ordering* of the bodies. Rather, having located the propensity to disorder in material necessity, he wishes to curtail the scope of the problem from the outset. For all its boldness of vision and grandness of scope, the *Timaeus* does tend to downsize its dragon. There is no attempt to deal with the natural cataclysms referred to in its preamble. As we will

see in Chapter 5, when later dialogues address this problem they depart from the stance of the *Timaeus* that disorder has purely material causes. Soul will have to own the negative aspect of cosmic flow as well as the positive.

2 Human physiology: Implications for the macrocosm?

As mentioned earlier, ῥοή has a more explicit role in Timaeus' account of human physiology, which I will use as a touchstone against which to test the foregoing analysis. The problem is that the role of ῥοή here seems to gainsay what I argue is its implicit place in the *Timaeus* cosmology. The *Timaeus* grasps the human creature, body and soul, as a microcosm of the cosmic one, which suggests that we can draw inferences both ways. Yet in the microcosmic context ῥοή is a purely physical motion. Timaeus refers to 'flows' or 'streams' of nourishment, sensation, speech, blood, breath, bodily fire, phlegm, bile, and marrow. Not even in the context of desire is flow directly linked with any motion of our souls – surprisingly, in light of the *Phaedrus* as well as the *Cratylus*. When it appears in this context at 86c–d, it denotes an overflow of a man's marrow (or of his 'seed' in his marrow), as a *physical* cause of sexual incontinence. Not only is flow not expressly connected with our souls' circles, but our bodily flow is said at 43c–d to do them harm: to 'shake them violently', 'impede' the circle of the same and 'dislocate' that of the different. Hence, it may be objected, if at this level flow is purely physical, this holds in the macrocosm too. In the *Timaeus* Plato does not associate the motion of *nous* or *nous*-endowed soul with cosmic flow either wholly (as in *Laws* XII) or in part (as in the *Cratylus*).

I will put forward two counterarguments to this. The first is that the passage I just glossed is not really representative of how 'flow' is used in the human context. There, as Cornford says (1935a: 147), Plato is describing 'the condition of the soul when newly incarnated', i.e., in *infancy*, when it has not attained mastery over the body's motions. The 'inflow and outflow' (ἐπίρρυτον καὶ ἀπόρρυτον) of the body, in which the soul's circles are confined (ἐνέδουν), constitutes 'a mighty river' (ποταμὸν πολὺν) which 'they neither control nor are controlled by' (43a). It subjects the circles to various deforming pressures, with the result that the infant creature moves in a random, disorderly way in all six directions (43b). But in time, when 'the stream of growth and nourishment' is less overwhelming, the soul's revolutions are able to return to their proper paths, and intelligence becomes possible (44b). Plato does not say that the mortal creature then controls the 'river', no doubt because we are largely unconscious of the flowing processes within us (cf. *Philebus* 43b, *Timaeus* 64b–c). But if these are not *driven* by intelligent purpose, they are *underpinned* by it, our bodies having been so designed that these flows will for the most part be less violent after infancy and not at odds with the soul's circles.

Generally this is the timbre of 'flow' later on. The circulation system has been devised by the gods for the purpose of 'irrigating' the body 'as if by an incoming stream' (ὥσπερ ἐκ νάματος ἐπιόντος ἄρδοιτο: 77c). The major blood vessels ensure that this stream 'flows easily' (εὔρους) to the other parts and irrigates the whole in a

'uniform' (ὁμαλήν) way (77d). Similarly, in the 'fish-trap' mechanism which is meant to explain how respiration drives digestion, the airy envelope is designed 'to flow *gently* [ξυρρεῖν μαλακῶς] into the inner-weels, which are also made of air to facilitate this (78d). The to-and-fro (διαιωρούμενον: 78e) of the central fire, following that of air, is perhaps more forceful, but its effect is again to ensure that the nutriments it breaks down 'flow' through the veins throughout the body (79a, 80d).[50] Physical growth simply means that inflow exceeds outflow, and decay the reverse (81b). Disease is the collapse of this 'compliant' flow of our bodily processes: for example, when the whole process 'flows in the reverse direction' (84c) so that the bones, instead of receiving nutriment from the blood, crumble and fall back into it.

However, this does not fully meet our problem, for all it indicates is a good side of *physical* flow. This may be underpinned by *nous*, but flow as such is still set over against it, *qua* physical. Yet there is one flow which seems to break this pattern. Discussing the dual function of the mouth at 75d–e, Timaeus lauds 'the stream of speech' which 'flows *out* and serves intelligence' (τὸ δὲ λόγων νᾶμα ἔχω ῥέον καὶ ὑπηρετοῦν φρονήσει) as 'the finest and best of streams'. Serving here presumably means that speech is ruled, led and caused by intelligence (cf. Plato's equation of causing with ruling at *Philebus* 27a). At *Cratylus* 408c an even closer relationship was posited between speech (λόγος) and intelligence; speech itself was said to make the All *go around*. Something of this cosmic speech reappears at *Timaeus* 37a–b. The account there of how the world-creature self-regulates through the constant revolution of its soul is gathered in the verbs ἐφάπτηται and λέγει: 'touching' things and 'saying' how they are the same or different. Putting this together with 75d–e, Plato is not a million miles away from expressly thinking a flow *of* intelligent soul which manifests itself in a physical flow.

My second counterargument hinges on the fact that there are constraints on what we can infer from microcosm to macrocosm. There are important differences between us and the cosmic creature, which follow simply from our being *micro*cosms. Unlike us, the cosmic creature has nothing outside it (33c), no external forces to which it is subject, and thus no need of eyes, ears, hands, lungs, or external sources of nourishment (33c–d). 'Inflow' and 'outflow', in such forms as the 'great wave' of nourishment (43b) or the 'tumult' of sensation (43c), are impertinent to it, but the same need not hold for flow *as such*. Furthermore, it is the physiological context that explains why Plato addresses inflow and outflow in solely physical terms. We know from the *Cratylus* and *Phaedrus* that such things as desire and love flow into the *soul*. Desire is absent from the discussion at 43a–44b, but it is listed with sensation and growth through nourishment as a basic trait of mortal life at 42a, and, as with them, it is the externality of other things, things we *lack*, that opens the space of desire in us. That suggests the world-soul is not subject to desire, and certainly the *Timaeus* says nothing to suggest it is. Yet here the *Statesman* will diverge markedly, imputing to the world-soul an 'innate desire' which, as I will argue in Chapter 5, is at variance with its intelligence. If our exogenetic desire *flows* into the soul from without, there seems no reason not to grasp this innate one as a flow internal to soul. We can then find the two sides of flow reappearing within the world-soul itself, this flow of desire being distinguished from the circular motion of its intelligence.

Certainly in the *Timaeus* Plato is not ready for this. Macrocosm and microcosm are analogous here in the sense that in both contexts Plato seeks to hive off flow's *negative* aspect to the side of matter, even if we also find something of the positive aspect here too, in both contexts. But that is not to say flow *as such* is solely a material motion set off against the motion of *nous*. The fact that Plato does not specifically address motions of soul like this one, or desire, in terms of flow in the *Timaeus* does not mean that he now repudiates this. It is, most likely, precisely because Plato inwardly associates flow with *both* sides, *nous* and necessity, that we hear nothing of it in the *Timaeus* cosmology. In other words, Plato would be comfortable deploying flow for one side or the other, but not both. Certainly that is what the evidence of *Laws* 966d–e would suggest. I will develop this point in Chapter 5.

3 The theories of perception in the *Timaeus* and *Theaetetus*

This is a digression from my main (cosmological) theme, but a necessary one for the sake of completeness. Its purpose is to show that the *Timaeus* theory of perception is not the theory of the *Theaetetus*, about which scholars have long been at loggerheads as to whether it has Plato's endorsement. I will argue that it does not (that is, I favour Burnyeat's B reading), and that we should not draw a sharp line between the flux dismissed at *Theaetetus* 181b–183c and the seemingly less radical one implied by the 'fluxist theory of perception' at 156a–157c. The *Timaeus* theory diverges from this, not simply because it involves a still milder flux, but because strictly speaking it is not a *fluxist* theory at all, but as it were a 'flowist' one.

The *Timaeus* theory is first outlined at 45b–46c, with the purpose of evincing the subordination of material to intelligent causation (cf. 46c–d). What makes perception possible is that the eye is so constructed that its own fire is akin to the fire that provides the 'gentle light' of day (45b).[51] The eye allows nothing but this purest fire to flow (ῥεῖν) through it, and perception occurs as a 'visual stream' (τὸ τῆς ὄψεως ῥεῦμα: 45c) which flows out (ἐκπῖπτον) into the daylight 'like unto like', and 'coalesces with it' in a direct line between the eyes and the object, along which the latter's motions are conveyed to the soul (45c–d).

This conforms to the pattern of the physiological 'flows' discussed in section 2. That is, flow is directed and teleologically underpinned, not chaotic and violent as at 43c–d. In fact the theory goes even further in this direction, in at least two ways. Firstly, in the contexts of circulation, respiration, and digestion, while the *sense* of ῥέω is flow rather than flux, flux is not to be excluded; the breaking down of food and the distribution of the various bits to their appropriate destinations (bone, flesh, etc.) is obviously an analogue of the cosmic flux. But in the account of perception there is really nothing of flux at all. What 'breaks into' (ἐμπίπτοντά: 67d) the visual stream is not a chaotic flux of changing particles, but those fire particles, of a definite quality, that 'flow out' (ἀπορρέουσαν: 67c) from the bodies seen. Nor is the visual stream itself a flux, but a unity of inner and outer fire particles targeted, as it were, at the intended object. Perception can only happen if these particles: (1) flow in an orderly way, and (2) *do not change*.

Secondly, while the purpose underlying the physiological flows is simply the maintenance of life, perception serves a more profound one, the ultimate purpose of living at all. The gift of sight underpins the demiurge's greatest gift to us of all: philosophy (47b). This is said, not to valorise knowledge for its own sake, but with a view to its moral application. Our appointed task is to perfect the microcosm we are by directing our eyes and our minds to the nature, and indeed mind, of the cosmos. God gave us eyes 'that we might observe the circuits of *nous* in the sky and use them for the revolutions of our own thinking' (ἵνα τὰς ἐν οὐρανῷ κατιδόντες τοῦ νοῦ περιόδους χρησαίμεθα ἐπὶ τὰς περιφορὰς τὰς τῆς παρ´ ἡμῖν διανοήσεως: 47b), and 'by imitating the entirely unerring motions of the [cosmic] god, stabilise the errant motions in ourselves' (μιμούμενοι τὰς τοῦ θεοῦ πάντως ἀπλανεῖς οὔσας τὰς ἐν ἡμῖν πεπλανημένας καταστησαίμεθα: 47c).

The *Theaetetus* theory bears some resemblance to that of the *Timaeus*, but the differences are far more significant. Firstly, here too there is talk of perception *going* from eye to object, and a quality such as whiteness going from object to eye, although not in a steady flow of particles (which are never mentioned). But the perception and the quality are grasped as the 'offspring' (156a) of a casual fling of eye and object. The whiteness literally comes to be when it is perceived, and ceases to be when it is not (156d–e). As Waterfield (1987: 160) points out, this contradicts the *Timaeus* theory, in which colours are an objective function of the shape and size of the particles that enter the visual stream from the object (67d). As such they could be verified by a second observer, whereas on the *Theaetetus* theory they are entirely relative to an individual and purely punctual event of perception.

A second feature of the *Theaetetus* theory is the distinction at 156c–d between the fast motions of the offspring (changes of place) and the slow ones of their parents (alterations of the eye and object, without change of place).[52] In the *Timaeus* there is a suggestion of fast motion in the πίπτω verbs used alongside the ῥέω ones, but again fast motion is an *intrinsic* property of fire particles (cf. 56a). Besides, I suspect that their rushing from the object and the eye is simply meant to guarantee that the visual stream is not subject to the general flux in between and perception is not scrambled. But in the *Theaetetus* this between is a private world of rapidly changing perceptions and qualities. Accordingly, the prohibition of 'being', and other terms which suggest stability ('it', 'his', 'mine', 'this', and 'that'), has a very different tenor at *Theaetetus* 157a–b than at *Timaeus* 49b–50b. In the latter the issue was how we are to refer to the fire, etc., that *we see* perpetually changing. This 'we see' is just what the *Theaetetus* theory excludes. Were I to say to another, 'Remember that whiteness there yesterday? Look, today it's over here', I would get a response like 'Here all is beigeness, surely', or 'there hasn't been whiteness there since 1992'. Moreover, the *Theaetetus* extends the prohibition beyond the perceptions of a man and the qualities of an object to the man and object themselves (157b–c). Each is just a 'collection' (ἀθροίσματι) of the changes or motions to which the perceptions and qualities reduce. This is very much at odds with the *Timaeus*, for while the latter does affirm the ephemerality of perceptible qualities, it presupposes that both the objects and the organs of perception have a certain stability (Burnyeat 1990: 17).

The theories are also differently motivated. The *Theaetetus* does not seek to explain the *mechanics* of perception, let alone as an instance of intelligent design. Plato there is intent on refuting three theses which are said to be mutually entailing: Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception, the epistemological relativism of Protagoras, and the 'Heraclitean' doctrine of flux. The latter two are clearly integral to the theory of perception. Indeed, the theory is ascribed to thinkers whose 'starting point' is that 'the All is motion and nothing else besides' (156a). I take Plato's purpose to be to reject the theory along with the three theses, in line with Burnyeat's B reading of the dialogue. According to this, Plato has Socrates reduce Theaetetus' definition to absurdity precisely by claiming that it entails the Protagorean and 'Heraclitean' theses and ultimately the impossibility of language (Burnyeat 1990: 9). The fluxist theory of perception is part of this *reductio*. As Burnyeat puts it (1990: 18), it is a 'Heraclitean story' and 'a metaphysical projection of a world in which the Protagorean epistemology holds good'.

On the A reading, Plato actually accepts the theory, and uses it for the very purpose of showing that perception is not knowledge (since its objects are in flux). For Cornford (1935b: 49) this purpose obliges Plato 'to give us what he believes to be a true account of those objects'. Yet the *Theaetetus* later rejects *tout court* the flux doctrine which underpins the theory. Champions of A often try to get around this by claiming that the theory involves a less extreme flux than that rejected at 181b–183c. They do not seem to agree on what makes it less extreme. For Hunt (2002: 161) the objects of perception are 'relatively stable' and possess identifiable qualities, which the later flux precludes. For Chappell (2004: 51) *these* objects are in 'constant flux', while the later passage denies that *everything* is in flux. Ademollo (2011: 469) sees 'radical change' in perceiver and perceived alike, but 'some' stability in that certain kinds of change are precluded. In any case, even if we accepted that this earlier flux is less rabid, it would not prove anything. For in the later passage it is not *qua extreme* that extreme flux is rejected. As I have stressed previously,[53] it is rejected *qua* flux, i.e., as the form of the doctrine which *any* fluxist must hold if he is to be consistent. If 'everything is in flux' does not mean that everything is simultaneously and constantly undergoing both locomotion and alteration, one may just as well say that 'everything is at rest' in some respect at least (181e). Ademollo (2011: 472) regards this argument as specious, but that is a separate issue. The point is that *in the Theaetetus* Plato is bound by it *not* to embrace a milder form of flux in the theory of perception.

I think this point alone is decisive against the view that Plato subscribes to the theory. An equally decisive argument is that a *different* theory is introduced at 184b which clearly has the Platonic seal of approval. It holds that it is not 'with' the eyes and ears that we perceive qualities like colours and tones, but 'through' (διά) them (184c–d). It is the soul that does the perceiving; the eyes and ears are *its* 'organs' or 'instruments'. Thus we are not simply 'bundles' of motions, as the prior theory had it, or Trojan horses, as Socrates puts it here, with 'indefinitely many sensings'[54] sitting inside us which do not 'converge and meet in some single nature',[55] i.e., a soul that relates all it hears and all it sees to each other. Proponents of A argue that soul is simply added to the earlier theory (Cornford 1935b: 105; Chappell 2004: 147), but

this is untenable for the reasons given by Waterfield (1987: 161). First, the abiding unity of the soul is 'anathema' to the earlier theory, according to which *everything* is change and nothing else besides. Second, at 186b Socrates discusses hardness and softness as objective qualities of things, not as only coming to be for a certain perceiver at a certain moment. Third, the new theory allows Socrates to talk of *being*, the exclusion of which is 'essential' to the earlier theory.[56]

In terms of its approach to flux, and *a fortiori* flow, it is difficult to harmonise the *Theaetetus* with Plato's other works, both middle and late, with the exception of *Cratylus* 3. Waterfield (1987: 243) sees in the *Theaetetus* a 'change of heart from the middle-period philosophy'. The implication of the refutation of flux is that the things of this world are stable enough to be referred to as being, not just becoming. Hence Plato no longer believes in the 'version of flux' adhered to in the middle period (162). Although this is not the extreme flux rejected at 181b–183c, it must be included in the refutation for the reason given above. However, the only distinction Waterfield makes here (182–183) is that between so-called 'Heraclitean' (= *Mach* 2) and Cratylan (*Mach* 3) flux. As we have seen, it is in fact *Mach* 1 flux that the middle dialogues typically embrace. I see no philosophical reason why Plato could not reject both *Mach* 2 and *Mach* 3 (*qua* universal) in the name of that *Mach* 1 flux. Since it allows that a thing may be changing and at rest at the same time, it is immune to the critique, which is aimed at a flux that must deny rest. What blinds Plato to this option in the *Theaetetus*, and to the fact that Heraclitus took it? It can only be the polemical motive running through the work, which leads Plato quite outrageously to lump in Heraclitus with Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception and Protagoras' relativism.[57] It is not a doctrinal change of heart that leads Plato away from the *Mach* 1 flux, or indeed the non-fluxist use of ῥοή, of the middle dialogues, and makes him revert to the stance of *Cratylus* 3. Just as the polemical drive of the latter led him to lose sight of his own non-fluxist usage of ῥοή in *Cratylus* 2, Plato repeats this gesture in the *Theaetetus vis-à-vis* the intervening middle dialogues.

In the *Timaeus* we have seen Plato embrace flux *Mach* 2, in a form which excludes (elemental) things but not qualities. At *Theaetetus* 182c–d flux is said to exclude both, but the earlier theory of perception permits identifiable (if momentary) qualities. This leads Hunt (2002: 160–162) to suppose that this 'initial' flux corresponds to *cosmic* flux in the *Timaeus*, and the later extreme flux to the pre-cosmos. This won't hold up. Firstly, the pre-cosmos does not lack qualities. Passage B told us that 'the four kinds' (fire, air, water, earth) were not simply present there inchoate, but were bound off from each other (although there is some difficulty squaring this with 69b). In any case, secondly, there is no obvious cosmological (much less pre-cosmic) reference in the *Theaetetus* passages, besides the incidental remark at 156a that 'the All is change'. Even the elements are not mentioned directly. The *Theaetetus* is concerned with the *logic* of the claim that everything is change or motion, not its empirical validity in the cosmological context or any other (cf. Waterfield 1987: 183). Thirdly, Hunt seems to forget that Plato's purpose here is to *repudiate* extreme flux, and indeed (on reading B) the less extreme one as well.

It is a mistake to try to force a reconciliation of the two dialogues in this way. They represent strands of Plato's thought which don't quite mesh. On the one

hand, if Waterfield is right about a doctrinal change apropos the ontological and epistemological status of sensibles in the *Theaetetus*,[58] this does not go hand in hand (as it well might have done) with an attribution of flowing motion to those sensibles which can be said to have 'being'. On the contrary, it is juxtaposed with a reduction of flow to flux, and extreme flux at that, so as to dismiss it, just as in *Cratylus* 3. On the other hand, the *Timaeus* maintains the old correspondences between being and Forms, becoming and sensibles, but does not reduce flow to flux, and gives both positive but distinct roles in cosmology and other contexts. Eventually these parallel lines must meet. My proposal is that they do so, by way of the *Sophist*'s admittance of motion into the concept of being, in the 'everflowing being' of *Laws* 966d–e.

Notes

1 I won't address the sketchier cosmology of the middle dialogues. I presuppose that the right place for *Timaeus-Critias* is at the beginning of the late period, before *Sophist, Statesman, Philebus*, and *Laws*. See Appendix for discussion.
2 I can't enter into the controversy over whether *aitia* here denotes causes or reasons. Suffice it to say that I disagree with Vlastos ('Reasons and Causes in the *Phaedo*', in Vlastos 1973) that they are solely reasons, and agree with Annas (1982: 325) that Plato conflates the two.
3 Some commentators regard the pre-cosmos (and indeed the demiurge) as a mythical representation, an abstracted feature of the cosmos as it is. Like most scholars nowadays I think this is simply wrong. I will say more about this later.
4 On the latter claim, compare Morrow (1965) and A. S. Mason (2010: 169–172).
5 Nevertheless, it is clear at 48b that necessity relates to pre-cosmic fire, air, water, and earth.
6 Cf. Grote's definition, 'the indeterminate, the inconstant, the anomalous, that which can be neither understood nor predicted', cited by Cornford (1935a: 171–172). Cornford endorses Grote's view largely on the basis of *Laws* 889b–c and similar usage by Aristotle.
7 In a similar way it is impossible to predict the behaviour of a given particle in Brownian motion, while there is still a tendential lawfulness which in a curious way each particle obeys.
8 At 46e Timaeus says of physical bodies that they are moved by others and move yet others in turn ἐξ ἀνάγκης, of necessity. Bury's translation, 'because they cannot help it', gives the right sense. Compare Archer-Hind (1888: 162): 'not of their own free will'. Cf. Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 73. Note that in Burnet's text κατά appears in place of ἐξ.
9 For more detailed criticism of the attempt to make the demiurge underlie even pre-cosmic necessity, see Jelinek 2011.
10 ῥέον ὕδωρ, 'flowing water', at 49c5 does not refer to water in the process of changing from or to something else. Flowing *characterises* the water that has issued from air through condensation. We have here yet another example, to add to those of *Cratylus* 2 and later middle dialogues, of Plato divorcing ῥέω from the fluxist sense that he adopts in *Cratylus* 3 and *Theaetetus*.
11 Cf. Gulley (1960: 54–55), yet Gulley sees the passage as an amelioration of Plato's *own* erstwhile radical flux doctrine. He too fails to recall that Plato was *attacking* the radical flux doctrine in the *Cratylus* and *Theaetetus*.
12 Strictly speaking (since the statement is in indirect discourse), whether fire is the primary or secondary object of the infinitive.
13 For earlier statements of this view see, for example, Archer-Hind 1888: 173–174, Taylor 1928: 316–319, Cornford 1935a: 178–181.

14 Cherniss (1954: 114) already tries to read τοῦτο as subject here: 'that *this* [i.e., any of the elements] is any particular thing and not another'. Zeyl (1975: 130) exposes the sleight of hand this involves. Notably Mohr (2005: 86) does not follow Cherniss here, as he does at d5–6.
15 There is an ambiguity as to whether ἀεί relates to ὃ καθορῶμεν or γιγνόμενον. I adopt the latter reading (with Bury, Cornford, Gulley, and Mohr) because it makes clearer sense.
16 The key difference is of course that at *Cratylus* 439d it is denied that what is in flux is *either* a thing (a 'that') or a quality (a 'such'). Cherniss does not recognise this difference, and thinks that on his construal of the *Timaeus* passage there is no variance between the texts (1954: 129–130). He passes over the fact that in the *Cratylus* passage ἐκεῖνό and τοιοῦτον function grammatically as (repudiated) predicates, which is precisely what he denies is the case at *Timaeus* 49d–e.
17 Anacoluthon due to a restated subject is not unheard of in Plato; I argue for the same sort of thing at *Philebus* 30b (Mason 2014: 147f.).
18 Regarding the further acrobatics Cherniss engages in to sustain his reading in face of this straightforward sense of the text, see Gulley (1960: 57–59).
19 I reproduce Plato's slip from a singular to a plural subject, which reflects the movement in the preceding part of the passage from ἄλλο μηδὲν to ὅσα (cf. Gulley 1960: 53 note 3). Note also Plato's play on ὑπομένον (stay behind, await, but also abide in the transitive sense of 'tolerate'). Less likely is the play some see on a legal sense of ἐνδείκνυται (indict) along with the sense 'point out' or 'exhibit'. That is more the language of the Neo-Heracliteans, as Plato presents them elsewhere for manifestly satirical purposes. This is not the tenor of the present passage.
20 Not self-identical, as claimed by Cherniss (1954: 121).
21 This is an alternative solution to Zeyl's (1975: 139) to what he calls the awkwardness of οὕτω. I take οὕτω not with καλεῖν but as referring back to φεύγει, and more remotely to the cycle described at 49b–c. Substantively my understanding of the passage is the same as his; fieriness now is broadly similar to its previous occurrences, but it is an intermittent 'such and such', not an enduring thing.
22 Most translators (including me, in Chapter 2, section 6) take τίθεμι ('put') as a verb of saying here, but LSJ's C sense, where it equates to ποιέω without a following attributive word, is a strong possibility given the reference to someone *moulding* gold into the shapes. It is used in LSJ's B sense (also 'make', but with an attributive complement) at 52d5.
23 Mohr also rightly rejects the positions taken by Lee (similar, but the images are not of the Forms) and Mills (that the Forms themselves are meant by τοιοῦτον).
24 To be a 'phenomenon' *just is* to 'appear' (φαντάζομαι, φαίνομαι) and present an 'image' (φάντασμα).
25 The point of ὡς δοκοῦμεν (as we suppose) at 49b8, and of ὡς φαίνεται ('as it seems') at the end of the sentence at c7, is to suspend the naïve assumption that elemental transformation is the becoming *something* of *something*. We think we see fire becoming air, whereas in reality what happens is that the triangles formerly convened as fire have broken up and reconvened as air. On this I agree with Johansen (2004: 127). Where I disagree is his allocation of an apparent (as opposed to actual) becoming to the pre-cosmos, and his assumption that passages A and B are of a piece in this respect.
26 This point is a difficult one, but it has been unnecessarily complicated by Aristotle's weird assertion that Plato identified space with matter. I won't go into this here.
27 Cf. Heidegger 1959: 66.
28 οὐχ ἡσυχίαν ἄγον ἀλλὰ κινούμενον πλημμελῶς καὶ ἀτάκτως. πλημμελῶς gives the faultiness the musical sense of being out of tune, striking a false or jarring note. The metaphor economically juxtaposes the disharmony of the pre-cosmos with the numerical-musical proportions given to the world-soul and the proportionalisation of the world-body's constituents by the demiurge.
29 A rare exception is Mohr (2005: 124). I share Mohr's view that, while universal flux is not expressly discussed in B, it is implicit. But I don't share his reason for thinking this, namely his view that D also describes the pre-cosmos.

30 A third clue may lie in the comment at 53b that the four bodies 'only had traces of their proper nature' (53b), which *might* mean that any given bit of ever-changing stuff was only *intermittently* recognisable as fiery or airy.
31 For restatements of Cornford's position see, for example, Vlastos (2005: 69–70), Johansen (2004: 124–127), Broadie (2012: ch. 6). Among those holding the contrary view are Gill (1987: 47), Zeyl (2000: lxvii), and Mohr (2005: ch. 5).
32 Admittedly, Plato presumably has in mind Anaxagoras' description of the pre-cosmos, which could be said to lack particulate matter because there is no 'bit' that does not have every other 'bit' in itself, and hence no sense in speaking of bits. But Plato does not go as far as Anaxagoras. Compare the 'motley appearance' of his pre-cosmos with Anaxagoras' more radical commixture in which 'no colour was apparent' (B 4b). Besides, it is hard to see how Plato could compare the pre-cosmic motion to that involved in winnowing grain, without the different things separated like unto like having a particulate nature characterisable in such terms as density, weight, and size.
33 Cornford also assumes the particles themselves would equate to immutable Democritean atoms in the void (1935a: 200), but this is unnecessary. The analogue to these in the *Timaeus* is of course the triangles making up the *cosmic* particles.
34 In fact Cornford ultimately concedes this: 'If any whirl or eddy did occur, it would be (as in the Atomists) only an accidental resultant of the six irrational motions' (1935a: 203).
35 On this point I am in agreement with Vlastos (1965b: 414–419, in departure from his earlier view: 1965a: 396–397) and Mohr (2005: 121; cf. ch. 8).
36 Outside of this remark, passage B indicates that the receptacle's motions are not self-sprung but are due to the imbalance of its contents, and *then* affect those contents (cf. Johansen 2004: 130). To bring the remark into line, Johansen translates κινουμένης αὐτῆς οἷον ὀργάνου σεισμὸν παρέχοντος 'whilst it was being moved like a tool for shaking' (123). But this sidesteps παρέχοντος. I take this to mean 'having the power to' (LSJ *s.v.* III.2). Of course a shaking tool does not have the *power* to move itself, but the point seems to be that the receptacle does, and that its *motion* is like that of such a tool.
37 The seemingly obvious answer – in part III, which brings together the workings of *nous* and necessity described in parts I and II – is not an answer at all, for III only brings them together apropos terrestrial beings, particularly humans.
38 As Mohr (2005: 137) shows in a fine analysis, the difference is that for Cornford the rotation directly causes the separation of the bodies, which then generates flux, whereas for Cherniss the rotation inadvertently generates the flux, which then causes the separation. Mohr rightly argues that both conceptions are wrong, precisely because they fail to recognise pre-cosmic causes of both motions of necessity. But the presence of cosmic rotation in D does not stand or fall with these interpretations.
39 διακείμενα, referring not to their spatial arrangement but their condition or constitution.
40 Accepting Mohr's (2005: 114–116) persuasive argument that the datives are not instrumental (as, for example, Bury and Cornford render them) but datives of respect.
41 σπέρμα (56b), a term Plato takes from Anaxagoras.
42 While the two terms are generally interchangeable, one key difference is that παθήματα does not have a 'state' sense, at least not in this context (it is used for emotional states of the soul). LSJ list a sense (III.3) in Logic of 'incidents, properties, or accidents', but in the Platonic examples given (*Phaedrus* 271b, *Parmenides* 141d, 157b) 'properties' is not the sense.
43 Johansen (2004: 126) goes further, arguing that the distinction between the two motions only applies at the level of the bodies; at that of the triangles it 'hardly matters', as it is simply a matter of the triangles 'moving from one place to another, temporarily hooking up with other triangles before they are again dissolved and move on'. But Johansen overemphasises the temporary nature of the 'appearances'. As we have seen, this is stressed in A but contradicted in B, and the sense of enduring fiery (etc.) regions in B is maintained in C when Timaeus refers to the τόπον ἴδιον of each body. Johansen's view (125) that 'places' are simply 'where coming-into-being and destruction happen' is not true to the ongoing presence of these fiery, etc. *regions* (although he acknowledges this at 131). Doubtless every

single particle of fire will break down at some time or other, but that is not to say there is essentially nothing more here than a movement of promiscuous triangles in space.

44 After Cornford's translation, but with reservations. The issue is the relationship between the two claims, i.e., between the incompleteness of the separation and the incessancy of transformation. The different tenses of διαχωρισθέντα (empiric aorist) and πέπαυται (perfect infinitive) do not establish any clear order of priority between them. Cornford's 'and so' (cf. Lee) makes the ongoing 'passing through' a logical consequence of incomplete separation. Technically it is, but in light of what is to come it is also true, and more significantly true, that the latter is due to the former. This is presumably why some translators (Bury, Archer-Hind) conjoin the two claims with a non-commital 'and'.

45 Mohr (2005: 127–130) refers to this passage several times, but fails to recognise its implications for his non-teleological reading of D. Its tenor, like that of this other passage, is certainly not that the flux at issue is 'a spontaneous source of disorder and positive evil' (144). Mohr's denial of teleology in D seems linked to his extraordinary claim (2005: xxi, 11–12) that the demiurge does what he does in the *Timaeus* for an epistemological end rather than the 'moral' and 'aesthetic' one of cosmic order. This is directly contradicted by 30a–b.

46 Consider also 78d–e, where Timaeus describes a mechanism whereby, when we breathe, the air we inhale draws our fire into the belly to help us break down food. I don't mean to imply that this has an exact macrocosmic analogue. But like the cosmic body, it is grasped as divinely designed for the purpose of preserving life. The incessant (μὴ διαπαύεσθαι: 78e1) movement back and forth of air and fire is crucial here. The same applies to perpetual motion at the cosmic level.

47 With, for example, Archer-Hind, Bury, Cherniss (1944: 449 note 393), Tarán (1971: 387 and note 121).

48 With, for example, Taylor (1928: 397–398), Mohr (2005: 134–135) and ultimately Cornford (1935a: 243–244). Cornford argues that the two notions are inextricable here and translates 'circuit' to cover both senses (cf. Lee), but he takes 'circumference' to be the primary sense.

49 This approach to the *Timaeus* goes back to Plutarch, *De animae procreatione in Timaeo* (On the Generation of Soul in the *Timaeus*), 1014A–1017C and 1022E–1027A. Cornford endorses a similar view (1935a: 205–206), but rejects Plutarch's claim that the world-soul was 'first' irrational (203). Cherniss' stance that the irregular motions are an incidental spin-off of the world-soul's *rational* motions is intended as a corrective to these views.

50 Plato goes on to try to explain how all this actually works by invoking the theory of 'circular thrust' or περίωσις (see Cornford's excellent discussion: 1935a: 315–327). Circular thrust is the doubling back of the air (for example) dislodged by some other moving body into the space that body leaves behind, where it continues propelling that body forward. At 80c (cf. 79d) Plato connects this with the cosmic process described at 57c, in which the elements undergoing flux exchange places and proceed to their new proper regions. This only holds when the two bodies in question are capable of transmutation into each other, not in the case of a solid projectile hurled through space.

51 Plato's pun here on ἥμερον (gentle) and ἡμέρα (day) seems to imply a rethinking of his rejection of this etymology of 'day' in the *Cratylus* (418d). There, in the older form ἱμέρα, day was derived from ἵμερος, since men 'long' for it in the darkness of night.

52 Ademollo (2011: 226–227) thinks both the fast and slow motions are spatial, simply because that is the case in the passage concerning justice at *Cratylus* 412c–413c (which is not concerned with perception). Yet it is stated at 156c that the slow motion occurs ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ, in the same place. At 181c–d two motions ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ are referred to: rotation (which is irrelevant in our context) and *alteration*.

53 See Introduction, section 1 and Chapter 2, sections 3c and 6. Cf. Waterfield 1987: 157 and 181–183.

54 I accept Chappell's point (2004: 147) that, with πολλαί τινες, αἰσθήσεις probably means 'sensings' rather than senses. I just don't think it supports his claim that Plato means here to accept the (so-called) Heraclitean thesis about perception. The wording at 184d1–2 rules this out, for ὥσπερ ἐν δουρείοις ἵπποις clearly has satirical force, which reflects

back on εἰ πολλαί τινες ἐν ἡμῖν. The point of the wooden horse reference is of course that it *does not have* a soul, but only an ununified multiplicity of 'bundles' within it. What Socrates thinks would be 'strange' is *that we should be* that horse, that bundle of sensings which (intrinsically) do not converge in a single soul, not that the bundle of sensings *that we are* should fail so to converge.

55 Following Cornford's rendering of μὴ εἰς μίαν τινὰ ἰδέαν … ξυντείνει.

56 A third argument (cf. Hunt 2002: 163) is that the account of the earlier theory is laced with pretty transparent irony. To be sure, the proponents of the theory are first described as 'more subtle' than those who fail to get past what is tangible and visible (156a). But when Socrates asks Theaetetus whether the theory tastes agreeable to him (157c), there is as Hunt says little if any doubt that its badness is implied. When Theaetetus goes on to complain that he doesn't know whether Socrates believes the theory himself or is merely testing him, Socrates responds with his trademark profession of ignorance. I think the previous two arguments permit us to decode this delicate gesture.

57 Even on a cursory glance at the fragments it is clear that both are incommensurable with Heraclitus' thought. To know a thing it is not enough to perceive it; it must be understood from and in the *logos*, the all-embracing structure of unity in opposition, which is not available to sense-perception itself. Can Plato seriously not have known that the Heraclitean *logos* is the 'common' over against the 'private' (B 2)?

58 I leave this open, although I suspect that it may be bound up with Waterfield's acceptance (1987: 162) of Owen's view (which I reject) that the *Theaetetus* is post-*Timaeus*, which would perhaps allow the redefinition of being in the *Sophist* to rub off on it.

5

THE PROBLEM OF NATURAL CATASTROPHE IN THE LATE DIALOGUES

The development of Plato's thought after the *Timaeus* is a story not simply of extensions and clarifications but often drastic revisions. My focus in this chapter is the different ways that the tripartite cosmotheological scheme of the *Timaeus* (demiurge, world-soul, celestial gods) is modified in the *Statesman, Philebus*, and *Laws*. The changes hinge largely on the nature and status of the world-soul, and what drives them, I will argue, is the problem of natural catastrophe. The *Timaeus* avoided this problem, besides cursorily indicating that its locus is material 'necessity', in that it 'wanders' and only 'complies' with *nous* 'for the most part'. The changes reflect Plato's dissatisfaction with this standpoint.

While the *Timaeus* is mute on this theme in its cosmology, it has much to say about it in the preamble, where Critias introduces the tale he will relate in the sequel concerning Atlantis and the ancient Athenian civilisation which defeated it, and their mutual destruction by a massive earthquake and consequent flood. Popular accounts of Plato's Atlantis myth often present this catastrophe as an act of divine punishment. It is not. Zeus' punishment of the Atlantans consists in sending them into a war they are destined to lose. At some later time the earthquake just 'happened' (γενομένων: *Timaeus* 25c).[1] But it still requires an explanation, and I will propose that the reason Plato abandoned the *Critias* mid-sentence[2] is that he came to see that his default explanation was insufficient. If the world-soul maintains order by being aware of everything going on in its body (*Timaeus* 37a–b), how can it be exculpated? What follows in the *Statesman* myth is Plato's most philosophically interesting attempt to account for why such events occur in a world governed by intelligence. Indeed, it is his only real attempt to *tackle* the problem cosmologically. The category of evil soul in the *Laws* is simply a place to *put* it.

It may seem obvious that flux will be key to any Platonic explanation of natural catastrophe. Yet as I said in the Introduction (section 4), I believe *flow* may give us a better handle on Plato's different approaches to the issue, since it spans all of them, owing to both its double (orderly and errant) nature and its applicability to

soul and matter alike. Each approach can be read as a different way of managing cosmic flow's two aspects, whether the negative one is allocated to matter over against *nous* (*Timaeus*), deficient aspects of the world-soul over against *its nous* (*Statesman*), or a bad *class* of soul over against the good and intelligent class (*Laws*).

1 The 'end' of the *Critias*

Homer begins the *Odyssey* with an Olympian convention. Persuaded by Athena, and in Poseidon's absence, Zeus declares to the other gods his decision to put an end to Odysseus' torment. The scene begins with Zeus musing how lamentable it is 'that men should blame the gods and regard *us* as the source of their troubles, when it is their own transgressions which bring them suffering that was not their destiny' (1.32–34, Rieu's translation). Athena persuades Zeus that Odysseus' troubles are undeserved. Since they *are* caused by Poseidon, in revenge for Odysseus' blinding of the Cyclops, this implies that the latter deed was not a transgression, and that Poseidon's act is an exception to Zeus' general rule.

The *Critias* ends with a scene that is no doubt intended to recall this one. Here too Zeus convenes the gods to announce a decision that favours Athena and overrides Poseidon, the patron gods of Athens and Atlantis respectively.[3] The divine element in the Atlantans has atrophied (121a8–9); they are 'filled with lawless ambition and power' (121b6–7). Intervention is required, and it must come from Zeus, who (unlike Poseidon, it seems)[4] 'reigns by law' and 'is able to perceive [καθορᾷν] such things' as the fact that 'this once equitable race' is in a 'wretched state' (b7–9). The punishment he chooses for them, 'so that when chastened they might strike a truer note'[5] (b9–c2), consists in giving free rein to their imperialistic overreach and letting them relearn humility from its disastrous consequences (cf. 120d7–8). But the text breaks off at the precise point where Zeus is to inform the gods of his decision:

> Accordingly he assembled all the gods into the abode most precious to them, standing as it does at the centre of all the cosmos and looking down upon the whole realm of what partakes of becoming, and having assembled them he said… (ξυνήγειρε θεοὺς πάντας εἰς τὴν τιμιωτάτην αὐτῶν οἴκησιν, ἣ δὴ κατὰ μέσον παντὸς τοῦ κόσμου βεβηκυῖα καθορᾷ πάντα ὅσα γενέσεως μετείληφε, καὶ ξυναγείρας εἶπεν …)
>
> (121c2–5)

I see no reason to doubt that Plato intended to echo the Homeric scene in terms of Zeus' message as well: men are the architects of their own sufferings.[6] A first question to ask, then, is why did he not follow through? Two other questions impose themselves: (2) why bring back the Olympians in the *Critias*, having marginalised and in effect replaced them in its 'prequel'?;[7] (3) why does Plato here, for the first time in the *Critias*, advert to cosmology? What is this most precious or honourable (τιμιωτάτην) abode, and might the reference to it have something to do with the work's termination?[8]

To start with question (2), a simple reason for the Olympians' return is that Critias is not Timaeus. His historical story, which he heard a very long time ago, cannot be informed by the novel cosmotheology Timaeus has just presented. Yet the Olympians' presence is not just a concession to narrative coherence. Plato has his own reasons for bringing them back. One is the *political* thematic of the *Critias*, for which there was no place in the *Timaeus*. Patron gods of *states* are needed here, gods who steer not only individual souls but human herds (109b–c). It would be difficult to have the heavenly bodies fulfil such a role, given their one-on-one relationship with human souls at *Timaeus* 41d–42b (each soul being assigned to its own star, which is a god and guide), and one can hardly imagine the world-soul getting involved. Yet while this explains the presence of Poseidon and Athena (and Hephaestus), it does not fully account for Zeus' appearance in the final pages. Certainly Zeus mediates in a political field, but he does so from a middle ground that is *cosmic*, not just political. This suggests a second reason, and it brings us to question (3). With what, in Plato's cosmology, is the place of outlook to be identified, and what is Plato's purpose in invoking it?

Its central location indicates a connection with Earth, but also perhaps the world-soul, which at *Timaeus* 34b is first set 'in the centre' (εἰς τὸ μέσον) of the cosmos. There is also, it seems, a special connection with Zeus. It is apparently *his* abode, for he has the other gods come to him there, and (presumably) it must be because he dwells there that he has a privileged ability to 'perceive' things. Note that Plato uses καθοράω both for perceiving the Atlantans' degeneration and for surveying the whole sphere of becoming. This verb implies a looking *down* from above, which is unsuited to a location in the middle of a spherical cosmos,[9] not to mention the middle of Earth. This problem disappears if we take the centre as an axial (rather than punctual) one, and so identify the place of outlook with what the Pythagoreans called the Tower (or Guardhouse or Throne) of Zeus. Yet this generates another problem, for the Pythagoreans grasped the Tower as a central *fire* around which everything else revolves, including Earth. Can Plato refer himself to it and still maintain a geocentric cosmos? Did he 'repent' of his geocentrism in his old age, as claimed by Theophrastus?[10] Why then does Aristotle say nothing of this, and simply demarcate Plato's geocentrism from the Pythagorean doctrine (*De Caelo* 293b31–33)?

Cornford (1935a: 125–128) resolves this by pointing to an alternative form of the doctrine. According to Simplicius' commentary on *De Caelo* (512), the 'more genuine' Pythagoreans posited a geocentric cosmos, and grasped the Tower as a fire at the centre of Earth. Cornford takes Plato to accept this version, and to renounce not his geocentrism but his positing of fire *only* at the cosmic circumference. He would thus take on the belief (held by 'many others', according to *De Caelo* 293a28–b1) that as the most honourable (τιμιωτάτην) element, fire should be assigned to the centre no less than the circumference (both being more honourable places than what lies in between), in a form which does not contradict his geocentrism.

One obvious problem with this view is that the central fire thesis is not found in any of the later dialogues.[11] Another is that Cornford is too keen to retrofit the Tower into the *Timaeus* by connecting it with the world-soul.[12] Cornford (1935a: 129 note 1) follows Richardson's view (1926: 119) that the Tower, as a flame issuing from the bowels of Earth and forming a cosmic axis, links up with Zeus the sky-god, and that this finds an analogue in the cosmic axis at *Timaeus* 40c and the claim at 34b that the world-soul extends from centre to circumference. Yet Plato cannot associate the world-soul so closely with any material body, however honourable, without duplicating the conceptual confusion he criticises in others. He thinks a world-soul *instead of* a Tower of Zeus here. In the *Critias*, however, I do think the Tower is intended. It is just that the abandonment of the work is bound up with the abandonment of that thesis.

It seems hard to disagree with Cornford (1935a: 6) that the *Timaeus* serves as a 'cosmological introduction' to Critias' task of grounding Socrates' ideal state in the actual, if ancient, past. Yet how can the Athenian society of nine thousand years prior be shown to be based on the 'inexpugnable foundation' of cosmic order, if the latter relies on the demiurge for its creation and the world-soul for its maintenance, and the Olympians now return in their place? Individuals become exemplary by modelling themselves on the world-creature in the *Timaeus*, and presumably this would apply to states. How then to harmonise the *Critias* with its prequel? Plato must, I think, have *intended* it to return to the *Timaeus* scheme by way of the political gods required by Critias' story. The reference to the Tower would then be the opening move of this return journey from Zeus to the world-soul. I am not saying that Plato already means to reinscribe Zeus *as* the world-soul. For all its judgements of sameness and difference, the world-soul is never presented as standing in judgement of individuals or states. This is Zeus' function here. The point of his dwelling in the place of outlook is not that he is *responsible* for cosmic order,[13] but that his judgement is founded on a firm grasp of it, cosmic order being, as Cornford says, the ground of human morality which the gods oversee.

If this speculation is right, Plato's abandoning of the *Critias* may be due to a realisation that his bridge back to the *Timaeus* scheme actually brings it into question. One potential problem is that a central fire within the Earth seems a prime candidate for the *cause* of earthquakes. Earth seemingly does not have an inherent proclivity to quake; the *Timaeus* deems it the most stable of bodies due to its particles' cubic form (55d–e). But a central fire would perhaps be at liberty to disintegrate Earth from within. Moreover, if Zeus inhabits this place and sees the whole sphere of becoming from it, why does he not realise that there is an earthquake coming which will make a mockery of his political justice, not just because it destroys the good (Athens) along with the bad (Atlantis), but because it denies the latter the opportunity to 'strike a truer note'?

Doubtless earthquakes defy prediction, though perhaps not for one who dwells where they originate. Moreover, the *Timaeus* preamble specifically mentions the *periodicity* of some natural disasters: a widespread destruction by fire, recurring 'at long intervals' (διὰ μακρῶν χρόνων), due to a 'deviation [παράλλαξις] in the course of the heavenly bodies around the earth' (22d); and floods which 'come sweeping down again like a plague *after the usual interval of years* [δι΄ εἰωθότων ἐτῶν]' (23a). From his place of outlook Zeus would know the periods of such

events. Even if this does not apply to the earthquake in question, there is a sense in which this point still recoils on the *Timaeus*. I suggest that, as he turned these issues over at the 'end' of the *Critias*, Plato was struck by the tension between periodic catastrophes and his stance in the *Timaeus*. To the extent that catastrophes occur with a kind of clockwork regularity, they cannot be due simply to the residual *randomness* of necessity. Their very regularity presupposes the work of *nous*.

Plato then abandons the *Critias*, not because he decides to say what he was going to say within a broader framework in the *Laws* (Cornford 1935a: 7), but because he has a new *problem*, which he endeavours to resolve in the *Statesman*. He cannot hold *nous* itself responsible, for in itself *nous* is impeccable. His strategy is rather to attribute natural catastrophe to deficiencies which the world-soul has in addition to its *nous*, by virtue of which the latter's rule can be compromised or undermined.

Before turning to the *Statesman*, I want to take up an aspect of the *Timaeus* cosmology which may shed light on why the *Statesman*'s approach to the problem takes the form it does. At 40b–c Earth is called the 'guardian and creator [φύλακα καὶ δημιουργὸν] of night and day'. If anywhere, this is where the *Timaeus* adverts to the Pythagorean Tower, which according to Aristotle the Pythagoreans also called the Guardhouse of Zeus, Διὸς φυλακήν (*De Caelo* 293b3–4), and described as creating (ποιεῖν) night and day (293a23). By 'creator' Plato presumably means that Earth creates night by casting its shadow opposite to wherever the sun revolving around it happens to be.[14] It cannot be responsible for the day-night *period*, which is the period of the world-soul's circle of the Same (39c). At any rate, what concerns me here is the issue of Earth's motion, which is crucial for understanding the role ascribed to it.

If it serves as a watchtower, we would expect Earth to be still and stable. At *Critias* 121c Plato uses βεβηκυῖα (a participle of βαίνω) for the central place. βαίνω can mean both 'stand' and 'go', and while the primary sense here is *standing firm* at the centre, a sense of *going about* there may be latent, given the unity of motion and stillness in axial rotation. In the *Timaeus*, Earth is stationary *relative* to the stars and planets running around it, but its stillness is the result of it having two equal and opposite motions. Since the world-soul extends throughout the cosmic body from the centre, Earth partakes of its rotation, but it attains stillness by turning counter to it. With Cornford (1935a: 130–131) I take Plato to express this with ἰλλομένην at 40b8, in the sense that Earth 'winds' about the cosmic axis, not that it is 'packed' around it and not subject to rotation at all.[15] Earth, like all the celestial gods, must have a rotational self-motion, but *its* self-motion, which is uniquely contrary, enables it to be still enough to serve as guardian. This may be why Plato gives it pre-eminence among the celestial bodies, as the 'first and eldest' (40c).

What then does this task involve? The most likely sense is that Earth serves as an independent reference point for the world-soul's circles. In relation to Earth the rising and setting of the sun, moon, and planets occur just so much earlier or later each day in comparison with the 'fixed' stars. In this way Earth would give the world-soul an independent check of whether the movements of the Same and the Different are in harmony with each other.

Zeyl (2000: l) points out that the circle of the Different, like that of the Same, is 'centred in Earth's centre', and hence argues that *it* subjects Earth to *its* 'contrary movement'. Perhaps, but I think this reflects an inconsistency in the *Timaeus*, which is probably a product of Plato's desire to venerate both Earth and the cosmic god. This hinges on the attribution of intelligence, and *therefore* rotational self-motion, to both. But whether Earth's counter-rotation reflects its own *nous*, or Earth is simply subject to opposed motions as the shared centre of the world-soul's two circles, the key point is that there is surely a certain friction here, at the heart of the cosmic body, and it does not occur by necessity. *Some* soul's purposive self-motion underlies it. Is it not likely that, when the need to account for earthquakes becomes pressing for Plato, he should think back to this latent crux in the *Timaeus* and develop from it the thesis of a *reversal* in the cosmic rotation instigated by the world-soul?

2 The flawed world-soul of the *Statesman* myth

In the course of its quest to define the statesman, the dialogue of this name introduces another cosmotheological 'great story' (268d) which, while it draws from the *Timaeus* scheme, also diverges markedly from it. The myth has the stated purpose of showing that the definition reached – the statesman as herdsman of a human herd – is at fault, for the statesman does not feed his herd (275d, 276b–d) as, in the myth, god tended directly to all the needs of creatures, including an autochthonous form of humanity, in the age of Cronus. The statesman arises in the alternate age or cycle, that of Zeus,[16] in which both we and the world-creature must fend for ourselves (274d), so his mode of caretaking must reflect this difference; a *political* organisation, superfluous in the age of Cronus, is now crucial.[17] Yet the myth is elaborated at much greater length than is necessary to make this point, which could after all have been made dialectically. Plato clearly has some ulterior motive for telling this new story. He is signalling that in important respects he now departs from the cosmotheology of the *Timaeus*.

That is not to say Plato believes in every aspect of the story.[18] He tells it partly for its entertainment value (268d), partly to revel in his own artistry in synthesising a number of disparate older myths by tethering them in one event which is said to be their common origin (269b–c), and partly because it raises interesting questions, such as whether life in the age of Cronus was better than it is now. However, I think Plato is entirely serious about what I take to be the real take-home message of the myth: that the world-creature is considerably less exemplary than the *Timaeus* made it out to be. In two separate ways natural disorder is linked to defects in the world-soul. It is also linked to shortcomings inherent in the world's bodily nature (*à la* the *Timaeus*), and we will need to look closely at how these factors are related.

2a. The cosmic reversal

In the *Timaeus*, once the demiurge has established the cosmic rotation,[19] he leaves it in the hands of the world-soul. Since the latter has the 'unceasing and

intelligent life' of axial rotation (36e), the transition is seamless; the world continues on its course without so much as a wobble. But in the *Statesman*, when the demiurge[20] cedes control of the cosmic helm, the world *reverses* its rotation (269c–d), with catastrophic results for terrestrial creatures (270b–d) due to earthquakes (273a). In different places the reversal is ascribed to the world's intelligence (φρόνησις: 269d) and to 'fate and innate desire' (εἱμαρμένη τε καὶ σύμφυτος ἐπιθυμία: 272e). *Prima facie* it is difficult to see how these claims are compatible.

The opening claim at 269c4–d2 is as follows:

> During a certain time the god goes with the All himself, guiding it and keeping it turning, but at another time he lets it go, when the cycles have at length reached the measure of the time proper to him. At that time, it turns around of its own accord back in the opposite direction [τὸ δὲ πάλιν αὐτόματον εἰς τἀναντία περιάγεται], it being a living thing and having been endowed with intelligence by him who put it together in the first place [ζῷον ὂν καὶ φρόνησιν εἰληχὸς ἐκ τοῦ συναρμόσαντος αὐτὸ κατ΄ ἀρχάς].

The world's reversal, then, is not something done *to* it, or something that just occurs. It itself 'turns around' (περιάγεται),[21] and does so αὐτόματον. With Fowler and Rowe, I take this to mean 'of its own accord' (cf. LSJ *s.v.* I.1: 'acting of one's own will'), because it is the most coherent sense in this sentence. As Scodel argues (1987: 75), and as the translations of Fowler, Skemp, and Rowe presuppose, the participles ὄν and εἰληχός in the final clause are explanatory, not just circumstantial. The world can reverse its motion 'of its own accord' *because* it is a living thing endowed with intelligence.[22]

Mohr disputes both these points. He takes αὐτόματον to mean that the reversal is a 'spontaneous' event that just happens 'of itself' (cf. LSJ *s.v.* I.4), pointing out that this is its sense at *Sophist* 265c (2005: 153, 157).[23] Since there spontaneous causes are specifically devoid of intelligence, Mohr also rejects that intelligence underlies the reversal. On the first point, αὐτόματον does not qualify the reversal *as* event, as Mohr claims. It qualifies 'it turns around': the *act* and its *agent*. Thus LSJ's sense I.1, which relates to persons, is the right one here. On the second point, if the reversal just happens, the last clause has no clear function, and at worst makes no sense. We would expect '*even though* it is a living thing endowed with intelligence'. Moreover, if this clause were simply descriptive, it would be better placed before 'it turns around…'. An explanation could go in either place, but a contextually irrelevant aside where one naturally expects an explanation would be uncharacteristically shoddy for Plato. Regarding the *Sophist* passage, it would only be telling here if Plato were doing the same thing in both places, yet he is doing something in the *Statesman* myth which he never does anywhere else. Admittedly, later the myth gives us reason to doubt that the world-soul's intelligence underlies the reversal. But that is what Plato has the Eleatic Stranger say *here*.

What leads Mohr to deny this? In the first place, it is what the Stranger says next: the world's reversal 'is inborn in it from necessity' (269d2–3).[24] Mohr

assumes that 'necessity' means just what it means in the *Timaeus*, and holds that the reversal has a purely material cause. At first sight this seems plausible, since the Stranger goes on (269d5–e2) to explain that it is because the All has a body that it is not exempt from change, despite its intelligence. Yet the point of referring to the world's bodily nature is not to ascribe the reversal *to* it. The explanation given (e2–6) is that the world is so designed that its subjectitude to change is *restricted* by the principle of single and uniform motion in the same place (ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ κατὰ ταὐτὰ μίαν φοράν). If it must deviate from its proper motion, the only change it is 'endowed' (εἴληχεν) with is *reverse* circular motion, as this involves 'the least deviation' (σμικροτάτην παράλλαξιν).[25] Now the axial rotation invoked here just is, for Plato, the motion of intelligence, so these claims, as Lane (1998: 102) says, must be connected with the earlier reference to the world's intelligence; it is *because* of this that the change is not more chaotic. Mohr, however, takes this passage to hold that the *reversal* occurs 'despite' this intelligence (2005: 153–154).

To get there Mohr must cajole the text in various ways. He takes the reversal as a metaphor of 'disorderly motion' or 'flux' *within* the cosmos (2005: 151), yet the passage says nothing whatsoever about that, and reverse axial rotation involving 'the least deviation' would be a very poor metaphor of it. Mohr thinks that 'phenomena just on their own are the cause' of the reversal (157), yet the passage speaks not of 'phenomena' in flux, but of 'the All', 'the Heaven', 'the cosmos', and what *it does* as a living thing. Mohr tries to explain away the indications of the world's self-motion as an ensouled thing, such as the reflexive phrases at 269e5 and 270a5. The first of these, αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ στρέφειν ἀεὶ, is not said solely of the demiurge, as Mohr claims (149 note 3). The point is not that the world cannot turn itself, but that, unlike the demiurge, it cannot turn itself *forever*. The second, δι' ἑαυτοῦ, restates the original point that when the demiurge ceases to guide it, the world moves 'by itself'.[26] That the mechanics of this volitional motion can be described (270a6–8) does not make the motion itself mechanistic. They are precisely those of a perfectly spherical and evenly balanced body whose motions conform – albeit in reverse – to the axial rotation of intelligence.

Mohr's approach to 269c–270a is also informed by certain remarks later in the myth:[27] that the world's reversal causes 'a great earthquake within itself' (273a), and that the world-body retains something of the 'violence and injustice' of its pre-cosmic state (273b–c). I agree with Mohr that the pre-cosmos in the *Statesman* (more than in the *Timaeus*) is 'actively chaotic' (2005: 163), but chaotic corporeality is not the *earthquake's* cause. Mohr wrongly holds that the world-soul has no influence until the shaking dies down and the rotation regains uniformity (cf. 273a4–7). As in the earlier passage, the cosmos is treated at 273a1–4 as an agent. It is called ὁ μεταστροφέμενος[28] καὶ ξυμβάλλων, 'the counterturning and colliding one'. *It* 'sets in motion [or 'urges on', ὁρμηθείς] an onrush[29] of beginning and end against each other'. *It* 'produces' (ποιῶν) the earthquake, and 'causes' (ἀπηργάσετο) the 'destruction of all sorts of living creatures'. This tells us, firstly, that Plato now recognises that Earth cannot withstand the opposite motions attributed to it in the *Timaeus*, and secondly, that he is not content with a physical explanation of the catastrophe.

Nevertheless, this passage has to cast doubt on the claim that the reversal is due to the world's intelligence. Indeed, it has just been attributed at 272e to 'fate and innate desire'. This raises several questions. If fate means what must inevitably happen, how is volition in any form involved? And what does innate desire mean in conjunction with fate, if not the desires one is fated to have by having a body? Thirdly, innate desire and intelligence seem contradictory as causes. In the *Phaedrus* (237d–238c) Plato opposes innate desire (ἔμφυτος ἐπιθυμία), *qua irrational* (ἀλόγως), to an acquired rational aspect of the soul that strives for what is good and right.[30]

Before addressing these questions, it is necessary to insist that the reference to innate desire be taken seriously. Mohr (2005: 162–163), following Vlastos (1965a: 395), sees it as just 'a colourful expression for a purely physical impetus'.[31] This amazes me. Desire is a major theme in Plato, and I can't see him referring to it so frivolously. Moreover, in a dialogue as late as the *Statesman* I can't see him referring to it as a *cause* in any form other than a psychical cause. Plato's thought trends increasingly towards soul, and away from body, as the locus of desire.[32] That he calls desire 'innate' does not entail that it stems from the body, *à la* the fairly crude theory of the *Phaedo*. This is hardly the sense when at *Republic* 366c Adeimantus speaks of someone having an inborn, god-sent aversion to wrongdoing. This brings a partial answer to the second question, but I want to start with the third because I think the answer to it will enable us to resolve the others.

If we must choose between intelligence and innate desire, the latter seems the more likely *instigator* of the reversal. For one thing, Plato would never attribute to intelligence the destruction that ensues. It is notable that it is invoked before, and innate desire after, those consequences are introduced. Secondly, that the world turns *counter* to the motion hitherto imposed on it by the demiurge, who just *is* intelligence, suggests wilfulness, even rebellion.[33] This chimes with the attribution to innate desire, one implication of which is that even in the age of Cronus the world will have *wanted* to turn against that motion – a desire it acts on at the first opportunity. But it does not sit well with the alternative. As we know from *Timaeus* 40a–b, the motion of intelligence involves 'forever thinking the same thoughts about the same things', *whoever* is thinking them. The world's intelligence ought to make it follow the *same* path, as in the *Timaeus*, not turn counter to Intelligence as Such, as if it were thinking those thoughts in reverse. Indeed, it is not until the world regains order by 'recalling the teachings of the demiurge' (273b) that its intelligence gains the upper hand.

Yet it may be that we do not have to choose. Are intelligence and innate desire necessarily brought in to explain exactly the same thing? A possible interpretation is that innate desire explains the abrupt turnabout, while *phronêsis* explains why the turnabout is a pure reversal of the cosmic rotation, like a train going back on its tracks, rather than an anarchic motion. Note that at 273a the earthquake is described as a shaking *within* the cosmos, not *of* it.

But what about fate? In both the *Timaeus* (41e–42d) and *Laws* (903c–905c) this has the definite sense of a divinely wrought and overseen law which, somewhat like the law of Buddhism, combines the categorical and hypothetical: *if* you do such

and such, X *must* inevitably result. The moral is that one is to become the captain of one's soul, which is just what the demiurge enjoins of the world-creature in the *Statesman*: 'to be the master of its course' (274a). In the age of Cronus it was subject to a law imposed on it from without. Now it must make that law its own, a 'for itself' rather than an 'in itself', to put it in Hegelese. But, like us, the world (in the *Statesman* at least) is not initially for-itself in the mode of willing the universal law as a demand of its own reason. It must first rebel against the law imposed on it and become for-itself in the incipient form of desire, even if that means irrational desire. This I think is the meaning of 'fate and innate desire'. It is fated that the world's necessary quest for autonomy must come at a terrible initial cost. This is a sense of fate which, far from excluding volition, demands that one learn to will what is best and learn from one's mistakes.[34] Hence the 'necessity' invoked at 269d need not have anything to do with matter and flux. That the reversal is inborn in the world from necessity means that it is a necessary part of this quest to which it is fated from the first.

When it comes to the world's relapse into disorder later in the Zeus cycle, the *Statesman* equivocates in a different way, ascribing this not to two different aspects of the world-soul, but to the world's *bodily* nature on the one hand, and to a *different* psychical flaw on the other, that of forgetfulness.

2b. Forgetfulness and embodiment

I agree with Mohr that in both the *Timaeus* and *Statesman* (though not the *Philebus*, as he also claims) the world-soul's role is that of *maintaining* (rather than creating) order in the world-body against the natural chaotic tendencies of that body. However, Mohr's point in so restricting its activity is to deny that it ever *initiates* motion, despite the fact that both desire and *phronêsis* – characteristics of soul – are adduced to account for a motion which the world evidently gives itself. It is through its self-motion that the world-soul fulfils its order-maintaining task. Its rotation maintains that of the cosmic body; although the latter is first secured by the demiurge, it is kept going by the world-soul *imparting* its rotation to the cosmos.[35] At the same time, the world-soul also has an independent capacity to monitor what is going on, to 'follow' things in their motion (as the *Cratylus* would say). At *Timaeus* 37a–b it is by revolving back on itself and so traversing the body it pervades that it comes into contact with things which it compares and relates to each other. Plato does not explain how 'touching' things and 'saying' how they are the same and different maintains order. But clearly he thinks it does. One hesitates to attribute to him an exposure to Buddhist meditation practices, but he too may have noticed how the sheer observation of a pain, for example, a simple attention to what it is like and whether it stays the same or changes over time in any way, can subtly ameliorate it, whereas willing it away can make it worse. In a similar way Plato's world-creature could maintain homeostatic balance simply by self-monitoring and, when it notices that a part of its body is too hot or cold, turbulent or stagnant, paying attention to its character and vicissitudes.

In the *Statesman* this breaks down, and the question is why. Let us resume Plato's story. After the catastrophe the reverse circuit is stabilised, allowing the world to 'take charge of and control the things within it and itself' (273a7–b1) by 'recalling [ἀπομνημονεύων] as far as possible the teachings [διδαχὴν][36] of its maker and father' (b1–2). But it gradually loses control again, 'accomplishing' the teachings 'more accurately at first, but in the end more carelessly [ἀμβλύτερον]' (b2–3). The sense here is an increasing mental dullness or stolidity, which in connection with ἀπομνημονεύων no doubt includes dulled memory. As Mohr says (2005: 164), the world-soul simply becomes non-rational, not 'actively irrational' or 'erratically exuberant'.

Now the cause (αἴτιον: b4) of this psychical atrophy is said to be the world's corporeal aspect, which still has its pre-cosmic tendency to disorder. The Stranger does not say exactly how this works. Mohr, who sees a close parallel here with the description of newly incarnated soul in the *Timaeus*, thinks it is a matter of 'explosive disturbances' or 'incursions' of the corporeal into the world-soul, which 'completely throw out of kilter' its 'organizing ability' and rational faculties (2005: 163–164). This is dubious. One problem is that Mohr's main example is the earthquakes, yet these are not primordial physical motions which then affect the world-soul, but consequences of the reversal instigated *by* it. Another is that the parallel with *Timaeus* 43a–44b is more tenuous than Mohr appears to recognise. As we saw in Chapter 4 (section 2), the reason why the 'flow' of the infant's body is a 'mighty river' which disrupts the circles of its soul is that this flow is constantly augmented from outside, through the 'inflow' of nourishment and sensation. Here any parallel with the world-creature breaks down, for the latter has nothing outside it to feed its bodily flow in these or other ways.

In any case, the striking thing is that when the Stranger goes over this ground again, he intimates precisely the reverse direction of causation: προϊόντος δὲ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ λήθης ἐγγιγνομένης ἐν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον καὶ δυναστεύει τὸ τῆς παλαιᾶς ἀναρμοστίας πάθος (273c6–d1). In Fowler's translation (modified to reflect Plato's narrative present): 'but as time goes on and [the world] grows forgetful, the ancient condition of disorder prevails more and more'. On this construal the first καί marks temporal coincidence, the second *result* (on which see Smyth 1956: §2874), so that προϊόντος δὲ τοῦ χρόνου relates circumstantially to λήθης ἐγγιγνομένης… but explanatorily to μᾶλλον δυναστεύει…[37] If this is right – and it seems so to me – actual physical disorder is not the cause but the *result* of growing forgetful. The material *tendency* to disorder is always there, and is not due to any psychical cause. But the world-soul has hitherto kept that in check through its intelligence. It now gains the upper hand thanks to the *default* of that intelligence.

It could be argued that there is no contradiction here, but a three-stage process spread out over the two passages. The incursions of corporeal disorder into the soul make it forgetful, and forgetfulness in turn allows disorder to predominate.[38] I am not convinced. In the second passage I think Plato hints at misgivings about his adversion to the Timaean stance in the first. Besides generally assuming that disorder has physical causes, the *Timaeus* held (87a) that diseases of the body penetrate to the soul and cause forgetfulness (λήθη) and stupidity (δυσμαθίας), among other

things. I don't claim that Plato now doubts that physical disturbances can impact on the soul; this survives in the *Philebus*. But he does have reason to doubt that sudden and violent physical disturbances (of the kind said to cause *pain* at *Timaeus* 64d) would make the soul *forgetful*. No doubt *constant* pain can make one mentally dull, but (besides the fact that there is no suggestion of a world in constant pain in the *Statesman) acute* pain is typically a warning, a call to vigilance. In the *Philebus*, where Plato explores this terrain most deeply, he associates λήθη not with those bodily affections that penetrate to the soul, but precisely *those that do not* (33d, 43b–c). My suggestion is that there is an inkling of this in our second passage. If *lêthê* is relevant specifically when physical motions have no impact on the soul, we need to look elsewhere for its *cause* in the world-soul. I propose that the ambiguity of cosmic *flow* is the place we should look.

As I have said, I think that in the *Statesman* the regular and errant aspects of flow are parcelled out, not into *nous* and necessity as in the *Timaeus*, but into contrary aspects of the world-soul. Admittedly this is speculative, as we hear nothing of flow in the *Statesman* myth, but speculation is necessary if we are to fill out its remarkable but underelaborated notion of a defective world-soul. Needless to add, the speculation will only be worth anything if it is able to cast more light on the text than is possible without the postulation of flow. Regarding desire, it is plausible, perhaps even likely, that Plato thinks of this as a *flow* of cosmic soul here, given his treatment of desire in terms of flow in earlier dialogues (*Cratylus, Republic, Phaedrus*). But to develop my case I shall focus on the second flaw ascribed to the world-soul, its forgetfulness.

As we saw in Chapter 4, flow shows itself in the compliance of matter with the motion of *nous* (or *nous*-endowed soul). In the *Statesman* this compliance is regained in the Zeus cycle when the world's reverse rotation assumes an 'orderly' character after the earthquakes have died down. The world-soul's active reappropriation of the divine teachings ensures *its* conformity with the motion of *nous*, which in turn ensures that the motions of the world-*body* are fluent and regular. However, the option is then available to the world-soul simply to go with this bodily flow, to entrust itself to it. This, I suggest, is the problem. The world gets on better while the teachings are fresh in its mind and the object of its attention. As time goes on, it rests on its laurels, losing sight of the law and presuming that by following its own flow, which *reflects* that law, it follows the law itself. But if flow is no longer actively tied to this, it is no longer a purposive intelligence that has the law in view which directs the movement, and flow is free to slide from its regular, purposive aspect to its 'wandering' and 'aimless' one. Plato does not say this, but I submit that he would not disagree with it.

There may be indirect support for my supposition in the *Philebus*. Crucial to Plato's attempt there to determine the nature of the good life is the notion of a neutral state between pleasure and pain. For it to serve this purpose such a state must be possible as an enduring way of life, not just a momentary condition. Yet this seems ruled out by the constant changes going on in the body. The 'Heraclitean' view that 'everything flows constantly back and forth' (ἀεὶ γὰρ ἅπαντα ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω ῥεῖ: 43a) threatens to make the hurdy-gurdy life of pain

(divergence from our natural state) and pleasure (restoration of that state) the only one available. Socrates counters this danger in an interesting way. He concedes this constant flow in the body, but argues that our souls are not always *sensitive* to it (43b). This harks back to the point at 33d that some bodily affections 'are extinguished in the body before they reach the soul, which is left to continue unaffected', 'oblivious' (λανθάνειν) to them. The fact that such occurrences as our own growth nearly always 'escape our notice' (λέληθε) enables Socrates to argue that only 'large changes' away from and back to the natural state bring about pains and pleasures, while 'moderate and small' ones 'have altogether no effect on us in either way' (43c).[39]

Nothing is said here about the cosmos, from whose body and soul we get our own bodily constituents and souls (as argued at 29a–30b), but why would the same not apply to it? At 63e–64a the good 'both in man and in the All' is linked to 'the most turmoil-free mixture', which strongly suggests that the *cosmic* good life also hinges on the neutral state. If so, the world-soul likewise needs to be oblivious to small changes in its body. In that case, λήθη here does not have the negative sense it has in the *Statesman*. It is not a fault that is to account for cosmic disorder, but a limitation necessary for order, inasmuch as this is bound up with the cosmic creature remaining in the neutral state. In connection with this, it is notable that at 66a we find the cosmic creature ('the eternal nature') choosing measure and moderation for itself before anything else, including even intelligence, which makes them possible.[40] If it chose *nous* first, its overriding concern (besides the Forms of course) would presumably be to know every little thing that occurs within itself. This is just how it was grasped at *Timaeus* 37a–b, but it seems Plato has thought better of this. A hunger for knowledge is understood in the *Philebus* as no less unconducive to the neutral state (52a) than oversensitivity to small changes. And forgetting, losing knowledge, is only painful – and, as such, a departure from the neutral state – if we fret over what we've forgotten (52a–b); in itself forgetting does not disturb that state, which in the *Philebus* seems all-important, but rather is a sign that we are in it. Forgetting, in short, seems preferred to thinking too much. The world-creature's choices are geared to the maintenance of its equanimity, and it seems to choose *nous*, in the end, only insofar as it is conducive to what it cares most about.

This attempt to turn λήθη into a positive is an interesting development in late Plato, but it was never going to satisfy him for very long, especially cosmologically. Evidently the spectre of natural disaster still haunts this idyll, lurking like a shark beneath a frolicking seal. A world-soul that does not (or cannot?) penetrate into the concealed processes of its body, and lacks any anxiety about small things growing into bigger ones, can hardly be expected to cope once the proverbial flap of a butterfly's wings has snowballed behind its back into a full-sized natural catastrophe. It could do a lot worse than heed the advice of Lao Zi (*Dao De Ching*, II.64): 'Deal with a thing while it is still nothing.'

For this reason, the thread I have sought to highlight in the *Philebus*, twisting in and out of sight like a telegraph wire, is not just a new development from the

Statesman. It falls back upon it, and as such it may have a bearing on how we should read the remark at 273c. That is to say, this coming full circle may splay out what was originally there. It is generally assumed (with good reason) that the object of λήθη here is the demiurge's teachings. But it may also be small physical changes that pass under the world-soul's radar. On my reading these two forms of λήθη go hand in hand. Insofar as the world, having brought its body's motion into line with that of its soul, simply goes with its own flow and assumes that this still conforms to the rule of *nous*, it no longer has in view the standard against which small but potentially much bigger deviations may be identified. The lack of any manifest disruption of its flow is all the proof it needs that all is in order. It thereby both forgets the teachings and at the same time becomes oblivious to those seemingly innocuous tremblings that presage something more serious.

The *Statesman*, to conclude, offers us a flawed world-soul which is ultimately unable to maintain cosmic order, so that the demiurge, a little like Mr. Wizard in the cartoon *Touché Turtle*, must intervene to prevent it coming to grief (273d–e). Of neither its irrational desire, nor its forgetfulness, was there even the slightest hint in the *Timaeus*, and it is no accident that, as Skemp observes (1987: 106), the cosmos is not called a god here. In the *Philebus* Plato takes a different tack again. Seemingly in an effort to make the world-soul surmount the problem whose cause it is in the *Statesman*, Plato expands its role from the maintenance of cosmic order to its production.[41] As remarkable as these developments are, a still greater surprise awaits us in Plato's final work, where he simply and noiselessly jettisons the world-soul from his cosmotheological scheme. Perhaps there is another explanation, but my suspicion is that Plato came to the view that it could not bear the additional weight placed on it, and decided, overreactively I think, that this made it superfluous.

3 The *Laws* revisited

We come full circle. Broadly speaking, everything we have considered since Chapter 1 has ultimately been geared to help us answer one question: how does Plato arrive at his affirmation of 'everflowing being' at *Laws* 966d–e? My guiding hypothesis has been that a non-fluxist and cosmologically relevant sense of 'flow' must have remained in Plato's thoughts all along, from *Cratylus* 2 to the *Laws*, and played a role in the construction and modifications of Plato's late cosmotheology. My interpretative key has been the double nature of flow that emerged in *Cratylus* 2. I have argued that, whereas in the *Timaeus* the good and bad sides of flow are parsed into intelligent soul and matter, in the *Statesman* they are best understood as good and bad aspects of the world-soul. Even though the *Statesman* repeats the Timaean ascription of disorder to matter, it is apparent that already here Plato is dissatisfied with that. In the *Laws* this development is carried to its own extreme, in an open rejection of the Timaean stance. Soul is 'the cause of *all* things', both 'good and bad, beautiful and ugly, just and unjust' (896d). However, instead of attributing disorder to a bad aspect of the *world*-soul, the *Laws* imputes it to a bad *class* of soul over against the good class responsible for cosmic order.

It will be crucial to address the function of evil soul in the argument of *Laws* X. I will argue, against the view that it is merely hypothetical, that it is a *placeholder* for the problem of natural catastrophe, which Plato does not wish to tackle here. But before that it is necessary to counter a fairly widespread view that Plato still maintains a world-soul in the *Laws*. In fact his abandonment of the world-soul and avoidance of the catastrophe problem are interlinked, for the latter would be unavoidable if good and bad effects had their source in the same soul. The declared task of *Laws* X is to dissuade atheists from their atheism (885c–e), and Plato must have felt that a flawed world-soul would complicate if not undermine this task. Finally, I will argue that the affirmation of 'everflowing being' is also, to an extent, a product of this evasiveness.

Book X is my focus here. Some of the themes addressed earlier in this chapter are taken up in other books of the *Laws*, but as these passages centre on the human rather than cosmological dimension of, for example, the age of Cronus myth, they are best treated in Chapter 6.

3a. The world-soul ditched

The world-soul is never named in the *Laws*. This was also true in the *Statesman* myth, yet there it was unquestionably implied, for the world was described as having certain characteristics (intelligence, desire), and as *acting* in ways, which entail that it has a soul; *it* reverses its rotation 'of its own accord', 'recalls the teachings of the demiurge' and later grows forgetful. In the *Laws* there is not a single indication that the world acts, thinks, wills, and so on. Above all, it is never said to turn *itself* around, to control its own rotation. It is always the object of such verbs (τὸν οὐρανὸν διοικεῖν: 896e1–2; ἐγκρατὲς οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς καὶ πάσης τῆς περιόδου γεγονέναι: 897b7–8; ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τοῦ κόσμου παντὸς καὶ ἄγειν αὐτὸν…: 897c7–9; τὴν οὐρανοῦ περιφορὰν ἐξ ἀνάγκης περιάγειν: 898c2–3; κοσμοῦσιν πάντα οὐρανόν: 899b8; τὴν τῶν πάντων ἐπιμέλειαν κέκτηνται: 900d2–3). Their subject *is* soul, but in the form of 'one or many' (μίαν ἢ πλείους: 896e4, 898c7–8) divine souls which 'inhabit' (ἐνοικοῦσαν: 896d10) the cosmos. Many take μίαν as a token that Plato at least leaves open that the world itself has a soul. In what follows I offer a series of arguments against this view.

My first set of arguments relate to the cosmological passage at 896d–899b. After asserting that soul governs from within everything that is moved, including the cosmos, the Athenian asks his interlocuters 'one soul, or many?' (896e4), and answers for them: 'many'. He then adds: 'no less than two: that which does good, and that which is capable of bringing about the opposite'. I stress: these are not two contrary tendencies *in* a soul, but contrary souls. The distinction at 897b1–3 between intelligent and unintelligent soul, which preoccupied us in Chapter 1, corresponds to this one. The claim that unintelligent soul 'brings about entirely opposite effects' repeats the remark about evil soul. *Pace* Schöpsdau (2011: 417), here it is not 'one and the same soul which does good or otherwise according to whether it accepts Reason or Unreason'.[42] This claim is surprising, since

Schöpsdau recognises that the 'gods' referred to at 897b2 must be the souls that move the heavenly bodies (2011: 420). It is this plurality of divine souls (or as it is put at 897b7, this *kind* of soul) that works with *nous*. How then can a world-soul be meant even here, let alone both here and in the *de* clause which concerns *another* class of soul? The correspondence Schöpsdau finds (421) between the cosmotheological scheme implied here and that of the *Timaeus* may apply with regard to the demiurge and the celestial gods, but the middle-man in that arrangement, the world-soul, drops out of the picture.

Carone is another for whom the world-soul is legible in this passage. She claims, firstly, that the description of soul at 896e9–10 as driving everything in the sky, earth, and sea 'is bound to recall the world-soul for any reader of the *Timaeus*' (2005: 172–173). It does not have that effect on me. In the *Timaeus* the world-soul may drive the bodies in the sky, the earth *itself*, and even (as I argued) sea, air, and fire as cosmic masses, but the things *on* the earth and *in* the sea? Since it has been established (896d) that soul resides in whatever it moves and controls, soul at e9–10 must be a class noun referring to the souls of the *creatures* inhabiting these milieux. True, it has been implied at e1–2 that soul also controls the *cosmos* from within. Yet this need not entail that the cosmos *itself* has a soul 'stretched' throughout it, as at *Timaeus* 34b. In the *Phaedrus* a single world-soul is not meant in 'when it is perfect and fully winged, soul soars high and governs the entire world' (246c), for this is said with reference to soul as a class (ψυχὴ πᾶσα: 246b). There divine souls (the Olympians) inhabit the cosmos in the different sense that they have their own home at a certain place *within* it (247a). *Laws* X never says or implies anything more than that.

Secondly, Carone thinks the world-soul is implied by the list of motions whereby soul drives everything at 897a1–4. Of these, however, only the second, monitoring, and the fifth, forming opinions, have an analogue in the one passage in the *Timaeus* (37a–b) that explicitly speaks to what the world-soul does. In fact these motions mostly recall the demiurge, as Carone recognises (2005: 256 note 28). In an earlier chapter of her book Carone has argued, untenably as I think most would agree, for a reduction of the demiurge to the world-soul, and it seems that this informs her approach to the *Laws* passage.

Thirdly, Carone sees the world-soul in the description of the good kind of soul as νοῦν προσλαβοῦσα at 897b1–2. Although Carone (2005: 173) takes the distinction between intelligent and unintelligent soul here to concern soul simply *qua* soul, she also takes the two kinds to have specific referents. Only *human* soul is presented as causing evil in *Laws* X (178); otherwise evil soul is only a hypothesis (175), since it is found that the good kind is the one that actually governs the universe, and being divine it must, for Plato, cause *only* good. This kind, for Carone, embraces the world-soul as well as the heavenly bodies (173). It is 'one *and* many' (257 note 31), rather than 'one or many' (as Plato actually puts it). To support this Carone (who otherwise adopts Burnet's text) takes up Diès's emendation.[43] Yet even if we accept this, and read that when soul has acquired divine reason it is rightly called god, how does this show that Plato posits an ensouled *universe* and 'says' (177, 259

note 47) that *it* 'is a god'?[44] He could still be saying this of soul as a class, as in the *Phaedrus*, or specifically of the *celestial* gods, as at *Timaeus* 40a–b.

If my construal of 897b1–3 in Chapter 1 is right, there is another argument against soul including the world-soul here: the specific cosmological content entailed by soul 'running in league with *nous*'. The cosmological sense of θέω in Plato always (in the *Cratylus* as well as the *Laws*) seems to be orbital motion, which conforms with, but is not itself, the axial rotation of *nous*. The latter Plato likens to the 'turning' of a wheel (*Timaeus* 37c, *Laws* 898a). That he uses θέω here suggests that he has only the celestial souls in mind.

Let us turn to the rest of the cosmological argument. The task, as set down at 897b–c, is to determine whether it is the intelligent 'kind of soul' (ψυχῆς γένος) or the contrary that controls the cosmos. The criterion for deciding this is simply whether cosmic motion is orderly (897c). At 898c Cleinias agrees that the circular motions of the cosmos and celestial bodies, reflecting as they do the motion of *nous*, are driven by 'one or many' fully virtuous souls, and at 898d it is added that soul drives the celestial bodies individually, not just *en masse*.[45] Evil soul is not heard from again, at least cosmologically. I do not think this means it is merely hypothetical, but even if that were so, we would not be left with one good soul but with the good *kind*. The equivocation continues up to 899b, where the motions of the celestial bodies are attributed to 'a soul or souls', but Plato does not leave much doubt about which way he is leaning.[46] This very sentence continues with an emphatic use of plurals ('these souls are gods': θεοὺς αὐτὰς εἶναι), and ends with an endorsement of Thales' saying that 'everything is full of gods'.

Finally, it is highly significant that at 898e–899a the Athenian is strangely ambivalent about *how* soul moves the sun. Twice previously (821b, 886d) he has insisted that the celestial bodies are ensouled and divine, not just lumps of matter, and at 896d he has linked διοικοῦσαν with ἐνοικοῦσαν to say that soul *dwells in* what it controls. Yet now it is left undecided whether divine souls move the heavenly bodies from within or without.[47] There would be no reason for this hesitation if Plato still posited a world-soul, for he could easily maintain that each heavenly body is moved by the soul whose body it is, just as the cosmos is. The most plausible explanation is that Plato has dumped the world-soul, and so needs the celestial souls to take care of the cosmic rotation as well as the orbits of the stars and planets. Since it is hard to see how they could perform the former function if they are locked up in discrete bodies which they drive individually, he leaves open the possibility that they perform both functions from some unspecified place or places within the cosmos but outside the celestial bodies.

I turn now to the eschatological passage beginning at 903b. Here the Athenian introduces a 'caretaker of the All' (τῷ τοῦ παντὸς ἐπιμελουμένῳ) who 'has set everything in order with a view to the preservation and excellence of the whole' and has delegated control of its parts to certain 'ruling powers' (903b–c). Here we do encounter a divine 'one *and* many', but there are ample hints that the caretaker is the demiurge rebadged.[48] He is certainly not the world-soul. Plato's language does not convey the slightest sense that the caretaker regards the cosmic whole as

his own body, that in taking care of it he is taking care of himself, or that he allocates control of his own parts to other powers. He takes care of the world as a doctor takes care of *another's* body, or a helmsman a ship, or a mason a house he is building (902d–e), and if he operates as a 'craftsman' he fashions a 'cosmos' from materials external to him. The ruling powers are presumably the celestial gods, the third prong of Platonic cosmotheology. There is a clear analogue of this relationship at *Statesman* 272e, where (in the age of Cronus) the demiurge's cosmic rule is shared by a host of regional gods. When the age of Zeus begins and the world must govern its own course, not only the demiurge but these other gods withdraw. They have no active alliance with the world-soul. In the *Laws* Plato simply generalises this relationship, cutting the world-soul out altogether.

However, some see the world-soul in this passage too. The passage certainly holds that we are each a part of the cosmic whole (903b–c), and Schöpsdau (2011: 434) sees in the claim at 903d2–3 that we and the cosmos have a 'common origin' an allusion to the *Timaeus*' claim that our souls were formed from the 'stuff' left over from the creation of the world-soul (41d). This is plausible, but is there other evidence to support it? That Plato speaks analogously of what is best 'for the whole' (τῷ παντί) and for us may seem to imply that it, like us, is ensouled. Yet we can speak of what is best for the planet without subscribing to James Lovelock's view that the planet is itself alive, and similarly, I think, Plato is speaking of what is *objectively* best for the cosmos. Likewise, the claim at 903b that the caretaker saw to the 'preservation and excellence' (σωτηρίαν καὶ ἀρετὴν) of the whole need not entail the preservation of its *life* or the virtue of its *soul*, and I struggle to see how it *could* mean that when the parts of this whole are controlled by a plurality of divine souls.

Carone highlights the fact that at *Laws* 903d the laws of eschatological justice are presented as operating automatically, depending on how we act, and takes this as evidence that god does not intervene in the world from beyond it but just is the world as an integral, self-regulating organism (2005: 180–182). Similarly, she argues (187), sense can be made of Plato's suggestion that human behaviour can have cosmic implications if we see that 'it is precisely because the universe is an organism' that Plato assumes 'that any movement of a part should affect the whole and have consequences that reach well beyond its own initial sphere'. This is food for thought, yet it seems to me that the real acid test as to whether Plato still conceives the world as an organism is not just whether it is an organic whole, but whether that whole itself *acts*. In this respect, as I have said, the *Laws* stands in sharp contrast to the *Statesman* (and of course the *Timaeus* and *Philebus*).

Plato's ditching of the world-soul is significant. For what he thereby ditches (rather than resolves or even tackles) is the *problem* of flow in what I would call its true form, in which its two sides are contained in the same entity. The *Laws* scheme gives us no handle on how these two sides are related: how the errant aspect of cosmic flow may be rectified and made regular, or how the regular aspect may degenerate. They are *hypostasised* as different kinds of soul and so kept pure. Their relation could only be a quasi-Manichaean struggle between good and bad flows, which seems to me unhelpful and unilluminating. It is Plato's prerogative, of course,

to take a different tack from the *Statesman* and try to isolate the good side of flow in an entirely exemplary kind of soul, such that of itself it *cannot* degenerate. Yet doesn't it then behoove Plato to say *how* it wins the day, how it grapples with the bad side and subsumes it in securing cosmic order? If the bad aspect of flow is located in a bad kind of soul, and if it does not undermine the cosmic rule of the good kind, how is it that good soul keeps bad soul in check or makes it 'comply', as necessity was said to comply with *nous* in the *Timaeus*? Plato tells us no more than that what evil there is in the cosmos must be ascribed to this other kind of soul, and there are many who think he is not even committed to the latter beyond the human context. What then is the status of evil soul in *Laws* X?

3b. Evil soul

It is important to stress again that the distinction drawn at 896e is not between good and bad *states* of a soul that might succeed each other, as in the *Statesman*. Rather, as Zeller says (1875: 829 note 6), the Athenian 'speaks of two juxtaposed souls, a good and an evil'. This ought to be straightforward, but some – going back at least as far as Plutarch – have been driven into this error from a need to harmonise the *Laws* with Plato's prior thought. A second point is that, as the world-soul is absent from the *Laws*, this juxtaposed other soul cannot be an evil *world*-soul that somehow co-exists with a good one. Zeller (like many others after him) assumes without argument that evil soul must have this sense, but it would be unthinkable for Plato that two world-souls should somehow be 'stretched' throughout the All. What then is the referent of evil soul, and does it even have one?

There is a long-standing view[49] that evil soul is only a hypothetical category set up for the purpose of argument and dispensed with as soon as it is found that the cosmos is controlled by the good kind of soul. With Zeller and Müller, I think this is wrong. Müller (1968: 87) rightly says that evil soul is introduced positively at 896e (the Athenian says *that there are* at least two souls that govern everything, including the cosmos) and never subsequently revoked.[50] It certainly remains in play at 897b, as we saw in 3a. Zeller (1875: 830, note 1 to 829) points out that it does not follow from the subsequent argument that Plato deems evil soul unreal. It may not *rule* the universe, but it follows necessarily from Plato's premises – that the universe is full of evil (906a), that soul causes evil as well as good (896d), and that it is solely rational soul that directs the orderly cosmic motions (898c) – that what evil there is must derive 'from another soul' (or kind of soul) which also, in some way, steps high, wide, and plentiful on the cosmic stage.

Carone (2005: 178) is right to object that only human soul is directly presented as causing evil in *Laws* X, yet even as I find thought-provoking her claim that for Plato human evil can have consequences cosmologically (187), I very much doubt that this is the full story. Human soul is not the only *possible* alternative to an evil world-soul. An evil kind of *celestial* soul is not unthinkable, if only we detach from this any sense of the diabolical and take evil in the sense in which Plato intends it here: the production of disorder due to ignorance or unintelligence. Recall that in

the *Timaeus* preamble it was said that some natural catastrophes occur due to a 'deviation in the course of the heavenly bodies around the earth' (22d). I think Plato must have this sort of thing in mind, particularly at 896e–897b when he distinguishes intelligent and unintelligent ways in which soul 'drives everything in the *sky*, on earth and in the sea'. Whatever the cosmic reach of human evil, it surely does not extend to influencing the courses of the heavenly bodies.

What this means is that there will be at least some celestial beings, at least some of the time, which really are 'wanderers', contrary to the Athenian's assertion at 822a that *each* of them eternally follows one fixed circular path. With this we can glean *why* Plato does not develop the notion of evil soul in *Laws* X. As Vlastos puts it (1965a: 392): '*Laws* X is simply and purely an exercise in apologetics. It must establish the existence of gods. It does not raise any issue which will not assist in the proof of this conclusion.' The category of evil soul is not really intended to *resolve* the problem of natural disorder, as the defects of the world-soul in the *Statesman* had been, but merely to serve as a placeholder for it, were it to be addressed. Plato does not *want* to address it here, just to put it in a box, to sequester it.

Having said that, it is important to add that a kind of theodicy is offered at 900c–905c. As Mohr points out (2005: 201), because the supreme god of the *Laws* (unlike that of the *Timaeus*) is *omnipotent* as well as omniscient and good, Plato is obliged to justify the existence of evil. His procedure, in Mohr's words, is to view the caretaker's 'inaction with regard to small evils'[51] as 'a choice for the best' (199). Mohr argues, firstly, that at 903b–d the caretaker allows evil only in the parts. If the goodness of the whole is the criterion for determining whether a given part is integral to it, a thing which in itself is evil may still be good as part of the whole. Secondly, Mohr (2005) takes the passage to imply that the caretaker deems a whole made up of good and bad parts to be *better* than one whose parts are all good. I struggle to see this at 903, but Mohr is right to see it at 905b–c. Here the Athenian berates atheists for regarding the prosperity of the wicked as a reflection of divine neglect, and for not seeing 'how their contribution serves the whole' (αὐτῶν τὴν συντέλειαν ὅπῃ ποτὲ τῷ παντὶ συμβάλλεται). Saunders takes 'their' (αὐτῶν) to relate only to θεῶν, but it can and surely does, as Mohr claims, relate first of all to αὐτῶν ταῖς πάξεσιν, the actions of the wicked (compare England 1921: vol. 2, 498). The point, as he says, is that the gods don't just 'graft' evil actions or people into the whole *once* they are made good. Those evils, just as they are, are made to contribute to the whole. Somehow, if Mohr's second point is right, they make the world better than it would otherwise be.

I don't propose here to debate the merits of this conception, although I will have a little more to say about this passage in Chapter 6. I simply ask how all this looks if we allow evil soul to include wayward celestial souls. What is the contribution to the whole of occasional events of natural upheaval due (*ex hypothesi*) to such souls? The answer is certainly not that such events purge the whole *of* evil elements; Plato recognises their indiscriminateness. The only answer I can see is that such events may serve as timely reminders of the need for order and thus serve to convert the wayward souls to work with *nous*. I concede that this is not much of

an answer. Among other things, since it simply duplicates the situation in the *Statesman* myth, it does not justify Plato's abandonment of the world-soul.

To conclude this analysis of the late cosmological writings. Ever since *Cratylus* 2 there will have been a part of Plato that yearned to link flow unabashedly with the motion of *nous*. It is not until the last book of his last work that Plato gets his wish, when he says, recapitulating the argument of Book X, that soul, in taking over becoming, brings about everflowing being, namely, the orderly, circular motions of the cosmos. But this comes at a cost. To get here Plato simply redefines cosmic flow so that its good aspect is its *only* one. We cannot say that it subsumes the bad aspect, or even that it has any direct relationship to it, for this has been left hanging in the category of evil soul which is set apart from the kind of soul that actually brings about everflowing being. Whether the *Laws* solves or dissolves the problem of evil, where the problem of *flow* is concerned the latter, I think, must be our conclusion. For since *Cratylus* 2 this problem has consisted essentially in the compresence (or alternation) of flow's two aspects. Whereas the *Timaeus* and *Statesman* can be seen as different ways of tackling this problem and of allocating flow's two sides, the *Laws* avoids it. The abandonment of the world-soul reflects this avoidance, and so, *a fortiori*, does the postulate of evil soul. Finally, I suggest that this circumstance suffices to explain why we never see cosmic order *explicitly* addressed in terms of cosmic flow in dialogues like the *Timaeus, Statesman*, and *Philebus*. Plato simply held back from affirming this as long as the notion of flow, in his own mind, remained unshorn as it were of its more wild and woolly side.

Notes

1 In one place, 22d, floods are attributed to the gods. How much weight should we give this? I think very little, since none of Critias' other remarks here or in the *Critias* adopt this approach. It may also be significant that this statement is ascribed to an old Egyptian priest (the original source of Critias' tale), but even he later speaks only of a periodic 'torrent from heaven' (ῥεῦμα οὐράνιον: 23a), which may just denote rain from the sky. In any case, gods are never said to have caused the disaster that destroyed Atlantis. Above all, no crass attempt is made to moralise suffering, as if a flood or fire were somehow able to target the unjust, or as if those killed must have been the unjust. It is simply a matter of geography. Fire events primarily afflict 'those who live in the mountains or in high and dry places', whereas in the case of floods 'the herdsmen or shepherds in the mountains escape, but those living in the cities … are swept into the sea by the rivers' (22d–e).

2 Assuming with Cornford (1935a: 7) that he abandoned it by choice. Plutarch (*Solon* 32.2) supposes he died before completing it.

3 We may even wonder if Plato got the idea of Atlantis from the *Odyssey*, which begins with Odysseus stuck on 'a lonely island far away in the middle of the seas' (1.50), held there by Calypso, daughter of Atlas – the name given to the first son of Poseidon and first king of Atlantis in the *Critias* (114a), and the source of the city's name.

4 Plato would never say directly that any god is less than perfect. Nevertheless, it is hardly an accident that Poseidon is chosen as the Atlantans' patron, since their defect, unbridled greed, especially for territory, is very much the defect of Poseidon in tradition. Plato presumably has in mind the stories relating to his greed for terrestrial territories on top of his dominion over the seas, even when it brings him into conflict with his co-conspirators at the time, Hera and Athena. Here too Poseidon and Athena fight precisely over Athens, and Poseidon loses. See Smith (1867: vol. 2, 506).

5 Following Bury's rendering of γένοιντο ἐμμελέστεροι.
6 This is a view Plato fully endorses, more consistently than Homer, it must be said. See especially the criticism of Homer at *Republic* 379d–e.
7 At *Timaeus* 40d–41a the traditional gods are thrown into the class of minor gods with the celestial bodies by the bye and never mentioned again. The tone of the passage is transparently sarcastic; it is a reluctant concession to orthodoxy.
8 Another question is the identity of Critias. The view that he is Plato's great-uncle, of the Thirty Tyrants fame, embroils us in vertiginous complexity (why use a latter-day Athenian imperialist to decry an imperialistic ancient Atlantis in praising a non-imperialistic ancient Athens whose latter-day analogue would perhaps be Sparta?), and unfruitful notions that the story put in Critias' mouth must be intended to say something *about* him, not through him. He clearly is a mouthpiece, at least of Platonic *political* philosophy, both on account of the intended moral of his story and because his depiction of ancient Athens conforms to the ideal state outlined in the *Republic* (cf. *Timaeus* 25e). Lambert and Planeaux (1998: section III) have shown conclusively (as was argued, for example, by Burnet 1964 (1914): 275, cf. 286, Taylor 1928: 23, and Cornford 1935a: 1) that the Critias who relates the story that Solon told to *his* great-grandfather roughly a century and a half before must be the grandfather of Plato's great-uncle.
9 Here 'above' and 'below' have no pertinence, as Plato stresses at *Timaeus* 62d.
10 According to Plutarch, *Platonic Questions* 8, 1006C.
11 Cornford admits this in the case of the *Laws* (the only dialogue he places after *Timaeus-Critias*) and the *Epinomis*.
12 That Plato did not simply discover the theme between the *Timaeus* and *Critias* seems clear, for we see intimations of it in the 'pillar-like' shaft of light going through Heaven and Earth at *Republic* 616b, the use of Hestia (Earth *and* hearth) at *Phaedrus* 247a, and the remarks about Earth at *Timaeus* 40b–c (more on which later).
13 At *Statesman* 272e Plato again refers to a place of outlook (περιωπή) to which the demiurge retires after he lets go of the cosmic tiller. Presumably this 'place' is hypercelestial, not central to the cosmos, but it is not a place from which the world's motion is directed.
14 The view of both Proclus and Plutarch, as noted by Cornford (1935a: 121).
15 Contemporary commentators seem to identify 'winds' with ἰλλομένην and 'packed' with an alternative reading, εἰλλομένην. I am unsure why, since they are different forms of the same word. I also question the claim (Zeyl 2000: l, citing Dicks) that εἰλλομένην is better attested. It is ἰλλομένην that Aristotle quotes in citing the passage at *De Caelo* 293b31 and 296a26 (although the J manuscript has εἰλομένην and εἰλλομένην respectively). Aristotle interpolates καὶ κινεῖσθαι, which shows that he understands the term to entail motion (cf. Stocks 1922 *ad loc*).
16 Plato exercises caution here; the present age 'is said to be the age of Zeus' (τόνδε δ´ ὃν λόγος ἐπὶ Διὸς εἶναι: 272b). If it *is* such, the clear implication is that Zeus just is the world (cf. *Philebus* 30d), as the age of Zeus is the one in which the world is left to its own devices. Since in the *Statesman* the cosmos is not divinised, there is no contradiction here with the claim at 270a1–2 that the world is not turned by two antithetically minded gods in the two cycles, *pace* Scodel (1987: 80). And there are, of course, only two cycles. For a comprehensive critique of the three-phase interpretation championed by Brisson, Rowe, and Carone, see Verlinsky 2008 and 2009.
17 Cf. Carone 2005: 154. I agree with Carone that, despite the definitional wedge driven between the statesman and god, the moral of the myth is that god still serves as an exemplar for human rulers, for example, where harmonising opposed elements and ensuring that intelligence triumphs over ignorance are concerned (154–155). However, I strongly disagree with her view of the myth's broader implications for human conduct. The cosmic creature here cannot be the normative standard it is in the *Timaeus* and *Philebus*. It will be more convenient for me to address this in Chapter 6.
18 That Plato could not have seriously believed in alternating cosmic reversals is argued, for example, by Skemp 1987: 85, 89; Mohr 2005: 151, and Carone 2005: 148.

19 At 34a the demiurge is described as 'driving around' (περιαγαγὼν) the cosmos, but the sense cannot be that he initiates its motion (as I wrongly claimed at Mason 2014: 157 note 20), as Mohr (2005: 114) points out. It is rather that he removes all the rectilineal motions in which circular motion was mixed up in the pre-cosmos. I would not put it quite like Mohr ('Rotation was there all along, just buried in kinetic excess that needed to be removed'), since I claim that the roughly circular motion of the pre-cosmos is a net *effect* of the rectilinear ones.
20 The identification of 'the god' with 'the demiurge' is first made at 270a. This, obviously, is also how 'Cronus' is meant.
21 This is middle-passive, but here it cannot have a passive sense, as that would imply a second independent agent, contrary to 270a1–2. A direct reflexive middle ('turns itself around') is unlikely, given the abundance of reflexive active verbs a little later in the text. Hence it is typically taken as middle-voiced with an active meaning.
22 Compare *Timaeus* 77b–c, where it is the possession of intelligence (or the capacity to relate knowingly to one's bodily nature through the revolutions of the soul) that distinguishes *self-moving* ζῷα from plants.
23 Cf. *Statesman* 271e. By 'the spontaneous life' of the autochthonous men in the age of Cronus, Plato means that their every need is automatically catered for by the gods; they don't have to toil or use their wits for anything.
24 ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἔμφυτον γέγονεν, adopting Lane's translation (1998: 102).
25 We should doubtless distinguish here between the motions occurring *within* the world-body from the one and only possible change in motion *of* that body.
26 For this reason the reading δι' ἑαυτοῦ (from Eusebius, adopted by Burnet) seems preferable to δι' ἑαυτόν in manuscripts B and T.
27 And by Mohr's mechanistic reading of *Timaeus* 58a–c, which I argued against in Chapter 4.
28 Again, a middle-passive participle with an active sense (since it is co-ordinated with an active participle), not passive (*pace* Fowler).
29 ὁρμήν, which is cognate with ὁρμηθείς. The use of both suggests (on pain of pleonasm) that Plato wishes to include a range of senses, and this may well include relating a psychical cause (namely eager, even violent *desire*) to a physical effect.
30 The *Statesman* myth is the one place in late Plato that supports Plutarch's view that he ascribes disorder to an irrational world-soul. Plutarch's error lies in equating this with the 'necessity' of the *Timaeus* (he deems matter 'inert' and 'void of all causality'), in a misguided attempt to harmonise the two dialogues. See *On the Generation of Soul*, esp. 1015A–E. A second slippage in Plutarch is that from rational and irrational *aspects* of *the* world-soul to rational and irrational world-souls, which again tries to harmonise the very different schemes of the *Statesman* and *Laws* X. Plutarch himself seems to be a dualist in *On Isis and Osiris* but not in *On the Generation of Soul*. See Dillon 2002: 223–238.
31 It is only on this basis that Mohr can claim that 'no psychic cause is found in 272e–273e for the reverse circuit of the universe' (2005: 164).
32 At *Phaedo* 66c it *is* the body, but in the *Republic* and *Phaedrus*, and still in the *Timaeus* (69d–70e), desire is one of the three main parts of the soul, although Plato still allows it physiological causes, as at *Timaeus* 86c–e. Soul finally wins exclusive rights to the title in the *Philebus* (35b–d).
33 Cf. Skemp 1987: 106. Lane asserts that there is nothing in the argument at 269d–270a to suggest that the reversal is against the divine will (1998: 104), but it is hard to see how this is not implied. Of course it may still be that the rebellion is regarded by the demiurge as a necessary moment within a broader process.
34 Scodel (1987: 83) takes fate as the time allotted to each of the two cycles, and innate desire as the world's desire 'to actualize the potential for life it has been given by its maker'. The first point is doubtless part of what is meant, and the second I don't fundamentally disagree with, although it seems somewhat idealised insofar as it too quickly harmonises the world-soul's desire with its intelligence.
35 *Pace* Mohr (2005: 184). *Timaeus* 37b refers to the world-creature as 'self-moved', i.e., as Cornford (1935a 95 note 2) extrapolates, moved 'by its own self-moving soul'. At 40a

the world-soul's circle of the same is called τοῦ κρατίστου, 'the *ruling* (motion)'. As the fixed stars are set in this circle, their orbital motion is directly driven by it, and since they are stationed at the cosmic circumference this driving easily extends to the cosmic rotation. Recall that this circle also 'rules' the circles of the different. They are all subject to it even as they turn obliquely to it; hence the net motions of the sun, moon, and planets are really net motions of whichever circle of the different they have been set in. In short, their orbits too are driven by the world-soul. Finally, as I argued in Chapter 4, section 1c, the world-soul also drives the 'flow' of the intracosmic masses of water, air, and fire around the earth.

36 That the demiurge's erstwhile guidance of the world involved instruction, not just steering it around like a domesticated animal, makes sense in that the world has intelligence, but the strongly paternalistic tenor of life in the age of Cronus suggests that, as with the earthborn race, the world-creature essentially had everything done for it and never had to make any decisions. One could at any rate imagine it 'switching off' from the lesson and dreaming of Friday night, as it were. Perhaps it is only in the need to recollect that it realises the instruction it was given. The content of the teachings must of course be Forms, Forms, and Forms, and all the logical entailments between them that one would need to know to maintain cosmic order: numerical ratios and their connection with musical harmony and beauty; the entailments between fire and heat, snow and cold, and those relating to elemental transformation, and so on. But besides everything relating to the *how* of cosmic order, it must be a matter of *why* order, harmony, etc. are *good*. Recalling the teachings means that the world-soul curbs its innate desire and rebelliousness and acquires an all-pervasive commitment to the good.

37 Rowe's translation, 'but as time moves on and [καὶ] forgetfulness increases in it, the condition of its original disharmony also [καὶ] takes greater control of it…', and Skemp's similar one, are non-committal on the relationship between the last two clauses. In his commentary Scodel (1987: 83) reproduces the ambiguity without remarking on it.

38 I take this to be Mohr's final position at 2005: 164.

39 Note further that at *Timaeus* 64d–e, when Plato contrasts violent affections with easy ones which do not involve pain or pleasure, the example he gives of the latter is visual perception, harking back to its treatment at 45b–46c. Recall that this is one of the passages in which the *Timaeus* makes explicit use of 'flow'. My point is that, where it is a question of the relationship between bodily and psychical motion, flow is thereabouts, both in the *Timaeus* and at *Philebus* 43a. This general point holds even if the remark about vision does not directly apply to the world-creature, which has no sense organs.

40 Following Bury (1897: 173–176) and Fowler's reading of the disputed text at 66a (τὴν ἀΐδιον ᾐρῆσθαι φύσιν), and Fowler's rendering of ᾐρῆσθαι. For justification see Mason (2014: 164–166).

41 See again Mason (2014: 149–151). Here I simply point to the most obvious indication at 30c, where the σοφία καὶ νοῦς responsible for the ordering of 'years, seasons and months' is expressly ἐν τῷ παντὶ, 'in the All', and so cannot still be the All-transcending demiurge.

42 In fairness, Schöpsdau (2011) asserts this against the certainly erroneous reading of two antithetical *cosmic* souls.

43 The plural θεοῖς in Burnet's text directly rules out Carone's 'one *and* many'.

44 Carone (2005: 259 note 45) also claims that Plato 'says' this at 821a, where she sees a direct identification of 'the greatest god' with 'the whole universe', mediated by an epexegetic καί. Carone claims support for this at *Timaeus* 92c, but when the world is described there as a perceptible god that is 'most great and noble, most fine and perfect in its generation', the point is not that it is the greatest of gods (can it be greater than the one who created it?), but that it is as great (etc.) as a *perceptible* god could ever be. With regard to the *Laws*, its greatest god is surely the one it calls the caretaker of the cosmos, who is certainly not identical to the world he brings to order.

45 Carone also takes this to suppor her 'one *and* many', arguing that the world-soul 'conducts the whole astronomical system' and seeming to say that the heavenly bodies

are individually guided by their own souls (2005: 257 note 31). We may wish that Plato held to this view in the *Laws*, but the fact is that he goes out of his way to avoid saying it. He equivocates between one or many souls *in both cases*, the systemic motion and the individual ones. A more cautious reading, unconvincingly countered by Carone, is that Plato simply leaves the question open since it is not of crucial importance for his present purposes (cf. Mayhew 2010: 210). A third approach, which I favour, is that this equivocation is itself a sign that Plato, for better or worse, is no longer committed to the world-soul.

46 Notwithstanding the Athenian's reference at 898c4 to 'the best soul'.

47 And if from without, whether this is by soul 'acquiring its own body of fire or air (as some argue)' which then drives the heavenly bodies by external contact, or, if soul is entirely incorporeal, by some other prodigious power. Plato certainly rejects the first of these (cf. Schöpsdau, 2011: 424).

48 Besides the remark at 903b, which implies that the caretaker is responsible for the *formation* of the cosmos (for just which reason Plato refers elsewhere to his supreme god as a craftsman), the *Laws* expressly compares him to a craftsman, albeit among a variety of other human analogues (doctor, helmsman, general, householder, statesman), at 902d–e and 903c. More still are added tongue-in-cheek at 905e–906b, and it is notable that when such comparisons are roundly rejected at 906e 'craftsman' is not mentioned. That said, the caretaker is a souped-up version of the demiurge. As Mohr says (2005: 198), he is effectively presented as omnipotent at 902e–903a, whereas in the *Timaeus* he only orders the world 'in the best possible way' given the constraints of his material.

49 Zeller (1875: 829 note 1) credits Böckh with the introduction of this view, and states that he is followed by Ritter, Brandis, Stallbaum, Suckow, and Steinhart. Recent or contemporary adherents of this view include Vlastos (1965a: 392 note 1), Carone (2005) and Schöpsdau (2011: 417).

50 Note, however, that Müller also follows Zeller in regarding it as an evil *world*-soul.

51 *Pace* Mohr, this point is not directly stated at 901b8 or c1, but it is the clear consequence of the whole argument at 901a–902a.

6

PLATO AND THE QUESTION OF NATURAL JUSTICE

In this last chapter we return to the human sphere and the notion of 'going with the flow', which was central to the ethical etymologies in the *Cratylus*. I want to develop the point that this reflects the ambiguity of flow itself. If going with the flow seems to speak to our very best moments, moments which have something of the divine about them as Diotima would say, it may equally speak to our worst mistakes. In the context of love, we have seen Socrates avow the former in his second speech in the *Phaedrus*, and something of the latter is implied in his first speech, where he refers to love as powerfully carried away (from a rational striving for what is right) towards pleasure in beauty (238c). The downside of Plato's decision to address the bad and good loves in separate speeches is that it is left unclear how they, and the two sides of 'flow' they reflect, are related.[1] Structurally this is comparable to the way the two sides are hypostasised at the cosmic level in *Laws* X. In any case, love ceases to be a major theme in Plato's late period, and I don't have anything further to say about it here. My focus is the more crucial issue of justice, specifically the question of whether it is being just or being unjust that is *natural*, in accord with the natural flow of life.

In the *Gorgias* these alternatives are endorsed by Socrates and Callicles, respectively. For Callicles (482e–484c) 'might is right' is a natural law that is salient not only in the animal kingdom but in 'the complex communities and races of men' (483d), but in the latter context it is opposed by conventional laws of fairness and equality. Against this, Socrates endorses the view that the world is an 'order' (κόσμος) in which 'heaven and earth, gods and men are held together by communion, friendship, orderedness, self-restraint and *justice*', in accordance with the principle of 'geometric equality'[2] (508a). Neither view is simply absurd or unsupportable. The issue really should be how it is that nature can show *both* faces. Yet while Socrates takes pains to dismantle Callicles' views in other respects, he never takes aim at his underlying conception of nature, or does anything more than assert his own belief

in natural justice *qua* harmony against it. These two beliefs just confront each other like an either/or.

We meet a similar situation in *Laws* III. At 690b–c the Athenian concedes that the rule of the strong over the weak 'is prevalent throughout the animal kingdom, and in accordance with nature [κατὰ φύσιν] as Pindar of Thebes once said'.[3] However, he adds that a more important claim to authority than that of the strong to rule the weak is that of the wise (τὸν φρονοῦντα) to rule the ignorant. Equating this with 'the natural rule of law with the consent of the ruled rather than with force' (τὴν τοῦ νόμου ἑκόντων ἀρχὴν ἀλλ' οὐ βίαιον πεφυκυῖαν), he asserts that it is not contrary to nature (παρὰ φύσιν) but is itself κατὰ φύσιν. As in the *Gorgias*, it is not asked how *both* can be in conformity with nature, and what this might say about nature.

In *Republic* II, by contrast, Plato opens himself up to the questionability of justice about as deeply as any philosopher has. Yet his answer, in Books IV and VIII–IX, does not in my view fully respond to his question. In his way Socrates does meet the twofold challenge put to him by Glaucon and Adeimantus: to determine what being just and being unjust are, and to demonstrate the *intrinsic* superiority of the former purely in terms of its effect on the soul, without considering social 'rewards and consequences' (358b–d; cf. 367b–e).[4] However, implicit in their challenge is a profound unease over whether being just is *natural* or, as common opinion has it, merely a convention established to *contain* a human nature which is predisposed to injustice. They are willing to be persuaded of the former, but they want Socrates to recognise (as he did not in his argument with Thrasymachus in Book I) the formidable basis for the contrary view that *nature* inclines us to injustice.[5] This Socrates simply does not do. His argument for the naturality of being just, since it hinges on grasping the soul by analogy with the constitution of the *ideal* state, abstracts from the problem that, in the world as it is, in being *unjust* we might be in harmony with nature in some way, whatever justice might also trickle down here from the Form of Justice, Plato's natural ground of justice[6] in both state and individual here. Not just our own nature but *nature itself* seems Janus-faced in this respect, and Socrates' arguments do not go to that ambiguity.

At least until Book X. Here Socrates supplements his earlier arguments by claiming that even in terms of rewards and consequences justice ultimately wins the contest. These new arguments, presumably just because Plato deems them surplus to requirements,[7] are brief, often question-begging, and quite dogmatic. Nevertheless, I disagree with White (1979: 262) that they are simply meant for a less philosophically savvy audience than Books II–IX. In fact a closer look at a much-neglected passage at 613b–c reveals that here at least Plato is prepared to acknowledge the Janus-facedness of nature.

Before we look at this passage, it will be useful to clarify what we are talking about. At issue is not δίκη, 'justice', be it as a goddess, force, or concept, nor τὸ δίκαιον, Plato's term for the *Form* of Justice. It is δικαιοσύνη, 'justness' as a character of the soul, 'the active disposition to behave justly towards one's fellows' (Vlastos 1973: 112–113). Vlastos stresses that δικαιοσύνη 'is a property not of actions as such, but

of agents', while adding that a just disposition naturally 'expresses itself' in just acts (112 note 3).[8] I suggest that we take this further, and understand δικαιοσύνη as a mutually reinforcing *interplay* of disposition and action. A just disposition predisposes one to just action, which in turn reinforces that disposition. This I think is integral to the claim that being just (or unjust) has *effects* on the soul in and of itself.[9] It is self-reproductive, even self-augmenting, and as such less a 'state' of the soul than a drive, an *ethos*. It is also more than a 'property' of agents, which may be present in them behind their backs. It is bound up with their self-interpretations, their decisions about the kind of person they want to be. Insofar as they actualise it, it is more a 'possession', something they have in a reflexive and self-responsible way.

This reciprocal interplay seems indispensible when it comes to distinguishing genuinely from seemingly just individuals. If I am feigning justness by making sure I am seen to do my share of good deeds, these deeds won't have the intrinsic psychical effect that they should. I will be fidgety where my collaborators in justice are at ease with themselves. I may be prone to the thought that my 'self-sacrifice' entitles me to do something 'for myself' on the side, whereas for them precisely what they are doing contains that 'for myself', insofar as their actions foster their disposition and sense of who they are.

Now this interplay also seems a useful way of grasping why being just can be characterised in terms of *flow*, that is, ongoing and easily sustained motion. As we have seen, that δικαιοσύνη is a *going with* the natural flow is indicated in the *Cratylus*. At 412c the term is said to denote the 'understanding' (σύνεσις) of 'justice' (τὸ δίκαιον), where justice is an all-pervasive cosmic *motion* (leaving aside Socrates' reservations here) and understanding is 'going with' that motion (cf. 412a–b). In the *Republic* (cf. Chapter 3, section 1), the true philosopher's desire for learning (485d), and his desire to do good (495a–b) are referred to as flowing streams, with the clear sense that they are constant, not intermittent or subject to fluctuation. In the latter passage Socrates argues that those of a philosophical nature can either do the greatest harm or the greatest good, depending on which way their desires happen to 'flow'. In the former case (where Plato undoubtedly has Alcibiades foremost in mind), desire takes the form of outlandish and impracticable ambitions or hopes (ἀμηχάνου ἐλπίδος: 494c), abetted by an overblown sense of self-importance and pride (494d). Socrates speaks of this disposition being exacerbated by social influences (particularly flattery), but it can be argued that it would also tend to exacerbate itself, if failed projects lead one to devise even grander ones to maintain one's *amour propre*.

But in the case of the true philosopher, the situation turns out to be different from what the remarks cited above lead us to expect. The feedback loop between disposition and action (and with it, it seems, the sense that being just has an easy, self-sustaining flow) is broken here. What it breaks on is the radical corruptness of actual societies. It requires exceptional circumstances for philosophical natures to survive unmangled by their social milieu (496a–c). Those that do, 'having tasted the happiness of philosophy and seen the frenzy of the masses', understand readily that it is better not to engage in a futile quest to do good in societies that are too far gone to help, but to 'live quietly and keep to themselves' so that they at least

'may remain untainted by wickedness and wrong until such time as they can take their leave of this world with cheerful composure and good hope' (496c–e). It seems as if the only way a just disposition can sustain itself in this world is by *refraining* from action, not by expressing itself in it.[10]

The distinction between corrupted and genuine philosophical natures is not identical to that between unjust and just individuals,[11] but there is certainly an overlap, and it puts us on guard against assuming that a just life will naturally be more flowing or fluent than a life of injustice. Outside of the ideal state, to be just might seem to be to go against the grain, or (in the *Cratylus*' terms) to be impeded rather than to flow. This needs to be borne in mind when we read 613b–c.

1 An energetics of being just and unjust: *Republic* 613b–c

Having completed the argument that, even if the just man has an unfounded reputation for injustice (and *vice versa*) and so gains no rewards among his fellows, being just is still the best thing for the soul itself (612b), Socrates proposes (612d) that δικαιοσύνη be given back its good reputation among gods and men, and the rewards that derive from *seeming* just (on top of the inner effects of *being* just). Regarding divine rewards, his argument is as follows. Since 'the true natures of the just and the unjust do not escape the gods' notice', and they therefore love the former and hate the latter, for the just man 'all that comes from the gods turns out for the best, unless some evil necessarily befalls him as a result of sins in a former life' (612e–613a). This urges the conclusion that, 'if the just man falls into poverty or illness or *any other apparent evil*, it works out for his ultimate good in life or after death' (613a). It is hard to admire this argument. It relies on a slippage between two forms of the distinction between 'real' and 'apparent': *inner* effects on the soul versus *public* consequences; and ultimate, lasting goods or evils versus transient, short-term ones. I don't deny that in some contexts this equation may be valid, but the effect *here* is to allow any suffering at all to be passed off as merely apparent, even if it lasts a lifetime, from the point of view of the afterlife said to await the just. This is seriously evasive. Even granted that suffering may ultimately be good for us in this life, the appeal to a consolatory good after death in the absence of that does not address the prosperity of the wicked *here and now*, and with that the question of whether justice sets the tone in this sphere or is only a momentary suspension of the prevailing tendency.

Part of the interest of Socrates' next argument, which pertains to human rather than divine rewards, is that it does take a step in this direction, offering what amounts to a hare and tortoise approach to the respective worldly fates of the just and the unjust. What Socrates says is this:

> Don't clever but wicked men perform [δρῶσιν] like those racers [δρομῆς] who run [θέωσιν] well off the starting line but not on the way back?[12] They leap away quickly to begin with, but in the end they become ridiculous and scurry off uncrowned with their ears on their shoulders, while the true racers, arriving at the finishing post, receive the prizes and carry off the crown.

> Doesn't it also turn out this way with the just, for the most part [τὸ πολὺ] – that *in the end* [πρὸς τέλος], in each of their actions and associations, and in life itself, they carry away with them both a good reputation and the rewards bestowed on them by their fellow men?
>
> (613b10–c6)

A great deal is packed into this extended metaphor. The main, or at least most obvious, point is that the prosperity of the unjust is short-term. In the end they get their comeuppance, and the just, left for dead to begin with, ultimately prevail. Just why the race should unfold in this way is our question.

A second feature is that the contest is a public spectacle. The competitors are not simply agents but *performers* in the theatre of public opinion. This may not be intrinsic to δρῶσιν (δράω), which generally means 'perform' only in the sense of 'do' or 'accomplish' (a task or action),[13] although a link with the theatrical sense is suggested by the ancients' derivation of δρᾶμα from δράω.[14] But the sense of public performance permeates the whole description. Presumably the just and unjust each have more or less vocal supporters egging them on, but it is not greater support that explains *why*, for example, the unjust man performs better early on. On the contrary, if he has more support it is because he is getting on well. As Adeimantus has said at 364a–b, both privately and in public people are quick to honour (τιμᾶν) a bad man *because* he is rich and powerful, and to dishonour those who are in some way weak or poor, even as they concede that they are better people. This atmosphere of contest inevitably makes justice a bit of a game (in Bob Dylan's wry observation), and this very fact would stack the odds against the just man, who is less given to ostentatious displays of justice – it is the unjust man who must put on a show of being just to dissimulate his real nature. This partly explains why the just must play the long game, as it were, but only partly.

The deeper interest of the passage is that it implies a *natural* basis for *both* the short-term success of the unjust and the long-term victory of the just. Plato is in effect proposing an *energetics* of justice and injustice. This seems to explain why he deems the race metaphor suitable:[15] why 'getting ahead' in life has the sense of running *faster*. Plato is acknowledging, firstly, the difficult fact that men are energised by, even *into*, their wrongdoings, as if nature not only urged us to do injustice but rewarded us for doing so – not just in terms of social position, opportunities, and so on, but in terms of *energy* and *joie de vivre*. Indeed, the very first thing Glaucon said in Book II, in unfolding the common opinion about justice, was that 'it is *by nature* [πεφυκέναι] a good thing to do injustice' (and 'a bad thing to suffer it') (358e). It is the unjust, on this view, who are in accord with nature and blessed by it, energetically in sync with its flow. Adeimantus indicated essentially the same thing when he said at 364a that, in the common view, 'licentiousness and injustice are pleasant and easily gotten' (ἀκολασία δὲ καὶ ἀδικία ἡδὺ μὲν καὶ εὐπετὲς κτήσασθαι), whereas self-restraint and justice are 'difficult and toilsome' (χαλεπὸν καὶ ἐπίπονον), precisely because they are not natural to us but bulwarks we agree to set up to curb our nature. At 613b–c, for the first time in the *Republic*, Plato has

Socrates admit this natural *facility* of injustice – both in terms of the ease with which one is led onto this path and the ease with which one 'gets along' on it.

Whether the subsequent flagging of the unjust 'runner' is a natural *enervation* corresponding to his initial energisation, or something more socially mediated (i.e., by a turning of the tide of public opinion), is not clear from the passage. If we move from the vehicle of the metaphor to its tenor, it seems safe to infer that, while for a time being unjust may 'open doors' and grant a free passage through the field of the possible, the unjust man's course becomes increasingly constrained and constraining. He becomes a prisoner of what he has done and cannot undo, unable to proceed without tangling his web even more. In the *Cratylus*' terms, he turns from flowing to impeded. A Buddhist would say that this is not contingent upon external factors (such as a withdrawal of support) which may or may not obtain; it is a matter of his own 'action' (*karma*) 'ripening'. I see nothing to indicate that Plato would disagree with this. At least in general terms it is implied by his belief that men are the cause of their own suffering.

Where the just man is concerned, it is also not clear whether his race involves the reverse transition: from impeded to flowing motion. His relative slowness over the first part *may* be a case of impeded motion, be it because circumstances do not favour him or because in being just he is (as the common opinion has it) fighting against his nature. On the other hand, this slower pace may just be his own natural rhythm, which he need only sustain to cruise past the unjust in his own time.[16] This is suggested by the way Socrates takes up the challenge prior to Book X. He *reinscribes* human nature so that justice belongs intrinsically to it and is not merely a necessary expedient in face of it. Thus he links justice to the 'harmonisation' (ξυναρμόσαντα: 443d5) of the soul's parts (reason, spirit, desire), or to a 'natural relation' (κατὰ φύσιν καθιστάναι: 444d3–4) of control and subordination among them, just as health is such a relation among the parts of the body. The just man, then, is one whose 'whole soul settles into its nature at its best' (ὅλη ἡ ψυχὴ εἰς τὴν βελτίστην φύσιν καθισταμένη: 591b). This sense of his being 'settled' should I think be understood at 613b–c. He simply goes about being just, preserving the state of his soul and not worrying about whether he is keeping up with others; he wins the race because he is not even trying to.

Having said that, the first reading should not be discounted entirely. I take it that this settling would occur at some time well into the 'race', before which time the just man, seeing the wicked streak away ahead of him, must be liable to great perplexity and vexation, things which, as the *Cratylus* tells us (415c, 419c), get their names from being a hindrance to motion. Stated non-metaphorically, at some point in his life the just man would simply have to renounce any hope for honour and recognition among his contemporaries and turn inward to take control of the things he *can* control. That would be the condition of finding his feet, as it were, and (if we believe Plato) ultimately prevailing.

To the extent that the unjust man prospers and seems, for a time,[17] in sync with the natural flow, Plato must concede that the common opinion is not wholly wrong. If justice as harmony of soul is natural, nevertheless, a proclivity to injustice

cannot simply be excluded from what is natural, as it is in Socrates' earlier arguments. It is true that Socrates is far from excluding from our nature the 'many-headed beast' of desire (see 588b–589a), and all the injustice associated with it. Yet it is not simply *our* nature that is at stake, but our harmony with nature as such. This, it seems, can express itself in very different ways in just and unjust individuals. Why should this be the case, in a world which, already in the *Republic* (530a), is grasped as the product of a divine craftsman? Why is nature such that it favours the unjust in the short term, the just in the long? Why are the former energised *into* and *by* the very deeds for which they are ultimately energetically punished? *Is* it punishment, or simply usage? And why are those who refrain from injustice impeded, forced to tread water as wrongdoers sail past them? Why does energy only seem to go over to their side once it has exhausted itself in the unjust, as if it were simply disencumbering itself of the latter's 'baggage'?

On the one hand, then, the value of the passage is that it responds, in a way that the earlier arguments do not, to the questionability of justice. On the other, in terms of its doctrinal content the passage cannot be regarded as an adequate resolution of the problem, which it only provokes anew. One shortcoming of the metaphor is that it pits against each other *a* (or *the*) just and unjust man. This obscures the possibility (if not likelihood) of one powerful unjust man (or group) being succeeded by another – something with which Plato was well familiar, growing up in the decades after Pericles. From this point of view, a better metaphor would be a relay race, in which as one unjust man flags he hands the baton on (unwillingly, no doubt) to another who is raring to go, and who acts as if he is exempt from the laws of fate which laid claim to his predecessor, so that the process simply and stupidly repeats. Even assuming that the just man too gets to hand his baton to others, it seems far less certain that team Justice would ultimately win such a race.

Another problem relates to the tenor of the metaphor. *Socially*, whether the just or unjust are victorious depends largely on the judgement of their contemporaries. Yet, where public opinion is concerned, what is the criterion of judgement here if not energy itself?[18] If people are initially deceived about the unjust man on this very account ('he must be good, he's so full of beans'), why should they not also be deceived on the home straight? Admittedly, the passage asks us to take as given that the victor is the *truly* just man. Fair enough, yet once we allow the situation discussed in the previous paragraph, there is clearly a real problem here. At the same time that people see that they were deceived about one person who *seemed* just, they may be perfectly open to being deceived again by the next seemingly just man who takes over from him, just because he has the spark his predecessor lost.

And it is not just the citizens' judgement that is at stake. At 613d–e Socrates concludes his account of social rewards by saying that most unjust men are ultimately found out, and in their old age are not only made miserable by the contempt of citizens and foreigners, but are subjected to punishments ranging from whipping to having their eyes burned out and crucifixion. Is it not possible to see here an *accrual* of evil under the sign of its rectification? Assuming that 'energy is good' expresses both the common judgement of the unjust man while he is still powerful, and

the *self*-understanding of the unjust man himself, and assuming that this good includes the delight he takes in bringing about another's suffering, I do not see what prevents us from concluding that this 'energy' jumps, as it were, not just from one unjust man to his successor, but to the 'just' citizens who are now emboldened to humiliate and persecute him, under the *aegis* of the same natural belief in their own goodness: 'this must be right; I've never been so full of energy'.

2 Plato's trajectory viewed from the perspective of the problem of natural justice

To conclude, I would like as it were to arrange the main findings of this study around *Republic* 613b–c, treating it as a kind of centre – not doctrinally, but in the sense that the problem it responds to, and provokes anew, may cast a new light on the course of Plato's thinking. I start by elaborating further on how the passage relates to the double nature of flow in *Cratylus* 2.

Cosmologically, as we saw in Chapter 2, the *Cratylus* sought flow as a regular, circular motion, but wound up with a 'wandering' – errant, impetuous, but also self-impeding[19] – motion. At the ethical level, the *Cratylus* grasped the virtues as 'going with' the cosmic flow, and their contraries as forms of impeded motion. It also found some of the passions (like joy) to be akin to the easy, smooth flow of the virtues, and others (like desire) to be a more frenetic kind of flow. All of this, I think, is relevant to *Republic* 613b–c. The just man (with the qualification I made earlier) may be said to run his race in a smooth and regular fashion, the unjust man in an impetuous way (driven by an overreaching desire) that cannot be sustained. Recall too that the *Cratylus* grasped desire as a force that goes to the soul from without. One form this could take is what I referred to as the unjust man's energisation *into* his misdeeds. There is more in play here than a simple opposition of flow and impedence. The deeper issue is why going with the natural flow, and flow as such, is not univocal in its character or its moral charge. Whether *Republic* 613b–c responds adequately to this, it can at least be said that it does respond to it.

From the reverse perspective, the passage seems to throw light on why *Cratylus* 2 takes the at times mysterious course it does. A first point is that although, to begin with (412c), δικαιοσύνη is treated like the virtues in general as going with the flow, in the treatment of justice itself we see Socrates, for the first time (in the etymological analysis proper), overtly aver an *ontological* skepticism about the idea of cosmic flow. He did not demur at the view that the celestial bodies eternally run on their circular courses (397c–d), or that aether eternally runs flowingly about the air (410b), or even that the good is an admirable, swift motion throughout all nature (412c). It is when this motion is associated with *justice* that he baulks. His problem, ostensibly, is that those who proclaim justice to be a pan-cosmic force do not say *what* makes it just. But we may discern here a deeper anxiety as to *whether* cosmic flow is unequivocally just. Now the *Cratylus*' account of the words denoting advantage was expressly tied back to the remarks about the good and justice. That it directly follows the discussion of the virtues suggests that the interest is the

inherent advantageousness of virtue. But implicit here too, as I argued (Chapter 4, section 4b), is the problem of whether it is the virtuous or merely the *clever* and ruseful who are naturally advantaged. It does not seem terribly *outré* to think that this anxiety is the undercurrent that brings the etymological inquiry to its ultimate determination of flow as 'divine wandering'. That is, this may speak more to the *moral tenor* of cosmic flow than to the form of its motion. Whether or not it wanders from the circular path imputed to it, it may wander in terms of who is naturally carried and who is buffeted by its motion.

I suggest, then, that it is Plato's concern with justice that ultimately underlies his ambivalence about flow and whether it provides any normative basis. I stress that Plato is genuinely *ambivalent* about this. Part of him is and remains strongly drawn to it. In the *Cratylus* he may in the end resort to scoffing at the whole notion of flow. He may take the easy way out of concluding from its ambiguity that *there is* no such flow. And he may ridicule it by reducing it to radical flux. But that does not make it go away. It is not just that Plato goes on using the *term* 'flow' in a non-fluxist way in the middle dialogues, nor that he rehabilitates flow philosophically in the *Phaedrus*. More importantly, the key thought of the *Timaeus*, that living a just life hinges on modelling ourselves on the regular motions of the cosmos, *is* the thought of going with the flow, differently expressed. Life is *literally* this before and (if one has been just) after embodiment, when the soul rides in its appointed star as in a chariot (41e, 42b). Obviously the sense is less literal in embodied life. Our bodies need not rotate in conformity with our souls' circuits, much less go into orbit, for us to be in harmony with the cosmos. What is needed is that the motion of *nous* be fostered in our own souls, so that we can 'stabilise' (47c) and 'master' (42b) the erratic motions to which we are subject as embodied beings. To the extent that we are able to do this, we become the microcosm we intrinsically are and follow the cosmic god.

When, at 42b, Timaeus identifies mastery of these motions with 'living justly', and being mastered by them with the converse, this is, in a sense, trademark Plato. But it is important to see that here living justly and unjustly are *both* understood as *motile*: the one as going with, the other as straying from, cosmic flow. Justice, like intelligence and virtue in general, is not just a matter of dwelling with, and becoming *like*, motionless Forms, as in the *Phaedo* (79d). All these things are essentially just as *Cratylus* 2 deemed them to be, before Plato baulked at flow and set his sights on Form, and with that a conception of being that excludes all motion and flow.

But the story, as we know, does not end here. Having found a way to revive cosmologically and ethically what I call the positive side of flow, and to subsume the negative one within it, Plato is compelled to revisit the latter in a less 'compliant' form. This occurs in the *Statesman* myth. What needs to be added to my discussion in Chapter 5 is that the myth, since it entails that the world-creature can no longer be a straightforward standard for human conduct, has telling consequences for the notion that virtue, and specifically being just, involves going with the cosmic flow.

Several times in the myth, but most explicitly at 274d,[20] the Stranger indicates that humans (like all living things) 'imitate and follow along with' (ξυμμιμούμενοι

καὶ ξυνεπόμενοι) the cosmos 'for all time' – in both the Cronus and Zeus cycles. This notion of microcosmic imitation obviously recalls the *Timaeus*, yet the Stranger is not laying it down as a *normative* principle.[21] The moral of the myth for us is neither that we should be the docile creatures we and the cosmos were in the age of Cronus, when the gods did everything for us, nor that we should strive to emulate the cosmos as it is now. The former is neither possible – since the animals that were once our pals now want to eat us (274b), and this forces us to develop means of self-preservation – nor desirable, since the demiurge's 'directive' (ἀγωγή) to be master of one's own course covers us as well as the cosmos (274a–b).[22] This latter point may seem to suggest that the second alternative holds, yet how can it? A cosmos that loses control of itself simply does not give us an adequate model for the task at hand, much less constitute Cornford's 'inexpugnable foundation' of human morality.

'Imitating and following' the cosmos is, rather, a description – and a sobering one – of what naturally occurs for better or worse (as, for example, our moods can follow the weather). A positive form of this natural and unconscious imitation would be the maintenance of homeostasis. Over against this, what makes the Stranger's description sobering is his previous remark at 273b–c that the cosmos not only retains in itself 'everything violent and unjust' (ὅσα χαλεπὰ και ἄδικα)[23] in its pre-cosmic condition, but *produces* it *in* living things (τοῖς ζῴοις ἐναπεργάζεται). It is the natural thing to imitate and follow the cosmos in *this* sense too, especially when this chaotic element gains the upper hand cosmically. Not that this is simply inevitable. There may be something in us that stands firm against the natural exigency, when in the cosmos, to do as the cosmos does, whether this be, as Adeimantus said, a heaven-sent aversion to wrongdoing, or an acquired knowledge to refrain from it. But in the absence of such things going with the flow will be our default setting. In this light the injunction to take the course of our lives into our own care entails that we bear in mind what a negative model, and influence, the cosmos can be.

It is not insignificant that this leaves us in much the same boat we were in at the end of *Cratylus* 2, when cosmic flow presented as 'divine wandering' and being in sync with it could take such incommensurable forms as the smooth flow of virtue, the manic inflow of desire, and the facility with which clever schemers 'take advantage' of situations or people. I do not mean to belittle the theory of Forms on which Plato's thought builds itself in between, but it is important to be aware that it arose against the background of this other, suppressed set of ideas and problems regarding flow. Just as Plato's own questioning and modification of that theory is integral to the development, and the greatness, of his thought, I see it as a good thing that he came back to this other problematic towards the end of his career. The disappointing thing is that, in the *Laws* in particular, he suppressed it again and did not go deeper into *it*. I addressed the cosmological aspect of this suppression in the previous chapter. To close, I want to show that much the same applies in the *Laws*' treatment of justice and social organisation generally.

Consider first the discussion of justice in *Laws* II. Here we get the doctrine of the *Republic* but nothing of its underlying *problem*. Cleinias does, it is true, demur at

certain of the Athenian's claims. At 661e–662a he is prepared to agree that an unjust person in a position to do as he wants all his life will inevitably live 'disgracefully' or 'basely' (αἰσχρῶς), but not that his life will be 'miserable' (ἄθλιον) or 'unpleasant and without advantage to himself' (ἀηδῶς καὶ συμφερόντως αὑτῷ). The Athenian counters, in much the way that Socrates was asked to respond to the common opinion about justice in the *Republic*,[24] that 'pleasant' and 'just' are not mutually exclusive. Whatever good may come to the just man (whether it be 'good fame and praise from gods and men', or an inner happiness) cannot be *divorced* from pleasure (663a–b). He argues further that whether justice seems pleasant is a matter of perspective. To those opposed to it, justice seems unpleasant, and injustice pleasant, simply because they are removed from the experience of what being just is actually like (663b–c). Cleinias is certainly made to think twice by this, but his responses at 663c (φαίνεται, 'so it seems') and 663d (κινδυνεύει κατὰ γε τὸν νῦν λόγον, 'possibly, on this argument at any rate') indicate that while he experiences the pull of the argument that the unjust life is less pleasant than the just, he is less than convinced.[25]

The Athenian goes on to say (663d–e) that, even if this were not true, there could be no more 'useful lie' to drum into everyone from a young age. England (1921: vol. 1, 305) stresses 'the extremely hypothetical form' of this remark, and takes its tenor to be along the lines: 'Does it not look as if it *must* be true, because it is such a useful thing to be able to say?' An alternative view is that Plato knows this is not the *whole* truth, but thinks it will become *more* of it by its inculcation into us. The 'hypothetical' scenario then looks like a broad wave in the direction of complications which Plato does not wish to go into. It is notable that the perspectival approach to the ambiguity regarding whether the just or unjust fare better replaces the *temporal* one in *Republic* X.[26] It could be argued that the latter remains implicit; when the Athenian claims that goods such as health, beauty, and wealth are in fact evils for the unjust (661a–d), what he means is that they are *ultimately* evils, while in the short term they give the impression that the unjust man is blessed.[27] But even if we grant this, it does not touch on the essential question. For the issue is not that there may be other things which enable the unjust to get ahead *in spite of* his injustice; it is whether he gets ahead *because* of his injustice, with a *natural* facility. The ambiguity, as I argued in section 1, has its ground in nature itself, and it is this problem that the *Laws* is most anxious to avoid, both cosmologically and in the human sphere.

It draws closest to it in the theodical passage in Book X discussed in Chapter 5, for here at least the Athenian addresses the complaint that many do rise to high places through 'acts of impiety or some such wickedness' (905b). But to argue, as he does, that the gods see to it that even evildoers contribute in their way to the whole, is to close out the problem at once, to leave unexplained and unexplored the *origin* of evil in a cosmos said to be divinely designed and surveyed *down to the smallest detail* (902e–903a, 903b–c). Why should the atheist whom the Athenian is addressing not conclude that this omnipotent god has designed us *so that* doing evil comes naturally and (for a time) pays naturally? And, if god makes use of our evils for the *whole*, knowing that he has so designed it that *we* in time naturally pay for

them, why should one not conclude that we are not punished so much as used and used up by something that is merely more powerful than us, and who doesn't really have a moral leg to stand on? I hasten to add that I am not endorsing this one-sided stance. Nor am I saying that Plato simply would have no response. I am saying that the question is there, and is not addressed.

The 'useful lie' passage in Book II reflects a broad tendency in the *Laws*: an inclination to valorise, and a temptation to normatise, a manipulable, somewhat childlike simplicity in the general citizenry of Plato's imaginary city. Book III takes up from the *Timaeus* preamble the idea that periodic floods left no survivors save the uncultured shepherds dwelling in the mountains, and finds in the cloud of civilisation having to start again from scratch the silver lining of it doing so from a basis of decency. Such men would have been 'innocent' of the cunning 'devices' (μηχανῶν) and 'dirty deeds' (κακουργήματα) that city-dwellers contrive against each other out of rivalry and greed (677b). Their 'simple-mindedness' (εὐήθεια), in a milieu not characterised by extremes of wealth and poverty, would have made them naturally good (679c–e). The shepherds seem comparable to the citizens of Magnesia. Indeed, it could be argued that Plato's imaginary city presupposes an imaginary flood which has swept away all the cunning men of actual cities. It is taken as a mark of the shepherds' good-naturedness that they are willing to believe what they are told about good and bad, and gods and men (679c). The Athenian's address to the new colonists at 715e–718a hinges on just these things. True, he seeks to persuade them *discursively*, but persuasion may be less an appeal to their *nous*, through reasoned argument, than a kind of 'cybernetic' manipulation of their feelings and predilections. In the 'useful lie' passage the Athenian wishes to persuade everyone to live justly by proposing that there is more *pleasure* for them here than in injustice.

Indeed, Book I has indicated that moral education hinges, not on the cultivation of intelligence, but on pulling the strings of pleasure and pain. In this context the Athenian muses that all living things may be 'puppets of the gods' (644d). His point is not that we simply lack autonomy, for we have a power of 'calculation' (λογισμός) which enables us to find pleasure and pain morally instructive (for example, to tell the difference between the pleasures that belong to a virtuous life and those that do not, presumably the excessive ones that in the long run bring pain). But there is still a sense of our being steered like an animal that has no other criteria for what it should do than a pat on the head or a kick somewhere else. The steering may not be direct, but it doesn't have to be; it is written into our *design*.[28] Note also that while λογισμός points in the direction of *nous*, its sense here falls far short of it. In the *Republic nous* is the dominant force in the (healthy) soul. Calculation here is a 'weak' force which needs to be supplemented by the external force of the law (645a). If we genuinely have the virtue of *nous*, we need no such external goad to do what we know is for the best.

It is against this background that we should read Plato's reprise of the age of Cronus myth in Book IV. The version here diverges from that of the *Statesman* both in its moral and in certain details. Whereas in the *Statesman* (272b–d) the

Stranger left open whether people were happier in the age of Cronus,[29] the Athenian swallows the mythic brochure in this regard. He accepts that the spirits who then took care of us – in the way that we now take care of our own herds and flocks – brought us relief from conflict and anarchy and made us happy (713d–e). On this basis he draws the moral that we should 'imitate' that life now 'by every means' (713e). This is precisely not the moral drawn in the *Statesman*. Certain other changes abet this one. The inclusion of cities or states (πόλεσιν: 713d) in the Cronus age, contrary to *Statesman* 271e, makes imitation more arguable than it would be otherwise. Moreover, the *Laws* abstracts this human aspect of the myth from its cosmological frame. In the *Statesman* the latter underpinned the moral that we must now (like the cosmos) take charge of our own lives, not hanker after a bygone age without cares. In the *Laws* the removal of this frame enables Plato to make that age normative for the present one. In Book X there is of course no distinction between periods of divine governance and default. The divine souls go on driving the cosmic motions and 'guiding' (or instructing: παιδαγωγεῖ: 897b) creatures to their proper happiness. Here guidance probably means rational persuasion. But in the age of Cronus it seems more 'cybernetic', occurring as if by a gentle tug on the psychical equivalent of a nose-ring (compare *Critias* 109b–c). For the Athenian, I suggest, this is part of the myth's appeal.

Now it is true that the Athenian holds that 'we', not spirits, 'should order our public and private lives, our homes and cities' in imitation of that age. He admits that this seems a hopeless task, since 'no human being is capable of managing all human affairs independently without being filled with *hubris* and injustice' (713c). But he holds that we do have something of the immortal within us, namely *nous*, whose dispensation (διανομή) is law (νόμος) with us. In lieu of the spirits (δαίμονες), we should run our individual and collective lives 'in obedience to this' (713e–714a), as voluntary slaves to the law itself (cf. 700a, 715d). Thus it seems he is prescribing just what the Stranger did: that we take charge of our own course. If our means of doing so is something divine in us that corresponds to the spirits, there seems to be no tension between this and imitating life in the age of Cronus,[30] and no reason to think that the latter entails making 'steers' of us.

But is it that simple? How universal is this 'we'? Where the self-organisation of society in conformity with its erstwhile divine organisation is concerned, no doubt it extends beyond the 'royal' one: the benevolent dictator envisaged in Book IV, who combines great power with 'wise judgement and self-restraint' (712a). Although the Athenian suggests that the desired social order depends on this 'extremely rare' phenomenon (711d), in the actual processes of government in Magnesia, to the extent that Plato spells them out,[31] the 'we', and the *nous*, cover all of those educated for the task of ruling. But does social order also depend specifically on the *nous* of citizens generally, or on their simple-minded alacrity, their steerability? Much in the *Laws* suggests the latter. I don't say that Plato simply succumbs to the temptation to normatise this, but it is there, and it seems to put a question mark beside the thesis of a 'natural' claim of the wise to rule the ignorant at 690b. If ignorance is a natural fact that inherently demands rule by the wise, it may also be, potentially, something

perpetuated by that rule. At any rate, were we to forget that Plato is abstracting from actual societies, and give ourselves over to the idea that we could regain the happy state of the age of Cronus by becoming simpletons in the midst of the cunning and calculative, we would shortly pay in spades for our naivety.

Finally, returning to the theme of pleasure and pain, what should we make of the remark at 636d that these are 'two wellsprings' which 'naturally have been let loose to flow' (δύο αὗται πηγαὶ μεθεῖνται φύσει ῥεῖν)? It is notable, first, simply that they are *discrete* flows, which suggests, contrary to Plato's other works, that one does not closely follow upon the other or mingle with it. It seems as if one could remain in one of these streams and live a life of unmitigated pleasure (or pain). That is not Plato's point here; he says that to live a happy life one must 'draw' judiciously from *both* – 'the right amount from the right one at the right time' (Saunders's translation). It may just be this that motivates the image of separate streams (as Zeus draws from his two jars in the *Iliad*). But maybe not. Is it an accident that Plato speaks of two flows here, in the same work in which he parses the good and bad aspects of *cosmic* flow into good and bad celestial souls? Moreover, can φύσει here signify 'necessary processes' of nature, or must the letting loose of pleasure and pain be driven by *soul*, given the argument of *Laws* X? Which kind? Evidently we cannot say pleasure by good soul, pain by bad, for each may be good or bad. Might it be that, when one of the celestial souls goes bad, this is because it fails to keep a lid on these wellsprings in itself, and that its *unintelligent* guidance of terrestrial beings (cf. 897b) consists in imparting to them a like failure? It seems a stretch, but we should recall that fear and confidence, which are said at 644c–d to be the anticipation of pain and pleasure respectively, are among the list of motive powers whereby soul is said to drive all things at 897a.

Or does all this too quickly assume that 'being let loose to flow' has the negative connotation of a running beyond bounds? If it is crucial for Plato to hold that the just life is more pleasant than the life of injustice, does he not need to hold that its pleasure, although or rather because it is less intense, is enduring, smooth and easily sustained, and not liable to morph into pain? And isn't that what 'flow' basically means, for Plato himself (with some exceptions) as for just about all his predecessors? I don't think we should see *only* this positive connotation; we could scarcely say that pain 'flows' in a smooth and easily sustained way, nor that *all* pleasure does. The remark must include a sense that both tend to gather pace and exacerbate themselves. In that case we see here, in the first book of the *Laws*, at least something of the ambiguity of flow that we do not see in 'everflowing being' in the last.

Notes

1 Cf. Chapter 3, note 26.
2 This is not elaborated upon here, but is to be identified (cf. Hamilton 1960: 117 note 1) with the proportional rather than 'simple or arithmetic' kind of equality affirmed at *Laws* 757a–e, in which each gets what he *deserves*.
3 The reference is to Pindar fragment 169a. In the *Gorgias* (484b–c) Callicles cited the poem in support of his might is right thesis, and Plato reads it thus on the three

occasions he cites it in the *Laws* (see also 715a and 890a). Whether this is Pindar's meaning is debatable, but I can't address this here.

4 There is controversy over the precise terms of this challenge. The main issue is whether the interdict against 'rewards or consequences' takes in *all* consequences or only those associated with social rewards (since these may derive from *seeming* just). I take the latter view, *contra*, for example, Irwin (1995: 181–193). Glaucon identifies praising justness αὐτὸ καθ΄ αὑτὸ (358d) with laying out its 'effect' or 'power' (δύναμιν) within the soul αὐτὸ καθ΄ αὑτὸ (358b; cf. Adeimantus at 366e, and at 367b where he uses ποιοῦσα in place of δύναμις, and αὐτὴ δι' αὑτὴν). This clearly allows the *intrinsic* effects of being just. Kirwan, who is often grouped with Irwin, takes Glaucon to allow inherently 'agreeable' benefits over against those that are painful or onerous (1965: 169). Payne seeks to extend the range of permissable consequences beyond intrinsic ones to what he calls 'criterial' (as opposed to 'fringe') benefits of just action, such as 'acquiring wealth, holding political office, gaining bodily health' (2011: 78). I fail to see why these should be *criteria* for determining the success with which justice accomplishes its function of enabling the *soul* to rule itself. (Socrates would seem to fail the first criterion, Plato the second.) All we can really take from 443d–e, which Payne cites in support, is that being just *need not exclude* such things – if they contribute to, and do nothing to upset, the inner harmony of the soul which Plato identifies with justness.

5 So, to give just one example, it seems to Adeimantus at 366c–d that it must take either 'some god-sent *inborn* aversion to wrongdoing' (τις θείᾳ φύσει δυσχεραίνων τὸ ἀδικεῖν), or 'an *acquired* knowledge to refrain from it' (ἐπιστήμην λαβὼν ἀπέχεται αὐτοῦ), for a man to be *willingly* just. His point is that the argument in praise of justice will fall on deaf ears in the absence of these things. The challenge to Socrates, accordingly, is not only to show how justice is good in itself, but how, in view of the above, justice can be said to have its ground in nature.

6 Cf. τὸ φύσει δίκαιον at 501b.

7 Whether they really are surplus is debatable. The prior arguments regarding the *unjust* are not free of considerations of social consequences. Take the portrait of the tyrant in Book IX. The external consequences of his wrongdoings mediate many of their bad effects on his soul. He is fully tyrannised by his basest desires when he is driven to crime *because* he can no longer borrow money to support his extravagance (573e), presumably because of a reputation for not repaying his debts. He is forced to stay at home in fear and envy because his wrongdoings have made him universally hated (579b). His will is constrained because of the complicities he has had to form for his protection (579a). As for the arguments regarding the just, it is moot whether their independence of such considerations is a product of the abstract level at which they are pitched. Were Plato more inclined to consider being just in the concrete context of dealings with others, it is not so clear that its inner effects could be isolated from its social rewards.

8 This is denied by Heinaman, who holds that what is at issue is just and unjust *action*s, not 'states of the soul' (2004: 380–381). This is drastically reductive. For one thing, 'state of the soul' does not cover the sense of disposition that is in play. It is not a question of a transient state that just happens to be present, but of a self-willed, self-maintained, and self-defining *career* in good or evil. Moreover, in Glaucon's portrait of the ideal-typical unjust man, a consummate ability to conceal his injustice is integral (361a–b). It can only be consummate if it succeeds in concealing his underlying *character*. The dissimulation wouldn't last if it only concealed his evil *deeds* (or talked them away once they have come to light), as Heinaman claims. For as long as doubts remain about his character, others will remain on the lookout for unjust actions on his part, his conduct being understood to be an external reflection or 'image' of the inner life of the soul (443c–d). See again Vlastos 1973: 126.

9 Irwin (1995: 191) argues unconvincingly that in the claim that justice 'makes' one happy, 'makes' is definitional rather than causal. The sense is transparently, I think, that being just has good effects on the soul, and since my conception of δικαιοσύνη can account for this very simply it seems a preferable approach.

10 Later Socrates will get his philosophers to reconsider and reluctantly agree to rule. They are the right people to do so just because they would rather be doing something else (dwelling on Forms), and regard ruling as a necessary evil, not an opportunity for self-enhancement (see, for example, 520b–521b). Crucially, while this is good for the *state*, it is not good for the philosopher-guardians themselves. Their actions as rulers, being onerous and compulsory, can have no intrinsically good effect on their souls, no amplifying feedback on their dispositions. To this extent I see Heinaman's point that justice does not really 'pay' in their case, although he seems strangely intent on blurring the line between intrinsic effects on the soul and such things as pecuniary self-interest. Besides, we should be mindful of Irwin's point (1995: 184) that living in a decent society pays everyone in the end.

11 Plato does not and *cannot*, without undermining his own social theory, maintain that only philosophers are capable of justice *qua* psychic harmony. As Vlastos (1973: 136–138) points out, while non-philosophers may lack the intellectual experience of Forms which morally 'energizes' the philosopher's love of justice, this is compensated by the socio-psychological conditioning that Plato prescribes, which provides a similar 'energization' at pre-intellectual levels.

12 The event referred to is the double-stade (cf. Pausanius, *Description of Greece*, 3.14.3.), a race from one end of the stadium to a turning post (τέρμα) at the other and back again. This has antecedents in Homer, especially in Book 23 of the *Iliad*, where some feature on the Trojan plain is designated as the post. In previous chapters I have taken a certain liberty in referring to Plato's race as a circular one, akin to our modern 400 metres (the Greek race was closer to 200 yards). *Some* 'roundness' is involved, as the competitors must go *around* the post (περὶ τέρμαθ' ἑλισσέμεν: *Iliad* 23.309; cf. 466). I assume this applied not only to horses and chariots but human runners too. Recall that Plato compares the orbiting celestial bodies to racehorses at *Laws* 822b.

13 As LSJ point out, referring to Aristotle (*Poetics* 1448b1), some claimed δράω to be the Doric equivalent of πράσσω. The latter also has the sense of 'fare' (well or badly), which is Shorey's translation of δρῶσιν. Some translators (Grube, Lee) bypass the term.

14 Cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448a28–29.

15 Plato is not the first to make this comparison. Hesiod, *Works and Days* 217–218, has Justice (Δίκη) ultimately winning its race with Hubris. Plato's step is to personalise this race as one between just and unjust individuals.

16 In terms of the metaphor, a 'true racer' is of course one who paces himself and saves enough energy to come home strong.

17 Plato is vague about how long, but the unjust man must fare well for at least the first half of the race, since things go awry for him 'on the way back'.

18 In *The Samurai Ethic* Mishima sought to make energy the basic standard ('Energy is good; lethargy is evil') of his 'morality of appearances' (1978: 7; cf. 59–61). Doubtless the common opinion about justice of Athenians circa 380–370 BC is not informed by the code of *bushido*, but it is in its way predominantly a morality of appearances, as Glaucon and Adeimantus make abundantly clear. It is not *purely* such, for this contends with another sense of good and bad. Recall the observation at 364a–b that people recognise the moral superiority of those they nevertheless dishonour on account of their lack of power.

19 I refer to my argument in Chapter 2, section 5, that wandering and impeded motion are not opposed in this context but intertwined.

20 See also 270d–e and 273e–274a. In the former passage, imitation takes the fanciful form of a reversal of the ageing process in conformity with the cosmic reversal. In the latter passage the Stranger emphasises the different modes of generation and nourishment in the two ages. In the age of Cronus living things are generated from the earth, and their needs are immediately provided for by god, just as the cosmos falls under god's full control. In the age of Zeus generation occurs through procreation, and living things must see to their own nourishment and growth, just as the cosmos must become the 'master of its own course'.

21 Carone (2005: 158) adopts the contrary view, but to do so she must override what she calls 'the literary details' and argue that the cosmos is an exemplary 'pattern of order' irrespective of which cycle it is in. This in turn means that she must regard cosmic disorder as 'a cosmic projection of *actual* human and social disorder' (152). In treating the 'cosmic drama' merely as a symbol of human drama and ethical conflict, Carone is in effect asking us to substitute the word *polis* whenever the Stranger refers to the cosmos, the All, or the Heaven. This request we should most certainly decline.
22 Scodel (1987: 85) sees a more specific political message. For him the Stranger's implied view is that the golden age of Cronus is just another 'old wives' tale', 'a misrepresentation … whose political implications are far from benevolent', in that the price of our lack of want is being 'chattel to the gods'.
23 Rowe translates 'bad and unjust', but χαλεπά has the sense of 'violent' in connection with animals at 274b, and this is not forced in connection with ἄδικα. As a description of the pre-cosmic state, the phrase should of course be compared with those of the *Timaeus*: 'in jarring and disorderly motion' (30a); 'shaking' all over due to the imbalance and heterogeneity of the 'powers' within it (52e); 'without proportion and due measure' (53a). In *this* context ὅσα χαλεπὰ και ἄδικα may simply denote a lack of order, harmony, limit, and so on. The cosmos is not 'unjust' in the sense that men are; it has no competitor to do down. But in connection with animals, and humans in particular, the sense of violence and injustice is paramount, and there remains the possibility that these are instigated in us by a cosmic 'violence and injustice', broadly corresponding to the might is right 'face' of nature.
24 Insofar as praising justice on account of its effects on the soul is equivalent to showing it to be 'agreeable', hence pleasant. Cf. Socrates' arguments for the superiority of justice in terms of pleasure (as well as happiness) in *Republic* IX.
25 For this reason it seems highly questionable that the much more emphatic καὶ πῶς at 663a8 belongs to Cleinias, as editors (Burnet, England) and translators (Bury, Saunders) typically assume. As England notes (1921: vol. 1, 302), Ficino has the Athenian answering his own question here. This makes more sense. Given his previous remarks, and his qualified assent later, Cleinias can hardly be so indignant at this point at the idea that being unjust is *pleasant*, even though 'disgraceful and wicked'.
26 With the consequence that the prosperity and enjoyability of vice is effectively denied a foothold in real life.
27 Later passages speak to this short-term 'appearance' of prosperity: for example, 716a–b, 905b–c.
28 In this respect, while my reading of this passage is similar to Frede's (2010: 116–120), it places the emphasis differently.
29 He says only that it depends whether men used their leisure to pursue philosophy, or merely to fill their bellies and tell each other stories.
30 As held, for example, by Rowe. Rowe argues further (2010: 40–41) that in this regard the *Laws* and *Statesman* versions of the myth have 'the same outcome', and that in the *Laws* passage Plato expects his educated readers to resolve its evident contradictions by referring to the *Statesman*. The differences between the two are in my view far more significant than Rowe recognises.
31 See the comprehensive analysis of Morrow (1960).

APPENDIX: ON THE RELATIVE DATES OF THE DIALOGUES

The argument of this book involves a definite position on the dating of several dialogues, which it is my task here to justify. The dating issue is hugely controversial. Besides disputes about whether certain dialogues are 'early', 'middle', or 'late', and about the order within these periods, some question the validity of this very framework, or at least the assumptions or agendas that may inform one's views about what constitutes, say, a late dialogue.[1] There are certainly reasons for caution here. Having inferred these periods *from* the dialogues, we can overstate their internal unity and division from each other, and before we know it they are stipulating their own members like country clubs. Plato is not bound by this. Nothing prevents the middle Plato who develops the theory of Forms from criticising it (in the *Parmenides*) or not referring to it (*Theaetetus*), while still upholding it (*Phaedrus*). And nothing prevents late Plato from upholding it (*Timaeus*), criticising it (*Sophist*), modifying it (*Philebus*) and avoiding reference to it (*Laws*). Forms are still there, only within a different *complex*. We can demarcate the three periods as distinct complexes fairly crisply if we can identify 'watershed' dialogues which establish the basic terrain for those that follow. These I take to be the *Cratylus* and *Timaeus*. My purpose here is to justify dating them at the beginnings of the middle and late periods, respectively, although I will have something to say about the overall sequence of the late dialogues.

By way of a fuller context, I have no argument with the sequence proposed by Vlastos (1991: 47) for the middle and late dialogues, which as it happens is also the view of my namesake, Andrew S. Mason (2010: 208):

> Middle: *Cratylus* – *Phaedo* – *Symposium* – *Republic* – *Phaedrus* – *Parmenides* – *Theaetetus*.[2]
>
> Late: *Timaeus* – *Critias* – *Sophist* – *Statesman* – *Philebus* – *Laws*.

The debate has largely turned on stylometric analysis. Although this has been a major basis for arriving at the above scheme (or something like it),[3] I bracket it here entirely, for two reasons. First, even if we grant that stylistic similarity has been (or can be) reliably measured,[4] there is no failsafe path from this to chronological proximity. What prevents Plato from consciously reverting to an earlier stylistic tendency?[5] Secondly, the findings of stylometry are in any case ultimately rather modest: a late group comprising the six dialogues named above, and a grouping just before this of *Republic, Phaedrus, Parmenides*, and *Theaetetus*, with no certain indication of sequence in either case. A content-led approach is in my view simply more fruitful.

Cratylus

Opinion here varies widely. An early middle or transitional date has long been the dominant view, but it has also long been under attack. Ross (1955) and Luce (1964) are among its most influential defenders in face of these attacks. Explicitly, both date the *Cratylus* before the *Republic* and near the *Phaedo*. Implicitly, both lean towards a pre-*Phaedo* date.[6] Ademollo (2011: 21) puts it after the *Phaedo*. Others, stressing parallel themes and arguments in the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, see it as post-*Republic*: either late middle or plain late (for example, Owen 1953, Allan 1954, MacKenzie 1986, Barney 2001, Sedley 2003). Some prefer to stay agnostic (for example, Crombie 1963: vol. 2, 323; Baxter 1992: 3).

As the debate turns mostly on how the *Cratylus* deals with Forms, I start with two arguments for a pre-*Phaedo* dating on these grounds. The first is that its theory of Forms is comparatively rudimentary. Like Ross and Luce (see note 6), Vlastos sees here the theory's 'first intimation', prior to its first 'systematic' unfolding in the *Phaedo*, in that the *Cratylus* only argues for the *invariance* of Forms – not their inaccessibility to the senses, their incorporeality, and their transcendence (1991: 66 note 91).[7] Perhaps to justify dating the *Cratylus* later than the ('transitional') *Meno*, Vlastos adds that its argument for invariant Forms is so 'masterful' that it gives 'convincing evidence that Plato is well on the way to his new ontology'. I do not find it so masterful (cf. Chapter 2, section 6). In fact I see its clumsiness as a third reason to take the *Cratylus* as pre-*Phaedo*. More on this later.

Secondly, we see no reference to the idea of manifold particulars *participating* in a Form, which is introduced in the *Phaedo*. μετέχω appears just once, at 401c, when Socrates says: 'we ourselves say that what *partakes* of being [οὐσία] *is* [ἔστιν]'. 'We' here does not mean we 'friends of Forms' but we contemporary Athenians, who are like those who say ἐσσία instead of οὐσία. In any case, partaking of being (existing) is not the same as partaking in a Form (having a quality such as beauty). This use of μετέχω is pre-technical, as in the early dialogues. There it can denote, for example, one's sharing in (or having) a virtue (*Charmides* 158c, *Laches* 193e, 197e, *Protagoras* 323a–325a), one's share (degree of aptitude) in an art (*Gorgias* 448c), or one's participation in a discussion (*Euthydemus* 271b). The first example points to the soil from which the theory of Forms sprouts. The early dialogues presuppose that Piety Itself (for example) exists in its own right, without probing

either the nature of that existence or what participation in it involves. The *Cratylus* begins the probing of the first point, but not the second. Participation may be present inchoate: in the distinction at 439b–c between Beauty Itself and beautiful faces, and at 389b, where particular shuttles 'have' (ἔχειν) the Form of Shuttle. But it does not take philosophical shape before the *Phaedo*.

As I see it these two points outweigh Ademollo's arguments for a post-*Phaedo* dating. He claims, firstly, that the use of 'the ὅ ἐστι formula' for Forms at 389b, without flagging its technical status, 'suggests that Socrates is assuming that readers are already familiar with it' from the *Phaedo* (2011: 126–127). Yet I do not see why Plato cannot use it here *before* stressing its technical status at *Phaedo* 75d. He need only assume that readers will grasp that 'the thing itself which is a shuttle' refers to the singular εἶδος, not the shuttles a carpenter makes 'with a view to' it, or indeed breaks. Ademollo's second argument (194–195) is that, in the *Cratylus*, the etymology of 'Hades' that is ultimately accepted (from *aei eidenai*, 'always knowing') corrects the first one suggested (from *aides*, 'unseen'), which is the one affirmed at *Phaedo* 80d. Therefore the *Cratylus* corrects the *Phaedo*. But is this so clear? Hades as 'the unseen' has a negative sense in the *Cratylus* (death as an evil to be feared) that it does not have in the *Phaedo*. The latter could just as well *restore* this derivation by divesting it of that sense and connecting 'unseen' with 'noble and pure' (γενναῖον καὶ καθαρὸν). Note the senses of 'high-born' and 'true to one's birth' in γενναῖον (cf. LSJ). The moral of the *Phaedo* is that death is not to be feared *because* we will be going home to our original state as unembodied souls. The *Cratylus* passage affirms the superiority of our *post*-mortem state, but does not say that it is also our pre-natal one. In the *Phaedo* the 'unseen' is a *higher* realm that we return to. It is not the underworld; we are in that *now*.[8]

Later I will add further reasons to date the *Cratylus* with, but before, the *Phaedo*. Let us first see through the Forms-based arguments. The transcendence of Forms and the notion of participation are principle targets of Plato's ruthless examination of his own theory in the *Parmenides*. If these are absent in the *Cratylus*, why not see this as a 'no longer' rather than a 'not yet' and count the *Cratylus* as a late, 'critical' dialogue, with Owen and MacKenzie? As previously implied, we should not equate 'late' with 'critical', but that in itself does not prevent the *Cratylus* from being either. As Owen's remarks on the *Cratylus* are rather peremptory, I shall focus on MacKenzie's statement of the case.

In MacKenzie's view, the *Cratylus* is structured by 'a series of paradoxes' whose 'final effect is to attack the theory of Forms, not to defend it' (1986: 124). The flux/Forms aporia at the end is staged as a Scylla and Charybdis (or so I construe her meaning), in order to provoke reflection on whether there is between unknowable flux *and* unknowable Forms 'some other type of entity which allows for cognition' (125). I find this fanciful. The thrust of the passage is that Forms cannot be in flux, because *if they were* absurd consequences must follow. This 'if, then' logic unifies all four arguments at 439d–440b, which only works if they all relate to the same 'it': a Form supposed to be in flux.[9] MacKenzie (1986: 138 note 34) forces a change of subject at 439e3–5 in order to read e7 as claiming that, besides flux, *Forms* too are unknowable *qua unchanging*. This change is not there.[10] MacKenzie says that if Socrates is trying to vindicate Forms here, as the 'traditional'

reading has it, he is doing a poor job (137). Quite true. He should be arguing that Forms are exempt from even the slightest change, not from *total* flux, and he should not be treating the opposition of total flux and total stability as exhaustive. But is this not an argument for the *nascency* of this attempt to establish the existence and nature of Forms, relative to the *Phaedo, Symposium*, and *Republic*?

This is my third argument. I agree with Calvert (1970: 47) that the aporetic conclusion of the *Cratylus* reflects a 'genuine ontological perplexity' on Plato's part. This he will seek to overcome in the ensuing dialogues precisely by recognising a third term between Forms and radical flux. This is more plausible than MacKenzie's picture of a late, critical Plato, fully in charge of his game, cunningly leading us somehow to infer, against the whole grain of the passage, that he no longer cares for Forms but for some third thing about which he has nothing to say. Had MacKenzie consulted the etymologies of the *Cratylus*, she might have found there a *tertium quid*, namely flow, that actually does have an affinity with late Plato. But Plato *turns his back on* flow in the *Cratylus* – a strange thing to do in any case, but a downright bizarre one if this were a late dialogue. He *reduces* it to flux, and radical flux at that. Which other *tertium quid* would he be covertly intent on at the end of the dialogue?[11]

I turn now to arguments for a late dating from thematic or doctrinal parallels with the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*.[12] As a general rule such parallels are of course no guarantee of chronological proximity. The clear parallels between the *Laws* and *Republic* do not compel us to date them together. Sedley's grouping of the *Cratylus* with the *Sophist* is guilty of this slippage. Sedley constructs an ingenious story in which a passage removed from the *Cratylus* in an alleged second edition was later copied into the margins by someone who had the first edition, and was then 'inadvertently copied' into the text itself 'at a point where it plainly does not fit' (2003: 13). The passage (385b–d) holds that for a statement to be true all its parts (names) must also be true, which directly contradicts the argument of the *Sophist* – unlike anything else in the linguistic theory of the *Cratylus*, Sedley claims (12–13). The putative redaction, then, presupposes the *Sophist*. Ademollo (2011: 70) has given several reasons to doubt all this. But let's say Plato did revise the *Cratylus* in this way. Does it vindicate a late dating? Not at all. Plato could have arrived at the correction at any time and then elaborated it in the *Sophist*. Moreover, it is difficult to see why he would correct the *Cratylus* in this respect, while not correcting something far more important – the *Cratylus*' claim that being is divorced from all flow or motion, in light of the *Sophist*'s claim to the contrary.[13]

In the case of the *Theaetetus*, things are more complex. In terms of their approach to flux, it and the *Cratylus* are clearly distinct from *all* the other middle *and* late dialogues. Dating them together seems the most straightforward way to handle this. However, Luce (1964: 145–149) counters that the 'philosophical superiority' of the *Theaetetus* (its richer and better articulated critiques of Protagorean relativism and 'Heraclitean' flux, and the fact that it carries through the refutation of flux that the *Cratylus* pines for) suggests 'a considerable interval' between the two dialogues. It's a good argument, yet not one I can rely on with a good

conscience. I do not deny the brilliance of the *Theaetetus*' inquiry into the nature of knowledge. But the dialogue does appear in a more negative light in this book, for I question why Plato *reverts* to the *Cratylus*' double reduction of flow to flux and flux to radical flux, when the intervening dialogues indicate that he has learnt better. The 'considerable interval' has a different ring here. I admit the inelegance of my own scheme in this regard. The *Theaetetus* is something of a sore thumb in my picture of Plato's development. But not the *Cratylus*. The above arguments are enough, in my view, to establish it at the start of the middle period. But here are some others.

In the *Phaedo* we see Socrates express both his profound attraction to the *nous* doctrine and his deep disappointment at Anaxagoras' default to material causation. He then puts the doctrine in the 'too-hard basket', and it is never heard from again in the middle period. It is not until the *Timaeus* that Plato takes it out and makes it his own, and it remains central to his thought from then on. Now in the *Cratylus* we also find both this attraction to the doctrine and an inability to ground it. The latter has a different cast, relating to the double nature of flow. But that aside, this similar rapport to the *nous* doctrine is a reason to regard the two dialogues as belonging to the same phase of his development. I cannot see *late* Plato letting the doctrine trail off into the sunset with an offhand reference to 'divine wandering'.

My last argument concerns Plato's use of ῥοή and ῥέω. As we saw in Chapter 3 (section 1), in the *Phaedo, Symposium*, and *Republic* this almost always conforms to the 'flow' sense of *Cratylus* 2, not the 'flux' sense of *Cratylus* 3. The one exception is in the *Phaedo* (87d). At the same time, the *notion* of flux in sensibles in these dialogues generally corresponds to what I call *Mach* 1 flux, not the extreme flux attacked in *Cratylus* 3. Again, if there is an exception, it is in the *Phaedo* (78d–e). To my mind the natural conclusion is that in these dialogues Plato weans himself off his crude, incipient notion of flux in *Cratylus* 3, and his conceptual and terminological conflation of this with an incommensurable notion of flow, but it takes a little time; there is still a remnant in the dialogue *immediately* after the *Cratylus*.

ῥοή and cognates are not found in any of the early dialogues. They enter Plato's writerly vocabulary suddenly, in the *Cratylus*. The likely explanation is Plato's first visit to Sicily in 388–387 BC, and his exposure there to the radical notion of flux, and fluxist use of ῥύσις (and possibly ῥέω) of Epicharmus and perhaps the Pythagoreans generally. The encounter urges him to give deeper thought to Forms. Surely *they* are not like Epicharmus' growing man. It also urges a new focus on language. He sees ῥοή *hic et ubique* in the Greek lexicon and wonders why. Returning to Athens, he founds the Academy and settles down to write a very different kind of dialogue. He rashly assimilates to the Sicilian ῥοή the usage of the 'mainstream' poetic tradition and Heraclitus,[14] without recognising that, at the same time, he himself is continuing that usage in a way that is quite at odds with the 'flux' he has brought back with him (so to speak).

Timaeus and after

While there is no reason to question the consensus that the *Laws* is Plato's last work, there are reasons to reject the traditional[15] view that the *Timaeus* and *Critias*

are his last dialogues before it. Owen threw a cat among these pigeons in his influential 1953 essay, arguing for a middle dating of the *Timaeus* on the grounds that the old view makes no sense in terms of Plato's development. Among other things, Owen argued that the *Timaeus* maintains a 'paradigm' notion of Forms, and a strict opposition between being and becoming, which are characteristic of the middle period but are openly attacked or quietly killed off and supplanted in the *Parmenides* and other 'critical' dialogues, which the *Timaeus* therefore must precede. The rebuttals have been many, and on the whole effective (see especially Prior 1985, appendix). But they have not only come from those anxious to preserve the traditional view, such as Cherniss (1957). Scholars who favour a late dating of the *Timaeus* are nowadays more willing to place other late dialogues between it and the *Laws*. The view that it is the very first late dialogue is now quite common.

I do not feel a need here to add to the critical literature on Owen's claims. Regarding the *Parmenides*, I endorse the view of Prior (1985, Chapter 2) and Dorter (1994: 27–46) that the arguments directed there against the theory of Forms do not amount to a refutation, typically because they reductively misrepresent it. Plato can maintain it in later works, although he does need to respond to the genuine problems raised in the *Parmenides*. Prior holds that this is just what he does in the *Timaeus*, by resituating the relation between Forms and sensibles *vis-à-vis* the demiurge and the receptacle. By having the demiurge look to Forms and intelligently produce their sensible likenesses, Plato gets around the third man problem in the *Parmenides*, which presupposes the *Phaedo*'s makeshift approach to causation in terms of participation. Without going into the details here, the crucial thing is that the *Timaeus* rehabilitates the *nous* doctrine which the *Phaedo* had given up on in resorting to that makeshift. The latter is still there, but is 'restricted' by the introduction of this 'new causal principle' (Prior 1985: 6; cf. 13, 94ff. on the relation of the *Timaeus* to the *Phaedo* in this respect).

This above all is what makes the *Timaeus* not only a late dialogue but the *first* late dialogue, and as such the second major watershed in Plato's development. Once revived, the *nous* doctrine remains central to his thought to the end. The *Timaeus* inaugurates what I call Plato's cosmological turn. Cosmology, centred on the *nous* doctrine, becomes not just a major theme in late Plato, but his 'umbrella' theme – the theatre within which he addresses his metaphysical, theological, ethical, and political concerns. The cosmology we find in the middle dialogues is not only much more rudimentary, but is merely in juxtaposition to these other concerns, not integrated with them (although there are some baby steps in this direction in the *Phaedrus*; cf. Chapter 3, section 4). Most notably, there is no indication in the *Republic* of how the cosmology of Book X might relate to the metaphysics of Books V–VII. The issue is never broached of how the natural justice founded on the Form of Justice (501b), indeed the whole 'orderly' realm of Forms (500c), is supposed to translate into the orderly motions of the cosmos, or into motion *per se*, when Forms themselves don't move. By retrieving from the *Phaedo* the *nous* doctrine and the distinction between intelligent cause and material auxiliary, and by developing Anaxagoras' thought of the circular motion of *nous*, the *Timaeus* is able to weave metaphysics and

cosmology together in a way that circumvents this problem. We can also see in its recognition of a primordial physical motion a correction of Plato's previous attempt in the *Phaedrus* to get beyond the makeshift by making soul the cause of *all* motion.

One of my theses in this book is that the *Timaeus* also retrieves from *Cratylus* 2 the two-sided nature of 'flow'. Necessity's compliance with *nous* in the *Timaeus* means not only that elemental *flux* serves a purpose cosmologically, but also, on my interpretation, that the errant aspect of *flow* is predominantly contained by the orderly one. This retrieval, like the one from the *Phaedo*, is integral to the way the *Timaeus* seeks to respond to the deficiencies and black spots of the middle period. To a large extent these stem from the double reduction (flow → flux → radical flux) in *Cratylus* 3. The ensuing middle dialogues take some steps beyond that, both in adopting a milder form of flux in sensibles and in their reversion to the non-fluxist usage of ῥοή of *Cratylus* 2. But what is particularly necessary is that Plato come back and grapple with the duplicity of flow without slipping into the first of those reductions. While we see something of this, in a limited context, in the *Phaedrus*, it is central, as I argued in Chapter 4, to the whole way that the *Timaeus* is organised.

Now I don't deny that other late dialogues correct or clarify the middle period philosophy here and there, but the point of the above paragraphs is that the *Timaeus as a whole* is a concerted attempt to overcome the limitations of that philosophy. The other late dialogues both presuppose that attempt and respond in turn to the deficiencies and blind spots of the *Timaeus* itself.

This is particularly clear in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*. The *Sophist* widens the concept of being to include motion, not just rest, and with it life, soul, and intelligence, in order to affirm that there are things besides Forms, above all the cosmos, that are worthy of the name ὄν. The *Timaeus* emphatically gave the cosmos precisely these four characters, even specifying that its 'life' is 'everlasting', but it also placed it in the category of becoming, reserving being for the Form 'Living Thing' of which it is a copy. *Sophist* 248e–249d constitutes a correction of this second point *in light of* the first. It is less a break from the *Timaeus* than a formalisation of a development already there but not yet seen in all its implications. But that is not to say that motion here is simply the old category of becoming 'renamed' and divested of inherently negative status (Prior 1985: 135–136). There is more than a 'terminological' difference, or a 'shift of emphasis' from a 'durative aspect' of being to a bare 'existential' one (Prior 1985, 137). The crucial point is that, because the ensouled cosmos has intelligence and the specific motion proper to intelligence, it has motion and rest enduringly *at the same time*. This is the driving force behind the redefinition of being; *total* immobility is no longer the defining mark of genuine being. It is not a matter of extending being to *anything* that moves.[16] That would conflate being with flux, which remains anathema to Plato to the end. What is no longer anathema, as he makes clear in the *Laws*, is connecting being with *flow*.

If the *Sophist* is later than the *Timaeus*, then so must be the *Statesman*, for the latter itself tells us (257a–b, 284b, 286b) that the *Sophist* pre-dates it. Substantively too it is obvious that the *Statesman* myth presupposes the cosmotheological scheme unfolded in the *Timaeus*. It proceeds as though the demiurge, the living cosmos

and the pre-cosmic 'chaos' are already familiar to the reader and need no elaboration.[17] But it also inflects this scheme. The crucial thing is less the cosmic reversal itself than the reason it is introduced. The world-*soul* is now grasped as deficient, and *these* deficiencies, not just those pertaining to body, are grasped as integral to the problem of natural disorder. Even as the myth adverts to the stance of the *Timaeus*, it indicates at once that things are more complex. As such the *Statesman* stands halfway between that stance and the one taken in the *Laws*.

In Chapter 5 I speculated that Plato's abandonment of the *Critias* may be bound up with a recognition of the inadequacy of attributing natural catastrophe solely to necessity. But if so, it may be objected, would he not abandon the *Critias* directly for the *Statesman*? Not necessarily. It is not hard to picture Plato putting the problem of natural catastrophe on the back-burner for a while to take up the question of what sets the sophist (or indeed the statesman) apart from those that resemble him. But it is also not inconceivable that Plato did compose the *myth* of the *Statesman* immediately after dropping the *Critias*, and only later incorporated it into a dialogue concerning the statesman. It feels like a cut-and-paste job, with some rather clumsy efforts (by Plato's high artistic standards) to smooth out the wrinkles on the sides and make it seem integral to the dialogue.

In the case of the *Philebus*, things are less straightforward. Many if not most now regard it as Plato's second last dialogue, as do I, but the predominant basis for this is its strong stylistic affinity with the *Laws*, which I exclude from consideration here. Almost all regard the *Philebus* as falling *somewhere* in the late period. An exception is Waterfield (1980), who embraces Owen's middle dating of the *Timaeus* but argues, against Owen, that the *Philebus* belongs with it and is not part of a late critical onslaught on the middle philosophy. Many of Waterfield's arguments rely on the faulty assumption that 'late' = 'critical'. I will focus on one that does not: his argument that the *Philebus* must pre-date the *Statesman*. Waterfield (1980: 276–280) claims that, in the discussion of 'the Unlimited' (τὸ ἄπειρον) at *Philebus* 24a–26a, Plato conflates different forms of comparison which the *Statesman* (283d–e) insists be kept distinct: that of the more and less to each other (for example, hotter and colder), and that of both to a standard (for example, *too* hot or cold). This, he thinks, simply could not occur if the *Philebus* were written after the *Statesman*.

I think the confusion Waterfield finds is based on a misconstrual of the passage's frame of reference. The ease with which Plato moves from 'more/less' to 'too much/too little' is easily understood once we see that what he is basically talking about here under the heading τὸ ἄπειρον are various (mostly physical) *continua*. Waterfield takes 'more and less' to compare (for example) hotter and colder *things*, and objects that this does not entail the notion of things *becoming* hotter or colder to excess. But there is no mysterious jump from hotter and colder *points* on a continuum to the notion of hotter and colder 'advancing forever' (24d) along that continuum. Plato in fact has good reason to treat 'more/less' and 'too much/too little' together here. His point is that it is only by the imposition of Limit upon the Unlimited that it can be determined both *how much* hotter and colder such points are, and *by how much* they are too hot or cold within a given frame of reference (for example, the body

temperature of a man) – that is, what *exactly* the standard is. On this basis it is not obscure why the imposition of Limit involves the removal of an extant excess (26b). It is Waterfield's own assumptions that make this seem 'absurd' (1980: 277).[18]

The substantive arguments for a late late dating of the *Philebus* are strong but not compelling. Firstly, Sayre's thesis of a distinct 'late ontology' in this dialogue seems to me to have much to recommend it. Sayre's two main arguments are: (1) that the seemingly bizarre doctrines Aristotle ascribed to late Plato (Forms as numbers or measures, the Indefinite Dyad, etc.) can be found under other names in the *Philebus*; and (2) that in this new ontology Forms are no longer radically separate (1983: 13–15). I take Sayre to have established the first claim, but not the second. A formidable argument against the latter is supplied by Dorter (1994: 3): why, if Plato abandoned this doctrine which Aristotle so despised, does Aristotle never mention it? Sayre suppresses an explicit affirmation of the doctrine at 62a, and a virtual one at 59a.[19] However, if we take seriously (as I think we should) his argument that the place of Forms in the ontological fourfold of the *Philebus* is both in the class of Limit and in the 'mixed' class of things that emerge from the imposition of Limit on the Unlimited (Sayre 1983: 291 note 3; cf. 161–168), it would follow that they are not radically separate from sensibles, which are also generated in that way. Putting this together with 62a, there seems some justification for Sayre's remark (161) that Plato's theory of Forms is in transition here. But when?

I take it that for Sayre the *Philebus* post-dates not only the *Timaeus* but the *Sophist* and *Statesman*. There is *prima facie* support for this in the fact that, as Sayre observes (129), *Philebus* 16c–19a 'couples' the method of collection and division of the latter two dialogues with a new ontological thesis of the constitution of things from Limit and the Unlimited. Conversely, since that method is also found in the *Phaedrus*, and since the *Philebus* does not employ it with anything like the clarity of the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, we might conclude that it pre-dates them. Furthermore, Sayre (62) holds the new ontology, especially the Unlimited, to be foreshadowed in *Parmenides* II. While this supports a late dating on Sayre's view (16) that *Parmenides* II, being critical, is late, it may have the opposite effect if we reject that view. Nevertheless, there are reasons to favour a late late dating on this score. Insofar as the Unlimited (also known as 'the Great and Small' and the 'Dyad') is a cosmological concept, it overlaps with 'necessity'. If the *Philebus* preceded the *Timaeus* and *Statesman*, we would expect 'the more and less', the 'mark' of the Unlimited (24e), to figure prominently in the descriptions of the pre-cosmos at *Timaeus* 52d–53b and *Statesman* 273b. It does not, besides a passing reference to 'dense/rare' and 'heavy/light' in the *Timaeus*. It is much more prominent in *Laws* X (cf. Chapter 1). This is as we would expect, if the *Laws* is the only dialogue capable of being informed by the *Philebus*.

From a cosmotheological perspective the *Philebus* also produces a mixed impression. The *nous* doctrine, the demiurge and the world-soul are all there, but are treated in such a broad, ambiguous, often clunky, and avowedly 'playful' way at 26e–30e that we may be tempted to regard this as a crude first draft of what will come in the *Timaeus*. Yet two points suggest a dating with the *Statesman*. One is that the

Statesman and *Philebus* alone, among the late dialogues, intimate an allegorisation of Zeus as the cosmos. It would be strange for this to occur either side of the *Timaeus*, where Zeus is marginalised. Secondly, the *Philebus* too adapts the *Timaeus* scheme, but in a different way. Instead of a flawed world-soul, we find one whose functions are expanded from maintaining to creating cosmic order, at least in certain respects.[20] The question then is which of the two comes first. The problem of natural disaster is not addressed in the *Philebus*, which might suggest its greater proximity to the *Timaeus*. Yet if the abandonment of the *Critias* is bound up with a recognition that that problem hinges on the world-soul's capacity to maintain order, I struggle to see the enhancement of its powers coming before the explicit avowal of its deficiencies. It is more plausible that in the *Philebus* Plato seeks to give the world-soul the resources it needs to surmount the defects avowed in the *Statesman*, and to make it the linchpin of a cosmology which limits the problem. He subsequently, as I argued in Chapter 5, recognises that this will not do, and dumps the world-soul in his final work.

Notes

1 See, for example, Cooper 1997: xii–xv.
2 I wonder if the *Phaedrus* might be shifted to the end of the middle period.
3 Brandwood (1990: 250) claims stylometric support for exactly the sequence of late dialogues I am supporting, but for many this is a bridge too far.
4 For reservations about this, see, for example, Young 1994, Dorter 1994: 5–6, Ross 1955: 188.
5 Cf. Waterfield 1980: 274–275, Young 1994: 242–243.
6 Luce later states this outright (1965: 21), describing the *Cratylus* as 'transitional', an 'important stage' in Plato's thinking of Forms but one 'distinctly prior to the position reached in the *Phaedo*'. In Ross's case, I infer it from his remark (1955: 194–195) that the theory is stated more 'simply' than 'in later dialogues', and from his earlier claim (1951: 19) that in the *Cratylus* 'Plato has not yet reached the point of thinking that an Idea is never perfectly exemplified, but only imitated', which clearly implies its priority to the *Phaedo*.
7 On the last point compare Ross (1951: 18–20), Luce (1965: 28–30, 36), who adds that the stage is at least set for separate Forms to appear, and Irwin (1977: 2). The absence of transcendence is contested, typically on the basis of the shuttle passage, for example, by Hackforth (1955: 9) and Calvert (1970). Note that Ross's claim that Forms transition from immanent to transcendent from the early to middle dialogues is too simplistic, in that the transcendence of Forms does not preclude their being instantiated in particulars (cf. Vlastos 1991: 265).
8 I am indebted to Leon Ruiz (2007: 56) for the point that this is implicit in the *Phaedo*'s claim that we live in 'hollows' below Earth's actual surface, as it is in the notion at *Gorgias* 493a (cf. *Phaedrus* 250c) that our bodies are tombs for souls which, it seems, are not just pining for the fjords.
9 As we saw in Chapter 2, the 'it' gradually broadens so that Socrates ultimately denies that *anything* could be in flux. But it is still the same 'it', only a broader one, at issue.
10 All three statements at e1–5 are tied together by εἰ γάρ at e2 and εἰ δέ at e3. To simplify the argument: *whatever* is never in the same state cannot be anything, for to be a definite thing (i.e., to retain rather than 'relinquish its Form'), *it* must remain in the same state and not change or move. And that in turn is the condition of *its* knowability.
11 I must also dispute MacKenzie's claim (1986: 142, restating Owen 1953: 85 note 6) that 'the flux of the *Timaeus* is present in the *Cratylus*, but it is under attack'. Firstly, there is

no indication that *elemental* flux is in question. Socrates' primary task is to establish that *Forms* are not in flux, and when he extends his argument beyond Forms, it is to the objects of ordinary experience. The things that 'flow like leaky pots' can hardly be the elements themselves. Secondly, the flux of the *Timaeus* is *Mach* 2, whereas that attacked here is *Mach* 3. Unfortunately, since Cherniss failed to recognise this distinction, this part of his critique of Owen (Cherniss 1957: 242ff.) tends to muddy some issues as it clarifies others.

12 Allan (1954: 273–274) gives dramatic grounds as well for grouping the *Cratylus* with these dialogues. See Luce 1964: 139 for criticism.

13 Another of Sedley's arguments for a late dating is that the *Cratylus* adds aether to the elemental fourfold of the *Timaeus* (2003: 14–15). Like Ademollo (2011: 196), I think the evidence adduced for this (from Xenocrates, the *Epinomis*, and *De Caelo*) is flimsy. To his criticisms I add that Sedley overlooks Socrates' apparent endorsement of aether in the *Phaedo* – long before the *Timaeus*, in which it is just a kind of air. More importantly, as I said in Chapter 2, the *Cratylus* etymology is simply too brief to give any indication as to whether Plato believes in aether at all.

14 Abetted in this, perhaps, by the doctrines of pseudo-Heraclitean contemporaries to which, according to Aristotle, Cratylus introduced him. But if this occurred in Plato's youth, as Aristotle claims, it is curious that we see nothing of it in the early dialogues. There are references to Heraclitus' statements on *perspectival* variation (what Irwin calls aspect change) in the *Hippias Major* (289a, 293b–c), but nothing like *panta rhei*.

15 Among modern scholars this view was never unanimous, even in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For an illuminating resumé see Cherniss 1957: 226 note 3.

16 I concede that the *Sophist* passage does not make this clear. In particular the plurals at 249d indicate that being/the All is to be understood as comprising both moving and unmoving *things*. But I suggest that this is a product of the formal and general pitch of the discussion. In equating 'being' with 'the All' immediately before this, Plato advertises the specific underlying motivation of the change, but he is seeking to generalise from this apropos the *categories* of being, rest, and motion.

17 It is true that Plato refers to the demiurge prior to the *Timaeus*, as at *Republic* 530a, but this is *incidental* to the argument there. The demiurge is obviously not incidental to the *Statesman* myth. Elaboration would be crucial unless it had already come in the *Timaeus*.

18 Arguably Waterfield is also hamstrung by his view that the *Philebus* is simply an ethical work in which the metaphysical passage (23b–31b), like the earlier methodological one (16c–19a), is a mere digression (1982: 48).

19 It should be noted that at the same time 58a–59c and 61d–62a clearly (*contra* Owen) uphold the being (Forms) and becoming (sensibles) dichotomy. Does this entail a dating before the *Sophist*? It is an awkward question. One could say that the *Sophist* leaves untouched the distinction between the eternally immutable being *of Forms* and the becoming of *what is in flux*. It says only that this is not exhaustive, that motionless being is not the *only* being. Nothing then prevents Plato after the *Sophist* from setting flux off against Forms, although one wishes for a more differentiated analysis at 58a–59c in particular, incorporating things that are neither Forms nor embroiled in constant flux.

20 I refer again to my elaboration of this point in Mason 2014.

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