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Closing a Road to Immanence in Plato's *Phaedo*

by

Bilal A. Khan

Under the Direction of Allison Piñeros-Glasscock, PhD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, scholars have held that in Plato's *Phaedo*, Forms are said to *not* be 'in' sensible particulars. The entities that are said to be in sensible particulars are immanent characters. Gail Fine tries to flip this narrative but does not succeed. Daniel T. Devereux attempts to show this by arguing that entities such as hotness in fire perish. I contend that Devereux's argument is not enough to establish that such entities are not Forms. They are not Forms because *either* they are said to withdraw, and withdrawal is a genuine, non-Cambridge change. Forms cannot undergo a non-Cambridge change, so these entities cannot be Forms. *Or*, they are said to perish, and perishing is a change that matters, since Forms are not made up of parts. Forms cannot undergo changes that matter, so these entities cannot be Forms.

INDEX WORDS: Plato, Forms, Immanence, Separation, Immanent Characters, Aristotle

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Closing a Road to Immanence in Plato's *Phaedo*

by

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DEDICATION

To Maryam, who held me when I was losing my confidence. To Furqan, who helped me get back my confidence. To Alan, Antonio and Ben, who kept talking to me, which helped. To David, who was the first to reach out to me. To Mama, who's still keeping it all afloat.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Above all one might discuss the question what on earth the Forms contribute to sensible things... they help in no way towards the knowledge of the other things (for they are not even the substance of these, *else they would have been in them*), nor towards their being, *if they are not in the particulars which share in them...*

(*Metaphysics* I.9, 991a10-20; emphasis added)

Aristotle says that Platonic Forms are not in sensible particulars. Had they been 'in' sensible particulars, they would have contributed to the being of sensible particulars and to our knowledge of them. Many scholars have disagreed with the consequences that Aristotle draws, but the vast majority of them have accepted his report about Plato. Platonic Forms, they say, are not in sensible particulars. Some of the chief proponents of this view in the last century are J. D. Mabbott (1926), Gregory Vlastos (1954, 1969) and David Gallop (1975). Vlastos, for example, argues that there are three ontological levels: Forms, immanent characters, and sensible particulars. Immanent characters are in sensible particulars, not Forms.

Versions of the standard account have been challenged in different ways in the second half of the last century by scholars such as Gail Fine (1986, 2004), David Bostock (1986), Charlotte Stough (1976), Alexander Nehamas (1973) and D. O'Brien (1967). Fine and D. O'Brien, for example, argue that immanent characters are not something other than Forms: they are simply Forms inhering in sensible particulars.¹

When Aristotle says that Forms are not in sensible particulars, he can mean one of two things: Plato did not believe that Forms are in sensible particulars, or Plato believed that Forms are in sensible particulars, but he was wrong. If Forms have all the features that Plato ascribes to

¹ D. O'Brien writes: "Particular three will be the only particularization of the form of three. There will be no 'third thing', no fieriness in fire that is not particular fire and not the form of fire" (The Last Argument of Plato's *Phaedo*, 1967, 202). Fine concurs: "... the so-called immanent characters are not a distinct ontological category from forms, but (parts of) forms themselves, when they are in things" (1986, 76).

them, then they cannot be in sensible particulars. One thing we can do to determine which of these positions is correct is to inquire if Plato ever explicitly claims that Forms are in sensible particulars. If he does, then it is reasonable to assume that the second option is correct: Plato thinks Forms are in sensible particulars.

Now, Aristotle accuses Plato of subscribing to a view of Forms that compels us to believe in absurdities (*Metaphysics* I.9, 991a17). If Forms are in sensible particulars, then Aristotle's allegation loses some of its force. Even if the view of Forms Aristotle is contending with leads to absurd conclusions, we can no longer attribute that view to Plato.

Secondly, there are consequences for scholarship if it turns out that Plato thinks Forms are in sensible particulars. The enterprise of looking for evidence of the absurdities pointed out by Aristotle in Plato's works does not look as fruitful anymore. Plato's view of Forms may still turn out to be problematic, but there is less of a compulsion to believe that it is problematic in the way Aristotle alleges in *Metaphysics* I.9. This is so because Aristotle bases his objections on the premise that Plato thought Forms are not in sensible particulars.

In the first part of "Immanence," (1986) Gail Fine argues that Plato does say Forms are in sensible particulars. She considers Plato's assertions in the *Phaedo* to that effect.² Largeness, Plato says, is in Simmias and hotness is in fire. Simmias—a human being—and fire, are both sensible particulars. Largeness and hotness are clearly not sensible particulars, so they must be Forms.

² Fine intends the meaning of 'in' to be "neutral" with respect to the claim that Plato says "forms are in sensibles" (1986, 73). Fine is only interested in establishing that Plato *says* that Forms are in sensible particulars "in *some* sense." For the purposes of my inquiry, I will accept the vague meaning that Fine assigns to the word 'in' in this context. Ultimately, I will argue that the entity that is said to be 'in' sensible particulars in the *Phaedo*—'in' in this vague sense—is not a Form. Therefore, it does not matter what specific sense the word 'in' is meant in, because whatever is said to be 'in' sensible particulars is not a Form, at least according to the reasons given by Gail Fine.

Fine's reading of the *Phaedo* seems to quickly run into a major problem. Plato says that this largeness and hotness either withdraw or perish when approached by their opposites (*Phaedo* 103a2). If largeness and hotness are Forms, then they should not be able to do either of these things. Withdrawal and perishing are changes, and Forms do not change (78d4). Fine answers by arguing that the withdrawal Plato has in mind is not a genuine change. Although the perishing Plato has in mind is a genuine change, it is not a change that matters.

Fine's view is challenged by Daniel T. Devereux in "Separation and Immanence in Plato's Theory of Forms" (1994). He argues that the logic of Plato's argument shows that largeness and hotness perish. If they perish, then they cannot be Forms. If they cannot be Forms, then Aristotle is right and from the *Phaedo* onwards, Plato denies that Forms are in sensible particulars (64).

Since Devereux's response to Fine, there has not been a major response by any scholar directly addressing their arguments. Fine included her original essay in a collection of essays published in 2003 titled *Plato on Knowledge and Forms* and did not respond to Devereux's objections. Scholars have built off of Fine and Devereux's work, but they have not explicitly criticized their particular views in any detail.³ Hence Verity Harte, in summarizing this debate in "Plato's Metaphysics," cites only Fine and Devereux's works (Fine 2019, 471). I think Devereux is right and Fine does not convincingly argue that Plato says Forms are in sensible particulars, but not for the reasons that Devereux gives.

I will begin by arguing that Fine's chief claim survives Devereux's key objection. Largeness and hotness may perish, but if what is perishing is simply one part of the Form, and not all of it, then the Form itself does not perish (and hence, change). Therefore, if all we have to

³ Debra Nails, for example, largely accepts Fine's conclusions about separation and immanence and uses them to argue against what she calls are two dogmas of contemporary Platonism. These dogmas are belief in a fundamental cleavage between Forms and sensible particulars and belief Plato's unhypothetical first principle is identical to the Form of the Good (Nails 2013).

go by is Devereux's argument, then largeness and hotness are Forms and these Forms are 'in' sensible particulars.

I will then give an independent argument for why Fine fails to show that largeness and hotness in the *Phaedo* are Forms. Fine argues that the specific kind of withdrawal Plato is talking about—which largeness or hotness may be involved in—is a non-genuine, mere Cambridge change. I will argue that withdrawal in the *Phaedo* involves an actual change of location, so it cannot be a mere Cambridge change.

I will then consider the objection that the kind of perishing Plato has in mind does not constitute a type of change that Plato disallows Forms (it is a change that does not matter). If that is the case, then—as Fine acknowledges—Forms need to be made up of parts. I will argue that according to the *Phaedo*, Forms cannot be made up of parts. If Forms cannot be made up of parts, then largeness and hotness cannot be Forms. If they are not Forms, then we cannot hold that in the *Phaedo*, Plato says that Forms are in sensible particulars.⁴

If Plato says that Forms are not in sensible particulars, then Aristotle can justifiably attribute to Plato the view of Forms that he criticizes in *Metaphysics* I.9 (whether or not his particular criticisms are justified). Moreover, the ground is cleared up again to look for evidence of the absurdities in Plato's dialogues that Aristotle charges Plato with.⁵

⁴ I have chosen *Phaedo* as the arena in which to carry out this debate over immanence because the main dialogue that recent scholars have pointed to in order to show that Forms are immanent is the *Phaedo*. Fine, Devereux and Dancy all look to the *Phaedo* to contest this claim over immanence. Support for rejection of immanence, on the other hand, can be found in dialogues such as the *Symposium* and *Timaeus*. David Ross, in *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford, 1951), identifies *Phaedo* 74c1 as the first instance in Plato's writings where we find evidence of his holding a belief in the existence of an ontological entity that occupies an intermediate position between Forms and sensible particulars. D. O'Brien begins with the evidence from the *Phaedo* and compares it with the evidence in the *Parmenides* in footnote 2 ('The Last Argument of Plato's *Phaedo*,' 1967, 201). Gregory Vlastos does the same in footnote 27 ('Reasons and Causes in the *Phaedo*,' 1969, 300), and so does Charlotte Stough in footnote 33 ('Forms and Explanation in *Phaedo*,' 1976, 23).

⁵ Devereux, Fine and most other scholars assume that Plato is using Socrates as a mouthpiece to propagate his own views. Therefore, it is Plato who either does or does not think that Forms are immanent in sensible particulars. So far, I have followed their lead in attributing to Plato the views of the character of Socrates in Plato's dialogues. In the wider literature, a consensus has been developing for some time that the Socratic problem—whether or not the

2 IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL AND THE NEED FOR IMMANENT CHARACTERS

A cursory reading of the *Phaedo* seems to support the idea that for Socrates, there exist beings that are not quite Forms, but neither are they sensible particulars. Scholars often refer to them as immanent characters and they exist 'in' sensible particulars. Largeness, for example, exists 'in' the individual Simmias and hotness exists 'in' fire. Consider the following exchange between Phaedo and Socrates:

If you say that that is so, then whenever you say that Simmias is larger than Socrates but smaller than Phaedo, you mean then, don't you, that both things are in Simmias, largeness and smallness?

I do.

(Phaedo 102b3-7)

views that Plato is attributing to Socrates were held by the historical figure Socrates—was based on mistaken assumptions to which a solution cannot be found (Dorion 2010, 12).

Henceforth, with respect to the *Phaedo*, I will argue as if it is Socrates who holds these views and refrain from claiming that these views were held by Plato. However, by Socrates I am not referring to the historical Socrates, but the character that we see represented in the *Phaedo*, who may or may not be an accurate representation of the historical Socrates. I have taken this position because concerning this issue, I can confidently claim only the following: the character of Socrates that shows up in the *Phaedo* holds these views. To say that it is Plato that holds these views, I will have to consider the structure of the whole dialogue and take a position on whether the author's voice is in fact represented by Socrates' voice. Such an analysis may involve study of literary techniques, and that is beyond the scope of this work. On the other hand, to say that the *historical* Socrates' views are being captured in the *Phaedo* (or in other dialogues) requires historical and philological research of a still different kind, and that is also beyond the scope of this work.

Sometimes, however, I have written as if Plato holds these views about Forms and not Socrates. I have done that in the context of Aristotle's views on Platonic dialogues, since he seems to consider the voice of Socrates' character to be fully representative of Plato's views. Of course, ultimately I will make a claim about the correctness of Aristotle's report about Plato—I want to say that he is justified in claiming that for *Plato*, Forms are not immanent. How can I do that, when I hold that the views expressed by Socrates in the *Phaedo* are views of Socrates the character and not Plato himself? Am I in fact disagreeing with Aristotle?

I do not think so. Both of us agree on a basic point: the views ascribed to Socrates in the Platonic works do not allow for there to be immanence. Aristotle thinks that these views are Plato's own views and I think that these views may not be Plato's own views (and so I refrain from making that claim). However, our disagreement on this point does not change the fact that we agree on the more important point: the views ascribed to the character of Socrates do not allow for immanence (at least in the *Phaedo*).

Socrates' purpose in bringing up immanent characters in the *Phaedo* is to set up his argument for the immortality of the soul. To show that the soul is immortal, he needs to talk about essential properties, since the argument depends on the existence of a special essential property—that of Life (105d). To talk about essential properties, he needs to distinguish between essential properties and accidental properties.⁶

If an object's accidental property is approached by its opposite, the object survives and the accidental property either withdraws or perishes. For example, when the large Simmias is approached by smallness, the largeness of Simmias either withdraws or perishes, but Simmias survives (102d). On the other hand, if an object's essential property is approached by its opposite, then the object cannot survive. For example, fire's essential property is hotness, and if coldness approaches fire, fire cannot survive. Fire perishes, and seemingly so does heat (106a).

Socrates goes on to distinguish between essential properties and the special essential property of Life. Just as fire is essentially hot, the soul is essentially alive, which means that it is essentially deathless, since that is just what it means to be alive (105e). Since the soul is deathless, it is immortal. Hotness and coldness are essential properties too, but they are not immortal, because their opposite—which they could never admit—is not death (and so they are not essentially deathless).

The question I am pursuing is whether or not the accidental and essential properties (or universals of some kind) that Socrates refers to—other than the essential property (universal) of Life—are Forms. It seems that the largeness that is in Simmias, for example, cannot be a Form, because "... *either* it goes away *or* it perishes" (103a2). Forms cannot go away (withdraw) or

⁶ I am not taking a position on the question that these entities are in fact properties. For my purposes, all that I am committed to is that they are universals of some kind. I am using the language of properties here because it helps me explain the context of the argument in an easier way.

perish. They cannot change (78d4), and they cannot dissolve (80b1). Withdrawal seems to be a change, and perishing seems to be a type of dissolution (in addition to being merely a kind of change). If largeness and hotness are not sensible particulars or Forms, they must therefore belong to a third ontological category. Therefore, it is not surprising that it is in the *Phaedo* that commentators have usually located the first evidence in Plato's writings for the existence of immanent characters.⁷

This is the view that most scholars have traditionally upheld. Entities such as largeness and hotness, which are said to be capable of changes such as withdrawal and perishing, are not Forms. Gail Fine tries to flip this narrative by conceiving of withdrawal and perishing in such a way that we can reconcile these processes with changelessness (in the context of Forms), and so consider them as appropriate characteristics of Forms. Withdrawal is a non-genuine, mere Cambridge change, so a Form can undergo it. Perishing is not a Cambridge change, but it is still a change that does not matter, so a Form can undergo it.

Devereux counters Fine's narrative by insisting that the entities in the final sections of the *Phaedo* are perishable. Overall, he wants to argue that from the *Phaedo* onwards, Forms are *not* immanent in sensible particulars. I have argued that Devereux does not succeed, because his objections do not bear directly on Fine's argument.

Before I address Devereux's objection to Fine and argue against it, I will lay out and clarify Fine's basic argument.

⁷ See footnote 3.

3 FINE'S CONTENTION: WITHDRAWAL AND PERISHING ARE IRRELEVANT CHANGES

Fine argues in the *Phaedo* that entities such as the largeness in Simmias are Forms even if they are said to withdraw or perish, and thus apparently change (*Phaedo* 103a2). Since we can reconcile the changeless nature of Forms with a view of withdrawal and perishing that does not involve real change, we can take Forms to be immanent in sensible particulars.

On the face of it, this reconciliation seems impossible. First, we will see how it is so in the case of withdrawal and then we will see how it is so in the case of perishing.

A withdrawal seems to involve change, and Forms cannot change (*Phaedo* 78d4). Fine achieves this reconciliation by offering a conception of Forms according to which withdrawal involves a mere Cambridge change, which is a non-genuine change (Fine 1986, 77).⁸ Fine does not go into great detail about her conception of a Cambridge change, but footnote 11 suggests that she is relying on P. T. Geach's conception of a Cambridge change. In *God and the Soul* (1969), Geach defines a Cambridge change as something that *only* pertains to the following definition:

The thing called 'x' has changed if we have 'F(x) at time *t*' true and 'F(x) at time *t*¹' false, for some interpretation of 'F', '*t*', and '*t*¹'.

(71-72)

For a non-Cambridge change to have occurred, something other than the mere process described above needs to have happened. For a Cambridge change, the above suffices. Here is an

⁸ Fine's claim, that Plato allows for Cambridge changes in the *Phaedo*, is disputed by G.E.L. Owen in his 'Plato and Parmenides on the Timeless Present,' *Monist*, 50 (1966), 336-340. Owen thinks that it is only in the *Sophist* that Plato allows for Cambridge changes, and the *Sophist* is widely considered to be written much after the *Phaedo*. See 'The Platonic Corpus,' T.H. Irwin, *The Oxford Handbook of Plato* (2019), 73. See also 'Stylometry and Chronology,' Leonard Brandwood, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (2022), 104. In the section on genuine and non-genuine changes, I will argue against Fine that the withdrawal related in the *Phaedo* is not a mere Cambridge change, because it involves a change of physical location.

example: As someone who is more than fifteen years of age, I am allowed to drive in the state of Georgia. Let us imagine the successful passage of a bill in the legislature that increases the driving age to thirty. Suddenly, I am not allowed to drive in Georgia. Nothing changed *in* me, but I have been involved in a Cambridge change. I was allowed to drive before, and I am not allowed to drive now.

One might ask: why should we conceive of this withdrawal as a Cambridge change, and not as a genuine change? If largeness was in Simmias, and it has now withdrawn from Simmias, then that largeness seems to have moved away from Simmias. To withdraw from something is to move away from it *in space*. It involves a change of location. A change of location is *not* a non-genuine change, which is what a Cambridge change is supposed to be. Why then does Fine say that withdrawal of largeness is a Cambridge change?

We can see why Fine conceives of withdrawal as a Cambridge change by considering the following passage:

But there is no difficulty in understanding how Forms can retreat from what they are in; the Form of Hot retreats from something *when that thing ceases to have or exemplify it*. This may involve a genuine change in what the Form was in; a body, for example, ceases to be hot. But it involves no genuine, but only a mere Cambridge, change in the Form...

(Fine 1986, 77; emphasis added)

In the kind of withdrawal that Socrates has in mind, nothing about Forms changes at all. The sensible particular that has the Form (or exemplifies it) may cease to exist, or change in some other way, and thereby change through a change of location, or a change of state of some other kind. The Form itself does not change its location. However, *a fact about its location has changed*: the Form was in proximity of the sensible particular before, and now it is not in

proximity of the sensible particular. Since the Form's location has not changed, but a trivial fact about its location has changed, the Form has been involved in a Cambridge change.

In other words, when Socrates says that the Form *withdraws*, all he means is that the Form is no longer *involved* in the sensible particular that it was previously involved in. That involvement has ended because the sensible particular changed its location (by ceasing to be, or moving away etc.), but the Form *remained in the same location*. Hence, the Form was involved in a Cambridge change—a non-genuine change—even though a change in location happened. It is just that the change in location happened to the sensible particular, and not to the Form. A change of location of the Form would have meant that the Form was involved in a genuine change.

Consider, for example, a rock on which some ice has formed. When that ice melts, nothing about the rock itself changes, but the rock has been involved in a Cambridge change. It was connected to the ice before, and now it has 'withdrawn' from the ice. The ice—sensible particular—has changed its location, but the rock has not changed its location. Therefore the rock—the Form—has been involved in a Cambridge change.

Overall, Fine's point is the following: since the change in withdrawal is not genuine—it is a mere Cambridge change—we can say that Forms withdraw without violating the principle of the changelessness of Forms.

To reconcile perishing with the changelessness of Forms, Fine explains the constituent elements of Forms as follows: Forms are made up of an infinite amount of "nonmaterial stuff" that are only partly in sensible particulars (Fine 1994, 77-78). The bits of them that are in sensible particulars perish, but that does not mean that the Forms *themselves* perish, because the infinite, non-depletable nature of the stuff ensures that losing any one part of it "makes no real

difference." This change is not a mere Cambridge change, but "neither is it any sort of change Plato is concerned to disallow forms" (78).

4 DEVEREUX'S CONTENTION: A THING THAT PERISHES CANNOT BE A FORM

Devereux thinks that he can refute Fine's argument, and that of scholars like Dancy (1991) who think that Socrates allows for immanent Forms in the *Phaedo*. Devereux argues that the entities that Socrates mentions in the second half of the *Phaedo* such as largeness in Simmias (which is the largeness in us) and hotness in fire, are perishable. If they are perishable, then they are clearly going through a genuine change, and if they are going through a genuine change, they are not Forms.

This is one of the main arguments that Devereux relies on to conclude that Forms are not immanent in the Platonic corpus in *every* dialogue that is traditionally thought to have been written just before or after the *Phaedo*.⁹ This is because Devereux thinks that there exists already the "explicit denial of immanence in the *Symposium*, *Parmenides*, and *Timaeus*" (1994, 69). In the eyes of Devereux, it is only "in the *Phaedo* he [the character Socrates] seems to regard Forms as *in* their participants" (63). If he can refute Fine's arguments for the immanence of Forms in the *Phaedo*, then his account will have made the *Phaedo* "consistent with the *Symposium* and *Timaeus*" (72), and confirmed Aristotle's reports of Plato having separated Forms from sensible particulars (78).

Devereux does not separately address Fine's arguments for withdrawal and perishing in the *Phaedo*. Fine offers two ways in which entities such as the largeness in Simmias and hotness

⁹ Devereux also suggests that the word *ιδέα* in the *Phaedo* refers to imperishable, non-immanent entities, but these are not Forms. This argument from language plays a minor role in Devereux's overall case, and in any case depends on the 'perishability' argument (1994, 71).

in us may turn out to be immanent. By showing that these entities perish, Devereux seems to be countering one of these ways: that which is linked with perishing. He does not seem to be countering the way that is linked with withdrawal.

Although Devereux does not explicitly address withdrawal, I think that he means for his argument to indirectly address withdrawal as well. It addresses withdrawal in the following way: if entities such as largeness in us perish, and perishing is a genuine change, then there is no need to directly address Fine's withdrawal option. Withdrawal is simply no longer an available option. Devereux thinks that he has established that these entities perish. If they perish, then they *do not withdraw*. Socrates says that either they withdraw or they perish, not both (*Phaedo* 103a2). If it is firmly established that they do not withdraw—because they perish—then there is no point in addressing a hypothetical scenario in which they do withdraw.

I will now argue that through his 'perishability' argument, Devereux does not refute the core of Fine's argument.

4.1 Is Devereux Addressing the Core of Fine's Argument for Immanence?

Devereux thinks that Fine does not seriously consider the possibility that the entities Socrates mentions in the final sections of the *Phaedo*—largeness, hotness etc.—are perishable. He says:

The critics' rejoinder is that Socrates does not suppose that perishing is a real possibility for the largeness in us. His view is that *it must always withdraw at the approach of its opposite*. (1994, 67; emphasis added)

The critic that Devereux is addressing himself to—as he specifies in footnote 8—is Gail Fine (1986). The way that Devereux goes about making his main argument also shows us that he

does not think that Fine takes seriously the possibility that such entities perish. Devereux outlines Socrates' discussion of hotness in fire, and calls our attention to the following passage:

'And in the same way, I imagine, if the un-coolable were imperishable, then whenever something cold attacked the fire, it could never be put out nor could it perish, but it would depart and go away intact.'
'It would have to.'

(*Phaedo*, 105e)

Devereux then adds the following comment:

"Now, according to Socrates' reasoning, since fires do perish, it follows that the heat carried by fire must be perishable—if it weren't, the fire could never be quenched."
(Devereux 1994, 68)

In other words, the logic of Socrates' reasoning about fire and hotness in fire implies that the hotness involved is perishable. If it were not perishable, then fire should never be able to be put out. Since hotness is perishable, and entities like largeness belong to the same category as hotness, Devereux goes on to conclude: "Socrates does regard such things as the largeness and smallness in us as perishable entities." (1994, 67)

I will now show that Fine does take the possibility seriously that entities such as largeness and hotness are perishable. If we look at the passage in Fine's *Immanence* (1986) that Devereux is referring to, we find Fine making the following claim:

Similarly, if the hotness in us is a Form, then it retreats but does not perish at the approach of coldness.

(1986, 77)

Fine thinks that the hotness in us is a Form, so she gives an explanation for how we can understand withdrawal as a type of change that is not genuine (i.e., as a Cambridge change). She needs to give this explanation, because to withdraw is to move, and to move is to change. If

Forms do not "admit of any change whatever," (*Phaedo* 78d4), then hotness in us cannot withdraw, if withdrawal is construed as a movement and hence a genuine change. If the hotness in us can undergo a genuine change, then that would mean, of course, that the hotness in us is not a Form. Fine argues that this withdrawal is not a genuine change, so hotness in us can be said to withdraw and still be a Form.

More importantly for my argument, Fine then puts aside the discussion of withdrawal, and shifts her focus towards perishing. She accepts, for the sake of argument, that the hotness in us does perish, and then posits a conception of perishing that is not genuine perishing (and that therefore does not involve a genuine change). Fine says:

Even if the hotness in us does perish, however, that at most precludes W [Forms are *wholly* in sensible particulars] and not also P [Forms are *partly* in sensible particulars]... even if the perishing of a part is not quite a mere Cambridge change, neither is it any sort of change Plato is concerned to disallow forms.

(1986, 77)

Devereux claims that for Fine, the perishing of such entities—largeness in us etc.—is not a real possibility, and only their withdrawal is a real possibility (Devereux 1994, 67). But the passage above indicates that Fine fully entertains the notion that the perishing of Forms—construed a certain way—is a real possibility. If Forms are constituted of many parts of an infinite amount of non-depletable stuff, then they might lose a part and still maintain their status as Forms (Fine 1986, 78).¹⁰ This does involve change, but it is not a change that "would

¹⁰ In a footnote, Fine says that others have suggested as well that Forms are "analogous to stuffs" (1986, 78), and that the view she presents in "Immanence" resembles most the view of J. Levinson in "The Particularisation of Attributes" (1980). Levinson gives a definition of a quality as an "infinite, non-depletable amount of... non-material stuff" (110-111).

Levinson admits that what he has arrived at is an "odd view" but that if a quality exists and it has "Platonic attributes," then it must consist of such stuff (111). Fine seems to have found in Levinson's view of the possible constitution of a Form a way to reconcile Socrates' apparent suggestion that largeness and hotness in us are Forms with Socrates' claim that these entities withdraw or perish. If Forms are made up of many stuffs, then some of them

jeopardize their remaining the very forms they are." Socrates does not *allow* any change "that would jeopardize their remaining the very forms they are," but Socrates does not *disallow* any change that does not do that. And "... losing a part (immanent character) does not put any Form in jeopardy" because gaining or losing such a part "makes no real difference."¹¹

Devereux has not refuted Fine's main claim, which is that these entities—largeness in us, hotness in fire etc.—are Forms. Devereux would only have refuted Fine successfully if the core of Fine's argument was that such entities (which Fine thinks are Forms) do not even have parts that are perishable. The core of Fine's argument is that these entities are changeless Forms, *regardless of the fact that some parts of them perish or are capable of withdrawal*. That is, they may be made up of infinite immaterial parts, which will allow some parts of them to perish but the Forms to survive/not change. The Form of Hotness, for example, has a part in the sensible particular that is fire, and this part perishes. However, the Form of Hotness does not become any less hot because it is made up of infinite immaterial parts. Therefore, the Form of Hotness does not perish even if its part—hotness in fire—perishes.

can perish without the Form itself perishing, and it was to *some* of those stuffs that Socrates was referring when he said that largeness withdraws or perishes.

Levinson does not give any textual support from Platonic texts for his view, other than what he understands by Platonic attributes. In the section titled "My Response: Withdrawal is a Genuine Change since Forms are not Made Up of Parts," I will argue that if we consider the attributes that Plato explicitly attaches to Forms in the *Phaedo*, we will realize that Forms cannot be made up of stuffs.

¹¹ I will address the merits of Fine's argument later. Here my point is simply that Devereux does not *directly* address this argument by Fine and gives us no good reason to believe that Fine is wrong about Forms being able to lose a part and remaining the very Forms they are.

4.2 Does Devereux need to address the core of Fine's argument for Immanence?

I have argued that Devereux does not directly address the core of Fine's argument. However, it may be that he can render Fine's argument ineffective without arguing against it directly. To do that, he would have to show that Forms cannot be partly in sensible particulars. If Forms cannot be partly in sensible particulars, then entities such as largeness in Simmias cannot be Forms, because they perish (as Devereux has argued). If largeness cannot be partly in Simmias, then it will have to be wholly in Simmias. In that case perishing would mean that largeness *wholly* perishes. If largeness is a Form, then that is impossible.

However, Devereux does not argue that in the *Phaedo* (or in other dialogues), Forms are wholly in sensible particulars. Nor does he argue that they cannot be partly in sensible particulars). He only argues that the entities in question perish—and therefore are immanent characters and not Forms—and leaves it at that. Devereux says:

"There are, of course, Forms for each of the pairs of opposites mentioned by Socrates: Forms for hot and cold, odd and even, large and small, etc. *But he is clearly not speaking about these Forms in the passage quoted, for he says that the opposites in question are perishable.* So the hot, cold, etc. that are in such things as fire and snow are not Forms; *they are distinct entities, subject to coming-to-be and perishing. Let us call them 'immanent characters'.*"

(1994, 69)

The only reason that Devereux offers for the claim that the entities in question are not Forms is that they are perishable. Unlike Fine, he does not discuss the specific nature of Forms' possible immanence in sensible particulars, and so he does not consider the possibility that Forms may be partly in sensible particulars. As a result, he does not offer an argument in support of the claim that Forms cannot be partly in sensible particulars, which would have allowed him to contest the core of Fine's argument.

Therefore, we should conclude that Devereux does not address—directly or indirectly—the core of Fine's argument. Devereux has not shown us why Fine is wrong to hold that Forms are immanent in the *Phaedo*. He has not shown us how the perishing of entities such as largeness in us *necessarily* means that Forms are not immanent. If perishing can be construed in the way Fine construes it—as an irrelevant change—then the entities in question can be Forms.

5 CREATING A HURDLE FOR IMMANENCE

Having defended Fine's account so far, I will now challenge it on grounds of textual support. Firstly, I will argue that even if we accept that *one* way of conceiving withdrawal is as a Cambridge (and thereby non-genuine) change, Socrates does not conceive of it this way. Secondly, I will consider the objection that even if withdrawal and perishing are genuine changes, they are irrelevant in the context of Forms. For that to be the case, Forms must be constituted of parts. I will then argue that according to Socrates' characterization of Forms in the *Phaedo*, Forms are not constituted of parts.

5.1 Non-Genuine Changes

According to Fine, when Socrates says that largeness withdraws, he does not mean by withdrawal *a genuine change*. Moreover, when Socrates implies that hotness perishes, he does mean by perishing a genuine change, but nevertheless a change that *does not matter*. Ultimately, withdrawal also falls in the category of changes that do not matter (a non-genuine change does not matter).

Therefore, Socrates can say that entities such as largeness and hotness withdraw or perish without contradicting his long-held view that Forms do not change. When largeness withdraws,

it is undergoing a non-genuine, mere Cambridge change. As I said earlier, Forms can undergo such non-genuine changes. Likewise, when hotness perishes, it undergoes a change that *does not matter*. Forms can undergo changes that do not matter because they do not change what a Form really is. In her discussion of perishing, Fine says as much:

All he means, in emphasizing the changelessness of Forms, is that Forms cannot change in any way that would jeopardize their remaining the very Forms they are; the Form of Beauty, for example, cannot cease to be, or cease to be perfectly beautiful.

(Fine 1986, 78)

The Form of Beauty only changes if it stops being perfectly beautiful.

If the Form is in the sensible particular, and it *withdraws* from that sensible particular, and that does not have any effect on the Form being perfectly beautiful, then the Form of Beauty does not change. For this to be the case, it does not matter if the Form is wholly or partly in the sensible particular.

The Form of Beauty may be *wholly* in a sensible particular, say in Helen of Troy. In other words, Helen instantiates the entirety of the Form of Beauty. If the entirety of this Form withdraws from Helen, and this process has no impact on the perfect beauty of the Form, then the Form has not changed. Likewise, only part of the Form of Beauty may be in Helen of Troy. If this part withdraws from Helen, and this process has no impact on the perfect beauty of the Form, then the Form has not changed.

A similar case for a change that does not matter can be made in the context of perishing, but only if the Form is *partly* in the sensible particular. The Form is composed of "infinite, non-depletable amount of nonmaterial stuff" (78). Some of this stuff is in the sensible particular. The part of the Form that is in the sensible particular may perish. If its perishing does not change the fact that the Form remains perfectly beautiful, then the Form of Beauty does not change.

5.2 My Contention: Withdrawal is Not a Cambridge Change

I contend that Socrates' language supports the initial suggestion that withdrawal of the Form involves an actual change of location. Socrates says about largeness: "... *either* it goes away *or* it perishes" (*Phaedo* 103a1). By going away, Socrates wants to say that *the Form* moves away *in space* from the sensible particular.

Firstly, I propose that the withdrawal that Socrates talks about in relation to the soul is the same kind of withdrawal that Socrates talks about in relation to largeness, hotness etc. Socrates asks Cebes whether it is the case that if hotness were imperishable, it would withdraw ("depart and go away intact"). Cebes replies that it is so (106a8-12). Socrates then immediately asks: "Then aren't we compelled to say the same thing about the immortal? If the immortal is also imperishable, it's impossible for soul, whenever death attacks it, to perish" (106b2). If it is impossible for the soul to perish, then that means it must withdraw. The same kind of withdrawal, then, would be applicable in the case of hotness as is applicable in the case of the immortal and the soul.

Socrates makes the same point in the case of oddness. He thinks that the same sense of withdrawal applies in the case of oddness that applies in the case of the soul. Socrates remarks that oddness is not "imperishable" (106c3). Were it imperishable, it would "depart and go away" i.e., it would withdraw, and we could make the same argument about "fire and hot and the rest" (106c2-7). This tells us that the same kind of withdrawal is applicable in the case of oddness and hotness.¹² Now we have to see if Socrates thinks this sense also applies in the case of the soul.

¹² I take it that largeness falls in the same ontological category as oddness and hotness.

Immediately afterwards, Socrates asks: "So now, about the immortal *likewise*: if it's granted us that it must also be imperishable, then soul, besides being immortal, would also be imperishable..." (106c9; emphasis added). Since the soul is imperishable, it must subscribe to the only other available option: it must *withdraw*. Indeed, that is what happens: upon death, "the immortal part gets out of the way of death, departs, and goes away intact and undestroyed" (106e6). The soul is imperishable, so it withdraws instead of perishing in the face of death. Hence, Socrates' statement shows that the same kind of withdrawal that was applicable in the case of oddness and hotness is applicable in the case of the immortal and the soul.

Let us now see what this withdrawal looks like in the case of the soul. By doing that, we will be able to see what withdrawal would look like for hotness, oddness, largeness etc.

Socrates continues: "Beyond all doubt then, Cebes, soul is immortal and imperishable, and our souls really will exist in Hades" (107a). The soul "enters Hades" (107d2) and then "goes on a journey" (107d6). It "flutters around it [the body] for a long time, and around the region of the seen" (108a8) and finds gods "for travelling companions and guides" (108c5).

The soul changes its location. We know that because the soul is said to move about in Hades. Change of location is not a Cambridge change. The withdrawal in question—a change of location—is not a Cambridge change. Therefore, largeness, hotness and oddness cannot be Forms if Socrates says that they withdraw.

Is Socrates talking metaphorically here? When he says that the soul moves around in Hades, could it be that he does not mean that like the body, the soul literally moves around in space? I think that is not the case. Socrates suggests (and Cebes affirms) that the soul is "totally and altogether more similar to what is unvarying than to what is not" (79e4). In other words, the soul is more similar to Forms than it is similar to the body. This means that at least some features

of the soul resemble the body (and even more of them resemble the Forms). This establishes, in principle, that the soul is similar to the body in some ways at least. Now we have to see if Socrates gives us an indication as to how exactly it resembles the body, and whether or not moving around literally may be one way in which the soul resembles the body.

I think that Socrates does give us this indication. He tells us that when the soul leaves the body, it is "trailing nothing of the body with it" (80e3). Does he mean that the soul shares no similarity with the body? No, he means that the soul shares no similarity with the body *as far as the ills of the body are concerned*. He says:

"... on arrival there, isn't its [the soul's] lot to be happy, released from its wandering and folly, its fears and wild lusts, and other ills of the human condition..."

(81e5)

The soul is similar to the Forms in that it does not bear the ills of the body, but that does not mean it does not share the basic features of the body. It was "bewitched" by the "passions and pleasures" of the body, and it is those that the soul is rid of upon death. Socrates cares to specify how the soul is different from the body, but that does not include the ability to move around, and Socrates' statement that the soul is more similar to the Forms than the body leaves open the option that the soul is similar to the body too. It shares some basic features of the body such as the ability to move around, but does not share other features of the body, such as the body's specific pleasures and pains.¹³

¹³ Other scholars have argued that the soul shares certain features with the body in the *Phaedo*. In 'The Separation of the Soul from Body in Plato's *Phaedo*' (2017), Thomas Johansen argues that for Socrates, the soul is not completely similar to the Forms, and therefore not completely incorporeal. In 'Bodily Desires and Afterlife Punishment in the *Phaedo*' (2021), Doug Reed points out that this leaves open the option that the soul can have literal physical elements (60). Doug Reed himself argues that incorporeal souls can have bodily desires (46).

To summarize, I have argued that Fine is mistaken in her view. Withdrawal, for Socrates, is not a mere Cambridge change. It involves a change of location, which is a genuine change. We know that because the kind of withdrawal that is talked about in the case of the entities that show up in the second half of the *Phaedo*—largeness, hotness, oddness—is also talked about in reference to the soul. In the case of the soul, it is clear that withdrawal involves a change of location. The soul is said to move about in Hades.

If withdrawal involves a change of location, then entities such as largeness in Simmias and hotness in fire change location. Since Forms do not change location, these entities cannot be Forms.

5.3 Fine's Response: Withdrawal and Perishing are Changes that Do Not Matter

Fine can accept my point and still argue that the entities that show up in the second half of the *Phaedo* are Forms. She can do that by arguing that Forms are made up of parts. I briefly mentioned the way it is supposed to work on p. 10, but I will explain it in a little more detail here.

.Fine thinks that Forms are made up of an infinite, nondepletable amount of stuff (1986, 78). Let us suppose that a Form is only partly in a sensible particular, and the part of it that is in the sensible particular perishes, or changes its location. This does not change the Form itself, because there is no substantial reduction in the "infinite nondepletable" amount of stuff that the Form consists of. Fine says, "All he [Socrates] means, in emphasizing the changelessness of Forms, is that Forms cannot change in any way that would jeopardize their remaining the very Forms they are" (1986, 78). If the Form was perfectly beautiful before, and perfectly beautiful afterwards, then does it matter that there was a change of location involved? To recap: It is a

non-genuine and irrelevant change, one that Socrates is not concerned with. It is a non-genuine and irrelevant change because it does not change the fact that, for example, the Form of the Beautiful was perfectly beautiful before and is perfectly beautiful after the change. This is because the Form is made up of infinite, nondepletable amount of stuffs and *the withdrawal of some of that stuff does not affect the Form itself*.

In fact, even if part of the Form that is in the sensible particular *perishes*, the situation does not change. For Fine, the perishing of some parts of Forms is not "any sort of change Plato is concerned to disallow forms" (Fine 1986, 78). The parts of Forms that are present in sensible particulars may perish, but since the stuff Forms are made up of is infinite and nondepletable, no *genuine* change occurs to Forms as a result of the perishing of *one of its parts*.

5.4 My Response: Withdrawal and Perishing are Changes that Matter

If Forms are made up of infinite, nondepletable amount of stuff, then it is reasonable that the perishing of some of these parts is not a perishing of the Form itself. If Forms have parts, then some parts of them can dissolve or change location without affecting any sort of change that *genuinely* impacts Forms. However, Socrates does not think that Forms have parts, and it is revealed by his remarks earlier in the *Phaedo* about the constitution of Forms.

After discussing the existence of the soul before birth of the body, Cebes is worried that the soul might disintegrate after death (77d6). Socrates addresses this worry by asking if the soul is more like the thing that is liable to such disintegration, or if it is more like the thing that is immune to such disintegration (78b5). Socrates then suggests that only something "incomposite, it alone is liable, to escape this [disintegration]" (78c3). Things which are "constant and unvarying" are "most likely to be *the incomposite*" (78c6; emphasis added) and vice versa.

Socrates then brings up "Being itself," "the equal itself, the beautiful itself, *what each thing is* itself, that which *is*" (78d1-5). In other words, he brings up Forms, and asks if they are "unvarying and constant." Cebes answers that they are indeed unvarying and constant. If these things are unvarying and constant, then they are "most likely to be the incomposite." The Form is therefore most likely to be the incomposite—ἀσύνθετον. The word means "uncompounded" according to both the Liddle and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon (1996, 265) and the Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek (2015, 326). In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates uses the same term to characterize a syllable (*Theaetetus* 205c2), and goes on to describe a syllable as having no parts. Likewise, in his *Politics*, Aristotle uses the word to mean something that has no parts. Aristotle says: "For as in other cases, a composite has to be analyzed until we reach things that are incomposite, since these are the smallest parts of the whole..." (*Politics* 1252a19).

Something that is uncompounded is not made up of parts. If it is not made up of parts, it cannot be subject to a change of location or subject to perishing without that process being classified as a genuine change. This is so because it will be affecting all of the Form (since the Form is not made up of parts). If largeness in Simmias or hotness in fire or oddness in the number three are said to perish by Socrates, they are said to wholly perish, and for a Form that is impossible.

6 CONCLUSION

If I have succeeded and we have gained a few more reasons in support of the position that the *Phaedo* does not countenance immanence, then support for immanence in the Platonic corpus is weakened. Scholars generally agree that evidence for the rejection of immanence is strong in dialogues such as the *Symposium* and *Timaeus* because of Socrates' explicit statements

(Devereux 1994, 63). It is in the *Phaedo* that scholars such as Fine, Dancy, Ross and D. O'Brien have found major support for immanence. If they are mistaken, and I have tried to show that at least one of them definitely is, then a pillar of support for immanence has been undermined.

Moreover, the *Phaedo* is a turning point in the development of the theory of Forms for another reason. It seems to be the first time that Socrates' offers a vision in which sensible particulars are imitating other entities (Forms) instead of merely possessing them (Ross 1951, 24). In works that are usually considered to be written before the *Phaedo*, Socrates' represents the relationship between Forms and sensible particulars as one of possession: if Forms are universals, then they are manifested in particulars. Forms *share* in sensible particulars (μέθεξις). In the *Phaedo*, however, this element of sharing seems to at least recede in the background. Forms are now spoken of as ideals to be approximated by the sensible particulars. Consider Socrates' statement:

But of course it is *from* one's sense-perceptions that one must think that all the things in the sense-perceptions are striving for *what equal is*, yet are inferior to it; or how shall we put it?

(*Phaedo* 75b)

Sensible particulars are imitating Forms, striving to be like them, but never quite managing to reach their goal. If Gail Fine is right, then support for theories like imitation in the *Phaedo* may be weakened. If Forms are 'in' sensible particulars, then they are sharing in these sensible particulars, and we are left with the task to reconcile this sharing element with the striving-to-be-like-Forms talk in the *Phaedo*. If I am right, then support for imitation is strengthened, because support is lacking for Forms being in sensible particulars in the *Phaedo*.

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