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THE INSTANT BETWEEN TIME AND ETERNITY:  
PLATO'S REVISION OF THE PARMENIDEAN NOW  
IN THE *PARMENIDES*

HUAIYUAN ZHANG

SINCE PARMENIDES' CONTROVERSIAL DISCRIMINATION between different "ways" in his poem, the distinction between phenomena and being has been pivotal in Western philosophical enquiry. In his early dialogues, Plato introduces the concept of form to lay an ethical, epistemological, and ontological foundation for the variegated tapestry of phenomena.<sup>1</sup> Sharing Parmenides' foundationalist conviction, Plato abandons the mechanistic and physicalist explanation of phenomena in terms of other phenomena on the same level. According to Socrates<sup>p</sup>'s narration of the "second sailing" in the *Phaedo*, such an approach fails to distinguish the real and essential cause from the necessary but insufficient cause.<sup>2</sup> A beautiful flower is not beautiful *because of* its color and shape. This explanation begs the question of why its color and shape are beautiful. To preempt the infinite regress in natural philosophy, Plato is motivated to insist that the flower is beautiful really and simply because it "participates in" the form of beauty. Hence, Plato seeks to account for phenomena by relating them to being or form. If Plato's early theory of forms preserves Parmenides' distinctive separation between phenomena and being, in the *Parmenides* he stages a dialogue between the characters Socrates<sup>p</sup> and Parmenides<sup>p</sup> to address a problem resulting from this separation, which can be summarized as the problem of μέθεξις (participation).<sup>3</sup> That is, since forms and phenomena are fundamentally separate, Plato is unable to reconnect the form of beauty

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<sup>1</sup> See Harold F. Cherniss, "The Philosophical Economy of the Theory of Ideas," *The American Journal of Philology* 57, no. 4 (1936): 445–56; Richard Patterson, "On the Eternality of Platonic Forms," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 67, no. 1 (1985): 45–46; Eric Sanday, *A Study of Dialectic in Plato's "Parmenides"* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 6, 12, 19–74.

<sup>2</sup> To distinguish the characters who appear in Plato's dialogue from the historical figures, I refer to Plato's Socrates as Socrates<sup>p</sup> and Plato's Parmenides as Parmenides<sup>p</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Phaedo* 100c–d; *Parmenides* 130a8–31e7.

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with the particular beauty and account for the phenomenon with its being. Flowers fade in time, while the form of beauty is eternal.

Plato characterizes the differences between forms and phenomena as being and becoming, the perceptible and the intelligible, the uniform and the multiple, the eternal and the temporal, and so forth. Among these characterizations, the divorce between eternity and time is of particular significance. In the *Symposium*, Diotima<sup>p</sup> explicitly introduces the quality of the form as eternally abiding instead of temporally contingent: “being eternal and neither coming to be nor passing away, neither waxing nor waning, then, not beautiful in this way, and ugly in that way, nor beautiful at one time, and at another not.”<sup>4</sup> In the *Phaedo*, Socrates refers to the form as ἀεὶ αὐτῶν ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστι (“each of them that eternally is”),<sup>5</sup> qualifying the being of the form with ἀεὶ (“eternally”).<sup>6</sup> In the following analysis, I will treat eternity as a temporal determination.<sup>7</sup> Implicitly, most of Plato’s positive characterizations of the form involve its temporal status through the special use of the tenses of “being.” In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates<sup>p</sup> refers to the form as οὐσίᾳ ὄντως οὐσα (“being truly [beingly] being”)<sup>8</sup> and τὰ ὄντα ὄντως (“those truly [beingly] being”).<sup>9</sup> In these instances, ὄντως ὄν (truly [beingly] being) and ἀεὶ ὄν (eternally being) are mutually explanatory. In other words, something truly is because it eternally is. In Plato’s later dialogues such as the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides*, the

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<sup>4</sup> *Symposium* 211a1–3. I cite the Greek of Plato’s *Symposium* from *Platonis Opera*, vol. 2, ed. John Burnet (1901; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967). The translation of the Greek of Plato is revised from *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and Douglas S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> *Phaedo* 78d5. I cite the Greek of Plato’s *Phaedo* from *Platonis Opera*, vol. 1, ed. John Burnet (1900; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

<sup>6</sup> See also *Parmenides* 135c1–2.

<sup>7</sup> I will distinguish between the narrow concept of time and the broad concept of temporality. By time I mean the quotidian perception of time as a flowing series of nows. Yet I will not focus on time in that restricted sense; rather, I will broaden the scope to temporality, that is, the structure of time, which consists in the relationship between nows. Temporality constitutes time, and the analysis of temporality includes such concepts as timeless eternity or the instant outside time. Even though eternity and the instant are not in the flow of time, they are temporal as ways of structuring the nows.

<sup>8</sup> *Phaedrus* 247c7. I cite the Greek of Plato’s *Phaedrus* from *Platonis Opera*, vol. 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Phaedrus* 247e3.

problem of time becomes more prominent. Since the temporality of forms is an important aspect of Plato's theory of forms, his reconfiguration of the participatory relationship between phenomena and forms requires a new clarification of temporality. In this article, I will present Plato's later temporal solution to the problem of participation in his early theory of forms.

To understand Plato's view of time, it is necessary to look at both his and Parmenides' conceptions of temporality.<sup>10</sup> Many scholars focus on the *Timaeus* in discussing the concept of time in Parmenides and Plato,<sup>11</sup> but in fact the analysis of time in the *Parmenides* is equally fruitful and even more profound.<sup>12</sup> Although some scholars have noticed

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<sup>10</sup> As Palmer recognizes, Plato's view of time cannot be understood without his reception of Parmenides. See John A. Palmer, *Plato's Reception of Parmenides* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 206.

<sup>11</sup> It is widely accepted that Plato repeats Parmenides' formula by disentangling the present from other tenses in the *Timaeus* (37e–38a). While Cherniss, Owen, Tarán, and Patterson claim that Plato's forms are timelessly eternal, Cornford and Whittaker deny or downplay the notion of timeless eternity in Plato. See Harold F. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1944), 211–18; Gwilym E. L. Owen, "Plato and Parmenides on the Timeless Present," *The Monist* 50, no. 3 (1966): 317–40; Leonardo Tarán, "Perpetual Duration and Atemporal Eternity in Parmenides and Plato," *The Monist* 62, no. 1 (1979): 43–53; Patterson, "On the Eternality of Platonic Forms," 27–46; Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato* (London: Routledge, 1935), 98 n. 1, 102; John Whittaker, "The 'Eternity' of the Platonic Forms," *Phronesis* 13, no. 2 (1968): 131–44.

<sup>12</sup> According to the unpublished seminar transcript on Plato's *Parmenides*, Heidegger judges that "the third course of 'Parmenides' is the deepest point to which occidental metaphysics has ever advanced. It is the most radical advance into the problem of being and time, an advance which (by Aristotle) was not caught, but intercepted." Herbert Marcuse, *Unpublished Transcript of Heidegger, Plato: Parmenides* (Frankfurt am Main: Universitätsbibliothek Johann–Christian–Senckenberg, Archivzentrum, 1930–31), 15; my translation. Heidegger is more explicitly dismissive of Aristotle's paradigm of time. I agree with his insight but not all his argumentation. Even though Aristotle profoundly recognizes the now as in one sense the same and in another sense always different, he has not dialectically solved the aporia concerning the relationship between the nows in *Physics* 4.10–14. For an elaborate reconstruction of what Heidegger's insight consists in from the Marcuse transcript of Heidegger's seminar, see Jussi Backman, "All of a Sudden: Heidegger and Plato's *Parmenides*," *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy* 11, no. 2 (2007): 393–408; and Francisco J. Gonzalez, "Shattering Presence: Being as Change, Time as the Sudden Instant in Heidegger's 1930–31 Seminar on Plato's *Parmenides*," *Journal of the History*

this, relevant studies are still relatively lacking. Sattler specifically interprets how Plato's deductions in the *Parmenides* respond to Parmenides' deductions in fragment B8 based on formal, linguistic, and conceptual resemblances.<sup>13</sup> I will follow her approach and draw further conclusions regarding what Plato's response consists in with respect to time. In a dialectical movement between Parmenides and the *Parmenides*, I will put forward my solution to Plato's problem of participation by articulating four temporalities. I will begin by showing that the eternal present pertaining to the way of truth in Parmenides' fragment B8, which he calls  $\nu\bar{\nu}\nu \dots \acute{\omicron}\mu\acute{\omicron}\bar{\nu} \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$  ("now altogether")<sup>14</sup> (Temporality 1), reflects Parmenides' ontological hierarchy of being above phenomena. Then, Plato begins to shatter this two-realm division by couching it in the distinction between a notion of the now altered from Temporality 1 (Temporality 2) in Deduction 1 and  $\acute{\alpha}\epsilon\iota \nu\bar{\nu}\nu$  ("always now")<sup>15</sup> (Temporality 3) in Deduction 2 of the *Parmenides*. By grounding time in the now, Plato saves the concept of time that Parmenides relegates to the way of opinion. Since Temporality 2 and 3 cannot fully bridge the gap between the realm of forms and the realm of phenomena, Plato uses the notion of  $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\acute{\alpha}\iota\omega\nu\eta\varsigma$  ("at an instant")<sup>16</sup> in Hypothesis 3<sup>17</sup> to resolve the contradiction of the first two deductions

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*of Philosophy* 57, no. 2 (2019): 313–38. For a perceptive comparison between Heidegger's ecstasis and Plato's instant, see Robert Petkovšek, *Le statut existentiel du platonisme: Platon dans l'analytique existentielle de Heidegger* (Berne: Peter Lang, 2004), 306–08.

<sup>13</sup> See Barbara M. Sattler, "Time and Space in Plato's *Parmenides*," *Études platoniciennes* 15 (2019): 1–69.

<sup>14</sup> For the Greek of Parmenides' fragments, I cite from *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, vol. 1, ed. Hermann A. Diels and Walther Kranz (Berlin: Weidmann, 1951), 227–46. The translation of the Greek of Parmenides is revised from *Early Greek Philosophy*, vol. 5, ed. André Laks and Glenn W. Most (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> *Parmenides* 152e1–2. For the Greek of Plato's *Parmenides*, I cite from *Platonis Opera*, vol. 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Parmenides* 156e5. On the instant in other contexts of Plato, see Luc Brisson, "L'Instant, le temps, et l'éternité dans le *Parménide* (155e–157b) de Platon," *Dialogue: Revue canadienne de philosophie* 9, no. 3 (1970): 394–95; Petkovšek, *Le statut existentiel du platonisme*, 307–08.

<sup>17</sup> I will refer to the section appended to the first two deductions as Hypothesis 3 (*Parmenides* 155e–157b). Due to the ambiguity of the subject of Hypothesis 3, referred to as "the one . . . being both one and many and neither one nor many, and partaking of time" (*Parmenides* 155e3–7), opinions vary on the function of Hypothesis 3: (1) Cornford considers it an addendum to

by grounding their premise that “being is in time” in the event of change that does not happen in time (Temporality 4). The paired Deductions 1 and 2 explore the separation and connection between Plato’s two realms, whose temporal aporia demands a temporal solution as offered in Hypothesis 3.<sup>18</sup>

## I

“*Now Altogether*” as the *Eternal Present* in *Parmenides’ Fragment B8*. Parmenides’ fragment B8 comprises the goddess’s account of the way of truth and the deduction of the predicates of being. As the “signs” on the way of truth, these predicates are corollaries of the beingness of being to the exclusion of nonbeing.<sup>19</sup>

(1) ἀγένητον (ungenerated) and ἀνώλεθρόν (imperishable)

(2) οὐλον (whole) and μουνογενές (one of a kind)<sup>20</sup>

(3) ἀτρεμές (unshaken)

(4) ἀτέλεστον (unending)

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Deduction 2; (2) Brisson, Turnbull, and Rickless regard it as an appendix to the first two deductions that reconciles them; (3) Proclus and Damascius assimilate the instantaneous nature of the soul to Hypothesis 3. Meinwald compares the Neoplatonist position that Hypothesis 3 stands alone as Deduction 3 with other interpretations. See Francis M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides* (London: Kegan Paul, 1939), 194; Brisson, “L’Instant, le temps, et l’éternité,” 389–96; Robert G. Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato’s Late Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Samuel C. Rickless, *Plato’s Forms in Transition: A Reading of the Parmenides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Constance C. Meinwald, *Plato’s “Parmenides”* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 117–30.

<sup>18</sup> “Il faut maintenant qu’il analyse la temporalité elle-même.” Brisson, “L’Instant, le temps, et l’éternité,” 389.

<sup>19</sup> Scholars debate over whether the summary of the signs is completed at B8.3–4 or B8.5–6. I agree with Coxon and favor the latter. See Allan H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides: A Critical Text with Introduction and Translation, the Ancient Testimonia and a Commentary* (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2009), 196–97. Plato’s first two deductions in the *Parmenides* seem to spell out Parmenides’ temporal sign at B8.5–6.

<sup>20</sup> Diels and Kranz read ἐστι γὰρ οὐλομελές following Plutarch; here I follow Simplicius but revise the translation of μουνογενές to avoid referring to Parmenides’ unborn and ungenerated being as “single-born.”

(5) οὐδέ ποτ' ἦν οὐδ' ἔσται (and was not, nor will be at some time)

(6) νῦν (now) ὅμοῦ (together) πᾶν (all)

(7) ἓν (one)

(8) συνεχές (continuous).<sup>21</sup>

Then, lines 6 through 49 develop the arguments that deduce these predicates from the tautological hypothesis that being is. Yet, B8.5–6 already contains a deduction from Signs 6 through 8 to Sign 5: Since it is now altogether, one, continuous, being cannot be predicated by the past or future in time, but only by the timeless present.<sup>22</sup> Here Parmenides associates the denial of the past and the future to being with its oneness and continuity. In fact, B8.6 is the only place in Parmenides' argument about being where Parmenides uses the word ἓν (“one”). As to continuity, Parmenides explains at line 25 that since being is adjacent to being, being is always continuous. Lines 6 through 21 argue for Signs 1 and 5 through 8 in an interwoven manner. First, being is not generated from nonbeing, for nonbeing is inconceivable. Second, no need compels being to be born at one time rather than another. Third, whether being was born or will be at some time, there is always a time when being is not, which is forbidden.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, being is subject to neither generation nor decay; it is an eternal unity indifferent to the passage of time. Any variation of time would insert nonbeing into being. In brief, the issue is between being and nonbeing, which has already been decided in favor of being.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Parmenides, B8.3–6.

<sup>22</sup> “[A]nd it was not, nor will it be at some time, since it is now altogether, one, continuous.” Parmenides, B8.5–6. Early to recognize the importance of time in Parmenides' poem, Chalmers puts forward that the basic distinction between the two ways in Parmenides is the distinction between eternity and time by interpreting the parallel constructions on the two ways through the temporal lens. See Walter R. Chalmers, “Parmenides and the Beliefs of Mortals,” *Phronesis* 5, no. 1 (1960): 5–22.

<sup>23</sup> “For if it was born, it is not, and it is not if at some time it is about to be.” Parmenides, B8.20.

<sup>24</sup> Parmenides, B8.15. As regards Parmenides' second way of opinion, which bears phenomena and falls in time, I observe: (1) The self-contradiction between the declared inferior epistemic status of the way of opinion and the writing-up of the cosmological section for the youth to learn is, in a sense, only apparent. In other words, they do not conflict if Parmenides does not attribute serious value to the latter, which is his treatise of natural science. (2) The way

Parmenides' temporal verse B8.5 lends itself to several interpretations. Sorabji instructively classifies them into eight concepts of temporality, among which he favors the option of a timeless eternity. I agree with his overall reading, though he has not exhausted the meaning of Parmenides' now. He quickly rejects the "enduring present," stripped of its relation to the past or the future, and the "single instant" on the grounds that "it would be more logical for a thinker who had whittled time down as far as an instant to take the next step and abolish time altogether."<sup>25</sup> Sorabji rightly indicates that the "enduring present" faces extra difficulty, for if the present endures, eternity cannot be "all together."<sup>26</sup> What is now simultaneously together cannot be temporal. More subtly, Zeller and Coxon understand Parmenides' now as "total coexistence in the present."<sup>27</sup> Later, Aquinas likens eternity to the center of a circle and time to the successive points on the circumference. That is, eternity is both outside time and simultaneous with any moment in time. As Aquinas explains, "[h]ence, whatever is found in any part of time co-exists with what is eternal as being present to it, although with respect to some other time it is past or future" (Diagram 1).<sup>28</sup> From the perspective of eternity, there is no enduring now in terms of the now before and the now after in the linear flow of time. In Parmenides'

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of opinion sometimes contaminates the way of truth, in that Parmenides uses temporal notions not only in the cosmological part. When such rejected notions figure in the youth's journey on the way of truth, scholars typically explain them by means of the ladder-to-be-abandoned-after-use metaphor or emphasize their metaphorical or transformed sense. The broader issue is the relationship between being and phenomena in Parmenides' ontology.

<sup>25</sup> Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (London: Duckworth, 1983), 100–01; see also Palmer, *Plato's Reception of Parmenides*, 199.

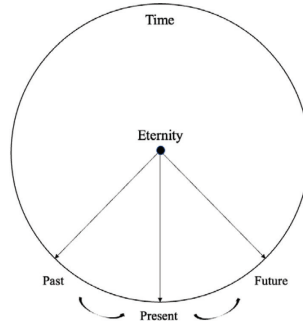
<sup>26</sup> Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 100.

<sup>27</sup> Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1919), 690; Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides*, 196.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book One: God*, trans. Anton C. Pegis (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 219. This figure of a circle and its center point is serviceable for explicating Parmenides' "now altogether." Nonetheless, Parmenides would be concerned not with its connotation of omniscience in the theological version, but only with its illustration of omnipresence, which follows from absolute immutability. Besides, Plotinus had already characterized eternity as being together at one point and always in the present in *Ennead* 3.7.3.



words, being is “now altogether, one, continuous.”<sup>29</sup> By divorcing time from eternity and hence phenomena from being, Parmenides alerts his audience to the deceptive nature of opinions and teaches us to respect sound and rigorous logical arguments in pursuit of truth.



**Diagram 1**

Instead of the enduring and perishable present, Parmenides recognizes only the eternal present.<sup>30</sup> Plato makes the same decision in the *Timaeus*: “For we say that it was and is and will be, but according to the true account only *isis* appropriately said of it.”<sup>31</sup> Palmer considers *Timaeus*’s words here as directly recalling Parmenides’ B8.5–6.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Parmenides, B8.5–6. Alternatively, O’Brien argues that the now is not timeless but just eternal in the sense of being ungenerated and imperishable, emphasizing the immutability of being. See Denis O’Brien, “L’être et l’éternité,” in *Études sur Parménide*, vol. 2, ed. Pierre Aubenque (Paris: Vrin, 1987), 135–62. To me, this position is logically conceivable but does not fit into Parmenides’ temporal signs and the overall denial of change and time as versions of nonbeing.

<sup>30</sup> I will describe the two kinds of present in section 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Timaeus* 37e5–38a1. For the Greek of Plato’s *Timaeus*, I cite from *Platonis Opera*, vol. 4, ed. John Burnet (1902; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

<sup>32</sup> Palmer, *Plato’s Reception of Parmenides*, 198. In addition, precisely where Plato echoes the sense of Parmenides’ ὄν ἔστιν μοῦ πᾶν (“is now altogether”) in μένοντος αἰῶνος ἐν ἐνὶ (“of eternity abiding in unity”) at *Timaeus* 37d6, there Patterson highlights how Plato’s forms, like Parmenides’ being, abides in unity or exists all at once; he writes that forms enjoy full immutability at every moment, which means that the being of forms “is complete at every instant, and does not materialize or increase as time passes,” whereas the phenomenal realm can only endure time “on a moment-to-moment basis”; as he sums it up, “Plato intends the eternality of Forms in a very strong sense, corresponding to the immutable, intelligible sort of being they enjoy.” Patterson, “On the Eternality of Platonic Forms,” 34, 40–41, 45.

When he states, “[A]nd it was not, nor will it be at some time, since it is now altogether,”<sup>33</sup> Parmenides regards the present as eternity and the past and the future as time. Eternity is outside time. For Parmenides, only people on the way of opinion live in time. In Parmenides’ work, the flowing present is dissociated from the eternal present, much as most modern people tend to understand the present on the same plane as the past and the future. In his early theory of forms, Plato accepts Parmenides’ temporal gap and ontological gap without reservation. The forms share the character of the Parmenidean being. But as we will see shortly, while distinguishing between eternity and time, Plato further articulates a now that ever accompanies all the phases of time in the *Parmenides*.

## II

*Eternity and Time in Plato’s Deduction 1 and Deduction 2.* The layered dramatic framing of the *Parmenides* suggests the philosophical problem central to the dialectical exercise. The imaginary encounter in Athens is narrated by Cephalus, an Ionian, to an unidentified, presumably Ionian, audience. This might represent the Ionian naturalist view on phenomena. The transmitted dialogue is essentially held between the aging Parmenides<sup>p</sup> of Elea, his disciple Zeno<sup>p</sup>, the young Socrates<sup>p</sup>, and the young Aristotle<sup>p</sup> (not the fourth-century Aristotle). The relationship between the two narrative layers seems to indicate that the theme of the dialogue will revolve around the Ionian phenomena and the Eleatic being, which boils down to the problem of participation. The relationship between these characters involves rich references to the relationship between their schools of thought. As Sattler notes, the dramatic setting suggests that Plato joins a conversation on time and other notions started by Parmenides’ poem and Zeno’s paradoxes.<sup>34</sup> Despite the playful tone in which Parmenides<sup>p</sup> tells Socrates<sup>p</sup> that

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<sup>33</sup> Parmenides, B8.5.

<sup>34</sup> Sattler, “Time and Space in Plato’s *Parmenides*,” 1. In addition, Plato’s choice to depict Socrates<sup>p</sup> as young could suggest that Plato is performing a self-examination of his early theory of forms using Parmenides<sup>p</sup> as his interrogator.

“philosophy has not yet gripped you,”<sup>35</sup> at the conclusion of the first part of the dialogue, the unmistakable references to Parmenides’ poem serve to prompt the recognition that the young Socrates’<sup>p</sup> articulation of the theory of forms has been premature. In the programmatic first part, Parmenides<sup>p</sup> challenges the interlocutors to demonstrate two wonders: That the one should be many at the level of phenomena<sup>36</sup> and that the forms should be in themselves capable of mixing together and separating,<sup>37</sup> even though in reality we are familiar with the combination of the one and the many. For example, Socrates is one person, whether he is wise or old. In the framework of Socrates’<sup>p</sup> theory of forms, this is because one phenomenon can participate in multiple forms, that is, the forms of wise and old. However, we need to explain not only phenomena but also their change. If, in a sense, being young and being old are both present in Socrates, then the forms of young and old must somehow be related. Hence, a complete theory of forms must explain how multiple forms interrelate.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Parmenides* 130e.

<sup>36</sup> *Parmenides* 129b–c.

<sup>37</sup> *Parmenides* 129e2–3.

<sup>38</sup> In Plato’s later dialogues, there is a tendency of addressing the first wonder, that is, the problem of participation, by addressing the second wonder. In his revised theory of forms, Plato transforms the problem of participation into the theory of the *κοινωνία* (“communion”) (*Parmenides* 152a2, 166a2) among forms, which in the *Sophist* takes a more sophisticated shape of a theory of the *κοινωνία τῶν γένων* (“communion of kinds”). Whereas the participatory model presupposes the separation between forms and phenomena, the full-fledged communion model of the forms establishes the interrelation of forms as the basis for the genesis of phenomena. The theory of the communion of forms, however, does not yield a ready answer to the question of the individuation of phenomena. The problem of participation is not the sole issue that Parmenides<sup>p</sup> takes with Socrates’<sup>p</sup> theory of forms. More specifically, the issues also include the opposition or the doubling of the phenomena by the forms, the separation between phenomena and forms, and the participation of the phenomena in the forms (*Parmenides* 130b). In this vein, Plato formulates a version of the famed third man argument (*Parmenides* 132a–b). Briefly, I think that the third man regress presupposes a category error, namely, the reification of forms by confusing them with individual things. Indeed, the way in which a form is embodied is unlike how a patch of sail is above each person’s head but resembles how the day is one and the same everywhere at the same time (*Parmenides* 131b). This is a temporal metaphor, since time is a curious phenomenon that often defies reification. However, this might not be Plato’s intention, for the smooth transition from the day metaphor to the sail metaphor might correspond to a natural association for the Greeks between the day and a tent overhead, which in our modern eyes seems reified.

To resolve the problems with the participatory relationship in Socrates<sup>p</sup> theory of forms, Parmenides<sup>p</sup> proposes a dialectical exercise. It systematically deduces the consequences of eight hypotheses constructed from three pairs of oppositions: is/is not, absolute/relative, and for itself/for others. With each hypothesis, the interlocutors examine a series of metaphysical categories of being—unity, sameness and difference, similarity and dissimilarity, motion and rest, place, and, at the end, time<sup>39</sup>—in order to decide what the right way of putting the thesis would be. Each turn of exhausting these trains of thought is called a deduction. Beginning with the hypothesis εἰ ἓν ἐστίν (“if one is”),<sup>40</sup> Parmenides<sup>p</sup> demonstrates this new method of analysis by a series of eight conflicting deductions.

Much of the rest of the dialogue remains a mystery and exceeds the scope of this article.<sup>41</sup> I will remain reticent about the debate over the referent of τὸ ἓν (“the one”) and focus my analysis on the conclusions about time drawn in its name.<sup>42</sup> I maintain that Plato has raised difficulties not merely regarding the being of “the one” but regarding the being of the forms in general.<sup>43</sup> After all, while the aporia of the one and the many has arisen in the first part in the context of participation, the nature of the one has not been clarified. In the dialogue, Plato does not explicitly state what use to make of these deductions in rethinking the theory of forms, but I will avail myself of the first two deductions in this section, and of Hypothesis 3 in the next section, to untangle their specifically temporal implications based on the assumptions about time, the concept of the now, and the concept of the instant. I will argue that

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As I will suggest, Deduction 2 addresses the problem of the reification of forms. In Sanday’s view, the main target of the dialectic is the habitual thinking that takes phenomena as surrogates for the form. See Sanday, *A Study of Dialectic in Plato’s “Parmenides”*, 24.

<sup>39</sup> The placement of time might suggest its importance.

<sup>40</sup> *Parmenides* 137c.

<sup>41</sup> Yet, for a very exhaustive presentation of the structure of this dialogue, see Chung-hwan Chen, “On the *Parmenides* of Plato,” *The Classical Quarterly* 38, nos. 3/4 (1944): 101–14.

<sup>42</sup> Parmenides<sup>p</sup> suggests that they begin with his own hypothesis about τὸ ἓν (the one) itself (*Parmenides* 137b). Plato seems to extract the predicate ἓν (“one”) from Parmenides’ fragment B8 and endow it with the status of the subject.

<sup>43</sup> As he explains the method of dialectic, Parmenides<sup>p</sup> indicates that it takes εἶδη (“forms”) as its proper objects (*Parmenides* 135e4).

Hypothesis 3 presents itself as a crucial avenue to the problem of participation at the crux of the dialogue and Plato's theory of forms. Such an interpretation traces a through line in Plato's discussion of time in the *Parmenides*, which does preparatory work for understanding the rest of the dialectic, the further hypotheses after the third, and even the point and outcome of the entire dialectic of the *Parmenides*.

Deduction 1 begins with the hypothesis that if the *one* is, then the one would not be multiple or divisible. Given that time is many, Parmenides<sup>p</sup> infers that the one is not in time.<sup>44</sup> Yet, he adds that since there is no being out of time, the one *is* not. Hence, the first hypothesis ends up self-contradictory. While Plato does not refer to the now in Deduction 1, the kind of timeless temporality that he attributes to the one conforms to Parmenides' concept of "now altogether."<sup>45</sup>

Deduction 2 turns to the hypothesis that if the one *is*, then it partakes of being. By the same assumption mentioned above that if the one is, then the one is in time, it follows that the one is in time. If the one in Deduction 1 resembles Parmenides' being, this affirmation that the one is in time has deviated from Parmenides or Plato's own early theory. For Plato, the fact that being entails a form of time does not relegate being to the way of opinion, and the now that serves on Parmenides' way of truth as the intersection of past and future has "fallen" to generate the phenomenal flow of time: "Yet the now is always present to the one throughout its being; for the one is always now, whenever it is."<sup>46</sup> If Parmenides endows us with the notion of the eternal present, Plato's present in Deduction 2 can be regarded as an invariable phase of time that accompanies all phases of time. Even though each individual present is incessantly sinking into the past, we still call each new present a present. In other words, the past will have passed and the future will have come, but the present does not follow this pattern. When we think that the present has passed, we are still steeped in the present. When we think that the future has come, we do not possess the

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<sup>44</sup> According to Parmenides<sup>p</sup>, being in time involves being the same age as itself and being both older and younger than itself, which are forms of being many (*Parmenides* 141d1–3).

<sup>45</sup> Turnbull refers to Deduction 1 as the Parmenidean version and Deduction 2 as the Platonic version of the supposition that the one is. See Robert G. Turnbull, *The "Parmenides" and Plato's Late Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 112.

<sup>46</sup> *Parmenides* 152d8–e2.

future, for we are still in the present. The temporal mode of the present is, as it were, stuck in the present and will not pass. In our daily understanding, there are two kinds of present: the flowing present and the enduring present.<sup>47</sup> The former is the present that flows in and away in coordination with the past and the future, and the latter is the basic point of reference for all phases of time. What is the future? The future is future as compared with the present. If there is no enduring present with which to compare the future, we will neither say that the future has not yet come nor say that the past has been. When we say that the past has been, we are already comparing a past present with an abiding present. It is in the contrast between a fleeting present and an enduring present that we derive the conception of the future or the past.<sup>48</sup> The past exists because it was now and it is now in the past, and the future exists because it will be now and it is now yet to come. Whether the one lives through the past, the present, or the future, whenever the one is, it is always now.<sup>49</sup> Thus, according to Deduction 2, to be is to be now.

As it stands, the first two deductions reach contradictory conclusions as to whether the one is or, we can say, whether the one is in time. In contrast to Parmenides' claim, Plato's one in Deduction 2 is not outside of time. Rather, Plato tests the one with time and examines

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<sup>47</sup> While some scholars could not make sense of the idea of a present severed from the flanks of the past and the future and attributes it to Parmenides' (for example, Owen) or Plato's own confusion, others such as Miller and Patterson see the distinction between two kinds of present. Sattler, in addition, positions the two kinds of now in the *Parmenides* in relation to the A- and B-series of time. See Mitchell H. Miller, *Plato's "Parmenides"* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), 120–21; Sattler, "Time and Space in Plato's *Parmenides*," 7, 8 n. 32.

<sup>48</sup> Parmenides<sup>p</sup> even puts it in terms of a dialectic of the aging now such that the one in the now is younger than itself as it becomes older and passes through the now. As he explains, "[b]ut if nothing that comes to be can sidestep the now, whenever a thing *is* at this point, it always stops its coming-to-be and then is whatever it may have come to be," it follows that "the one is then also younger than itself, whenever, in its coming-to-be older, it encounters the now." *Parmenides* 152 c6–d2, 152d7–8. While the process of becoming older does not stop, the now is ever present. This version of the present indicates the ever-recurring present in our daily experience of time.

<sup>49</sup> This is in part why we use the present tense to denote events in the past and in the future, saying "that what has come to be *is* what has come to be, that what is coming to be *is* what is coming to be, and also that what will come to be *is* what will come to be, and that what is not *is* what is not." *Timaeus* 38b1–3.

the consequences, further deducing what features the one should have as they are taken up in the dialectic. The assumption of the first two deductions is that to be is to be in time.<sup>50</sup> As Parmenides<sup>p</sup> points out in Deduction 1, to be one is first of all to *be*: “Therefore neither is it in such a way as to be one, because it would then, by being and partaking of being, be.”<sup>51</sup> Then, the one “partakes of being” only if the one “partakes of time,” whether “it has at one time come to be, was coming to be, or was; or has now come to be, comes to be, or is; or will hereafter come to be, will be coming to be, or will be.”<sup>52</sup> Plato adduces all the tenses of being at 141e3–7, though negatively, concerning Deduction 1. As Plato reiterates in Deduction 2, to be is to be with a certain phase of time: “*To be*” is “partaking of being with time present, just as ‘was’ is in communion with being together with time past, and in turn, ‘will be’ is in communion with being together with time future.”<sup>53</sup> It might first be a linguistic observation that being is always being in time, tying being to time. On the one hand, it seems to be the case that whenever we express some form of being, we use a form of the verb “to be” in one of the tenses available. On the other hand, the realm of phenomena we experience is spread out temporally, where was, is, and will be are treated on the same footing and the one has to move from the before to the after through the now.<sup>54</sup> As Parmenides<sup>p</sup> puts it succinctly, “[s]o the one partakes of time, if in fact it partakes of being.”<sup>55</sup>

Parmenides<sup>p</sup> does not seem to give a robust proof for this premise. Instead, as we will see more clearly, this is a necessary condition that Plato offers to ground phenomena in forms. The problem with Parmenides’ separation between being and phenomena and between eternity and time, as Brisson points out, is that time is carried away by the flow from the past to the future, without the anchor of the present that orients it. Hence, the problem of the participation of time in eternity

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<sup>50</sup> Mesch offers an analysis of the claim that all being is in time in Walter Mesch, “Être et temps dans le *Parménide* de Platon,” *Revue philosophique de la France et de l’étranger* 127, no. 2 (2002): 159–75.

<sup>51</sup> *Parmenides* 141e10–11.

<sup>52</sup> *Parmenides* 141e3–9.

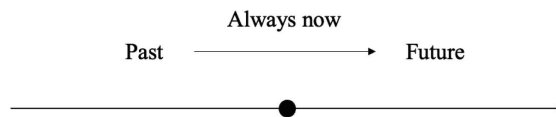
<sup>53</sup> *Parmenides* 151e7–152a2.

<sup>54</sup> *Parmenides* 152b2–5. In contrast, being is not subject to the differences of time.

<sup>55</sup> *Parmenides* 152a2–3.

is an important aspect of the problem of the participation of sensible things in intelligible forms.<sup>56</sup>

As Diagram 2 shows, Plato presents a different picture than that of Parmenides. The now is a flowing limit that accompanies all phases of time. The arrow is drawn over the now because it is the flowing of the now itself that causes the flowing of all phases of time. Unlike Parmenides, Plato's nows are not together. They are present in each phase of time and must be experienced in succession. The phenomenon of the becoming older of the one illustrates that insofar as something undergoes time, it must go through the now.<sup>57</sup> The now is the manner in which something goes through every detail of time. To use an analogy with modern mathematics, there are two types of continua: Diagram 2 represents Plato's relationship between the past now and the future now in the one-dimensional linear manifold, whereas Diagram 1 represents Parmenides' "now altogether" in a circular manifold.



**Diagram 2**

The hypotheses of the first two deductions that the *one* is and that the one *is* share ostensibly the same premise, yet they produce opposite conclusions as to whether the one is in time, for they lay different emphases on the premise. Hypothesis 1 focuses on how the one is one, whereas Hypothesis 2 focuses on how the form of the one is combined with the form of being. In Deduction 1, the one is not in time, because if so, then it is many, and many is not one. In Deduction 2, the one is in time, because if the one is, it is in time. In this regard, Hypothesis 3 begins from the conclusion of the first two deductions: "Let's speak of it yet a third time. If the one is as we have described it—being both one and many and neither one nor many, and *partaking of time*—must it not, because it is one, *sometimes* partake of being, and in turn because it is not, *sometimes* not partake of being?"<sup>58</sup> In Deduction 1 the one is eternal, whereas in Deduction 2 the one is in time. Deduction 1 presents

<sup>56</sup> Brisson, "L'Instant, le temps, et l'éternité," 394.

<sup>57</sup> *Parmenides* 152b–d.

<sup>58</sup> *Parmenides* 155e3–7; my italics.



an absolute temporality, whereas Deduction 2 risks reification. In my reading, the first two deductions constitute an antinomy. They are correct within their respective scopes despite being contradictory to each other.

### III

*In No Time: Plato's Instant.* The antinomy is reconciled by Hypothesis 3.<sup>59</sup> Since the first two deductions share the assumption that to be is to be in time, Hypothesis 3 seeks to clarify exactly what time is or how being is in time. Both time and eternity are ways of the self-organization of the now. In Parmenides' fragments or in Plato's Deduction 1, eternity is now altogether (circular manifold). In Plato's Deduction 2, time is always now (linear manifold). The constitutions of time and eternity share the now as their basic component. In Hypothesis 3, Plato further explores the nature of this basic component through the concept of the instant as the moment of μεταβολή ("change").<sup>60</sup> Plato nominalizes the adverb ἐξαιφνης ("at an instant") into an abstract concept τὸ ἐξαιφνης ("the instant"). While Parmenides' temporal verse and Plato's two deductions provide us with two types of temporal diagrams, they have focused on the relationship between one now and another. A further question is how or whence the now is generated.

To follow Parmenides' order of exposition, if the conclusion from the first two deductions is that in one situation the one is and in another the one is not, then a question emerges as to how or when the one changes from *is* to *is not*. "Isn't there, then, a definite time when it gets a share of being and when it parts from it?"<sup>61</sup>

The ambiguity of the being of the one at one time and the nonbeing of the one at another implies that the place of the transition from being to nonbeing (or vice versa) does not happen at yet another time, but outside time. In Parmenides' words: "And whenever, being in motion, it comes to a rest, and whenever, being at rest, it changes to moving, it must itself, presumably, be in no time at all."<sup>62</sup> How so? First, any sort

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<sup>59</sup> *Parmenides* 155e3–57b4.

<sup>60</sup> It is not the time of κίνησις ("motion") as opposed to rest.

<sup>61</sup> *Parmenides* 156a1–2; my italics.

<sup>62</sup> *Parmenides* 156c1–3.

of transition of the state of the one from one time to another, such as from being one to being many and from being in motion to being at rest, involves change.<sup>63</sup> Besides, “[t]here is no time in which something can, simultaneously, be neither in motion nor at rest.”<sup>64</sup> Instead, the one changes at an instant, “for it does not change while it is at rest or in motion, or while it is in time”<sup>65</sup> and “[f]or the instant seems to signify something such that changing occurs from it to each of two states.”<sup>66</sup> That is, the instant is not in time; nor does it have nothing to do with time. It is neither rest nor motion, but it has something to do with both. It can change into rest or into motion, and the change does not happen in time.<sup>67</sup>

In this way, the concept of the instant unifies the being in time and the being not in time of the one. At an instant, the one is neither in time nor beyond time; it can either change to being combined with being, or to not being combined with being, either to being combined with time, or to being away from time. In this regard, the one *is* change, and change occurs ἐξαιφνης (“at an instant”)<sup>68</sup> and ἐν οὐδενὶ χρόνῳ (“in no time”).<sup>69</sup>

In Diagram 3, the circle and the tangent intersect at one point, from which the one can either turn to the tangent line and become the now of time in the linear manifold or turn to the circular manifold of eternity. As an intersecting point, the instant belongs neither to time nor to eternity, just like the transition between motion and rest. As a result of change, the point can belong both to the line and to the circle. As a process of genesis, it belongs to neither and precedes either. If there are two realms, and the realm of being is timeless and the realm of phenomena is temporal, they have a common origin as different forms

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<sup>63</sup> *Parmenides* 156c3–5.

<sup>64</sup> *Parmenides* 156c6–7. In other words, how can we think of the one as at once/at the same time (ἄμα) not in time and in time?

<sup>65</sup> *Parmenides* 156c9–d1.

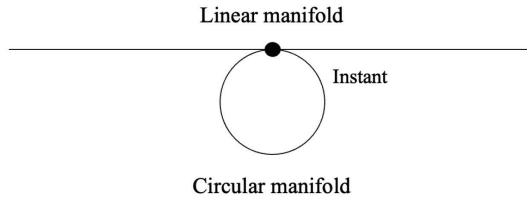
<sup>66</sup> *Parmenides* 156d3–4.

<sup>67</sup> “[I]t lurks between motion and rest—being in no time at all—and to it and from it the moving thing changes to resting and the resting thing changes to moving.” *Parmenides* 156d6–10.

<sup>68</sup> *Parmenides* 156e5.

<sup>69</sup> *Parmenides* 156e6. For a proposal that the subject of change at an instant refers to the timeless eidetic structure and hence grounds the temporality of the Deduction 2 in the eternal present of the Deduction 1, see Sanday, *A Study of Dialectic in Plato's "Parmenides"*, 141–46.

of connection between the nows. If the nows are connected linearly, then they form world time. If the now closes a loop in itself, then it forms eternity. Plato calls this intersection the instant.<sup>70</sup>



**Diagram 3**

In this vein, the relationship between the one and being in the premise of the first two deductions—“that the one is”—is that the one *is* at an instant, which is the moment of change. Heidegger highlights Plato’s concept of the instant and summarizes the argument as “being is change, change is the instant, the instant is not in time; therefore, being is without time!”<sup>71</sup> Being is change. For Plato as read by Heidegger in his *Parmenides* seminar, being is the state of the completion of change. The one that is undergoes change. Change is the instant, for change happens only at an instant. ἐξ-αίφνης can refer to a sudden appearance

<sup>70</sup> Brisson nicely describes the instant as the vertical dimension between time and eternity. Yet, I disagree with Brisson in two aspects: First, his claim that the instant is also the threshold between the past and the future lacks textual basis. Second, I do not think that time in the *Parmenides*, like that in the *Timaeus*, is grounded in eternity. As Heidegger remarks, “[t]he Exaiphnes is not a character of time, is not time. For if it were time, then it would also be a specific this, placed in a place by time, and could not be from-to.—The determination ‘no time’ therefore only means: no time in which and at which something is specific, through which something is counted (Aristotle!), no inner-temporalness.—But this does not mean that the Exaiphnes is the Eternal. It has been claimed; the Exaiphnes is not in time, so it is eternity! This thesis summarizes the whole of Western metaphysics in one formula. We claim that it must be reversed.” Marcuse, *Plato: Parmenides*, 18. Still, Brisson’s comments regarding how eternity appears in time are insightful: “In short, this frozen and continuous explosion that is eternity only appears in time as an incessant crackling of discrete instants. Eternity is the absolute instant; time, the instant always called into question”; “For the instant, founding time, escapes it by presenting the characteristics of the eternity that it fragments.” Brisson, “L’Instant, le temps, et l’éternité,” 394, 396.

<sup>71</sup> Marcuse, *Plato: Parmenides*, 13.

or manifestation, thus lending yet another reading of time as an unveiling of a moment.<sup>72</sup>

In this way, Hypothesis 3 plays a pivotal role in responding to the problem of participation posed in Part 1 of the *Parmenides*. Based on the first two deductions, Plato argues that the condition under which the one is combined with opposite sets of static categories or forms (such as oneness and multiplicity, sameness and difference, and being older and younger than itself and not being older and younger than itself) is that the one is combined with being (Deduction 2) and is not absolute or transcendent (Deduction 1). While the first two deductions try to deduce the possibility of participation through the static communion among forms, Hypothesis 3 reconciles the antinomy regarding the being of the one in the first two deductions and proves the possibility of participation from a dynamic perspective.<sup>73</sup> It provides a temporal avenue to answering how phenomena in time participate in eternal forms: at an instant. Thereupon, the deductions following Hypothesis 3 (except Deduction 5 and Deduction 6) move on to show how the connection between forms and phenomena is realized.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> This analysis of time deepens our understanding not only of Plato and Parmenides but also of Heraclitus. The Platonic transformation of Parmenides' view of time can be regarded as an attempt at reading Parmenides' eternal principle through Heraclitus's flow principle. Inspired by Heidegger, Dilcher argues that the event of stepping into the river is the instant or the *Augenblick*, to use Heidegger's term. The river is the whole stream of time. The now is other and other. Upon stepping into the river, the flow of the river that embodies the flow of time is always other and other. As Heraclitus has it, "[i]t is always other and other waters that flow toward those who step into the same rivers" (B12; my translation). See Roman Dilcher, "Im-Fluss-sein (Heraklit, B 12)," in *Frühgriechisches Denken*, ed. Georg Rechenauer (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 203–16. Reinhardt reads the flux doctrine as "eternity in transience/at an instant." Karl Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der Griechischen Philosophie* (Bonn: Friedrich Cohen, 1916), 207; my translation. For the Greek of Heraclitus's fragments, I cite from *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, vol. 1, ed. Hermann A. Diels and Walther Kranz (Berlin: Weidmann, 1951).

<sup>73</sup> From the static pairs of forms in the first two deductions, Plato derives opposite sets of dynamic forms (such as coming-to-be or ceasing-to-be, and increasing and decreasing), which will serve to describe the realm of phenomena in the following deductions.

<sup>74</sup> Beginning with Deduction 3, Plato tests further hypotheses with the same opposite sets of categories retained from the first two deductions and Hypothesis 3 and presents the last deductions in increasingly abridged manner. As Plato synthesizes the eight deductions in the form of antinomies at the end

## IV

I began by delineating how Plato inherits Parmenides' divided ontology with his own view of time in the *Parmenides*. Parmenides' view of time is close to Plato's temporality in Deduction 1 and different from that in Deduction 2. But Plato's temporality in Deduction 1 is not strictly Parmenidean either, whose basic presupposition of being in time is diametrically opposed to Parmenides' disentanglement of being from time. In Parmenides' temporality, the nows circle together to constitute eternity. In Section 2, I explained that in Deduction 1 of Plato's *Parmenides*, the one or the form is not combined with being, and the forms and phenomena are separated. The problem of the temporal model in Deduction 1 echoes the problem of Parmenides' temporality. Existing in the mode of the self-enclosed eternal present, the form is self-contained and breaks with the realm of phenomena. In Deduction 2, the one or the form is combined with being, but the linear temporality also causes problems. If the form has the temporality of the phenomenal realm, it becomes a ready-made thing and is susceptible to reification. Therefore, in Section 3, I have shown that Plato introduces Hypothesis 3 to solve the previous difficulties. The connection between forms and phenomena cannot occur in time, not in the sense of the first two deductions. It occurs not in the time of motion or the time of rest but in the moment that connects motion and rest. The being of forms is understood as a dynamic transition that is not ready-made but a genetic event. Hence, by tracing the relationship between the role of the now in Parmenides' poem and the instant in Plato's dialogue *Parmenides*, I have argued that the relational concept of the ἐξαιφνης, the "sudden" instant that is "not in time," reconciles the eternal being of the form with the being in time of the particulars. Taken together, these sections are

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of the *Parmenides*, "as it seems, whether the one is or is not, it and the others, both in relation to themselves and in relation to each other, both are and are not, and both appear and do not appear to be all things in all ways." *Parmenides* 166c1–5. In other words, if the one is, then it is all things (Deduction 2), and is not all things (Deduction 1); then the others are all things (Deduction 3), and are not all things (Deduction 4); if the one is not, then the one is all things (Deduction 5), and is not all things (Deduction 6); then the others appear to be all things (Deduction 7), and do not appear to be all things (Deduction 8). More specifically, Deduction 3 and Deduction 4 treat individual things, whereas Deduction 7 and Deduction 8 deal with phenomena, which emphasize the correlation of individual things with the cognitive subject. Since it is unrelated to our topic, I have not maintained this distinction here.

meant to marshal textual evidence and philosophical argument in support of an interpretation that seems to me fruitful for revitalizing Plato's conception of temporality and understanding the wider issues at stake in it, such as his vision of forms and the world.

Parmenides' and Plato's different treatments of time and attitudes toward the relationship between phenomena and being are guided in part by their different interests and concerns, such that Plato sees a worthwhile project in what Parmenides cautions against. Parmenides cares only about being itself and does not try to bridge the way of truth and the way of opinion from his general theoretical perspective. The way of truth does not assume the role of explaining the way of opinion, and being is not the basis of phenomena. However, since Plato inherits the foundational problem from Socrates' quest for definition and commitment to ethics, he maintains a foundational relationship between phenomena and forms. Even though the beautiful particulars fall short of the form of beauty, being must make phenomena intelligible. In taking up the project of grounding phenomena in their being, Plato runs the risk of many aporias. Yet, fine risks are worth taking and must be taken. For instance, in Deduction 1 of the *Parmenides*, Plato demonstrates that a strictly metaphysical deduction of a Parmenidean one can lead to inconsistencies if basic concepts such as time are not sufficiently clarified. And the reward of coming to terms with Plato's *Parmenides* is a retrieval, via scattered traces, of how Plato gives a sustained, positive, and rather coherent account of a threefold temporality consisting of eternity, time, and the instant throughout the deductions. If Parmenides understands the now as true eternity, Plato regards it as both the passing time and eternity.

In the history of philosophy, we are more familiar with Plato's concept of the now in the *Timaeus* and Aristotle's concept of the now in *Physics* 4.10–14. The former is a static now, transcending the passage of time. Even though Aristotle makes the now-point divide and connect the line of time, he could not sort out the relationship between the nows. In fact, Plato provides us with a more subtle concept of the now and a deeper concept of time in the *Parmenides*. On the one hand, the concept of the ἀεὶ νῦν ("always now") between the past and the future in the *Parmenides*, thanks to its nonpunctuality, forestalls Aristotle's aporia. On the other hand, without repressing phenomenal time, Plato deepens both the eternal present and the flowing present by grounding

them in the instant, which stands out between the flowing now and the static now. At an instant, the flower fades in time, but we can catch a glimpse of its eternal beauty.

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