Necessity and Form-Copies: *Republic, Timaeus, and Laws*

[Abstract]

Plato’s metaphysics employs three distinct ontological states: Forms, particulars, and form-copies. Fundamentally, Forms are static beings; particulars are dynamic non-beings; form-copies are dynamic instances of being(s). Plato’s metaphysics is met with difficulty when we start to question how exactly form-copies, mixtures of two seemingly incompatible ontological states (Forms and particulars), come into existence. In this paper, I offer an analysis concerning the relationship between Plato’s two cosmological causes (i.e. Reason and Necessity) and form-copy generation. I am chiefly interested in what finalizes the union between particulars and Forms to generate form-copies. I refer to this finalizing agent as the “form-copy agent.”

Plato puts forth two causes: Reason and Necessity. Both Reason and Necessity possess operative limits (authority) defined by causal capabilities. The abstract parts and machinery are subsumed under Reason, while Necessity is broadly associated with physical reality. The causal role of Reason is to define all being. Necessity’s causal role, on the other hand, remains somewhat obscure. If Reason defines being, what does Necessity accomplish as a cause? Plato’s metaphysics needs a catalyzing agent that can account for particulars’ transition into form-copies. Necessity, I argue, is this agent.
**Introduction**

In Plato’s first real attempts to outline the theory of Forms (*Phaedo*), two principal modes of being are posited: *being* (οὐσία) and *participation* (μετέχειν). These two modes of being give rise to three definitive ontological states: Forms, particulars, and form-copies. Forms are defined by *being* (οὐσία). Particulars are devoid of *being* (οὐσία) and are limited to *participation* (μετέχειν). Form-copies are phenomena produced by particulars rendering copies (μιμηταί) of *being* (οὐσία) through *participation* (μετέχειν) in Forms (i.e. both *being* (οὐσία) and *participation* (μετέχειν)).

In middle-late dialogues (*Parmenides* and *Sophist*), Plato maintains these two modes of being (i.e. *being* (οὐσία) and *participation* (μετέχειν)) and, in addition, distinguishes Forms that are necessarily partaken of by all other Forms. The συμπλοκή εἰδῶν are a specific brand of Forms (e.g. Being, Oneness, Sameness, Difference) that interweave with each and every other Form and open up the possibility for ontologically-rich form-copies (i.e. compresence).

Finally, in late dialogues (*Philebus* and *Timaeus*), the relationship between particulars and form-copies comes to a point. *Philebus* provides an ontological account engrained with Pythagorean notions of the limited and unlimited. When limit is imposed on the unlimited by some cause, a mixture is produced. The limited and unlimited represent the conditions under which particulars exist. Mixtures represent the form-copies that come to be when a complementary limit is established. *Timaeus*, too, demonstrates an ontological system steeped in Pythagorean doctrine. Triangles serve as ontological simples in physical reality. Characterless geometrical Forms demarcate particulars and channel the traditional Forms needed to generate form-copies.

The question becomes: how do form-copies come about? Forms and particulars seem to be ontologically incompatible (i.e. two entirely different modes of being), so how is it possible that Forms and particulars are joined together to produce form-copies in physical reality?

In this paper, I explore how Plato’s cosmological causes (i.e. *Reason* (νοῦς) and *Necessity* (ἀνάγκη)) factor into the process of form-copy generation. Throughout, I argue *Reason* is limited to the construction of potential states of being in physical reality. *Necessity*, on the other hand, is the agent that takes potential states of being (outlined by *Reason*) and makes them fully actual. Roughly put, I argue *Necessity* is the form-copy agent that concretizes the union between particulars and Forms in order to produce physical, propertied form-copies.

The structure of the paper is as follows: first, I define my use of the term “agent.” Next, with respect to passages found in *Timaeus*, I evaluate the roles played by *Reason* and *Necessity*. Then, I analyze Plato’s allegorical uses of *Necessity* in other dialogues to develop a stronger sense as to what *Necessity*’s causal enterprise is. Finally, I provide an example in an attempt to make my view concerning *Necessity* clearer.

**I: Defining “Agent”**

It is important to define my use of the term “agent” when I say *Necessity* is the form-copy agent. For the purposes of this paper, the term “agent” is meant to insist upon the ability to perform actions that occur under the dominion/domain of one’s own limits. Thus, there are two important aspects to my definition for what it means to be an agent: a) an agent affects unique change (i.e. an active component that furnishes a result which is impossible without its presence)
and b) an agent has authority in the domain to which it affects change. Both of these aspects must be satisfied if something is going to be counted as an agent.

It is important to note that Plato does not posit independent domains for both Reason and Necessity. I agree with Allan Silverman (here and elsewhere) who argues that no domain exists in which Necessity could operate as the sole agent of causation because the cosmos is inescapably engrained with intelligibility in one way or another. Even in the chaotic precosmos there must remain some shred of order (e.g. density, patterned motions, etc.). Therefore, the supposition that Necessity exclusively manages physical reality seems to be unfounded. Although, just because Necessity operates in conjunction with Reason does not mean that Necessity must be subservient to Reason. In fact, Plato seems to imply Necessity has authority over Reason in physical reality (as will be discussed below). Reason provides the ontological blueprints and establishes necessary conditions for being, but it appears as though Reason depends upon Necessity to finish the Form instantiation process.

II: Possibilities for the Form-Copy Agent (*Timaeus*)

**Possibility One – Reason (The Craftsman and the Divine Model):**

Strong textual evidence in favor of Reason acting as the form-copy agent appears in the first half of *Timaeus*. First, there is the response to the proposed question: what paradigms (παράδειγμάτων) did the Craftsman look to when creating the cosmos? *Timaeus* states there are two different models the Craftsman could look towards in reference to production: a) towards the generated (πρὸς γεγονός) or b) towards the eternal (πρὸς τὸ ἄῤῥητον). Here, the former option seems to appeal to nature over reason, whereas the latter option appeals to reason over nature. Reason wins out as the Craftsman is said to look towards the eternal paradigms (i.e. traditional Forms).

Later in *Timaeus*, this matter is returned to when the discussion spotlights the relationship between Forms (ἰδέας), the paradigm (παράδειγμα), Reason (νοῦς), and the living creature (ζῷον). There, *Timaeus* says the divine model consists of Forms, and Reason looks to craft the living creature (i.e. the cosmos) in the image of the divine model. Seemingly, Plato suggests physical reality is essentially the product of Reason attempting to copy the divine model.

Looking into the matter, Reason can be understood as the confluence of (traditional) Forms and the Craftsman. Forms, being static, only define a particular’s possession of a property; therefore, Forms cannot actively affect change. This is why the Craftsman is needed as an operative additive to make Reason a cause. As T.K. Johansen notes: “A craftsman is required for making becoming like being. Becoming on its own does not ‘have it in it’ to be or bring about something beautiful.” To state it in another way, the divine model is unable to actualize itself because Forms are beings in a potential state (i.e. becoming). Becoming cannot spontaneously take on being, something must act to actualize it. The Craftsman, then, takes abstract Forms and fashions form-copies through acts of crafting.

At its roots, the view that Reason is the be-all-end-all form-copy agent is directly tied to the role of craftsmanship (τέχνη) in Plato’s philosophy. Johansen believes the Craftsman personifies the general act of craftsmanship itself. The basic version of the Craftsman argument is as follows:
(A) If instances of being (i.e. form-copies) exist in physical reality, then it is because intelligibility exists in physical reality.
(B) Instances of being (i.e. form-copies) exist in physical reality.
   - Therefore, intelligibility exists in physical reality.
(C) Intelligibility is either natural or artificial in physical reality.
(D) If intelligibility is natural, then particulars would tend towards being.
(E) Particulars do not tend towards being.
   - Therefore, intelligibility is artificial.
(F) An artificial act employing intelligibility is craftsmanship.
(G) All craftsmanship is an extension of the Craftsman (i.e. Reason).
   - Therefore, all instances of being (i.e. form-copies) exist in physical reality because of the Craftsman (i.e. Reason).\(^\text{12}\)

A strong reading of the final conclusion would suggest the Craftsman (i.e. Reason) is the form-copy agent.

Johansen recognizes some might want to advance some version of the following counterargument to discredit the final conclusion in the above argument:

(A) Either the Craftsman makes everything beautiful (καλὸς) (i.e. perfected ontological state) or the Craftsman makes nothing (in physical reality).
(B) If the Craftsman is successful at making everything beautiful, then everything would be beautiful in the same exact way.
(C) Nothing is beautiful in the same exact way.
   - Therefore, the Craftsman makes nothing (in physical reality).\(^\text{13}\)

This counterargument may be valid, but it is not sound. There is a problem with how the consequent from the conditional statement (B) is cashed out. No metaphysical requirement exists such that every instance of a being must be beautiful (καλὸς) in the same exact way. All a form-copy must do to represent a being is satisfy the definition associated with that being. Thinking in terms of Philebus, there is no provision suggesting the imposition of limit on the unlimited must yield a single result.\(^\text{14}\) Different mixtures (i.e. form-copies) with variable accompanying properties can reside within the same limit. We can imagine there is an operational range for each limit such that anywhere between two points on an unlimited spectrum multiple states exist that meet the definitional requirement for what it means to be a specific type of form-copy. It is possible for there to be multiple instances of the same type of form-copy without those instances being identical. For example, pure water at -1 °C (standard atmospheric pressure) and pure water at -50 °C (standard atmospheric pressure) are equally a form-copy of ice.

Indeed, the argument from craftsmanship above is laden with truth. There is an antisymmetric relationship between Reason and being such that without Reason there can be no being. However, I argue, we need not employ a strong reading of the argument’s final conclusion. Reason can be responsible for form-copies without being what brings them about (i.e. form-copy agent). So, where I do find room to criticize the role of the Craftsman is with respect to my notion of authority. I agree with Silverman that corporeality is one causal result of Necessity,\(^\text{15}\) but I also believe Necessity accomplishes much more. On my view, Necessity also enables the activation of properties expressed by, and between, the bodily form-copies themselves. Every bodily form-copy possesses distinguishable properties. To be propertied is to be physical. To be physical is to be a form-copy. The problem I put to advocates of an entirely unrestricted Craftsman generating form-copies in the cosmos is the fact Plato never shows the
Craftsman being associated with either the instantiation of substantive Forms or, consequently, any sort of actual property expression whatsoever. Two instances come to mind.

One instance in Timaeus is during the first account where the Craftsman fashions Soul (ψυχή) with Being (οὐσία), Sameness (ταὐτός), and Difference (ἐτέρος). The Craftsman blends them all into a single Form ( eius μίαν πάντα ἰδέαν). This seems to be an obvious nod to the συμπλοκή εἰδόν from Sophist. The συμπλοκή εἰδόν are Forms (e.g. Being, Oneness, Sameness, Difference) necessarily partaken of by all form-copies. The συμπλοκή εἰδόν must exist before anything else can exist. However, just because the συμπλοκή εἰδόν are necessary conditions for existence does not mean they are sufficient. For a form-copy to be produced, the συμπλοκή εἰδόν must be supplemented with at least one substantive Form. Without the addition of a substantive Form, a form-copy will lack a distinguishable property and, thus, not be a form-copy at all.

The second instance concerns the geometrical Forms the Craftsman creates. Timaeus pronounces each element as an unstable suchness (τοιοῦτος) rather than a permanent this-ness (τοῦτο). Primitive matter is not simply separable into four types (i.e. fire, water, air, and earth). Instead, elements are reducible and analyzable. Elements are reducible and analyzable because they do not have inherent properties of their own. This is why geometrical Forms provide suitable elements to impose being on. Without any properties of their own, geometrical Forms receive ontological impressions without adulterating the source traditional Form(s).

This evidence, to me, suggests Plato believed actual expression of properties lies outside the capacity (i.e. authority) of Reason. The intelligible blueprints provide ontological content to particulars but are not sufficient for yielding physical, propertied form-copies. Reason controls what we might consider the second stage of potentiality/first stage of actuality. However, form-copies are fully actual (i.e. second stage actuality) entities. Reason needs something to get the information over the ontological threshold in order to fully realize intelligibility in physical reality (by way of form-copies) which is why Plato posits Necessity as an additional cause.

**Possibility Two – Necessity:**

Forms are participated in by particulars through a Pythagorean model of mathematics. As Timaeus states, the Craftsman conveys eternal paradigms through proportion (ἀνά λόγον). Why a particular is of such a nature is because it harmoniously matches (συνηρμομέθαι) with the eternal paradigm it participates in. How does this occur? Timaeus’ answer is Necessity submits voluntarily (ἐκοινώσαι) or is persuaded (πεισθεῖν). Plato returns to this same general sentiment multiple times in Laws. On one occasion, the Athenian stranger states not even God is said to be able to force Necessity (ἀνάγκην δὲ οὐδὲ θεὸς εἴναι λέγεται ὑπὸ μόνης βιάζεσθαι). Then, on another occasion, he states not even God will be seen fighting Necessity (οὐδὲ θεὸς ἀνάγκη μὴ ποτέ φανῇ μαχόμενος).

I agree with Johansen who notes: “Timaeus refers to the persuasion of necessity as voluntary in so far as necessity is made to behave in accordance with its own nature.” What Johansen seems to mean is Reason (via the Craftsman) works to impart being in physical reality by playing to Necessity’s natural propensities. Reason cannot force (βία) an eternal paradigm to be instantiated in physical reality if it is not within Necessity’s capacity to immediately do so. We can imagine there is an ontological speed limit engrained in physical reality such that Necessity’s agential doings are time sensitive. This should be expected since physical reality is
composed of space and time (even on Plato’s account). If form-copies are going to occupy space (i.e. be physical), form-copies also have to occupy time.

Unfortunately, Plato does not provide the full story when it comes to Necessity acting as a cause in Timaeus. The fresh account is on the horizon just as we are given the preliminary remarks regarding the relationship between Reason and Necessity. Once the fresh account is made, the Receptacle\(^{26}\) (χώρα/ὑποδοχή) dominates the conversation. Plato only briefly returns to the two causes (i.e. Reason and Necessity) late in the dialogue, providing no new information.\(^{27}\) Even though we are told Reason must persuade Necessity, this statement is never properly qualified. It may be the case that Necessity satisfies the second part of the definition for “agent” (i.e. possesses authority in the domain of change), but it remains to be seen whether or not Necessity satisfies the first part (i.e. affects unique change). If Necessity is going to be regarded as the form-copy agent in Plato’s metaphysics, further textual support is needed.

III: The Narrative of Necessity (Republic, Laws, and Timaeus)

To realize Necessity’s complete causal role, I believe it is important to look at the narrative Plato gives concerning the goddess Necessity (Ἀνάγκη) in other dialogues. Necessity is twice called upon to perform the same duty: to fix and complete being. This section is meant to show how Plato’s allegorical uses of Necessity carry real philosophical weight and provide a positive account for what Necessity’s role is in Plato’s metaphysical ontology.

First, I begin with the myth of Er\(^{28}\) from Republic. In the afterlife, Er and the party of souls he is accompanying journey to a large column of light. The light is said to be brighter (λαμπρότερον) and purer (καθαρότερον) than a rainbow and stretched over the whole of the heaven and earth (διὰ παντὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς τετμένον φῶς εὐθύ).\(^{29}\) The column of light binds the intelligible and physical realms together like the cables girding a trireme.\(^{30}\) A complex network of tethers spread outward from a single fixed point to maintain order. This fixed point is the spindle of Necessity (Ἀνάγκης ἀτρακτον), and it is where all revolutions are turned (πάσας ἐπιστρέφεσθαι τὰς περιφοράς).\(^{31}\)

Necessity presides over the column of light and employs the three Fates (i.e. Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos) to assist her. Orientations of time are represented by each of the Fates (Lachesis - past, Clotho - present, and Atropos – future). It is also said Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos aid Necessity with spinning the spindle in different ways. Clotho helps spin the outer circumference, but releases her grip from time to time; Atropos aids in the turning of the inner circumference; Lachesis turns both circumferences with one hand on each.

According to the myth, souls report initially to Lachesis. Lachesis has a number of lots used to decide the selection order for new lives (which come attached with predetermined circumstances). Each soul picks up a lot number thrown to the floor by Lachesis. Afterwards, the souls go in order selecting new lives from the models (παραδείγματα) available. The second Fate, Clotho, ratifies the model selection of each individual soul before passing the group over to Atropos.\(^{32}\) The final Fate, Atropos, is arguably the most important. Atropos makes it so everything which is spun is made irreversible (ἀμετάστροφον). Finalizing the union of souls with models, Atropos seems to represent the last step in the Form instantiation process.\(^{33}\)

The Fates reappear in Laws. Towards the end of the dialogue, the Athenian stranger is worried the men’s account is lacking something that makes the model political constitution developed throughout the dialogue complete (τέλος).\(^{34}\) To address this worry, the Fates are called upon once again in order to emphasize the need for an institution that forever ensures the
constitutional integrity of the model polis. In the passage, the Athenian stranger introduces the three Fates and remarks that Atropos takes each of the models formed (ἀπηκασμένα) by Clotho and makes them irreversible (ἀμετάστροφον) (i.e. making the models complete (ἀπεπεραμαξομένοι)).^{35} (The Athenian stranger devises the synod (σύλλογος) as an appropriate means to make the polis irreversible (ἀμετάστροφον).) This evocation of the three Fates seems to be quite deliberate and significant. The Athenian stranger notes how a particular instance is lacking until it possess the natural power (κατὰ φύσιν δύναμιν) of being irreversible (ἀμετάστροφον).^{36} A clear gesture to the importance of Necessity (specifically Atropos).

These passages from Republic and Laws, to me, illustrate how Necessity (via the Fates) instantiates models completely (τέλεως) after matching an individual with a model. The act of completion seems to mark the final step in the creation of form-copies. Once a Form is completely instantiated in a particular (by Necessity), that particular will be bound to the nature associated with the instantiated Form. This demonstrates that Necessity affects unique change and, as a result, is the form-copy agent.

Giving pause, I acknowledge the scrutiny this view might receive. The challenge could be leveled such that Plato’s allegorical use of Necessity (the goddess) is something much different than the Necessity (the cause) presented in Timaeus.^{37} I do not wish to dispute whether or not Necessity (the goddess) and Necessity (the cause) are two different entities because doing so is a nonstarter. Plato’s use of Necessity is continually associated with the same metaphysical role. Evidence for this, albeit limited, can be found in Timaeus. In the first account of the cosmos, where Timaeus discusses the divinities and their relation to human affairs, right before the formal discussion of Reason and Necessity, Timaeus states it is by virtue of Necessity (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) that souls are implanted (ἐμφυτευθέν) in bodies.^{38} Now, this is not much, but it may be enough. Timaeus never seriously elaborates on the matter, but, given the passages referenced above and the fact Timaeus begins with a recounting of the events from Republic, it may be feasibly concluded that Plato’s use of Necessity in Timaeus is somehow connected to the version of Necessity offered at the end of Republic (and Laws).

At the very least, my view warrants a high degree of plausibility. Plato repeatedly employs Necessity at critical junctures (conclusions of whole works), and, for someone as calculated as Plato, it is hard to believe it is a mere coincidence. Instead, as Fred Miller Jr. aptly points out in his article “Socrates Mythologikos,” there are simply some matters that escape a logical account (λόγος) in Plato’s metaphysical ontology. At times when a logical account (λόγος) is unavailable, Plato provides a myth (μῦθος) in its stead.^{39} So, ultimately, what is to be gleaned from Plato’s allegorical use of Necessity is that Reason cannot fulfill the entire form-copy generation process. Reason furnishes all of the necessary pieces for being to exist in reality (i.e. traditional Forms, geometrical Forms, and the συμπλοκή εἰδῶν); however, it is not until Necessity performs its own task (i.e. binding together individuals and models) that irreversible (ἀμετάστροφον) form-copies become fully actualized (i.e. second actuality), or, in other words, complete (τέλος). Beyond that, Necessity remains an ontological cause only relatable through myth.

IV: Radio Example

The following example is meant to illustrate how each cause functions to produce form-copies:
Reason: A radio station houses all of the songs it plays, and each song represents a specific traditional Form. The complete musical library of the radio station acts as the divine model. The disc jockey at the radio station controls the songs being broadcasted. By surveying the possibilities and making the appropriate selections to broadcast over the radio waves, the disc jockey fulfills the role of the Craftsman. If we want to take the example one step further, the equipment needed to play/broadcast each song at the radio station (e.g. mixing board, turntable, etc.) could represent the συμπλοκή εἰδῶν since the συμπλοκή εἰδῶν are necessary (but not sufficient) for any traditional Form to be realized.

Form-copies: Just as the fulfillment of Form instantiation requires harmony between traditional Forms and geometrical Forms, songs (i.e. content) played over radio waves depend upon the mathematical principles that govern wave motion. A song being played on a particular radio receiver represents a form-copy. Whether or not a song (i.e. a Form) is instantiated by a particular radio receiver first depends upon whether or not the radio receiver is tuned to the right frequency/amplitude. The act of “tuning in” is quite applicable here. The frequency/amplitude spectrum itself is virtually unlimited. Each radio station exists on its own frequency/amplitude and, theoretically, can exist on any one frequency/amplitude out of an unlimited number of different frequencies/amplitudes. However, the specific frequency/amplitude that each radio station is assigned to is the only frequency/amplitude the radio station is accessible through.

Necessity: Necessity is represented by the principles of magnetism that allow for an audible rendering of a radio transmission. The rendering of a radio transmission requires both the non-physical radio waves broadcasted by the radio station and the physical metal components (e.g. copper) that compose a given radio receiver. Radio waves are constantly broadcasted and, thus, always accessible; however, not everything made out of copper is a radio receiver. (I cannot press my ear up against my copper water pipes and expect to hear one of the local radio stations.) This is why a radio receiver can turn on and off. The metal pieces inside the radio receiver by themselves do not render an audio transmission. Only in the presence of a stable magnetic field does a radio receiver successfully tune radio waves in. Therefore, magnetism is the agent that actualizes audible radio transmissions out of non-physical radio waves and physical stuffs, just as Necessity actualizes form-copies by binding together Forms and particulars.

Advantages: There are two distinct advantages to this example beyond demonstrating the roles Reason and Necessity play in generating form-copies. One advantage is this analogy can help explain away the Parmenidean one-over-many dilemma. Just as the same radio station can be tuned into by a number of different radio receivers at any given time, a Form can be participated in by numerous particulars without needing more than one originating Form. Also, no particular radio receiver instantiates the original song itself. The original song is inscribed on the record at the radio station.

Another advantage is this analogy explains how individual particulars can partake of the same Form yet be better or worse copies of Forms than others (i.e. degrees of reality). Simply put, some particulars are better instances of a Form than others because of the way properties interact with one another. Just as having a stronger power source or larger antenna can boost a weak radio reception, some particulars possess supportive, tangential properties that influence the quality of Form instantiation without being absolutely necessary for Form instantiation. This is why some particulars are clear while other particulars are fuzzy.
Conclusion

To conclude, Necessity satisfies both conditions for being the form-copy agent. With respect to form-copies, Necessity: a) affects unique change (i.e. generation) and b) possesses authority in the domain where change takes place. Necessity satisfies the latter condition because form-copies are necessarily physical and, therefore, express properties (i.e. actual). Even with the Craftsman, all Forms remain immaterial and static (i.e. potential). Like a dictionary, each Form has its own proper definition, and each definition can be related to other definitions, but the relations between Forms do not exist as fully actual. Therefore, Necessity retains authority in the domain form-copies exist in (i.e. physical reality), and this is why Reason must persuade Necessity.

It is not the case that Necessity is simply a restricting factor set on Reason. Necessity actively marries Forms with particulars in order to actualize physical, propertied form-copies. (This is why I emphasized Necessity’s narrative.) There is no doubt Necessity needs the intelligible input from Reason to fulfill the task of marrying Forms with particulars; but, it is Necessity’s job to take the information supplied by Reason and make it so in physical reality. Necessity binds together each particular with its corresponding Form as to make it irreversible (ἀμετάστροφον). Thus, Necessity affects unique change and is the form-copy agent.

As I draw my argument to a close, one difficult question looms: what kind of necessity is Necessity? To this question, I recognize I may not have the most satisfying answer. A difficulty to differentiate between Fortune (τύχη) and Necessity (ἀνάγκη) persists in parts of Plato’s texts. At times, it seems as though Fortune (τύχη) is equated with Necessity (ἀνάγκη). The reason this can cause issues is because a traditionalist who opts for primitive matter will likely label Necessity as an instance of physical necessity since a traditionalist delivers Necessity its own domain (i.e. physical reality) devoid of Reason. This has some merit when considering both the notion of Fortune (τύχη) in Laws and the Form of the wandering cause (πλανωμένης εἰδώς αἰτιάς) in Timaeus. Yet, in another light, Plato’s Necessity appears to be some brand of metaphysical necessity when we view it as either the goddess Necessity from Republic and Laws or the restrictive Necessity from Timaeus and Laws. Therefore, it seems best to leave off by saying that subscribing a type of necessity to Plato’s Necessity is an anachronistic practice that does not bear fruit. We should accept Plato’s Necessity for what it is. Plato’s Necessity is the type of necessity that completes the ontological union between Forms and particulars to produce physical, propertied form-copies.
References


Chapter 7. Also, see Cornford

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Notes

1. I somewhat draw upon A.E. Taylor’s use of the term “agent.” Taylor asserts there are two fundamental positions in Timaeus: “a) that the sensible world, being sensible, ‘becomes,’ or, as we might say, is a world of ‘happenings’ or ‘events;’ b) that whatever ‘becomes’ has a cause, by which Timaeus means that it is the product of an agent.” See Taylor “Timaeus and Critias” pp. 440. (This is Taylor’s emphasis, and Taylor cites Tim. 28a-c.)


3. Taylor seems to understand Reason as manipulating Necessity to do its bidding. See Taylor “Timaeus and Critias” p. 454. Cornford, on the other hand, believes Taylor is wrong, and takes it that Necessity has pull that Reason cannot overcome. See Cornford Plato’s Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato p.176.

4. See Plato Tim. 28a.

5. See Plato Laws 888e-889a. There, Plato seems to be wrestling with some of the notions associated with nature in this sense.

6. See Plato Tim. 29a

7. See Plato Tim. 39e. Also, no matter how we read Timaeus, either as a mythical or literal account, I think it is safe to equate the causal aspect of Reason with the Craftsman. Timaeus describes the Craftsman as the best of causes (ἀριστος των ατητων) and if Plato is staying consistent from dialogue to dialogue (which I believe he is) the interminable theme regarding Reason (τοις) is that nothing is greater than Reason. See Plato Tim. 29a.

8. The topic of Forms as efficient causes has been exhaustively discussed already in the literature. See Gail Fine “Forms as Causes: Plato and Aristotle,” Julia Annas “Aristotle on Inefficient Causes,” Gregory Vlastos “Reasons and Causes,” and Fiona Leigh “Restless Forms and Changeless Causes.”

9. See Johansen “Why the Cosmos Needs a Craftsman” pg. 308. As I understand it, the use of the term “beautiful” here by Johansen is meant to signify complete/perfected being. Therefore, all beings are beautiful.

10. See Johansen “Why the Cosmos Needs a Craftsman.” Also, Luc Brisson has a similar position as Johansen. See Brisson “Plato’s Natural Philosophy and Metaphysics.”

11. I do agree that Plato takes craftsmanship (τεχνη) to be playing a fundamental metaphysical and ontological role. This seems rather irrefutable. As stated in Laws, the Athenian stranger asserts craftsmanship (τεχνη) must (δει) be included if human affairs (safe to assume any state of affairs) are to be properly orchestrated. However, this does not suggest to me that the Craftsman, or craftsmanship in general, is the whole story concerning ontological actualization. This seems to be especially true since the Athenian stranger states Fortune (τυχη) and Fitness (καιρος) co-operate with God. See Plato Laws 709b-c. There is also Plato’s discussion of the three types of beds from Book X of Republic.

12. See Johansen Plato’s Natural Philosophy “Teleology and Craftsmanship” pp. 69-76. Johansen’s view of craftsmanship is probably the clearest. Sergio Zedda asserts the Craftsman strategically calculates each step in a causal chain and thereby manipulates the ontological results of physical reality (e.g. blending metals in perfect proportions to create alloys with no left over material). See Zedda “How to Build as World Soul: a Practical Guide.” Most importantly, see p. 27. Taylor also subscribes to a version of this theory. See Taylor “Timaeus and Critias.” I side with Cornford who asserts the Craftsman and crafting art (τεχνη) are not one and the same. See Cornford Plato’s Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato pp. 175-7.

13. See Johansen Plato’s Natural Philosophy “Teleology and Craftsmanship” pp. 69-76.

14. Silverman goes into this matter quite extensively. See Silverman The Dialectic of Essence Chapter 7.

15. See Silverman The Dialectic of Essence p. 278.

16. See Plato Tim. 34c-35a.

17. For more analysis concerning the parallels between Timaeus and Sophist exhibited by this passage, see Cornford Plato’s Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato pp. 59-65.

18. The inability for Reason to engender properties may be why Plato shows the Craftsman is shown handing crafting duties over to the created gods. The created gods are the ones that create instances of substantive Forms (e.g. plants and animals), not the Craftsman. See Plato Tim. 42a.

19. See Plato Tim. 49d.

20. For a more detailed account as to why primitive matter simply will not do see Silverman The Dialectic of Essence Chapter 7. Also, see Cornford Plato’s Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato pp. 189-91.

21. See Plato Tim. 56c.

22. See Plato Laws 741a.

23. See Plato Laws 818b. This is reiterated at 818e as well.
find myself most aligned. Silverman notes that there are two traditional readings: the existential and the predicative.

routed back towards the predicative reading. See Fine logical space for a veridical reading of these degrees, but, as Allan Silverman points out, this stance seems to get thoughts. See Murphy as well since his position is that there are not more or less true individuals, but instead there are more or less true sensible instances. See Vlastos “Degrees of Reality

the view endorsed by Greg

of Essence

radio waves go unutilized (this supposes independent existence

station is broadcasting a sp

particulars

the radio receiver cannot play the song (this supposes antisymmetry or natural priority between Forms and

Posing the same question to

ways to answer one of the most challenging questions: where does randomness and ontological decay come from?

Taking stock, looking to establish the importance of the first two Fates, Lachesis and Clotho may provide for

The benefit here would be that randomness is located outside of Reason. Randomness occurs as a result of corporeality (i.e. Necessity). (The shred of Heracliteanism that Plato does not want to relinquish). Of course this point is never made explicit by Plato, so my position on this matter is merely nascent speculation. However, there is undeniably a void in Plato’s metaphysical ontology that we need to account for (i.e. randomness and ontological decay). With that, this matter will need to be shelved for the time being.

In her introduction, M.R. Wright explicitly states these two notions of Necessity are not the same, and implies the two are not related to each other in any way. See Wright Reason and Necessity: New Essays on Plato’s ’Timaeus’ pp. xiii-iv. A.E. Taylor explicitly says the two instances of Necessity are not the same. See Taylor “Timaeus and Critias” p. 455.

When discussing the topic of degrees of reality there are a couple of directions that the literature goes in. One is the view endorsed by Gregory Vlastos which is to say there are varying degrees of cognition between Forms and sensible instances. See Vlastos “Degrees of Reality in Plato.” N.R. Murphy seems to teeter on the edge of this view as well since his position is that there are not more or less true individuals, but instead there are more or less true thoughts. See Murphy The Interpretation of Plato’s ’Republic’. Then, Gail Fine attempts to carve out a place in logical space for a veridical reading of these degrees, but, as Allan Silverman points out, this stance seems to get routed back towards the predicative reading. See Fine Plato on Knowledge and Forms. It is with Silverman that I find myself most aligned. Silverman notes that there are two traditional readings: the existential and the predicative.
Vlastos, too, acknowledges the existential reading. Both Silverman and Vlastos rightfully reject this reading because it seems foolish to say some beings in the world are more being than other beings; all beds might be made differently, but all beds are equally. Silverman notes the predicative reading is not without its problems as well. The question is posed: how can something be and not-be simultaneously? (The only way there could be degrees of reality.) Instead, it is best not to hang such intermediate states of being on the Forms but rather the individual form-copies. As Silverman posits, there could be temporal slices in which an individual at one time possesses a property and at other times does not. Silverman is willing to let it go at that. I agree with Silverman’s conclusion on this matter. See Silverman *The Dialectic of Essence* Chapter 3.

Surely, the cosmological relationship between Reason and Necessity is a codependent one. Plato posits an *auxiliary cause* (συναίτια) to account for the cooperation between Reason and Necessity. See Plato *Timaeus* 46d-e. An *auxiliary cause* (συναίτια) is not a third intermediary cause between Reason and Necessity, but rather the causal residue from the combined efforts of Reason and Necessity. Simply put, Reason and Necessity work together to form reality, but each has a specific role that limits and defines their authority. This seems to be Plato’s intention for returning to Reason and Necessity towards the end of *Timaeus*. See Plato *Timaeus* 68e-69a. Also, see the discussion father-mother-offspring analogy at *Timaeus* 50d-e.

See Johansen “Necessity and Teleology.” Also, see Cornford *Plato’s Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato* p. 279. For another perspective: A.E. Taylor believes Necessity does not concern laws of nature but rather brute facts to account for “remainders.” See Taylor “Timaeus and Critias” p. 455.

See Plato *Laws* 888e-889a and *Phil.* 66a-c. Cornford also mentions this difficulty. See Cornford *Plato’s Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato* pp. 165-71. See Plato *Timaeus* 48a.