

Participation and Coming of Beauty: from the *Hippias Major* to the *Phaedo*

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In the last part of the *Phaedo*, Plato abruptly introduces the notion of beauty in the discussion related to the participation of the sensible in the intelligible reality. To understand the reason for this introduction of beauty, it seems useful to examine the discussion on beauty in the *Hippias Major* considered as an early dialogue and compare these dialogues paying attention especially to dynamic action of the intelligible in relation to the sensible. This reflection will unfold some aspects concerning the development of Plato's theory of Ideas.

In the *Hippias Major*, where we find expressions that would correspond to intelligible beings if they were in middle dialogues, Socrates says that it is *eidos* of "beauty itself" which "comes" to things (289d), this action being expressed by the verb *prosgignesthai*. However, Hippias, neglecting the precision of Socrates, considers that the verb has exclusively physical sense which could rather be translated as "be added". Thus, the meaning of this term remains ambivalent between the metaphysical requirement of Socrates and the materialistic position of Hippias. In the *Phaedo*, where Plato establishes the theory of Ideas, there are also two different usages, materialist and idealist, of *prosgignesthai*. In its materialistic sense, this term is used in a passage (69b) where he criticizes the hedonistic position and the notion of *skiagraphia* which signifies one of the artificial processes that causes confusion and disorder in the soul by the effect of optical illusion. We also see materialistic usage of *prosgignesthai* in another passage (96c-d) where Plato discusses the position of scientists who explain expansion by the addition of materials. After the abandonment of the position based on physical explanation, he introduces the term *prosgignesthai* in a metaphysical sense, when he explains the causality of beautiful things by their participation in the intelligible (100d). He establishes the idea of participation by introducing the action of intelligible beauty that "comes" to the sensitive level.

Integration of this action of beauty in the theory of Ideas is also based on Plato's consideration of the relationship between model and its image which is opposed to skiagraphic illusion. Introduction of the coming action of intelligible beauty in the *Phaedo* represents a crucial moment in his philosophical inquiry concerning the establishment of the metaphysical relationship between the sensible and the intelligible. In this way, we can see the successive development of Plato's thought on intelligible existence from the *Hippias Major* to the *Phaedo*.