

# Cambridge Elements

Elements in Ancient Philosophy  
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## RELATIVE CHANGE

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## Relative Change

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**Abstract:** A relative change occurs when some item changes a relation. This Element examines how Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, and Sextus Empiricus approached relative change. Relative change is puzzling because the following three propositions each seem true but cannot be true together: (1) no relative changes are intrinsic changes; (2) only intrinsic changes are proper changes; (3) some relative changes are proper changes. Plato's *Theaetetus* and *Phaedo* discuss relative change. I argue that these dialogues assume relative changes to be intrinsic changes, so they deny (1). Aristotle responds differently, by denying (3) that relative change is proper change. The Stoics claimed that some non-intrinsic changes are changes, denying (2). Finally, I discuss Sextus' argument that relative change shows that there are no relatives at all.

**Keywords:** Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, Sextus Empiricus, relative change

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