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HEIDEGGER'S INTERPRETATION OF PLATO'S *SOPHIST*, 246A-259E:
THE ANALYSES OF *OUSIA* AND *TO ON*

submitted by

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under the supervision of

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to the

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

*in partial fulfilment
of the requirements
for the Master of Arts Degree*



Derek Simon, Ottawa, Canada, 1996



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PREFACE

The origin of this thesis can be partially traced back to my interest in finding out whether Thomas Aquinas' metaphysics is necessarily and legitimately subject to Heidegger's critique of ontotheology. Heidegger's critique of ontotheology, as it turns out, involved several claims about the history of occidental metaphysics itself. One of those claims construed Plato as the seminal progenitor of the oblivion of being, of the corruption of language into correctness of speech, of the decline of truth into correspondance, of the deterioration of thinking into instrumental rationality. Plato in short spawned the Platonism which, after its various mutations in the history of western philosophy, culminated in Nietzsche's nihilism and the destructive decline of modernity. In his absence Plato certainly has had no lack of defenders, while Heidegger and increasingly Heideggerians have been pressed by detractors. In reading the volumes of the corpus heideggerianum, it appears that there are points of development in these claims in general, and with regards to Plato in particular. The recent release in 1992 of volume 19 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, entitled *Platon: Sophistes* hence assumes importance in terms of discerning the shifts in the early Heidegger's perception and appropriation of Plato's significance in the history of occidental metaphysics. It provided the occasion for research into Heidegger's analysis of the question of being in the *Sophist*, that late dialogue of Plato's which Heidegger, even into his later years, considered one of the most profound of Plato's literary productions.

The dissertation began with an introduction of the context for the investigation into Heidegger's interpretation of the *Sophist*, lines 246a-259e. This is achieved in three ways. First, a survey of the corpus heideggerianum established the exclusive uniqueness of Heidegger's commentary as the only exegesis of a Platonic dialogue as a literary whole. Aside from the commentary, Heidegger's reflection on and appropriation of Plato's literary legacy

is fragmentary and discriminate from the point of view of the dialogues themselves. With a few notable exceptions, it is limited to a consideration of etymologies and semantic issues rather than dramatic or analytic developments of Plato's dialogical narratives. Second, of the five different themes that Heidegger's interest in Plato can generally be grouped into, the dissertation limited itself to a diachronic overview of Heidegger's interpretation of *ousia* and its cognates in terms of presence and their representation as an average concept of being in general. Thirdly followed the summary of the secondary literature. In this I set out to delineate the two fundamental hermeneutical orientations that are reflected in the secondary literature on Heidegger's appropriation of the *Sophist* prior to the publication of volume 19 in the collected edition. Either one distorts Plato's philosophy in the *Sophist* or elsewhere by reading it through Heidegger's phenomenology, or one penetrates it more deeply than Plato himself and explicitates what is only implicitly stated in the texts themselves. Aubenque's plausibility principle was adopted in order to negotiate and navigate through these competing orientations.

The challenge faced by the first chapter was to give an intelligible account of the dialogue between the Stranger and Theaetetus in lines 246a-259e of the *Sophist* concerning the question of being. Based on an exposition of the dramatized arguments in this section of the dialogue as well as on consideration of the eminent scholarship on the matter, I tried to establish that Plato advances two separate accounts of being. One account determines that being, *ousia*, is the cosmic totality of all that is, while the other account determines that being, *to on*, is an eidetic element in the community of Forms. Despite the fact that on a literary level, the two terms, *ousia* and *to on*, appear synonymous on a few occasions, these two accounts are considered irreducible to and independent of each other. The integrity of this particular interpretation of Plato's text was defended on the grounds of its ability to

incorporate and account for in detail significant dramatic and analytic features of the Stranger's imprecise and precise discourses.

The intention of the second chapter was to present some of the salient features of volume 19 of the *Gesamtausgabe*. It was especially the task of this section to make the reader attentive to the hermeneutical strategy Heidegger espoused for his approach to the *Sophist*. The pivotal strategy, namely, of interpreting the *Sophist* through the tenets of Aristotle's ontotheology. Heidegger contends that the foundation for the objective evaluation of Plato lies in the hermeneutical agency of Aristotle. This is justified by various ideas concerning the relationship between Plato and Aristotle which basically come down to this: Aristotle represents a more lucid and scientific version of the philosophical problems that Plato grappled with. Within this aristotelian perspective, Heidegger specifies that the immanent determination of being is *ousia*, or presence. This is the primary determination of *on*, what he identifies as the Being of entities.

The burden of the following chapter was to provide a critical exposition of Heidegger's analyses of the terms *ousia* and *to on*. Heidegger explains *Ousia* in terms of "being-present-to-one-another" and more explicitly in terms of the presence of Forms to each other in their community. *Ousia* designates the present aspect of the Forms individually and collectively as determinations of Being. *To on* is ambiguously interpreted as either the entitative community of Forms itself or as the individual Form-Genus. Heidegger defends that *ousia* and *to on* are basically interrelated. *Ousia* is the temporal mode of presence of *to on*, whether in its categorical content as a monoeidetic element or in the categorical function of intereidetic relations.

The purpose of the concluding chapter was to arrive at a synthesis of Heidegger's reading of *ousia* and *to on* and to consider the plausibility of his analyses of the terms. The

largely negative result of the conclusion rested on several concerns. First, Heidegger didn't sufficiently take into account the literary genre of the text as a dramatic dialogue. He reads lines 246a-259e as an undifferentiated literary unit that proposes a homogenous concept of being. He approaches the *Sophist* as if it were a scientific aristotelian treatise, indifferent to the narrative developments in lines 246a-259e. That move inexorably leads him to the reduction of the separate, rhetorically juxtaposed hypotheses about the cosmic totality and eidetic elements into a systematic ontology with a single, definite object. This object in effect represents a univocal concept of being conceived as the Forms in terms of presence. Several conceptual difficulties were found to reside in this delimitation of *ousia* to presence and in his ambiguous reconstrual of *to on* as a fundamental determination of Being. The cumulative effect of these difficulties was to discredit the plausibility of Heidegger's analysis of Plato's ontologies and to directly call into question his methodological adoption of Aristotle.

With the prominence of the category of presence in its explication of *ousia* and *to on*, volume 19 of the *Gesamtausgabe* thus constitutes one of the earliest indices of Heidegger's perduring preoccupation with time and being. While there inevitably are some limitations to the following line of interpretation, I would submit that Heidegger's claims concerning the history and destiny of western metaphysics can be cast in the framework of an unclarified and persistent struggle between faith and reason, between religious consciousness and rationality, between Luther and Aristotle. Heidegger was led into philosophy only after having began his training as a professional theologian. It was his readings of St. Paul's *First Letter to the Thessalonians* and Luther's *Werke* that motivated his subordination of being to time and a basically Christian sense of eschatology. Furthermore, he was led to Luther and the subsequent critique of Aristotle by his concern for purging Catholic theology of its neo-scholastic, peripatetic excesses. Heidegger's project can basically be identified as a hegelian

revision of a lutherian critique of the degenerate, instrumental rationality that perverts and inhibits authentic religious experience. In this respect, Stanley Rosen strikingly suggests that what Heidegger characterizes as the fateful destiny of western metaphysics isn't Platonism, it's really a post-hegelian revision of Aristotelianism. Plato aboriginally stands outside this destiny. It is possible to read him, to think with him and beyond him, without consenting to the destructive decline of nihilism. The question then becomes: to what extent is Aristotle the progenitor of this destiny, the instigator of instrumental rationality? We might well have to look elsewhere and perhaps more in the historical vicinity of modern Europe than of ancient Hellas.

If very little of a commendable nature was affirmed of Heidegger's exegesis of lines 246a-259e on the theme of being in particular, it is because the strength of his exposition lies in topics outside the range of this dissertation, such as in his analysis of language, in his consideration of the factual existence of the sophists, as well as in his explication of book six of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The positive value of volume 19, finally, comes to light more in the leverage it grants for comparison with the later developments of the mature and late Heidegger's claims about Plato. This dissertation was not the place to amplify the comparison, but *Platon: Sophistes* represents a very receptive and appreciative attitude towards Plato, unlike the later doleful propositions concerning Plato's fateful orientation of the traditions of philosophy towards nihilism. Despite the infiltration of Aristotelian biases, Plato is still Plato in this commentary, he speaks with his own voice and is not wholly reconstructed for ulterior purposes in the Heideggerian project.

INTRODUCTION

Die Vorlesung stellt sich die Interpretation zweier Spätdialoge Platons zur Aufgabe¹. Die Beschränkung auf die Interpretation zweier Dialoge liegt darin begründet, daß der Sachgehalt dessen, was in diesen Gesprächen verhandelt wird, eine besondere Eindringlichkeit des Verstehens verlangt. Die Zueignung der Sachen, die hier zur Sprache kommen, muß so geführt werden, daß sie ständig neu vergegenwärtigt werden.¹

A. "...in einem der tiefsten Gespräche..."

In 1952, Martin Heidegger observed that the distinction between participle and gerund, verb and noun came to light "zum erstenmal und bedachtsam in einem der tiefsten Gespräche, das uns Platon unter dem Titel »Sophistes« hinterlassen hat..."² Whatever one might infer from this regarding the origin of his own perduring thinking on the interpenetration of time and being, Heidegger's description of Plato's *Sophist* as one of the most profound of all the dialogues was not merely a fleeting fascination of his later years. This esteem for the dialogue is already evident in his use of the *Sophist*, 244a, "Then since we are in perplexity, tell us plainly what you mean when you say 'being'; for it is clear that you have known this all along, whereas we formerly thought we knew, but are now perplexed", as the epigrammatic question introducing the unifying theme for his magnum opus, *Sein und Zeit*, published in 1927. This programmatic line at 244a previously received significant consideration in his lecture of the summer semester, 1925.³ Heidegger's familiarity with the *Sophist* dates back to at least 1919,

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes*, GA 19, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1992), 7.

² Martin Heidegger, *Was heisst Denken?*, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1954), 134.

³ Martin Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, GA 20, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1979), 129, 179. Kisiel refers to this as the "intermediate" and "penultimate draft" of *Sein und Zeit* -- Cf. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 362.

when he made his first published reference to a text of the *Sophist*, line 242c8, which was indeed his first published reference to any texts in the entire body of Plato's dialogues.⁴

These indications of the early and prominent awareness of the *Sophist* in the young Heidegger are strikingly confirmed, however, by his dedication of the 1924-1925 winter semester to an exegesis in toto of the entire text of the *Sophist* itself. At this point in his life, Heidegger was a professor at Marburg, and the lecture took place four hours per week from 3.11.1924 to 12.12.1924 and then five hours per week from 8.01.1925 to 27.02.1925. Originally intended to embrace also a treatment of the *Philebus*, the lecture has been very recently published as volume nineteen of the *Gesamtausgabe* under the title *Platon: Sophistes*.⁵ The distinctive feature of this volume derives from its status as the only line-by-line etymological and thematic exegesis Heidegger ever attempted of a Platonic dialogue in its entirety. He also reflected on the *Theaetetus* in its entirety,⁶ but not with the same exhaustive attentiveness and comprehensive analysis as with the *Sophist*. Of the remaining body of Plato's dialogues, he never attempted a commentary on any other dialogue as a literary whole.

An overview of the texts in the corpus heideggerianum⁷ establishes that very little of

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie*, GA 56/57, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1987), 19.

⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes*, GA 19, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1992). Nowhere in Heidegger's published texts is the *Philebus* ever again mentioned; it receives only a passing acknowledgement in GA 22:261. Either the dialogue held little interest for him otherwise relative to the *Sophist*, or, since it is quite likely that he had studied it, its influence on his overall evaluation of Plato never came to public expression. Cf. *Ibid.*:7, fn.1: "Es handelt sich um die Dialoge »Sophistes« und »Philebos«. Zur Ausführung kam in dieser Vorlesung die Interpretation des »Sophistes«."

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, GA 34, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1988), 149-332; as well as *Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie*, GA 22, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1993), 107-137, 264-281.

⁷ The neologism *corpus heideggerianum* is taken to designate the entirety of Heidegger's texts hitherto published. The corpus thus consists of the texts published by Klostermann (cf. Appendix II - "Gesamtausgabe Series"), by Neske and by Niemeyer (cf. Appendix III - "Neske/Niemeyer Series"), as well as the monograph published by the *Dilthey Jahrbuch* (cf. Appendix III - "Neske/Niemeyer Series", Addenda). The neologism is a convenient way of

Heidegger's publications are directly dedicated to an examination of Plato and his texts. Apart from *Platon: Sophistes*,⁸ *Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie* which examines the *Theaetetus*⁹ and lines 514ff from the *Republic*,¹⁰ the small essay "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit" which is dedicated notably to a discussion of the *Republic*, 514a2-517a7,¹¹ and *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* which once again examines the *Theaetetus*¹² and lines 514-517 from the *Republic*,¹³ no other texts from the *Dialogues* provide a focal point for the phenomenological or poetic excursions of Heidegger's thinking. This overview reveals that Heidegger spent very little of his efforts in commenting explicitly on Plato's *Dialogues*. Aside from his preoccupation with the Allegory of the Cave in the *Republic*, 514-517, and the *Theaetetus*, the *Dialogues* are selectively perused by Heidegger for their terminological legacy.¹⁴ His references to Plato are almost entirely concerned, not with arguments or dramatic developments in the literary progression of the text, but with etymologies and related

covering all the hitherto published texts regardless of the publisher. Appendices II and III also indicate the abbreviations by which, once cited with a complete footnote reference, Heidegger's texts will be indicated in the footnotes. When several texts are cited consecutively in relation to a topic or cross-reference, the texts will be indicated according to their diachronic development as surveyed in Appendix I - "Chronology of the Corpus Heideggerianum".

⁸ *GA 19*, 227-610. The first two hundred pages are given to an analysis of *alêtheuein* on the basis of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 2-6 and *Metaphysics*, I, 1-2.

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie*, *GA 22*, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1993), 107-137 and 264-281.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 99-106 and 225-261. This is the only tome Heidegger ever composed that approximates the textbook genre, being an introduction to Ancient Greek philosophy. It has respective sections on the Pre-socratics, Plato, and Aristotle.

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, *GA 9*, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976), 203-238.

¹² Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet*, *GA 34*, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1988), 149-332.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 21-147.

¹⁴ Cf. Appendix IV, "Complete Compendium" for the actual lines in the dialogues ever commented on at any point in the corpus heideggerianum.

nomothetic issues. His allusions to Plato are thus less to continuous passages in the dialogues construed as dramatic-dialectical plays than they are to terminological sediments of semantic value from which he seeks to extract exact statements that are representative of Plato's thinking. Considered as texts, an examination of the actual lines of different dialogues that receive attention in the corpus heideggerianum indicates that the dialogues, with the exception of a selective assembly of lines concentrated in the *Republic*, the *Theaetetus*, and the *Sophist*, held spurious interest in Heidegger's larger professional concerns.¹⁵ Thus only six lines from the *Phaedrus* or 7th *Letter* are ever mentioned, only two lines from the *Phaedo* and the *Timaeus* receive comment, while one line each of the *Apology*, *Phaedo*, *Ion*, *Protagoras*, *Meno*, *Euthydemus*, *Symposium*, and *Laws* enter the interests of his published materials. While the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, *Republic*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Timaeus* are discussed without explicit textual associations in some instances, the *Parmenides* and *Philebus* are only ever mentioned in passing. The rest of the *Dialogues* never enter into the picture. Boutot is thoroughly justified in his observation:

Donc peu de textes de Heidegger sur Platon, mais aussi et corrélativement peu de textes de Platon commentés par Heidegger...le commentaire heideggerien se porte le plus souvent sur des passages relativement brefs qui se réduisent généralement à des simples phrases ou membres de phrases extraits des Dialogues de Platon, et sur lesquels Heidegger revient sans cesse...¹⁶

Hence the commentary on the *Sophist* is the exclusive and privileged locus of Heidegger's only sustained interpretation of a dialogue as a literary whole. Apart from it, Heidegger's appropriation of the dialogues is both fragmentary and discriminate.

¹⁵ See Appendix IV - "Complete Compendium".

¹⁶ Alain Boutot, *Heidegger et Platon*, (Paris: PUF, 1987), 12.

B. "Diese innerste, lebendige Berufung...zum »Leben« zu bringen"

It would be misleading, however, to infer that Plato's influence on Heidegger is delimited to a consideration of such particular textual points. This is far from the case. Plato is often, although at times ambiguously, integral to the discussion when Heidegger makes reference to "Die Griechen", "die griechische Erfahrung", or "griechisch gedacht". He repeatedly and significantly is under consideration by Heidegger in association with Aristotle, as the abundant occurrences of "Platon und Aristoteles"¹⁷ and "Aristoteles und Platon"¹⁸ betray. Even the quantitative paucity of textual material devoted to Plato when compared individually to the amount of attention lavished on Kant, Hölderlin, or Nietzsche, can be deceptive.¹⁹ One of the earliest assertions Heidegger ever makes on Plato's status in the history of European philosophy acknowledges him to be one of the greatest manifestations in the destiny of philosophy. "Diese innerste, lebendige Berufung, das Schicksal der Philosophie, ihre Idee, deren größte Manifestationen wir kennen unter den Namen: Plato, Kant, Hegel, gibt es

¹⁷ Cf GA 61:44,45; 20:179,184,201; SZ:2,32,39,159,244,399; 24:30,104,149-150; 29/30:53,55,75,499; 31:37,48,65,70,89; 33:162,163,164,165,198; 34:16,120,130,137,226; 40:44,62,102,129,145,146,179,188; 41:43,44,48,81,83,99; 45:9,60,73,92,1,01,111,117,121,220,222; 47:183,184; 49:45,111,150; 68:81,107; 54:11,73; 55:56,57,76,78,79,100,114,227,235,238, 255,314,364; 5:195,322,341,344,371; 48:289,293,315; 9:314,348; WhD:68,69,112,113,119, 120,134,173; 15:18,312,337,334,378.

¹⁸ Cf GA 59:12; 21:191; SZ:3; 3:12; 29/30:488; 31:37,55; 41:48; 45:57,58; 49:150; 54:231; 55:105,234; 15:436.

¹⁹ Compared to the two volumes dedicated to a direct debate with Plato, Heidegger focuses on Kant in three (GA 25, GA 3, KTS,) and further in significant portions of two (GA 24, GA 31, GA 49); on Nietzsche in six (GA 43, GA 44, GA 47, GA 51, GA 50, GA 48); and on Hölderlin in four (GA 39, GA 52, GA 53, GA 4). Indeed, it appears that his concern with the tradition of German philosophy exceeds his concern with Greek philosophy, when one considers that compared to the eight texts in the corpus heideggerianum devoted to ancient Greek philosophy (GA 61, AHS, GA 19, GA 22, GA 33, GA 34, GA 54, GA 55) there are a total of fifteen consecrated to German philosophical figures (Leibniz: GA 26; German Idealism: GA 49; Kant: GA 25, GA 3, KTS; Schelling: GA 42; Hegel: GA 32, GA 68; Hölderlin: GA 39, GA 52, GA 53, GA 4; and Husserl: GA 56/57, GA 58, GA 17). Husserl is obviously central to the discussion in other texts but the debate with him in these instances is so close to Heidegger so as to pass without explicit or direct recognition, e.g in SZ and GA 24.

ursprünglich und radikal aus einer neuen Grundsituation heraus zum »Leben« zu bringen. Was das heißt -- das zu verstehen ist unsere nächste Aufgabe.²⁰ There is every indication that Plato retained his status for Heidegger in his later years as one of the most prominent thinkers in occidental philosophy.²¹

Four different themes can be discerned as central foci in Heidegger's overall evaluation of Plato: *alêtheia*²², *logos*,²³ *ousia*,²⁴ and Platonism.²⁵ With the exception of the latter, these themes are latent and emergent in his commentary on the *Sophist* itself.²⁶ The scope of this dissertation lies within the field of *ousia* and its cognate terms. The very first indication of the discussion of *ousia* ever to take place in an extant text of the corpus heideggerianum is in reference, not to Plato, but to Aristotle.²⁷ The first such discussion in

²⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, GA 58, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1993), 1.

²¹ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Was heisst Denken?*, (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954), 112.

²² Along with its subordinate themes of *poësis*, *déloun*, *orthotês*, *homoiôsis*, *doksa*, and *pseudos*.

²³ Including the related topics of *logos apophantikos*, *logos tinos*.

²⁴ Directly implicated with *ousia* are the related topics of *parousia*, *ênai*, *on*, *to on*, *ta onta*, *eîdos*, *idea*, and *koinônia*.

²⁵ Heidegger sharply delineates Plato from Platonism. This distinction runs from an earliest text stemming from 1923 ("Platonismus der Barbaren...barbarisch, weil ihr der eigentliche Wurzelbodens Platos fehlt", *Ontologie: Hermeneutik der Faktizität*, GA 63, [Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1988], 42-43), through his commentaries on Nietzsche, to one of his later texts originating in 1952 ("Platon gilt als der größte Denker des Abendlandes, weil der Platonismus, d.h. das, was man aus Platons Denken und mit diesem in der Folge übernahm und abwandelte..." as well as "Platon selber hat seine Herkunft weit wesentlicher im Andenken behalten als der nach ihm kommende Platonismus...", *WD*, 112).

²⁶ Thus *logos* is widely discussed in the commentary on lines 216a-219a (GA 19:236-252), 224d-e (GA 19:300-302), 236e-237a (GA 19:406-410), and 259e-263d (GA 19:574-606). *Alêtheia* enters the commentary in terms of the discussion of *déloun* related to lines 261c-263d (GA 19:587-596). *Ousia* and its related cognates are covered in the commentary on lines 242c-259d (GA 19:435-573).

²⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation*, In *Dilthey-Jahrbuch*, 6 (1989-1990):253, 268.

reference to Plato is not surprisingly found in the *Platon: Sophistes* commentary, which this subsequent investigation will elucidate (Cf Chapters II and III). Apart from his commentary on the *Sophist*,²⁸ Heidegger's earliest interpretation of *ousia* in Plato dates back to the winter semester 1925/1926, when he criticizes his contemporary Lotze: "*Ousia* bedeutet nicht Substanz - Ding - Reales in Lotze's Sinn »Seiendes«; *ousia* ist das Anwesende bzw. die Anwesenheit...der Terminus ist im höchsten Grade dem angemessen, was Plato meinte [die Idee als *ousia* zu bezeichnen]."²⁹ Heidegger dissociates the term from an aristotelian or even neo-scholastic interpolation as substance and phenomenologically delineates *ousia* as presence in specifying intelligible Form. In the summer semester of 1928, Heidegger iterates that "*Ousia* ist oft nur eine Verkürzung für *parousia*, Anwesenheit. Das *para* als Titel für das Anwesendsein-bei, für die ständige Gegenwart von etwas in nächster Nähe, kommt in allen ontologischen Hauptproblemen Platos vor."³⁰ It is only in the winter semester 1929/1930 that Heidegger determines *ousia* as "Seiendheit des Seienden; wir sagen: Sein des Seienden."³¹ He further clarifies that "Mit *ousia* ist in der Tat nichts anderes gemeint als *ständige Anwesenheit*, und dieses versteht man eben unter Seiendheit. Dieses, ständige Anwesenheit, anwesende Ständigkeit, meinen wir mit »Sein«."³² In the following winter semester he reiterates: "Anwesenheit heisst bei den Griechen *parousia* oder verkürzt *ousia*, und Anwesenheit bedeutet

²⁸ This includes the pertinent sections of GA 22 from the summer semester 1926 concerning the *Sophist* which are basically a repetition of the previous *Vorlesung* from the winter semester 1924-1925.

²⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit*, GA 21, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976), 71.

³⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe Der Logik im Ausgang Leibniz*, GA 26, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1978), 184.

³¹ Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit: Einleitung in die Philosophie*, GA 31, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1982), 50.

³² *Ibid.*, 52.

für die Griechen Sein."³³ This interpretation of *ousia* as presence is confirmed in his significant analysis of ontology from the summer *Vorlesung* of 1935,³⁴ and remains constant into his latest texts.³⁵ Heidegger claims that his retrieval of *ousia* as *Anwesenheit* derives from the etymology of *ousia* and the meaning it carried in the everyday Greek language of Athens during the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. "Denn *ousia* ist kein künstlicher, erst in der Philosophie geprägter Fachausdruck sondern gehört zur alltäglichen Rede und Sprache der Griechen."³⁶ "Wenn wir also die Grundbedeutung des Grundwortes *ousia* heraushören wollen, müssen sie in den alltäglichen Sprachgebrauch hineinhören."³⁷ On this basis of the indigenous ontological content of quotidian Greek language, Heidegger derives from the

³³ Martin Heidegger, *Wom Wesen der Wahrheit: Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet*, GA 34, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1988), 51.

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983⁵), 65. "Alle jetzt aufgezählten Bestimmungen des Seins gründen jedoch in dem und werden zusammengehalten durch das, worin die Griechen fraglos den Sinn des Seins erfahren und was sie *ousia*, voller *parousia* nennen. Die übliche Gedankenlosigkeit übersetzt das Wort mit »Substanz« und verfehlt damit allen Sinn...»Sein« besagt im Grunde für die Griechen Anwesenheit."

³⁵ As a synoptic intimation of the constancy of his interpretation of *ousia* into his latest years the following indications are offered: *Grundfragen der Philosophie*, GA 45, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1984), 67,68,70; *Die Metaphysik des Deutschen Idealismus*, GA 49, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1991), 45-46; *Parmenides*, GA 54, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1982), 140; *Heraklit*, GA 55, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1979), 385; *Holzwege*, GA 5, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), 155,196,351; *Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus*, GA 48, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1986), 293,302; *Wegmarken*, GA 9, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976), 234,330, 376; *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959²), 142; *Der Satz vom Grund*, (Pfullingen: Neske, 1965³), 175; *Zur Sache des Denkens*, (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), 31; *Seminare*, GA 15, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1986), 333.

³⁶ GA 31, 50. Heidegger continues to defend his claim: "Die Philosophie hat das Wort [ousia] lediglich aus der vorphilosophischen Sprache aufgenommen. Wenn das so gleichsam von selbst und ohne Befremden geschehen konnte, dann müssen wir daraus entnehmen, daß schon die *vorphilosophische* Sprache der Griechen *philosophisch* war. Und das ist in der Tat der Fall. Die Geschichte des Grundwortes der antiken Philosophie ist nur ein *ausgezeichneter* Beleg dafür, daß die *griechische Sprache philosophisch* ist, d.h. nicht: mit philosophischer Terminie durchsetzt, sondern als Sprache und Sprachgestaltung philosophierend." *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

connotation of *ousia* as property, possession³⁸ in daily usage the designation of *ousia* as presence.³⁹ Possession and property constantly present themselves as available at hand and hence make themselves immediately accessible in the present moment.⁴⁰ This brief etymological digression must suffice as an indication of the atmosphere pervading Heidegger's interpretation of Plato's ontology.

In his criticism of Lotze's obfuscation of Plato's *ousia* with the category of substance, Heidegger obliquely associated his own rendition of *ousia* as presence with the Platonic Ideas, the Forms. Throughout the corpus heideggerianum, *eidos* and *idea* are interpreted as the visually apparent face that constitutes the permanent whatness of a thing, the immutable quiddity which makes a thing present.⁴¹ Concerning the abiding whatness of *idea* and *eidos*, Heidegger explicates in the summer lecture of 1930 that "Sein besagt für Platon Was-sein. Was etwas ist, das zeigt sich in seinem »Aussehen«. Dieses ist das, worin sich das betreffende Seiende präsentiert, *anwesend ist*. Im Aussehen des Dinges liegt *dessen Anwesenheit* (Sein)."⁴² It is in the look (*Aussehen*) that is determined by the whatness of the Forms that the presence of a thing is established. Presence is thus constitutive of the Forms. In

³⁸ There is a play on words in German which is totally lost in English. Thus, in German the single word *Anwesen* is simultaneously linked etymologically not only to presence and temporality but to a farmer's property and productive land.

³⁹ This remains his position throughout his published texts. Cf. *GA* 34, 51; *GA* 49: 45; and *GA* 54: 140.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 51-52. Heidegger defends this interpretation from the charges of violence, artificiality, and superficiality pages 53-55.

⁴¹ Already in the winter semester 1925/1926 Heidegger advances his view that "dieses Aussehen, das eigentliche Gesicht, das je die Sache macht, was sie ist, bezeichnen die Griechen mit *eidos* - *idea*. *idea* bezeichnet primär das Gesichtete, das Gesehene und ist seinem Sinne nach das an einer Sache, was sie ist", *GA* 21, 56. For similar descriptions cf. *GA* 22, 252; *GA* 24, 154; *GA* 26, 233; *GA* 34, 172-173, 298; *GA* 40, 65, 189; *GA* 43, 211, 213; *GA* 45, 60, 62; *GA* 65, 208; *GA* 47, 115; *GA* 54, 154; *GA* 55, 253-254, 270; *GA* 50, 43-44; *GA* 48, 294; *GA* 9, 214, 221, 227, 275; *VA*, 27-28, 52, 252; *GA* 15, 312; *SD*, 74.

⁴² *GA* 31, 72. Cf. *GA* 54, 184; *GA* 15: 337.

emphasizing the presencing function effected by the quidditative face of the Forms in their offer of an immutable look, Heidegger connects the Platonic notions of *idea/eidos* and *ousia*:

Das in diesem Sehen Gesichtete ist die *idea*, das *eidos*. »Idee« ist also der *Anblick* dessen, *als was* seiend sich etwas darbietet. Diese *Anblicke* sind es, worin das einzelne Ding als das und das sich *präsentiert*: präsent und anwesend ist. Anwesenheit heisst bei den Griechen *parousia* oder verkürzt *ousia*, und Anwesenheit bedeutet für die Griechen *Sein*... Der *Anblick*, *idea*, gibt also das, *als was* ein Ding anwest, d.h. was ein Ding *ist*, sein *Sein*.⁴³

The Forms as visible quiddities have the capacity to make present any given thing. Being is thus primarily the presence of quidditative looks (*Anblicke*). This connection between *ousia* on the one hand and *idea* as well as *eidos* on the other is a consistent characteristic of his understanding of Plato's ontology. Their interrelationship forms a fundamental feature of his phenomenological interpretation of *ousia* as *Anwesenheit*, as presence.

The question thus arises as to what the precise nature of the correlation between *idea/eidos* and *ousia* is. Indeed, the correlation is not immediately addressed in this lecture, although Heidegger begs the question when within the same paragraph he writes of "Platons Auslegung des Seins als *idea*" and "die Auslegung des Seins (*ousia*)".⁴⁴ Elsewhere he suggests the identity between *ousia* and *eidos/idea*, between being and Form when he observes that the understanding of being as constant presence "[ist] der Grund für die Auslegung der Seiendheit (*ousia*) als *idea*...Nur auf Grunde dieses Verstehens des Seins als beständiger sich auftuender und sich zeigender Anwesenheit ist die Auslegung der Seiendheit des Seienden -- also der *ousia*

⁴³ GA 34, 51. For other relevant passages on the correlation between *ousia* and *eidos/idea* cf GA 40, 65; GA 43, 211; GA 45, 62; GA 65, 208-210; GA 49, 46; GA 48, 301; GA 9, 234. Anything that appears *italicized* within a direct quotation from any of Heidegger's writings represents an unaltered version of Heidegger's own manuscript. This dissertation will refrain from altering any of the italics, whether by addition or deletion, in the corpus heideggerianum so that Heidegger's own emphases can clearly stand on their own.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 331.

-- als *idea* möglich und notwendig."⁴⁵ The consequence of the presencing function of the quidditative look of the Forms and the interpretation of *ousia* as presence is the irrevocable reduction of *ousia* to a Form, to an *idea* or *eidos*. Indeed, Heidegger observes that "Sofern nun für die Griechen Sein beständige Anwesenheit besagt, wird die Seiendheit des Seienden (*ousia* des *on*) nur als das Wassein im Sinne der *idea* bestimmbar."⁴⁶ Being has its fundamental and exclusive identity in its constitution as a Form. "Weil das Sein Anwesenung des Beständigen ins Unverborgene ist, deshalb kann Platon das Sein, die *ousia* (Seiendheit) als *idea* auslegen...*Idea* ist der Name für das Wesen des Seins selbst."⁴⁷ He again reiterates: "*Idea* ist das Wesen des Seins; Seiendheit, *ousia* ist *idea*."⁴⁸ Hence, an evident and fundamental aspect of Heidegger's understanding of the interrelationship between being and the Forms is the reduction of *ousia* in its identity to the specificity of a Form in the capacity of its quidditative look to make present and disclose. Heidegger previously identifies this reduction as Plato's homogenous concept of being. Articulated shortly after the 1924-1925 winter semester in the wake of the publication of *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger proposes in the summer lectures of 1927 that

Schon in der Antike stellte sich ein Durchschnittsbegriff von Sein heraus, der zur Interpretation alles Seienden der verschiedenen Seinsgebiete und seiner Seinsweisen verwendet wurde, ohne daß das spezifische Sein selbst ausdrücklich in seiner Struktur zum Problem gemacht wurde und umgrenzt werden konnte...für [Plato] sowohl wie für Aristoteles und die Folgezeit bis zu Hegel und erst recht

⁴⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Grundfragen der Philosophie*, GA 45, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1984), 67-68. In one of his latest texts, the third seminar of La Thor in 1969, he writes: "Worin entspricht die Platonische Idee genau dem, was die Griechen *Anwesenheit*, *ousia* nannten?...Die Idee allein ist reine Anwesenheit, nie abwesende Anwesenheit, ein Sich-beständigvergegenwärtigen" (GA 15, 333).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁴⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus*, GA 48, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1986), 293.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 301.

für die Nachkommenden bewegen sich alle ontologischen Untersuchungen in einem Durchschnittsbegriff von Sein überhaupt.⁴⁹

Thus it is "the basic concept of *ousia*" determined by the "whatness of the look of the Forms"⁵⁰ which in the instance of Plato defines the content of the average concept of being in general. It is in this manner that Plato employed an average concept of being in general that overshadows not only his own ontology but all ontologies from Aristotle to Hegel and thereafter.

With these preliminary indications 1) regarding the uniqueness of *Platon: Sophistes* as a textual commentary in the corpus heideggerianum; 2) concerning Heidegger's consistent phenomenological interpretations of *ousia*, *eidos*, and *idea* in terms of presence; and 3) their interrelationship as an average concept of being in terms of the total identity between *ousia* and *eidos/idea*, the Heideggerian context for the theme of the present investigation has been sufficiently developed. The purpose of this dissertation will be to undertake an exposition and critique of Heidegger's analysis in *Platon: Sophistes* of *ousia* and *to on* in lines 246a-259e of Plato's *Sophist*. Does Heidegger present Plato as an adherent of an average concept of being in this dialogue? Does Heidegger analyze the *Sophist* in terms of the reductionistic identity of *ousia* and the Forms? Addressing such questions as these will require an initial description and analysis of Plato's diverse discourses in lines 246a-259b of the *Sophist* (Chapter I) as well as an exposition of the salient features of the *Platon: Sophistes* commentary (Chapter II). The groundwork will then be laid for a rigorous examination of Heidegger's interpretation of *ousia* and *to on* (Chapter III). Subsequent to this the dissertation will attempt a critique of Heidegger's interpretation of *ousia* and *to on*, advancing some hermeneutical and analytical

⁴⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, GA 24, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975), 30.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 153-154.

challenges to the kind of exegesis of the *Sophist*, 246a-259d found in volume 19 of the *Gesamtausgabe*. Before the groundwork of Chapters II and III can be attempted, a brief account of the secondary literature on Heidegger's evaluation and appropriation of Plato is imperative.

C. "Die antike Ontologie ist...nie zu überwinden..."

A succinct examination of the existing literature reveals an evident paucity of cumulative investigation into Heidegger's *Platon: Sophistes* in general and the topic of this dissertation in particular. The literature on Heidegger's appropriation of the *Sophist* can be assimilated into two different sets. First, there is the literature which investigates the contents of *Platon: Sophistes* itself. Here the research is negligible. There is only the archival memory of Gadamer⁵¹ as well as the brief appraisal by Rosen, relegated to a terse appendix that provided very little opportunity for extended analysis.⁵² The second set of literature, however, concerns the larger question of Heidegger's relationship to Plato in terms of the hermeneutical penetration of the *Sophist* dialogue and its contents, based on the corpus heideggerianum at various phases of its development prior to the reception of the published volume nineteen. Furthermore, some of the analyses of this segment of the literature tend to concern the perspective of the late rather than early Heidegger's thesis that Plato is the pivotal and historically fated instigator of the pernicious fall of occidental metaphysics into the oblivion of being. The analyses of Heidegger's nihilistic appraisal of Plato circulate in a

⁵¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Auf den Rückgang zum Anfang", In *Gesammelte Werke, Bd. 3. Neuere Philosophie, I. Hegel · Husserl · Heidegger*, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987), 405; and "Dialektik ist nicht Sophistik", In *Gesammelte Werke, Bd. 7 Griechische Philosophie, III. Plato im Dialog*, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), 367-368.

⁵² Stanley Rosen, *The Question of Being*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 317-322.

different region of Heidegger's relationship to the *Sophist* than the early Heidegger of the 1924-1925 winter semester. These significantly altered contexts of the Heideggerian interpretation of Plato and the *Sophist* poses the considerable question of development and discontinuity between the early and late Heidegger's appropriation of the dialogue, not to mention his shifting attitude towards Plato and the legacy of Platonism. These recent studies stem from the period antecedent to the publication of volume nineteen of the *Gesamtausgabe*.

In the early 1980s, two studies were simultaneously published on the *Sophist* which not only elucidated the characteristics of a phenomenological interpretation of the *Sophist* but began to explore the salient dimensions of a Heideggerian interpretation of that text.⁵³ These two investigations are significant for they implicitly delineate two separate hermeneutical orientations that surface in the analyses of the subsequent scholarship in the late 1980s and early 1990s. With Rosen, one can assert a critical distancing from a Heideggerian disarticulation and reconstruction of Platonic texts, or, with Mattéi, one can infiltrate Plato with a Heideggerian operation. Rather than explore this group of literature in terms of its thematic content at this moment, the remaining "Introduction" will survey the secondary literature in terms of their respective hermeneutical frameworks. This delimitation of the survey protects the teleological aspirations of this dissertation while further curtailing the risk-laden venture of entering a labyrinth from which there may be no exit if justice is to be done to the breadth and exactitude of the thematic content of the existing research, related derivatively as it is to the subject of this dissertation on the threshold of the *Sophist*.

Rosen's assessment of the possible rapport between Heidegger and the *Sophist* is paradigmatic for its recognition of, yet distancing from performing, a Heideggerian exegesis of that dialogue. Rosen considers the phenomenological appropriation and articulation via

⁵³ 1. Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Sophist: The Drama of Original and Image*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983). 2. Jean-François Mattéi, *L'étranger et le simulacre: essai sur la fondation de l'ontologie platonicienne*, (Paris, PUF 1983).

Heidegger of Plato's philosophy in the *Sophist* or elsewhere to constitute a distortion and distraction from the phenomena themselves which Plato grappled with. In his earliest comments he suggests that Heidegger ignores the fundamental intertwining of literary form as well as the dramatic and dialectical contexts of Plato's philosophy. Prescinding from or selectively ignoring these and their interrelationship for the sake of isolating technical phrases and considering them *in abstracto* leads for Rosen to a foundational aberration.⁵⁴ This criticism, which has remained constant in his debate with Heidegger's various excursions into Plato,⁵⁵ characterizes the hermeneutical commitment of defending Plato against Heidegger by recourse to the resources latent in Plato's own dialectical dramas. From within this position, Gadamer contends that there is more in the *Sophist* than the mature Heidegger's portrayal of Plato permits. His reading of the *Sophist* contends that Plato is not the formal and efficient cause of Aristotle's ontotheology and hence the pivotal progenitor of instrumental rationality. Indirectly and by implication he asserts that Heidegger's phenomenology is not sufficient for a complete examination of Plato's distinct animation of the question of being.⁵⁶ What Rosen and Gadamer question is the adequacy of Heidegger's phenomenology to take into account the effect of Plato's option for dramatic literary form on the content of his discourse on being, his ontology. It is not that Rosen or Gadamer contend that Heidegger is wrong; rather, it is more an issue that Heidegger is only partially correct.

⁵⁴ Stanley Rosen, "Heidegger's Interpretation of Plato", in *Essays in Metaphysics*, ed. C.G. Vaught, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970), 57.

⁵⁵ *Plato's Sophist*, 1-14; *The Question of Being*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 10-13, 318-319. It is worthwhile to note that Rosen isn't engaging in an elenctic battle with Heidegger, insisting on his refutation because Plato will somehow be polluted by contact with him. Indeed, Rosen recognizes the vitality and fecundity of Heidegger's approach to Plato, while considering this approach to be only partially adequate. He further considers the phenomenological method to be fundamentally identical, even though inverse, to the analytical method of interpreting Plato's dialogues in contradistinction to his dramatic reading of the dialogues.

⁵⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Dialektik ist nicht Sophistik", *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 7, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), 367.

An inverse position nonetheless presents itself in the literature that, prior to the publication of *Gesamtausgabe* 19, attempted to articulate if not Heidegger's own possible interpretation of the *Sophist* then at least a proposed Heideggerian interpretation of that text. Mattéi's studies are in this respect an idiosyncratic attempt to formulate Heidegger's evaluation of the *Sophist*.⁵⁷ Finding provocative resources in the late Heidegger's reflections on the *Geviert* and Hölderlin, Mattéi's return to Plato involves an elaborate retrieval of the mythological origins and symbolic principles which he claims suffuse and dominate Plato's explicit philosophy and especially the *Sophist*. The symbolic values of the *dramatis personae* and the number five become the guiding interpretive lens for his structuralist effort to elucidate the foundations of Plato's ontology in that dialogue. While he operates in accord with Rosen's principle of the fundamental unity between dramatic form and philosophical content, Mattéi represents the hermeneutical orientation that seeks to rethink and penetrate anew the Platonic text beginning with Heideggerian presuppositions. Whereas Mattéi's cultural studies and poeticizing tendencies at times obfuscate the purpose or conclusions of his philosophical investigation, other studies which share the same hermeneutical orientation to interpret Plato *ex* rather than *contra* Heidegger do not. Boutot's research fundamentally differs from Mattéi's in that he offers a more clarified analysis and conceptual exposition of Heidegger's relationship with the *Sophist*.⁵⁸ In *Heidegger et Platon*, Boutot takes seriously Heidegger's diagnosis of the historical culmination of occidental metaphysics in nihilism as an

⁵⁷ *Op. cit.*. The essential theses of this work are succinctly summarized and developed, with a precision not available in the poetic and mythological musings of the earlier tome, in two articles published in 1989 as chapters one and five of *L'Ordre du monde: Platon - Nietzsche - Heidegger*, (Paris: PUF, 1989).

⁵⁸ Alain Boutot, *Heidegger et Platon*, (Paris: PUF, 1987), and "L'interprétation Heideggerienne du *Sophiste* de Platon, In *Études sur le Sophiste de Platon*, ed. P. Aubenque and M. Narcy, (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1991), 538-559.

optimal point of departure for the interpretation of Plato.⁵⁹ From his point of view, no criticism of Heidegger's interpretation is meaningful which depends on recourse to criteria extraneous to the Heideggerian hermeneutic itself; the critical task is thus to interrogate the consistency of the historical prejudice as it is developed in itself. When this critical task confronts the texts of Plato, the challenge is, via Heidegger, to penetrate what has hitherto remained only implicit and unthought in the textual legacy of Plato's explicit thoughts.⁶⁰ The principles, meanwhile, for probing the implicit concealed in the explicit in the *Sophist* are formulated on the basis of Heidegger's phenomenological excursions into the linguistics and structures of *Sein* and its cognates in *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* and *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. The service rendered by Boutot is that it compels the interpretation of Plato to listen constructively to Heidegger's insights. While Montet takes some critical distance from Heidegger in her analysis of *ousia*, *eidos*, and *idea*, she nonetheless pursues a similar strategy to Boutot. Seeking a direct rapport with the *Sophist* and a few other dialogues, she admits Heidegger's analysis of *essentia* and *existentia* as the guiding terms of her investigation of Plato.⁶¹ What the combined researches of Mattéi, Boutot, and Montet

⁵⁹ Boutot claims, in openly confronting a line of interpretation that would question the hermeneutical integrity of the Heideggerian operation, that "Heidegger est un historien de la philosophie d'une rigueur peu commune qui, comme Hegel, ne s'intéresse pas à la tradition occidentale en «historiographe», mais en «philosophe», et que ses analyses, qui jettent une nouvelle lumière sur l'ensemble de la pensée occidentale, sont, en tant qu'œuvre philosophique, inattaquables." *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶⁰ This strategy can be traced back to Heidegger himself, cf "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit", *Wegmarken*, GA 9, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976), 203: "Die »Lehre« eines Denkes ist das in seinem Sagen Ungesagte, dem der Mensch ausgesetzt wird, auf daß er dafür sich verschwende."

⁶¹ Danielle Montet, *Les traits de l'être*, (Grenoble: Jerome Millon, 1990). Despite her recognition that "l'*ousia* reste à penser dans le feuilleté des sens, les nervures sémantiques que souligne finement Platon" (15), and her castigation of Heidegger for performing "une désarticulation et restructuration complètes du texte [de Platon]" (37) she accepts as her exegetical principle the structure of *ousia* as essence and existence (15). Essence and existence are the terminological contributions of mediaval ontology which, without any foundation in Plato whatsoever, are directly associated with *ousia* by Heidegger himself when he defends his interpolation of these terms: "Und zwar hat *ousia* selbst eine doppelte Bedeutung, die nicht

exemplify are the hermeneutical orientation that seeks to render Plato intelligible on a Heideggerian foundation. The outcome and limitation of this orientation is essentially the repetition of a sui-generated and self-contained perspective within the Heideggerian lifeworld. This isolated hermeneutic has difficulty finding any legitimacy outside its own culture in other lifeworlds that do not share its meta-historical commitments concerning occidental metaphysics.

Is a resolution between these two seemingly diametrically opposed hermeneutical orientations possible? In his critical review of Montet's study, Brunner questions the viability of the Heideggerian rapprochement and infiltration of Plato's thinking. His astute observation presents a direct rebuttal to the strategies of Boutot and Montet:

Admettre, comme le fait le philosophe allemand, que la pensée contemporaine est la clé de la pensée ancienne dont elle explicite le non-dit, et se donner ainsi la faculté de comprendre les auteurs mieux qu'ils ne se comprenaient eux-mêmes, c'est en somme accepter le postulat hégélien, si hautement discutable, selon lequel le déroulement de l'histoire est l'explicitation de la vérité. En fait, rien ne prouve qu'une pensée quelconque assume la vérité totale qui fut découverte avant elle...⁶²

Brunner's comment questions the Hegelian prejudice underlying the Heideggerian hermeneutic which consists of retrieving Plato and his implicit doctrine. It illuminates the exegetical illegitimacy of an illusory monopoly of truth seemingly justified in the name of a contemporary historical advantage. Brunner emphatically makes us attentive to the precariousness of the claim that presents Heidegger's phenomenology as the only point of access to the resources of Plato's text. Can phenomenology, however, only contribute a futile projection in the

zufällig ist, und die bei Aristoteles erst scharff heraustritt, aber bei Plato überall schon festgestellt werden kann...*Ousia* ist Sein im Sinne der *modus existendi*...[und] im Sinne des *modus essendi*: Was-sein, Was-gehalt, Wesen, das, was etwas zu dem macht, was es ist -- mag es existieren oder nicht". *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang Leibniz*, GA 26, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1978), 182-183. This collusion of *ousia* with essence and existence in Heidegger is constitutive of the very lens with which Montet approaches the *Sophist*.

⁶² Fernand Brunner, "Un imbroglio herméneutique", *Museum Helveticum*, 48 (1991):235.

investigation of the dialogues, as he claims it does?⁶³ Is there no defensible possibility of mutually enhancing conversation in the encounter with the *Sophist* via Heidegger, a conversation that liberates both partners of the dialogue into the plenitude of a meaningful discourse on being?

Such is the hermeneutical intention of Brague in his aspiration towards "un rapport de maïeutique réciproque, chacune aidant l'autre à accéder à sa propre vérité" in the encounter between Heidegger's phenomenology and the Greek experience of philosophy.⁶⁴ In accord with Brunner, Brague considers it a menacing danger to see one's own position as the fulfilment of the whole occidental tradition or even the rehabilitation of insufficiently pursued thinkers in the philosophical heritage. He perceives the possibilities, however, in heideggerian phenomenology for articulating what has only remained hitherto implicit in Greek thought. Phenomenology leads back to the Greek philosophical experience, but it also leads further ahead. This requires however, the following methodological proviso: "Libérer la phénoménologie suppose ainsi l'identification de ce dont il s'agit de la libérer."⁶⁵ For his maieutic to be fully reciprocal, the liberation of phenomenology will thus require the liberation of Greek thinking, and in our instance, of Plato's discourse on being. Prior to the liberation of both, however, lies the necessary identification of that from which the liberation proceeds.

What the contrast in hermeneutical orientations has attempted to elucidate is that both the pure projection of Heideggerian phenomenology and the assumption of an anachronistic archaeological preservation of Plato's static meaning are equally untenable and sterile as

⁶³ Brunner, *Ibid.*: "...le lourde mise en scène heideggerienne" of phenomenological biases "ne possède la plénitude de son sens que sur le plateau de celui qui l'a inventée...Il reste que projeter la phénoménologie heideggerienne sur la philosophie du maître grec pour justifier cette philosophie, c'est refuser cette philosophie au nom de la phénoménologie", 235-236.

⁶⁴ Remi Brague, "La phénoménologie comme voie d'accès au monde grec", in *Phénoménologie et métaphysique*, ed. J.-L. Marion et. al., (Paris:PUF, 1984), 249.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 252.

strategies of interpretation. Aubenque's intervention is salutary at this point for delineating the parameters of the present study in light of this hermeneutical state of affairs.⁶⁶ Every investigation of Plato is biased on account of the a priori diversity of contemporary philosophical interests. Even the most scientifically empirical and purely structuralist efforts at impartial exegesis admit such biases at the limits of verifiability and the evaluation of its data. Hermeneutical responsibility is thus exercised in the conscientious account rendered for the biases operative in the interpretation. These observations lead Aubenque to what he calls the legitimated plausibility of an interpretation.

J'appelle plausible une interprétation qui, sans être imposée par aucune assertion explicite de l'auteur, n'est non plus contredite par aucune...Il y a a des interprétations impossibles, mais il y a, s'agissant d'une œuvre grande, c'est-à-dire riche en potentialités, plusieurs interprétations plausibles... on s'efforcera de choisir celle qui garantit au texte à la fois le maximum d'intelligibilité (celle qui intègre le plus de parties de l'œuvre) et le maximum de productivité (celle qui donne le plus à penser).⁶⁷

The *Sophist* is precisely such a grand text, fecund in its potentialities for a liberating, post-modern discourse on being. This dissertation is thus inevitably bound to the claim that Heidegger prevents the full identification of that from which the liberation, not merely of phenomenology's but moreover of Plato's desire to critically interact with the phenomena of being, proceeds. The present investigation into the *Sophist* will not, in the meantime, embark on the path of the liberation of one or the other. That will be the occasion for numerous dialogical *logoi* beyond the opportunities of this enterprise. More specifically, the claim is presented that Heidegger's interpretation of Plato's discourses on being in the *Sophist* and especially his analysis of *ousia* in his commentary are not sufficiently plausible. They avert a full appreciation of the phenomena which not only Plato but we ourselves after Heidegger grapple with. This thesis of the implausibility of Heidegger's interpretation will be limited,

⁶⁶ Pierre Aubenque, *L'histoire de la philosophie est-elle ou non philosophique? Oui et non*, in *Nos Grecs et les modernes*, ed. B. Cassin, (Paris: Seuil, 1992), 17-37.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

to cite Aubenque's distinction, to the question of its intelligibility, not of its productivity. This investigation will set itself the limited task of trying to demonstrate that Heidegger's exegesis of *ousia* and *to on* in the *Sophist*, despite its exegetical rigour, obstructs the discourse on being from which the liberation ultimately proceeds. This dissertation thus circumscribes a negative task. It nonetheless, as a hermeneutically preliminary task, constitutes a first step, even though it may only be a step back, in clearing the path for future liberations ahead. This step back consists of the identification of that from which the liberation of Greek thinking and phenomenology may eventually proceed. Courtine aptly observes that "l'enquête phénoménologique doit d'abord se définir comme répétition et comme radicalisation de l'aporie initiale...".⁶⁸ In this regard, the present endeavour understands itself as a repetition and as such a first, albeit negative, moment in the radicalization of the initial aporia, the perduring difficulty of rendering an intelligible account of being. Heidegger's own words, in the wake of *Platon: Sophistes*, intuitively narrate our hermeneutical predicament: "Die antike Ontologie ist aber grundsätzlich nicht belanglos und nie zu überwinden, weil sie den ersten notwendigen Schritt darstellt, den jede Philosophie überhaupt vollziehen muß, so daß dieser Schritt von jeder wirklichen Philosophie wiederholt werden muß. Nur die selbstgefällige und der Barbarei verfallene Modernität kann glauben machen wollen, Plato sei, wie man geschmackvoll sagt, erledigt."⁶⁹ In order to attempt the negative but necessary retrieval, the moment has arrived to reclaim Plato's inexhaustible narrative in the *Sophist*.

⁶⁸ Jean-François Courtine, "Le Platonisme de Heidegger", in *Heidegger et la phénoménologie*, (Paris:Vrin, 1990), 143.

⁶⁹ GA 24: 157.

CHAPTER 1

THE *SOPHIST*: PLATO'S ONTOLOGY

Die Frage, die *Plato* im *Sophistes* stellt: *τι ποτε Βούλεσθε σημαίνει ὅποταν οὐ φθέγγησθε;* (244a) »Was wollt ihr denn, daß es bedeute, wenn ihr (das Wort) 'seiend' gebraucht?« Kurz, was besagt 'Sein'? Diese Frage ist so lebendig gestellt, seit *Aristoteles* aber ist sie verstummt, und zwar so verstummt, daß man nicht mehr darum weiß, daß sie verstummt ist, weil man hinfort ständig über das Sein in den von den Griechen überkommenen Bestimmungen und Perspektiven handelt.¹

A. "...y-a-t-il déjà une *ontologie* chez Platon...?"

Every task of interpretation has to account for the prior task of translation when it involves a hermeneutical juxtaposition of texts written in different languages. Yet paradoxically, every translation is already an interpretation. *Traduttore traditore*, as the Italian saying goes, bearing in mind the ubiquitous risk of distortion latent in every translation which, *qua* translation, constitutes an interpretation. The translator, however, can minimize the treachery of distortion. One minimizing strategy is to transliterate. The other is to provide as accurate a syntactical and semantical rendition of a term into English as is possible. The difficulty arises when the obtuseness of the English language and its accepted canons of style and usage don't capture the semantical and syntactical specificity of, in this case, a Greek or German term. For instance, the word *ousia* in Greek is often translated as being, but then being is also used to translate *on*, *to on*, and *einai*, etc.. The English user cannot but feel betrayed, left on the outside of an incredibly rich interplay of meanings and expressions. The

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, GA 20, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1979), 179.

overriding strategy adopted in this thesis will consist of transliteration, whatever the limitations of this may be. Translations will also be introduced intermittently, with textual legitimization.

A further consideration. The present dissertation is inextricably bound to the use of the category "ontology". This in itself poses contextual considerations which need to be clarified before undertaking the foray into Plato and Heidegger. Ontology is a recent term in the history of occidental philosophy. It stems from Christian Wolff's trifurcation of ontology, natural theology, and cosmology, and from there filtered into the stream of the technical vocabulary of continental philosophy via Kant. It is not a term that was ever used by Plato or even by Aristotle, yet it is omnipresent in Heidegger's texts. Mattéi poignantly asks "Mais y-a-t-il déjà une *ontologie* chez Platon, en premier lieu dans le *Sophiste*, et surtout une *ontologie*?...On risquera ici tout au plus le terme de *tinologie*."² Tinology, a timid neologism, stems from Plato's insistence in 262e6-7 that every *logos* is a *logos tinos*, every discourse is a discourse in reference to a real thing. While the present study will avoid the neologism, it contains an insight which animates the current use of the category "ontology". The term "ontology" will henceforth be flexibly used to designate any account or discourse, broadly conceived, concerning that which in any way is, whether it is in reference to *ousia*, *to on*, or *einai*. This loose designation of ontology is intended to dissuade the affiliation of the Stranger's own naming of his discourse as *diaireisis* or *dialektike episteme* (253c) with the Aristotelian science of being qua being (*Meta.*, IV, 1003a22-25) whose explicit and conscientious commitments to a specifically delimited subject matter, predicational structures, and demonstrative procedures differ from the texture of Plato's dialectics. Rosen adverts to this differentiation between the Platonic and Aristotelian discourses when he writes that "Very far

² Mattéi, *L'Ordre du monde*, 28-29.

from articulating an ontology or science of being...the Stranger proceeds in a variety of ways and uncovers various senses of 'being'.³ The present investigation henceforth understands ontology flexibly as a non-homogeneous effort using different approaches to discover the plurivocal senses of being. With this clarification, the Stranger's polysemic account of being can be faced.

B. Introduction: the *Sophist* and the Question of Being

In Plato's late dialogue⁴, *Sophistês: ê peri tou ontos*, the Eleatic Stranger develops a poignant question on behalf of Theaetetus and himself. The question is posed to the Eleatic, Ionian, and Sicilian traditions which have carelessly thought about the number and nature of real entities, *ta onta* (242c-d): "Then since we are in perplexity, tell us plainly what you mean when you say 'is' (*on*). For it is clear that you have known this all along, whereas we formerly thought we knew, but are now perplexed" (244a). He is thus restating his previous query, "What are we to understand by this 'to be' (*to einai*) of yours?" (243e). This question had stemmed from the previous realization that he and Theaetetus find "that which is", *to on*, as equally aporetic as *to me on*, "that which is not" (243c; cf. 250e). In the *Sophist*, the question of being is thus crucial to addressing the aporia regarding not-being and the difference between true and false statements. The resolution of the aporia is integral to the task of differentiating the pretentious sophist and the genuine philosopher. In the First Digression (246a-249d) of the conversation between Theaetetus and the Stranger, this very question

³ Rosen, *Plato's Sophist*, 8.

⁴ Plato, *Sophist*, trans. H.N. Fowler, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987). All quotes are taken from this translation, which was based on the Codex Clarkianus and Codex Venetus.

regarding that which is, *to on*, motivates the discussion of the battle of the giants concerning reality, *ousia* (246a). This dispute between the somaticists and the eideticists eventually culminates in the recognition, dialectically superceding their dichotomous positions, that *ousia*, as the living totality of that which is, *to on te kai to pân*, consists of the moved and the unmoved (249d). After a brief transition (249d-250a), the dialogue continues in a Second Digression (250a-259e) with a development of the doctrine of *koinônia* in which the terms *ousia* and *to on* again circulate as significant dimensions of the account of being and intereidetic participation.

Plato's flexible use of multiple terms -- *on*, *ousia*, *einai* -- indicates the various nuances of a single question: what is being, what do we mean when we use the word being in our discourse, and what account can be given for being? The purpose of this chapter will be to investigate the meaning of being as developed by Plato in the dialogic conversation between the Stranger and Theaetetus in the *Sophist*. The particular focus of this investigation will be to examine the meaning of being in the context of the Stranger's development of the first and second digressions of the dialogue. An exposition of the salient features of *koinônia* is thus considered integral to the analysis of the meaning of being itself. For it is precisely through the dialectical procedure of differentiation, *diaireisis*, where one thing is made manifest in contradistinction to others, that the various Platonic perspectives regarding *ousia* and *to on* will emerge.⁵ This in turn will facilitate the focal examination of the interrelationship between them.

Meanwhile, there is hardly the possibility of discerning a consensus among the commentators concerning the interrelationship between the plurivocal senses of being developed by the Stranger in general, or between *ousia* and *to on* in particular. Diès draws

⁵ *To einai* will be prescinded from in the immediate analysis for purposes of delimitation.

no connection between the two terms, choosing to read *ousia* as the passivity of immutable Forms⁶ in their being known and *to on* as the heterogeneous Form that is always other than the Forms that combine with it.⁷ Cornford presents the two terms as interchangeable names,⁸ synonymously signifying both the universal totality of all things (*to pân*) and the Form-Genus:Being (*eidos, genos*).⁹ *Ousia* and *to on* each have two senses, and he claims that there is an identity between the first sense of the two terms and the second sense of the two terms such that their identical first sense refers to the totality of all reality and their identical second sense refers to the Form-Genus:Being. He then makes the two senses co-extensive with each other by insisting that the Form-Genus:Being as the highest Form "must not be the poorest, but the richest, a universe of real being, a whole containing all that is real in a single order".¹⁰ In Cornford's reading the *genos* subsumes *to pân* with a strict identity between them. Bluck, however, prescinds from drawing any direct connection between *ousia* and *to on*.

⁶ A. Diès, *La définition de l'être et la nature des idées*, (Paris: Vrin, 1932), 54 ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁸ Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd., 1935). He designates *ousia* and *to on* as "reality" (cf 216, fn. 1; 246) in his translation and discussion of the first digression that concludes in 249d. With the transition in 250aff he writes "Our attention is now fixed on the three Forms, Reality (or Existence¹), Motion, and Rest. [Fn ¹ The shift will be marked in the translation by the use of 'existence' instead of 'reality' for *ousia, to on*.]" (252). He further specifies the two senses of *to on* when he writes that with 249d "the Stranger passed from the discussion of the Real (that which is Real) as containing both things that move and things that are at rest to Realness or Existence as a Form of which everything that is real partakes" (292).

⁹ Concerning the expressions "Form-Genus" or "Form-Genera" see footnote 25. The name "Form-Genus:Being" thus designates that particular Form-Genus that has the nature of being. "Form-Genus:Other" would thus name the particular Form-Genus that has the nature of otherness, etc.. A short form for designating particular Form-Genera will consist of capitalizing the Form-Genus. Thus, for example, "Form-Genus:Same" will be designated simply by "Sameness", the "Form-Genus:Motion" by "Motion", etc..

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 270.

While he admits two senses for *to on*, "what is" and the Form-Genus:Being, he reads *ousia* as an ambiguous designation of "what is" and also of the Form-Genus:Being.¹¹ The parallels here may seem apparent, but he in no way adverts to them directly and even less brings them into interaction with each other. Employing the categories of intension (sense) and extension (reference), Seligman in turn understands *ousia* and *to on* to univocally designate the intension of being, in contrast to the extension of being, *to on kai pân*, the total universe of all that is.¹² This intension of being "will turn out to be a purely formal notion, that is to say, a form of a higher order, a form of forms, as it were."¹³ In this view, *ousia* and *to on* are two names that refer to the same thing, the Form-Genus:Being that transcends the other Forms.

Rosen asserts a strikingly different position to the combined emphases of Cornford, Bluck, and Seligman on the formal identity between *ousia* and *to on*. Based on the dramatic discourses in the First and Second Digressions, he argues for "an unexplained bifurcation" in the Stranger's account: "*Ousia*, the divine and hence ensouled totality, cannot be the same as the atomic form *being (on)*."¹⁴ *Ousia* is identified with *to pân*, and *to on* is delimited to one

¹¹ Richard Bluck, *Plato's Sophist*, (Manchester: The University Press, 1975). He identifies *to on* as designating both a Form and "what is" (104). He further designates *ousia* once as the essence of a Form (38), once as the Form-Genus:Being (107) and once as co-extensive with the Form-Genus:Other and the Form-Genus:Being (164). While he translates the term as "being" on two occasions (80, 107), absent from his discussions is any association of *ousia* with the universal totality of real things.

¹² Paul Seligman, *Being and Not-Being*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 37. Even regarding the occurrences of *ousia* in the first digression (245e-248a) where the term is affiliated with the discussion of the whole and the all, he asserts that Plato uses *ousia* to indicate that "his concern is intension, i.e., the essence of being" (30, fn. 2).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁴ Rosen, *op. cit.*, 326-327. "In my own terms, there is a difference between the eidetic alphabet, one element of which is 'being' (*to on*), and the whole, or 'being' in the sense of the living, and indeed divine, cosmos (*ousia*)" (30). "With what follows, it is plain that the present conception of *ousia* as divine has nothing to do with the subsequent doctrine of *being* as an element in the eidetic alphabet" (223).

of the greatest Form-Genera in the *koinônia tôn genôn*, a formal element in the eidetic alphabet. In contrast to the reticence of his principal study to draw any correlation between *ousia* and *to on*, Mattéi elsewhere addresses their partnership. He assimilates Rosen's fundamental analysis of the disparate senses of, and hence separation between, *to on* and *ousia*.¹⁵ He nonetheless qualifies their division by amplifying their rapprochement in terms of the *koinônia tôn genôn*, the community of Form-Genera. In his analysis, *ousia* names the entire presence of *koinônia* in its gathering together of the Forms.¹⁶ *To on* thus designates the formal aspect, the intension, of the essence of *ousia*.¹⁷ As for Dorter, he agrees with Rosen's distinction between *ousia* and *to on*, but he refuses to dichotomize them to the extent that Rosen insists. Dorter modifies the latter's bifurcation of the two terms by claiming that *to on* is the "primary species" of *ousia*, whereby the stranger comprehends the primary species

¹⁵ Jean-François Mattéi, *L'Ordre du monde*, (Paris:PUF, 1989), 34: "*to on* se distingue ainsi de l'*ousia*, la vivante totalité...". "Alors que la neutralité du second terme [*on*] lui permet, en restant extérieur aux quatre formes qui'il accouple, *triton*, *heteron ti*, ou *pempton*, d'ouvrir le champ d'une logique formelle possible, le premier [*ousia*] sauvegarde, de ses harmoniques oubliées, le mystère du Monde et la bien-fondé du Tout" (46). "Bien que le texte du *Sophiste* semble utiliser indifféremment la féminin *ousia* et le neutre *on*, le second terme désigne l'être dans son rapport formel d'opposition aux autres genres, alors que le premier laisse entrevoir la totalité ordonnée de l'être...c'est désormais l'*ousia* qui évoque la plénitude unique de l'être, soit par opposition à l'inachèvement du devenir (245d4), soit pour exprimer la totalité du cosmos (246b1,b8; 246c2,c7,c9). *To on* qualifie, quant à lui, l'être comme l'une des formes de «l'alphabet éidétique»..." (132-133).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 133: "Mais la Communauté pleine et entière des formes, assimilée au Tout du monde, appelle la terme propre d'*ousia*, en le rapprochant de celui de *koinônia*...La communauté de l'être délaisse maintenant les incessantes neutralisations de l'*on* pour disposer harmonieusement les formes autour de leur unique centre, ce foyer du Monde où, semblable à la déesse qui garde la demeure des Dieux, se tient l'origine de l'affirmation majeure de l'être, l'*Ousia*."

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 46: "...l'*on*, cette quintessence de l'*ousia*...". "*To on* exprime de façon presque systématique l'aspect formel de l'essence suprême..." (133).

within *ousia* both "formally and substantively".¹⁸ Gadamer resonates with Mattéi's analysis in the identification of *ousia* with *koinônia*. *Ousia* signifies "da sein zusammen", "mit da", in the community of the greatest Forms.¹⁹ *To on* is also affiliated with *koinônia* and in turn signifies "das verbindende", "[was] alles verbindet".²⁰ Gadamer meanwhile equivocally translates both the Greek terms with the German "das Sein" and doesn't venture any further explanation on the interrelationship between its Greek designates.

With this evident conflict of interpretations, the moment has arrived for a critical reading of the *Sophist*. What, in the Stranger's account, is the meaning of being? Does Plato advocate a single ontology or diverse ontologies amidst the dialectical drama of the *Sophist*? This investigation will proceed with an analysis of the dialogue itself in order to discern which reading of the relationship between *ousia* and *to on* sustains, to employ Aubenque's principle, the greatest amount of plausibility. Plausibility in this instance will contend primarily with the intelligibility of the interpretation. More specifically, the appraisals will be assessed in terms of their ability to provide optimal integration of the different aspects of the text presented in the Stranger's dialectical accounts of *ousia* and *to on* in the *Sophist*, 246a-259e.

C. The Battle of the Giants and Gods concerning *ousia*

From lines 243c-246a, the Stranger has engaged Theaetetus in a discussion of *to on*, "that which is", regarding unity, plurality, and the whole. The conversation constitutes a debate with eleatic tenets, but the discourse concerning "what 'that which is' is", *hoti to*

¹⁸ Kenneth Dorter, *Form and Good in Plato's Eleatic Dialogues*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 149.

¹⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Dialektik ist nicht Sophistik", *Gesammelte Werke, Bd. 7*, (Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), 359, 361.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 359,361.

on...estin, ends aporetically in perplexity.²¹ The perplexity regarding *to on* persists beyond the First Digression, 246a-249d, when Theaetetus admits in 250e that their consternation regarding "that which is" is greater than ever. This repetition of the aporia concerning *to on* in 250e dramatically emphasizes that the discourse in the First Digression concerning *ousia* enacts a particular discontinuity with the question *hoti to on estin*. In the meantime, however, at line 246a the dialogue undertakes a noticeable shift with the proclamation of the battle between the giants and the gods concerning *ousia*, foundational reality. Is *ousia* identical with material bodies, as the somaticists maintain (246b1), or with Forms (246b7), as the eideticists maintain? It is interesting to note that nowhere in the vicarious debate with the Friends of Forms are any instances or examples of particular Forms divulged. Given the eventual refutation of the eideticists, Plato's evident disregard of particular instances of the Forms functions as a provocative indication that the sense and reference of *ousia* is significantly differentiated from a strict identity with the Forms, regardless of whether, as 249c suggests, they be one or many.

The First Digression proceeds as follows. The Stranger invites Theaetetus to vicariously represent the positions of the somaticists and the eideticists (246a-c). He then proceeds with the help of the eager Theaetetus to expose how both parties in the battle neglect and cannot account for a significant dimension of reality which in some manner or other they are compelled to concede. In the case of the somaticists (246c-248a, 249b-c), the Stranger secures a modification of their position which asserts asomatic reality in order to account for

²¹ It is notable that nowhere in the dialogue up to this point has *to on* been discussed as a Form (*eidos*) or Genus (*genos*) -- this only occurs in 254d, although retrospectively the discussion of *to on* in 250b7,c2,c4,c6,d2 eminently qualifies as an exercise of dialectical differentiation with two of the greatest Form-Genera, the *megista genê*, motion and rest. The only other references to *to on*, in 250e2,e6 contain a reference, not to the Form-Genus:Being but in continuity with the aporetic inquiry of 243c, 245e into "that which is" and "that which is not".

the virtues in the soul (247b) which produce change in the body and cause the body to be affected (247d8-e1). In the case of the eideticists (248a-249b), the Stranger forces the concession from the eideticists that reality is not merely immutable and uniform but is constituted by the animated vitality of the life of the soul in the mind's activity of intellectual knowledge and the passivity of its object and hence must necessarily include movement (249b). Moreover, the Stranger forcibly affiliates this enhanced rendition of the eideticists account of *ousia* with the holy, the divine, in so far as the *pantelôs on* (248e6-249a3) comprehensively includes life, soul, mind, and noetic activity. This markedly takes the updated formalists' account in a theological direction. These debates, while they do not constitute a positive conclusion regarding the stranger's own account of *ousia*, serve to clear the way by indicating the deficiencies in either extreme position that states that *ousia* is only bodies or only an eleatic homogeneity of intelligible Forms. *Ousia* is not identical with either of these, but it would be misleading to think that the meaning of *ousia* is elucidated in combining the modified somaticist and eideticist positions. The modifications are negatively meant to indicate the deficiency of the respective stances (249c-d), not the exhaustive doctrine of the Stranger. It is noteworthy, however, that the Stranger at no point refutes the reference of *ousia* as designating either bodies or Forms. Indeed, his lack of refutation seems to indicate an acceptance on his part that a modified version of somaticity and a modified version of eideticity with theological overtones both constitute partial dimensions of reality. His debate is directed to a modification of two extreme tendencies.

An analysis of the occurrences of *ousia* and other terms serves to illuminate the eventual account of the Stranger. *Ousia* occurs eleven times in the First Digression (246a, 246b², 246c², 247e, 248a, 248c², 248e, and 249d). Only in two instances is the occurrence of *ousia* representative of different moments in the Stranger's own original account: first in the

opening of his discourse and debate with the declaration of the battle (246a), second in the confirmation of his own position in 249d5.²² All the other instances of *ousia* in between these two poles of the digression reflect either the original position of the somaticists (246b), the original position of the eideticists (246b), the latter's bifurcation of *genesis* and *ousia* (246c², 248a², 248c), or the conditions of intellectual knowledge (248a, 248e). *To on* itself occurs only three times in the digression, at 247d as a general reference to the somaticist definition of "that which is", and twice in 249d in the stranger's own account of *ousia*. With the first occurrence of *to on* in 249d5, the discourse strikes right at the core of the Stranger's version of *ousia*: *to on te kai to pan* (249d5), the universal totality of all that is. The immediately preceding admonition that *to pân* cannot be a stationary unity or plurality of Forms starkly purges *to on* in 249d5 of any eidetic connotations in the definition of *ousia* as the universal totality of all that is. The universal totality of all that is includes in its meaning a reference to what is moved and unmoved (249d4). Given the absence of any definitive refutation of the improved somaticist's and updated eideticist's position, the universal totality of all that is can be understood comprehensively as including material things as well as divine. Yet, the Stranger's definition of *ousia* as the universal totality of the moved and the unmoved, as the divine cosmos of all that is, supercedes the combined positions of both the somaticists and the eideticists. The third instance of *to on* in 249d7 comprises a general reference to the account the stranger has just provided of "that which is", *tô logô to on*. Clearly then, *to on* functions in 247d and 249d5 not as an appellation of any Form but as an equivocal designation for the discourse regarding *ousia*. *To on* is here a synonym for *ousia* without any intrinsic

²² The *tês* in 249d10 in the phrase *peri tèn aporian tês skepseôs* is taken, as feminine, to be able to refer only to the feminine *ousia*, and not possibly to the neuter *to on*. The aporetic difficulty refers back, not to the explanation of *ousia* as *to on te kai to pân*, but, as the transition in 249d-250a renders clear, the reference of *to pân* to the moved and the unmoved.

connotation or denotation of its own distinct from that implied in the different moments of the account for *ousia*.

D. To on and the Form-Genera

With the transition in 249d-250a, the advent of the Second Digression notably marks a shift back to the discussion of *to on*, especially in relation to *kinesis*, motion, and *stasis*, rest. This is meant as a reprise of the original aporia identified in 243b-c and 245e, from which the First Digression diverted, regarding being and not-being. The First Digression was qualified by the Stranger in 245e8 as an investigation of those whose accounts are *au theateon*, less precise. This was in particular reference to the immediately preceding debate with the precise doctrines of the monists, dyadists, and pluralists; but it also carries the implication that the subsequent discourse after 250a is also an engagement with a precise, rather than imprecise discourse. The precision of the ensuing discourse regarding *to on* and the Form-Genera is explained in terms of the eidetic alphabet of formal elements (253a-b) and the doctrine of *koinônia*. The analysis of *to on* and *ousia* in the Second Digression which forms the central concern for the rest of this section requires a penetration of the Stranger's doctrine of *koinônia*.

D.1 Introduction to the Doctrine of Koinonic Fellowship

The doctrine of *koinônia*, or koinonic fellowship, in 250a-259e can be read in the context of the whole dialogue as a propaedeutic to the explanation of false discourse in 260a-264b, which in itself is but the foundation for the eventual identification of the sophist in 264c-

288d; but in the present analysis, the *koinônia eidôn* developed in 250a-259e is taken in the context of the late dialogues as a response to the question of intereidetic participation raised in the *Parmenides* 128e-130a and left in an aporetic condition by Plato in that text.²³ After inducting Theaetetus to a brief dialectical exercise from 250a-251c regarding the relationships between being, motion, and rest, the theme of intereidetic participation is openly engaged by the Stranger in 251d-252e when he asserts three possible positions on the interrelationship between Forms, *ta onta*,²⁴ in 251d: do being, motion, and rest not combine at all, do they all combine with one another, or do some of them combine and others not? Before advancing to a consideration of the arguments leading to the conclusion in 252e as well as an analysis of the elaboration of the community of Form-Genera in 254b-259e, a striking feature of 250a-259e that calls for attention is the plasticity, the flexibility of Plato's language regarding

²³ Gadamer shares this view regarding the relation of the *Sophistes* to the *Parmenides* when he writes: "Was Methexis an Problemen aufgibt, hat Plato in dem höchst rätselhaften Parmenides-Dialog, im ersten teil dieses Gespräches, geradezu auf die Spitze getrieben...Man erfährt am ehesten im *Sophistes*, wie das Problem der Methexis für Plato selber eigentlich aussieht. Dort wird die Problemstellung und Problemenentfaltung, die der Parmenides-Dialog gibt, positiv aufgenommen." "Plato als Porträtist", *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 7., (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), 247. He further claims elsewhere that in "der einleitenden Sektion des Parmenides-Dialog...wird die Frage gestellt, wie die Erscheinung an der Idee teilhaben soll, und alle Antworten des jungen Sokrates werden ad absurdum geführt. Dagegen werden diese Fragen durch den alten Parmenides selbst offenbar als unbedeutend beiseite gesetzt. Der alleinige Sinn des Problems der Methexis besteht in dem Verhältnis der Ideen zu einander. Das, und nur das, ist das wahre Problem der Teilhabe bei Plato." "Dialektik ist nicht Sophistik -- Theätet lernt das im *Sophistes*," *loc. cit.*, 343.

²⁴ A succinct textual analysis of the Greek term *onta* (251d,252a,254d.e,256e, 255c,257e, 258a.c.d.e,259d) permits the synonymous interchange of *onta* with *eidê* and *genê* at least in the passage 250a-259b. It is a principle of the present interpretation that *eidê* and *genê* are *not* logical or linguistic entities in the mind, which interpretation of the analytic tradition (such as Frede, Moravcsik, and Ryle among others) is hard pressed for justification by *Parm.* 132b-c, but immaterial entities that really exist independently of the mind in the noeton topos, in the intelligible world. Cf. Seligman, *Being and Not-Being*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 1-2, 69-72; Lafrance, "Autour de Platon: continentaux et analystes", *Dionysius*, 3 (1979), 32-36; *La Théorie Platonicienne de la Doxa*, (Montreal/Paris: Bellarmin - Les Belles Lettres, 1981), 322-330, 342-349, 382-383; "Reading Plato's *Sophist* with Stanley Rosen", *Independent Journal of Philosophy*, 5/6 (1988), 157-158.

koinônia. Textual analysis of the passage yields the following evidence regarding the usage of *koinônia* and its related terms: *epi-*, *pros-*, *koinônia* (250b, 251d,e, 252a,b,d, 253a, 254c, 255b, 256b, 257a), *epi-*, *koinônein* (251d, 253a,e, 254b,c), *sumplokê* (259e), *metechein* (251e, 255a,d,e, 256a,d,e, 259a,b), *metaschon* (255b, 259a), *metalambanein* (251d, 256b), *sum-*, *mixis* (252b, 253b), *a-*, *meiktos* (251d, 254d), *sunkerannumenous* (253b), *sum-*, *mignusthai* (252e, 253c, 254e, 256b, 259b), *sumphônein* (253b), *dialeluthenai* (255e, 259a), *dechesthai* (253b), *epigignesthai* (252d), *suntithenai* (252b).

In contrast to the *Parmenides* dialogue, where the language of *metechein* (129a,b, 132c,e, 134b,c, 137e, 140e, 141d,e, 142b,c, 143a, 144a, 147a, 149c, 151e, 152a, 155c,d etc.), *methexis* (132d, 141d, 151e), and *metalambanein* (129a, 131a,e, 156a, 158b, 163d) is superabundant, the new language of *koinônia* and its cognates, as well as *sumplokê*, *sumphônein*, *dechesthai*, *epigignesthai*, *(sum)mignusthai*, *suntithenai*, and *dialeluthenai* appears in striking contrast through the force of its originality, for it is not to be found in the text of the former dialogue. These novel terms are evidence of Plato's struggle to articulate his evolving doctrine of the community of Forms in response to the legacy of the *Parmenides* and its previous aporia of intereidetic participation. The predominance of this different vocabulary accentuates that the participation of Forms amongst themselves is entirely different from the participation of sensible things in intelligible Forms. Given this fundamental divergence between the issue of the participation of sensibles in intelligibles and the issue of the possible combination of intelligible Forms themselves, it is preferable to speak of eidetic community or intereidetic communion rather than intereidetic participation in the discussion of the *Sophist* and its philosophical problems. Nonetheless, the language of participation is still in sufficient evidence in that dialogue to permit the identification of the previous aporia of intereidetic participation with the novel doctrine of eidetic community.

A close scrutiny of the language of *koinônia* from 250a-259e also reveals the following characteristics of the doctrine of koinonic fellowship. Two grammatical constructions are identifiable with *koinônia* and its cognates: the genitive-construction (250b, 252a,b, 254c, 256b) and the dative-construction (251d,e, 252d, 253a, 254b,c, 257a). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that *metechein* and *metalambanein* bear upon the genitive-construction, while *epigignesthai* and *sum-, mignusthai* both bear upon the dative-construction. Finally, another new trait of the vocabulary is the larger degree of verbs connoting participation in the passive voice, where previously in the *Parmenides* the passive voice is absent in the verbs designating participation.

D.2 The greatest Form-Genera

Before proceeding to the interpretation of these textual data and to an analysis of the community of Form-Genera, however, the text suggests that the full appreciation of *koinônia* requires further consideration of the *megista genê*, the greatest Genera,²⁵ a notion equally original as, and integral to, the community of Form-Genera. In accord with a great number of commentators, including Diès,²⁶ Cornford,²⁷ Robin,²⁸ Bluck,²⁹ Seligman,³⁰ Lafrance,³¹

²⁵ The adoption of the translation "Genera" by *no means whatsoever* implies any meaning of the term as is usually understood after its designation in Aristotle's logic. It is merely a transliteration of *genê* without further importing semantic content from any other philosophical position. On the justification of the term "Form-Genera", cf. Lafrance, *La Théorie Platonicienne de la Doxa*, 337 [n. 203].

²⁶ Diès, *La Définition de l'Être et la Nature des Idées*, (Paris: Vrin, 1909), 9-10. Although he does not conscientiously state that they are synonymous terms, he nonetheless refers individually to the most important Form-Genera as either a "genre", an "idée", or an "eidos".

²⁷ Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd., 1935), 276. "The word 'genus' later came to be used in opposition to *eidos*, 'species'. But Plato in the *Parmenides* and throughout the *Sophist* uses 'Kind' (*genos*) and 'Form' (*eidos*)

and Gadamer,³² *genos*³³ and *eidōs*³⁴ are understood to be interchangeably interspersed throughout the text of the dialogue as synonyms. The theme of the *megista genē* is formally

indifferently. Both mean, not 'genus' or 'species' or 'class', but 'Form'...No one of the Kinds is thought of as a class, either of entities or of predicates."

²⁸ Robin, *Les Rapports de l'Être et de la Connaissance d'après Platon*, (Paris: PUF, 1957), 112. "Pour le moment, j'appelle votre attention sur le vocabulaire: *genos* et *eidōs*, genre et forme ou essence sont des terms synonymes..."

²⁹ Bluck, *Plato's Sophist*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975), 133. "It is interesting that what are called Kinds (*genē*) in 254b appear to be the same things as are called Forms (*eidē*) in 254c. coming as it does immediately after the discussion of Dialectic, this passage seems to be a clear indication that the reader acquainted with Platonic doctrine should interpret what follows in terms of Platonic Forms."

³⁰ Seligman, *op.cit.*, 56. "He [Plato] will go on using *genos* and *eidōs* synonymously, and I feel no compunction...in following him, and in subsequent sections shall speak indifferently of "kinds" or "forms" of being, sameness, difference etc."

³¹ Lafrance, *La Théorie Platonicienne de la Doxa*, 207, at first is cautious: "Le vocabulaire de ce passage du *Sophiste* (254b-259d) pourrait permettre l'identification des genres suprêmes aux réalités subsistantes en soi, à moins que le mot *eidōs* ne soit tout simplement assimilé à *génos* en tant que désignant une espèce considérée comme un genre. Et même si l'on assimilait *eidōs* à *génos*, comme le suggèrent certains commentateurs, il resterait encore un fondement textuel pour interpréter les genres suprêmes comme des réalités subsistantes en soi et séparées du monde sensible.¹⁷ [17. Nous ne prenons pas position sur ce problème de savoir si les genres suprêmes du *Sophiste* sont ou ne sont pas des Idées ou des Formes. Tout ce que nous affirmons, c'est qu'au strict niveau du vocabulaire de Platon, il est possible de concevoir les genres suprêmes comme des Idées ou des Formes, à cause de l'usage explicite du mot *eidōs*, sans pour autant dire que cela soit nécessaire.]" But then he asserts, 345: "Certes, les choses qui entrent sous les divisions dichotomiques sont des *gene*, des *eide* et des *mere*, et c'est ainsi que sont désignées également les Formes du *Sophiste*." Also, 382: "Les mégista *genē* du *Sophiste*, nous l'avons vu précédemment, sont des Formes-Genres, et la plus grande partie du dialogue est consacrée à des problèmes proprement ontologiques."

³² Gadamer, "Dialektik ist nicht Sophistik", *op. cit.*, 360. *Eidōs* is universally translated as *Gattung* in the German language, and *idea* is translated *Idee*. He states with reference to 253d-254b that "Es fällt auf, daß in diesem Zusammenhang erstmals in diesem Gespräch der Begriff der *genē*, der *Gattungen*, auftritt und von da an festgehalten wird."

³³ *Sophistes*, 219e, 220a, 222d, 223a, 224e, 228a,d, 229a, 231a, 235b, 253b,d,e, 254b,d, 256b,d, 257a,e, 259a,b, 260a,b, 261a,e, 264e, 266d, 267d, 268a,c.

³⁴ *Sophistes*, 219d, 220e, 222d,e, 223c, 226e, 227c,d, 229c, 230a, 234b, 235d, 236d, 246b, 248a, 249d, 252a, 253d, 254c. 255c, 256e, 258c,d, 259e, 260d, 261d, 264c, 266c, 267d.

introduced in 254b-d, although it is partially anticipated in 250a-251d. The purpose in positing the greatest Form-Genera, as stated in 254c-d, is a) to delimit the number of Forms in testing the thesis that Forms both do and do not combine, in order that b) to see if it is possible to meaningfully speak of not-being. As to the extension of the *megista genê*, they include *to on*, *kinêsis*, *stasis*, *tauton*, and *thateron*. Some commentators find this choice of the individual *megista genê* arbitrary, including Cornford,³⁵ who specifically finds the choice Motion and Rest arbitrary, and Gadamer,³⁶ who extends this arbitrariness to all the individual Genera. Diès derives Motion and Rest through the default of other candidates rather than by their own merits, while insisting that Motion does not have a principal role to play in the dialogue³⁷. Robin, for his part, sees Motion chosen because the discussion aims at the negation of movement.³⁸ Seligman finds the choice quite deliberate, with the Motion/Rest couplet essential to the modification of the mutually exclusive hegemonies of the Parmenidean doctrine of being and the Heraclitean position of flux.³⁹ Lafrance in turn insists that Being,

³⁵ Cornford, *op. cit.*, 277-278. "He choses Motion and Rest because (as the Stranger says) we have been discussing them, and for no ulterior reason...Any other pair of incompatible Forms would do as well. Had Plato used symbols, he might have written, not Motion and Rest, but A and not-A, standing for any pair of contraries."

³⁶ Gadamer, "Dialektik ist nicht Sophistik", *op. cit.*, 361: "Die Auswahl der grössten Gattungen (*on*, *stasis*, *kinêsis*, *tauton*, *thateron* 255dff.) erscheint einigermaßen willkürlich."

³⁷ Diès, *op. cit.*, 15-16.

³⁸ Robin, *op. cit.*, 120. "L'analyse qui suit (255e-257a)...consiste en une sorte de contre-épreuve par récapitulation, partant sur un seul des genres considérés: c'est le mouvement qui est choisi, *comme il est naturel dans une discussion qui vise des négateurs du mouvement*. Platon va donc chercher à définir les rapports du mouvement avec les autres genres."

³⁹ Seligman, *op. cit.*, 57: "...we need not be suprised that Plato includes motion and rest among the kinds which he wishes to investigate in order to dismantle the Eleatic canon...motion and rest are highly relevant to the is/is-not dichotomy as conceived by Parmenides." Also: "...we may wonder why Plato went to such length to establish the distinct existence of his five chosen kinds...We may find good reasons for it, however, if we remember that being, difference and sameness, and (motion + rest) are co-extensive. Moreover, these

Same, and Other are more ontologically significant than Motion and Rest, but the latter are significant for their incompatibility and contrareity, as well as for their prominence in the interests of Plato's predecessors.⁴⁰ In de Muralt's contrary view, from the ontological primacy of Motion and Rest are derived the Same and Other. Motion above all is supremely important to the thesis of intereidetic participation.⁴¹ How is the status of the Form-Genera to be understood as Plato might have appreciated it?

To begin with, it appears that the analyses of Robin and Diès might need to consider a different reading of the text of the dialogue. The text nowhere aims at the negation of movement, nor does it diminish the role of motion, even if the latter is not the most supreme principle. One can hardly escape the importance that Plato is striving to bestow on motion as an essential and integral ontological principle. The indications of this are several. It acts as a dialectical foil with Rest to allow *to on* to emerge as a *triton ti* (250c). Motion and Rest are inscribed as central to the elaboration of eidetic community in the *koinônia tôn genôn*

notions tended to be conglomerated in the doctrines of his predecessors, and even in his own earlier thinking...And was not Plato's own "classical" form a conglomerate of the very same ingredients (Heracletean and Parmenidean)? Plato must have felt the need to differentiate these various strands as he undertook to weave them into a new fabric," (64).

⁴⁰ Lafrance, *La Théorie Platonicienne de la Doxa*, 337 [fn. 204]: "Or, les genres que nous venons d'examiner dans les discussion précédentes ne sont-ils pas "très importants", c'est-à-dire parmi les plus importants si l'on se fie à l'intérêt qu'ils ont suscités chez nos prédécesseurs (254d4-5)?" Also: "Il faut noter, en passant, que le mouvement et le repos n'ont pas la même importance ontologique que l'être, le même, et l'autre. Ils ont ici une importance dans l'argumentation en vertu de leur incompatibilité et contrariété," (337, [fn. 205]).

⁴¹ de Muralt, "De la participation dans le *Sophiste* de Platon", *Studia Philosophica*, 17 (1957), 117: "On peut dire que Platon néglige de donner la déduction du même et de l'autre dans toute sa complexité, car ce qui l'intéresse avant tout c'est le principe, en l'occurrence donc le repos et le mouvement. Seul le principe est dynamique, la conséquence ne l'est pas, étant l'effet, étant ce qui est fait. Et de fait, la déduction du mouvement et du repos est plus travaillée que celle du même et du l'autre. En donnant la primauté à ces deux principes, Platon ne fait que souligner le dynamisme de toute sa pensée." Regarding the primacy of movement, he concludes: "Le mouvement du *Sophiste* est la participation ...le mouvement intelligible est la participation," (119).

(254b-259d) especially in so far as Motion (255a-256a) allows both Otherness and Not-being to emerge. It appears in the discussion of the *rhema* (261ff) and animates the implicit tensions underlying the Parmenidean tendencies of the young mathematician, Theaetetus. In all these ways, the Stranger advocates the capital role played by *kinêsis* in the ultimate justification of *to me on* and false discourse. In fact, *kinêsis*, and with it *stasis*, are thus absolutely integral to the purpose of the *megista* outlined in 254c-d: they both function to show how some Forms are not able to combine with each other, while Motion especially, contra Parmenides, is used to show that not-being is (256d). While acknowledging with Cornford and Lafrance that other ontological principles, such as the One and the Many, are highly important and missing from the discussion, attention to these details of the text regarding the centrality of Motion suggest that the views of Cornford, Dies, and Gadamer fail to respect Plato's new appropriation of Motion as an ontological principle in the *noeton topos*. De Mural's view that Motion is fundamental to the dynamic of intereidetic participation contains greater fidelity to the perspective that Plato instilled in the dialogue; however, the textual and argumentative foundation for his subordination of the Same and Other to Motion and Rest is questionable. He appears to mistake the order of presentation, in which motion and rest have the priority, with the order of reality, in which the Form-Genera are equals. This equality is respected by Seligman. If any of the Genera are philosophically predominant, it appears to be Being, Motion, and Otherness, for they are essential to the intertwined doctrines of eidetic community and the subsequent justification of meaningful discourse about not-being.

D.3 Community and Communion within the Koinonic Fellowship

This digression into the *megista gênê* is vital to the analysis of *koinônia* which this

study now resumes, for the greatest Form-Genera provide the content for the explanation of koinonic fellowship. Recalling the dative- and genitive-constructions of *koinônia* and its cognates, the analysis now turns to an appropriation of the arguments in 250a-252e and in 254b-257a. The Stranger conducts a series of arguments to establish the irreducibility⁴² of the *megista genê* (beginning with Motion, Rest, and Being and then extended to Sameness and Otherness) to each other individually, given that they are atomic, monoeidetic elements and not just different names for the same intelligible entity. From this irreducibility he derives unilateral or bilateral relations amongst them. Contrary to the original thesis of Cornford, that the Form-Genera are all in a symmetrical relation to each other,⁴³ these grammatical constructions reveal that both symmetrical and asymmetrical relations are operative in koinonic combination. The genitive constructions of *koinônia* and its cognates as well as of *metechein* and *metalambanein* betray unilateral relations: Motion or Rest participate in Being, but the converse is not asserted -- Being is not said to participate in Motion or Rest. The relation of the Form-Genera *kinêsis* and *stasis* to the Form-Genus *on* is unilateral, since it is not reciprocated in both directions. The dative construction of *koinônia* and its cognates, on the other hand, implies a bilateral mutuality where relations between Form-Genera are equal and convertible. The Form-Genus:Being, for instance, participates in the Form-Genus:Same just as Sameness participates in Being. The research of Seligman⁴⁴ and Lafrance,⁴⁵ while benefitting from Cornford's fundamental insight that the interrelationship of Form-Genera are

⁴² For a summary representation of the explicit and implicit arguments Plato employs to establish this irreducibility and the *megista genê*, consult Lafrance, *op. cit.*, 336-340.

⁴³ Cornford, *op. cit.*, 255-257, 278-279, 296-297.

⁴⁴ Seligman, *op. cit.*, 46-47, 86.

⁴⁵ Lafrance, *op. cit.*, 349-355.

specifically ontological and not merely predicational, represents a necessary modification. Based on the textual evidence, their investigations establish an asymmetrical relation between Motion or Rest and any one of either Being or Sameness or Otherness, and a symmetrical relation between Being, Otherness, and Sameness.⁴⁶ The asymmetrical relation is expressed by the genitive construction, the symmetrical relation by the dative construction. In so far as all relations in the *koinônia* are either asymmetrical or symmetrical, the term *koinônia* itself involves both the aspect of eidetic community, with respect to relations asymmetrical, and intereidetic communion, with respect to relations symmetrical. Henceforth the designation koinonic fellowship signifies the aspects both of eidetic community and intereidetic communion. This distinction, however, does not mean that there are two groups within the *koinônia*. The distinction is conceptual and not real, for ultimately there is only one *koinônia* that contains intertwining yet different relations. It is important for the present analysis of Plato's discourse on being to recognize that with regard to the Form-Genera Motion or Rest or even the couplet of Motion and Rest, the Form-Genus:Being is a *triton ti* (250b), a third something beyond either or both of these. Moreover, this same Form-Genus is said to be different from all the other Forms (257a1). Finally, the Form-Genus:Other (and hence, by deduction, Sameness), while it is co-extensive with Being nonetheless is not Being according to its own nature, but other (259a). The Form-Genus:Being as other is not identical with any one of the Form-Genera nor their sum but only itself (259b). It is to an examination of Plato's discourse on the nature of being that we now turn.

⁴⁶ Lafrance has definitively rendered these various relations in a helpful chart, cf. 354.

E. To on and ousia in the context of koinônia

With this clarification of the community of Form-Genera in the Second Digression, the inquiry into the relationship between *to on* and *ousia* can be resumed. The analysis of Plato's multivalent discourse requires close attention to the textual evidence offered by the dialogue itself. The text in 250a-259e offers three distinct ways of speaking about being in the various terms and cognates of *to on*, *einai*, and *ousia*. *To on*⁴⁷ (250b7,c2,e4,c6,d2,e2,e6; 254a7,c5,d4,d10; 255b8,b11,c3,c9,d3,d5; 256a1,d5,d10,e1,e3,e5; 257 a1,a4,b4,e6²; 258b1,d6,e2,e7; 259a5²,a8²,b4) consistently signifies the Form-Genus:Being. It is a monoeidetic element, an intelligible entity separate from the sensible world. As an atomic unit it functions as a formal element in the patterns of eidetic combination possible in the community of Form-Genera. The discourse about *to on*, as the Form which Motion, Rest, Sameness, and Otherness directly participate in or combine with, thus constitutes an eidetic ontology.

Intereidetic compatibility (i.e. Motion and Sameness) or incompatibility (i.e. Sameness and Otherness, Motion and Rest) is expressed in the verbs *einai* (250a11,b3,b5,b10,c2; 252a8,a9; 253c2; 255a8,b5,b8,c3,d7,e3,e4; 256a10,c12,d1,d5,d12,e3; 257a1,e4,e6; 258a1,a5; 259a2,b1), *estin* (254d13; 255d7,e12,e14; 256a1,a3,a4,a5,c2,c5,d8,e5; 257a4²,a5²,d7,d8,d11,e8; 258b2,b8,b9,b10,c2,d5,e3,e7; 259a6,a8,b3,b5,b6²), and *on* (253d2; 256d8,d9,e1; 257a5; 258d6; 259a8, b3,c9,d1). These verbal expressions indicate the activity of combination and exclusion within the community of Form-Genera and hence manifest the entitative ontology operative in the *Sophist*. Hence, the representation of Plato's ontology would be deficient without recognizing the contribution of *ta onta*, of intelligible entities, specifically the *megista genê*.

⁴⁷ With the designation of *to on* the references to *to onta* are included, while the references to the verbal *on* as well as to *to mê on* are not included. *To mê on* is not included since indeed it is another name for the Form-Genus *thateron* and refers to this intelligible entity. It is not in itself an intelligible entity after the manner of the *megista genê*.

A strong affiliation persists between the eidetic formulation of Being and these various verbal articulations of actual combination associated with the Form-Genera, for the latter are only possible only on the basis of participation of the other four *megista genê* in *to on*. The doctrine of koinonic fellowship demonstrates that the meaning of *to on* can only emerge through its relationship with other *eidê*. The analogy with the eidetic alphabet is meant to show that, while each letter is an entity in itself that subsists without the other it is fully meaningful only in its combination with other letters. So with the Form-Genera: while each one subsists on its own as a monoeidetic formal element according as it has its own nature, the meaning of each formal element is amplified only in relationship to other formal elements, other Form-Genera. Hence, Plato's discourse on being justifiably also includes an entitative ontology.

The highly significant term *ousia* has a distinct value within the digression on *koinônia*. *Ousia*, however, must not be subject to a naive reduction that equates it simply with the semantical content of *to on*. It is hardly self-evident in Plato's polysemic discourse that *ousia* and *to on* are merely two different names that univocally designate the identical Form-Genus. Attentiveness to the meaning of *ousia* and its declensions (250b9; 251d1,d5,e9; 252a2; 258b2,b9) as well as its verbalized forms in *ousa* (258a8), *ousan* (255e1; 258d7), and *ousês* (257d5, 258a8), suggest that *ousia* is both ambiguous in its connotation while at other times clearly designating something different than a Form-Genus, something more akin to ultimate reality. In 251d1 *ousia* is used ambivalently to designate any account of being whatsoever. This ambivalence is eliminated however, in the subsequent discussion concerning Motion and Rest. In 250b9, prior to the technical discussion of direct participation in the Form-Genus *on*, which occurs for the first time with the formalization of the greatest Form-Genera in 254b ff., the Stranger argues that Motion and Rest each are in community with *ousia*. This could simply mean that each of them, as a monoeidetic element, has its own formal reality quite

apart from its interrelationship with any other Form-Genera. The connotation of *ousia* is ambiguous here, since the formal element *to on* has just been identified in 250b6 as a *triton ti*. Meanwhile, the recurrence of *ousia* in 251d5, 251e9, and 252a2 in the discussion of combination (251d5-253a1) is not so ambivalent, and openly contains formal connotations in light of the discussion's propaedeutic function for the subsequent development of the eidetic alphabet (253a). Here the Stranger asks Theaetetus if Motion and Rest can concatenate with *ousia*; through Theaetetus' dialogic intervention he establishes that if Motion and Rest are not combined with *ousia*, neither of them will be able to be. One line of interpretation would suggest that the Stranger is arguing that moving and resting entities both have a share in the universal totality of all that is. Accordingly, it is precisely the reality inhering in monoeidetic elements which the first thesis in 251d5,e9 is set out to deny, eliminating every condition whatsoever for the possibility of eidetic combination or incompatibility. Hence the conclusion in 252a2 that neither motion nor rest, as monoeidetic elements, would at all be if they did not individually have some dimension of communion with essential reality. Without *ousia*, they would simply have no reality at all. Such a position is considerably weakened, however, given the formal discussion in 250a-250d and the presentation of the eidetic alphabet in 253a, lines whose content is decidedly eidetic in its focus on formal elements.

The evidence for the synonymy of *ousia* as another name for the Form-Genus *to on* in lines 251d5, 251e9, and 252a2 is nonetheless not without juxtaposition and contrast. It is very difficult to construe *ousia* in 258b2 and 258b9 as mere synonyms for *to on*, for *ousia* is strictly differentiated from the nature of the Form-Genus:Being. When *ousia* reappears in 258b2, it is to demonstrate that the Form-Genus:Other has no less reality than the Form-Genus:Being. In other words, *to thateron* and *to on* both have the same dimension of reality, neither is more real than the other. *Ousia* is depicted as the ontological condition of the

possibility of these two Form-Genera tout court; *to on* does not have any ontological primacy over *to thateron*, while both have their foundation in *ousia*. In 258b, the Stranger in effect demonstrates that the Form-Genus:Other and the Form-Genus:Being, as formal elements each with their own contrasting and indeed antithetical natures and parts when apposite each other, *ousia estin*, are reality. For the nature of the Form-Genus:Other is no less *ousia* than the nature of the Form-Genus:Being. Divine duty, *themis*, requires the assertion that Otherness and Being both are *ousia* in some way. *Ousia* is thus radically demarcated from *to on*, their is no identity between them in this passage. The theological overtone of this assertion evokes the account of *ousia* in 249d5. Furthermore, in 258b9, the Stranger asserts that not-being is also endowed with reality, *ousia*. Even *to mé on*, because it signifies otherness and no other intelligible entity but the Form-Genus *thateron*, is thus admitted in 258b9 as containing essential reality. Eidetic associations are absent here. Furthermore, in 255e1 the nature of Otherness is said to be placed *en tois eidesin ousan*, among the Forms that are real. This construes the Form-Genera according to their natures as monoeidetic elements, not as formal elements in eidetic combination, as having reality. In 257d5 the eidetic atomicity of *thateron* is preserved amidst its several parts through its being real. Again in 258a8 and 258d7, the Form-Genus:Other is affirmed as being real in its eidetic atomicity, its nature, and in its parts. The duplicity of *ousia* in the Stranger's discourse during the Second Digression is hereby evident.

F. Plato's Ontologies

Various commentators have responded to the issue of the definability of being in the *Sophist*, soliciting divergent views. Diès, for instance, insists on the indefinability of being

because of its heterogeneity.⁴⁸ Robin otherwise asserts the definability of being on the basis of a synthesis rooted in the mutual participation of Form-Genera. He disavows the indefinability of being as it risks turning being into absolute non-being.⁴⁹ It may have been closer to Plato's deliberate intentions, however, to circumvent the entire issue of the definability *and* indefinability of the nature of being. Plato was not, after all, infected with the propensity for definition bequeathed by Aristotle in his *Posterior Analytics* to the Peripatetic, Medieval Scholastic, or Neo-scholastic traditions. He is possibly not so much concerned with the definition of being as he is with the definition of the sophist. However, this does not negate the explicit development by Plato of identifiable accounts of being at the core of the imprecise and precise discourses in 246a-259e. The issue, rather, is to recognize the plurivocality of discourses operative in the Platonic text. The alleged definability or indefinability of the nature of being turns into a false dilemma if one appreciates, with the suggestion of Rosen, that "Plato never reduces to unity the various senses of being in the *Sophist* and elsewhere...".⁵⁰ This suggestion upholds the pluridimensional character of Plato's ontologies, and portrays Plato with his penchant for a polysemic discourse of being. What are the senses of being in this polyvalent discourse?

⁴⁸ Diès, *op. cit.*, 31-35, 126-127. "Pas plus par ce couple de termes que par tout autre, l'être n'est définissable. Il est toujours ἕτερον τι" (126).

⁴⁹ Robin, *op. cit.*, 109, where he asserts that "la nature de l'être... ne sera définie que par une *synthèse*, c'est-à-dire par la participation mutuelle ou communication des genres." In this way, the two extremes are avoided where "l'Être sera déchiré par le conflit des déterminations contraires dont il peut être affecté simultanément; ou bien, faute de les recevoir, il restera un pur indéterminé dont on ne pourra rien dire et qui, n'étant ni ceci ni cela, sera une sorte de non-être absolu. Le mal vient de ce qu'on envisage non-être tout seul et être tout seul...". Interestingly enough, Robin nowhere attempts a definition of what *to on* is. The definition of *to on* in effect devolves around his notion of synthesis, i.e. *koinônia*. The meaning of *to on* "*kata phûsin*", according to its own nature, is never provided.

⁵⁰ Rosen, *op.cit.*, 265.

A summary of the discourses permits the following observations. While *ousia* functions as a synonym for *to on* on a few occasions, it appears to have a different field of sense and reference than *to on* in other significant contexts of the discussion on *koinônia*. Indeed, Plato apparently develops a pantheistic ousiology in 246a-249d, while in the context of *koinônia* he develops an eidetic ontology of *to on* and an entitative ontology of formal elements. Meanwhile, in this context *ousia* sometimes designated the eidetic discourse concerning *to on* as a formal element in the eidetic alphabet. At other times *ousia* asserted the cosmic reality transcending all the formal elements including *to on*, hearkening to the imprecise account of the First Digression and its pantheistic ontology. Pantheistic ontology, eidetic ontology and its corollary entitative ontology are the names of the ontologies developed by Plato in the *Sophist*. The answer to Mattéi's question, "...y-a-t-il une *ontologie*...et surtout *une ontologie*?" is an unequivocal yes and no respectively: there is an account of being profiered by the Stranger, not only one but two. Concerning the interrelationship between the plurivocal senses of being and specifically between *ousia* and *to on* presented by Plato in 246a-259e, Rosen's analyses emerge as the most intelligible and hence plausible because of its ability to integrate the various dimensions of the dramatic text. He ultimately claims that

There are two distinct ontologies at work in the Sophist. The Stranger not only does nothing to reconcile these two ontologies; he never refers to the fact that he has introduced two distinct conceptions of being. But this silence on his part does not excuse the interpreter for overlooking the obvious...When the Stranger turns to the doctrine of *being* as a letter in the eidetic alphabet, he will again shift to *to on* as the characteristic term. The doctrine of forms, so to speak, is the Stranger's version of a precise speech about being. The doctrine of the divine *ousia* is his version of imprecise speech. We should have learned by now that, in questions of ontology, precision is not necessarily more suitable or fitting than imprecision.⁵¹

With this forcible identification of an evident dualism operative in the ontologies of the

⁵¹ Rosen, *ibid.*, 223.

Sophist, the positions of other commentators can be countered on the principle of plausibility. Diés' differentiation between the meaning of *ousia* and *to on* is thus correct, although for reasons more cogent than the one he proposed. Cornford's initial recognition of a difference between the totality of reality and the Form of Existence is also validated. More importantly however, his contention that *ousia* is another name for *to on* after 250a is misleading. Cornford is partially correct in so far as *ousia* appears to be another name for *to on* in 250b-251e, but the synonymy is circumscribed by those lines. Finally, his thesis that *to pân* constitutes the reference or denotation of the Form *to on* is refuted by the insistence in 255e1, 257d5, 258b2, and 258b9, that *ousia*, as the universal totality, transcends the Form-Genus: Being and indeed all the Form-Genera. Bluck's thesis of synonymy falls on the same grounds as Cornford's. Seligman's obfuscation of *ousia* as the formal intension and hence invariable designation of the Form-Genus:Being is strongly countered by the Stranger's disparate discourses and is not sustained by the dramatic evolution of the different accounts. While Mattéi assimilates Rosen's position, his identification of *ousia* and *koinônia* merits caution. Indeed, if *ousia* primarily designates the divine totality of all that is, whereas *koinônia* in turn signifies the patterns of possible combinations among the formal elements in the eidetic alphabet, their alignment does not seem possible. This same observation applies to Gadamer's account. Finally, Dorter's explication of *to on* as the formal and primary species of *ousia* at first glance may appear feasible. The consideration, however, of the transcendence of *ousia* relative to the Form-Genera and especially *to on* questions the primacy of *to on*'s formality. The application of the category "species" in its Aristotelian meaning, moreover, poses considerable difficulty, for a species is a conceptual abstraction empty of content. This logical emptiness is incompatible with *to pân*, an evident anachronism which does little to facilitate the penetration of Plato's bivalent accounts and their interrelationship.

The main defect in the presentation of the bivalent ontologies no doubt resides in Plato's use of *ousia* as a name for the formal element *to on* in 250b9, 251d5, 251e9, and 252a2. Rosen's response to this is to concede that the use of *ousia* here weakens but cannot obliterate the distinction, serving as a reminder of the plasticity of Plato's dramatic language that makes a non-controversial presentation of the Stranger's account virtually impossible.⁵² He notes however, that with the reinforcement of the differentiation between *ousia* and *to on* in 258a11-b3, *ousia* is the comprehensive term signifying the divine totality, while *to on* and with it the other Form-Genera are elements within that whole.⁵³ Rosen's interpretation sustains the most convincing intelligibility and hence plausibility of any of the interpretations due to its capacity to take into account and legitimately integrate the greatest number of textual and dramatic features of the Stranger's imprecise and precise discourses. Both from within the text and in contrast to the conflicting commentaries, the pantheistic ousiology and koinonic ontology of the *Sophist* are irreducible to each other and carry probative independence in face of the other. With this conclusion of the investigation into Plato's ontologies, we have perhaps approached the identification of that from which the liberation of Greek thinking may proceed, having taken the first step, as Heidegger conceded, that every genuine philosophy must take. It is now the time to venture a foray into Heidegger's *Platon: Sophistes* to encounter his own interpretation of the dialogue.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 243.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 288.

CHAPTER 2

HEIDEGGER'S *PLATON: SOPHISTES*

Wo vom Sein des Seienden, ohne ausdrückliche Frage danach, gehandelt wird, nicht nur in den ausdrücklichen, im besonderen so genannten Ontologien, sind die Seinsbestimmungen und Kategorien in Wirkung, die *Plato* und *Aristoteles* in den Grundzügen entdeckt haben.¹

A. *Platon: Sophistes*. The Marburger Vorlesung, 1924-1925

A brief overview of the content of this lecture is very revealing regarding Heidegger's immediate concerns in his commentary on the text of this dialogue. His lecture has yielded a six-hundred and ten page document, with a further forty-three pages of appendices. It hence comprises the longest and most comprehensive study of Plato, let alone a particular dialogue, available in the corpus heideggerianum. After a brief admission of his hermeneutical principles in the "Preface" (7-19),² Heidegger devotes his "Introduction" (21-188) to a striking exegesis of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 2-10 and *Metaphysics*, I, 1-2, with respect to the primacy of *sophia* over *phronêsis* as the highest form of *alêtheuein*. In the section entitled "Transition" (189-225), Heidegger justifies his introductory digression as inextricably linked to the theme of dialectic and the sophist. The remainder of the text is then devoted to an exposition, virtually line by line, of the text of the *Sophist*, in two sections. The "First Section" (236-405) covers lines 216a-237b on the pursuit and definitions of the sophist. The "Second Section" (406-610) covers lines 237a-264d under the rubric of the ontological discussion of the

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, GA 20, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1979), 179.

² All numbers in parentheses (n) or (n-n) henceforth refer to page numbers in GA 19, *op. cit.*, unless they obviously refer to Plato's *Sophist* (216a-268b).

Being of not-being, in three chapters: the first chapter (415-436) oversees lines 237a-242b and introduces the theme of not-being; the second chapter (436-499), examines lines 242b-251a, and attends to the various narratives on being; the third chapter (500-610) encompasses lines 251a-264c as the positive solution to the problem of being and not-being through the *koinônia tôn genôn*. Heidegger throughout pays rigorous attention to the original Greek text and to the structure of the dialogue as a whole. As can be expected in orally delivered lectures, the repetition of insights, view-points, and acquired progress occurs occasionally. In the style of an exegetical lecture, Heidegger does not systematically organize his reflections on Plato's doctrines according to a superimposed conceptual scheme. He rather follows the text closely in the manner of a rigorous exegete, painstakingly translating the Greek word for word for his audience as needed, and thus proceeding to analyze the contents of the dialogue itself. There is no effort to synthesize into an overall, consistent framework the accumulation of acquired analyses from previous lectures; rather, his priority is to explicate the text according to the topics presented by Plato himself. Whether such an adherence is true of the content of his interpretation remains to be investigated. The interpretation that Heidegger presents is genuinely concerned with a painstaking textual analysis of the issues and proceeds by examining the dialogue with considerable linguistic and historical acumen.

B. "Vom Hellen ins Dunkle. Von Aristoteles zu Plato"

In the "Preface", Heidegger stipulates a twofold preparation required for the interpretation of the dialogue. The first consists of a preparation in the orientation of phenomenology, phenomenology in this case being described as addressing, a speaking towards and through, (*legen*) that which shows itself (*to phainomenon*). He contends that the

phenomenon consists of that which is as it shows itself, primarily with respect to the question regarding the Being of entities.³ Interestingly enough, phenomenology, says the Marburg philosopher, can be learned from the Greeks (8)! Phenomenology, however, leads to the second requisite preparation, for Heidegger discerns the interpretative obstacle inherent in phenomenology: "...daß man an diese Gegenstände nicht frei herankommt, sondern sie immer schon in bestimmten Fragestellungen und Sichtweisen zu Gesicht bekommt" (9). The second preparation is henceforth hermeneutical and concerns the ground from which the historical past, namely Plato, can be attained. He consequently acknowledges the hermeneutical principle that will guide his interpretation of the *Sophist*: "Vom Hellen ins Dunkle. Von Aristoteles zu Plato" (10). "Wenn wir die platonische Philosophie eindringen wollen, so werden wir dies am Leitfaden der aristotelischen Philosophie tun" (11). In other words, Heidegger takes the obvious starting-point of any interpretation of Plato to be the philosophical texts and doctrines of Aristotle. Far from construing this as an arbitrary projection of illegitimate perspectives from which to launch a wholly prejudiced interpretation, Heidegger sees this move precisely as the means by which "wir die Vergangenheit, die uns in Plato entgegentritt, in der rechten Weise erfassen, so daß wir nicht beliebige Gesichtspunkte in sie hineindeuten und beliebig sie hineintragen" (7). He thus considers the encounter with Plato through Aristotle as the legitimate foundation of an objective exegesis as opposed to a capricious and distorting

³ *Ibid.*, 8: "Phänomenologie besagt: *phainomenon* - das, was sich zeigt, *legein* - ansprechen...Die phänomenologische Betrachtungsweise ist durch die bestimmte Hinsicht ausgezeichnet, in die sie das, was sich zeigt, stellt und in der sie es verfolgt. Die primäre Hinsicht ist die Frage nach dem Sein dieses Seienden...Phänomen bezeichnet künftig das, was sich zeigt..." Note that *das Sein* would best be translated as "the to-be" while *das Seiende* will be translated as "entity". "The to-be" is an awkward phrase, but it captures the semantical value of the infinitive *das Sein*; the English "being" as a participle approximates much more closely the German *seiend*. Given the awkwardness of the phrase "the to-be" for English linguistic sensibilities, however, recourse will be had to "Being" (the gerund, with a capital "B") to translate Heidegger's *das Sein*.

one. Going against the usual practice of interpreting Plato progressively in a continuous ascent from the Pre-Socratics and Socrates, Heidegger defends his practice of interpreting Plato retroactively by descending from Aristotle with the following reasons. On the presuppositions that 1) the hermeneutical principle of proceeding from the well-known and more developed to the less-known and ambiguous is effective, 2) Aristotle represents the more clarified and developed, Plato the less-known and ambiguous, 3) posterity understands its predecessors better than the predecessors understood themselves, 4) creative research does not understand its own essential progress, Heidegger advances the claim that Aristotle understood Plato. He understands the objectivity of this return through Aristotle as originally based on Plato's constitutive legacy for Aristotle: "Was Aristoteles sagt, ist das, was ihm Plato in die Hand gab, nur radikaler, wissenschaftlicher ausgebildet. Aristoteles soll uns auf Plato vorbereiten" (11-12). Aristotle basically reconstitutes the philosophical problems proffered by Plato but in a more radical and scientific form.⁴ After the excursus on *alêtheuein*, this hermeneutical framework is restated in the "Transition" as follows: "Es gibt kein wissenschaftliches Verständnis, d.h. historisches Zurückgehen zu Plato ohne Durchgehen durch Aristoteles" (189). This is justified since "in der aristotelischen Forschung nichts anderes vorliegt als eine *radikalere Fassung der Probleme*, mit denen Plato und die Früheren gerungen haben. Eine Plato-interpretation kann Aristoteles nicht nur nicht überspringen, sondern jede muß sich an ihm bewähren" (190). As historically conscious interpreters of the past which we constitutively carry in our very awareness, Heidegger assumes that we approach

⁴ Courtine trenchantly observes in this hermeneutical strategy a possible reflection of the circumstances in Heidegger's own relationship with Husserl. *Op. cit.*, 136: "On peut imaginer que Heidegger -- à qui on ne saurait reprocher une excessive modestie --, songeait ici à son propre rapport à Husserl: celui d'un disciple certes, mais qui entend bien par sa radicalité ravir au maître la possession du principe de la phénoménologie. Durant cette même époque de Marbourg en effet, les critiques serrées et sévères à l'égard de Husserl sont toujours menées au nom d'une plus grande fidélité à l'inspiration phénoménologique."

earlier thinkers of antiquity by means of later ones, especially those later ones that had a direct link with their predecessors. This has the further consequence that Aristotle presents a more genuine and scientific development of Platonic positions. He provides not only an improved but superlative articulation of what was only insufficiently expressed by Plato, and hence presents the authentic means of access to Plato and his texts.

What is the consequence of this hermeneutical position for Heidegger's interpretation of the *Sophist*? As a result, Heidegger asserts that "*die Fundamentalfrage der griechischen philosophischen Forschung ist die Frage nach dem Sein, nach dem Sinn des Seins und charakteristischerweise die Frage nach der Wahrheit*" (190). Being is the field, truth the mode of the investigating reflection. Delimiting our concerns to the field of Being, he further admits this requires an extensive exposition of Aristotle's first philosophy, but offers a mere five page summary of his views despite his confession that "*die Seinsforschung selbst, d.h. das Thema des Seienden, wie es von Aristoteles in seiner Ontologie abgehandelt wird...ist nur unzureichend angezeigt*" (194). The result of Heidegger's hermeneutical foundation is to frame his investigation of the dialogue with the specific philosophical problematic of the investigation of the Being of entities. In fact, he credits Aristotle with this distinction and with the realization that Being cannot be understood as if it were an entity. Plato, according to Heidegger, still understood Being in terms of an entity, but Aristotle cannot claim this with the insight that the Being of entities is something unique that cannot be characterized by that which it categorically determines. The following consequence stems from this difference between Being and entities, and with the switch to the first person singular in his own manuscript Heidegger almost testifies autobiographically as if perceiving a personal imperative: "*Ich darf das Sein des Seienden nicht wieder als Seiendes fassen; ich kann es nur fassen, indem ich für das Sein selbst aus ihm heraus immanente Bestimmungen gewinne*" (210). What this

immanent determination might be, however, Heidegger does not immediately venture to say. This emerges only in the last pages of the "Transition" with the consideration, promised earlier, of Aristotle's ontology. He now specifies that Aristotle's first philosophy is at once both a theology and an ontology. This ontotheology, however, "ist nur verständlich zu machen aus dem *Sinn, den Sein für die Griechen hatte. Das Seiende ist das, was im eigentlichen Sinne anwesend ist*" (222). It is precisely at this threshold of the introduction of *Anwesenheit* that Heidegger introduces the related terms of *on* and *ousia* into his preparatory analysis. The immanent determination of Being is hereby identified:

Das zeigt sich darin, daß die Grundbestimmungen des *on*, die *ousia*, den Charakter des *hupokeimenon* hat, dessen, was im vorhinein schon vorliegt, der ganz primären Anwesenheit; das ist die formale Bestimmung von etwas, das überhaupt ist...*diese Fragestellung nach dem on ist dadurch motiviert, daß das on, das Sein des Seienden selbst, primär als Anwesenheit interpretiert ist...*(224-225).

Ousia in this context signifies the formal and immanent determination of *on* and as such connotes presence, *Anwesenheit*. If the report of Kisiel is correct, Heidegger had formulated the ontological difference between Being and entities as well as the immanent determination of Being as presence for the very first time in the summer semester of 1924 during the exegesis of basic concepts in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, V.⁵ Presence thus becomes, in the framework of the distinction between Being and entities, the guiding motif of Heidegger's reappropriation of Plato through the ontology of Aristotle. The corresponding corollary of the difference between the ontological and the ontical is operative as a basic philosophical tenet from the very beginning without any explicit justification or introduction. This tenet is simply

⁵ Kisiel, *op. cit.*, 286-291. "It is thus clear that, by the beginning of May 1924, not only *ousia* as presence but also its multifarious ramifications are firmly in place in Heidegger's framework of thought" (290). This lecture is slated for publication as volume 18 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, and is entitled *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*.

taken for self-evident as the *sine qua non* of his philosophical discourse and of the *Sachen selbst*, and appears throughout his entire exposition.

Thematically received, this hermeneutical strategy appears to suggest more than a fundamental prejudice towards Plato's text. Heidegger nonetheless professes the primacy of the text as not only the locus but the focus of the interpretation. Although the Marburg philosopher regrets that all the topical horizons within which the dialogue circulates were not adequately introduced, "Trotzdem müssen wir am Ideal einer solchen Interpretation festhalten, die lediglich das Ziel hat, *den Dialog rein für sich selbst sprechen zu lassen*" (227). This dictum of letting the text speak purely for itself, however, is not to be mistaken for fetishism of the text, which reifies the text into its own self-sufficient world, as if the text were only a composite of signs with no reference to extra-textual bearings, to the *Sachen selbst*. It involves letting the text speak what is explicit as well as what is implicit. Henceforth letting the text speak for itself will consist of "sich diese Sachen vorgeben zu lassen aus einem weiterdringenden Verständnis" which means "die *immanenten Tendenzen* herauszuhören, sie in ursprünglicherer Durcharbeitung zu ergreifen und festzuhalten..." (228). This means dedicating one's efforts phenomenologically to the things which the text speaks about, independently of, yet parallel to, the meaning imparted to them by the text itself. Simple recourse to other texts, for instance to other Platonic dialogues does not suffice: "...das Entscheidende liegt immer wieder in der Auseinandersetzung mit den Sachen, über die gesprochen wird" (229). The fundamental requirement for letting the text speak for itself is a direct involvement with the things beyond the text which are referred to by the text itself. As a result, Heidegger legitimates the application of his version of *to phenomenon*, derived from his own phenomenological ontology, to his interpretation of the Platonic text. Thematically and formally, moreover, this amounts to an initial alignment with Plato's own

concerns in the *Sophist*. The paramount *Sache* of both Plato's and Heidegger's efforts, the immanent tendency of both of their discourses, is the question of being. This is evident once Heidegger launches into the "Second Section" of *Platon: Sophistes*. The question of being is paramount as the focal point of both the dialogue and his commentary. Indeed, Heidegger insists that the actual theme of the dialogue is the meaning of Being, the celebrated *Seinsfrage*, on several occasions:

Es handelt sich nicht um eine radikale Entgegensetzung von Nichtsein und Sein bzw. um eine *sumplokê* beider, wie sie bisher behandelt ist, sondern: *to on ôs ouk esti pê*, d.h. daß das *on* nicht so *nicht ist* wie das *mê on*, sondern *anders*, und das *mê on* nicht so *ist* wie das *on*, sondern *anders*, *ôs esti kata ti*. Darin liegt aber dann eine *Modifikation des Sinnes von Sein überhaupt*. Das ist das eigentliche Thema. Letzlich wird die frage nach dem *mê on* auf die Frage nach dem Sein zurückgeführt, weshalb auch die Tradition diesen Dialog mit einem gewissen recht überschrieben hat: »peri tou ontos«, »Über das Sein«. (433-434)

Having presented and defended his hermeneutical scheme, the realization "daß das eigentliche Thema das *Sein* ist" (435) marks the threshold of his own analysis of *ousia* and *to on* in the *Sophist*. The phenomenological orientation to *die Sachen* actually grounds the confluence of Heidegger and Plato's own accounts of Being. This becomes poignant at Heidegger's perusal in *Platon: Sophistes* of the famous line at 244a, famous since the publication of *Sein und Zeit* in 1927 as the programmatic declaration of Heidegger's own ambition. "244a folgt zu allem Überfluß ganz deutlich, was eigentlich das Thema dieser Untersuchung ist...»Da wir also keinen Ausweg wissen« in dem, was Ihr da sagt, müßt Ihr selbst uns darüber aufklären, *was Ihr denn eigentlich wollt, das on bedeute, wenn Ihr dieses Wort aussprecht. Das ist das eigentlich zentrale Bemühen dieser Stelle und des ganzen Dialogs*" (446-447). In the meantime, the eager anticipations of several commentators have been relieved with the publication of a remarkable study in the corpus heideggerianum uniquely consecrated to the exegesis of an

entire Platonic dialogue, the *Sophist* no less.⁶ Rosen attests that in volume 19 of the *Gesamtausgabe* "the analysis of the *Sophist* is entirely superior to any subsequent Heideggerian interpretation of Plato known to me. Heidegger's procedure is nevertheless idiosyncratic in certain decisive ways...".⁷ Out of the recesses of his rich cultural memory, Gadamer, who attended the lecture of 1924-1925,⁸ testifies that the *Sophist* was one of the formative influences on Heidegger's *Seinsforschung*.⁹ One of the decisive idiosyncrasies indubitably resides in the unimpeded agency of Aristotle's ontotheology as the hermeneutical filter for the interpretation of the dialogue. It is to the exposition and evaluation of the consequences of this strategy in the analysis of *ousia* and *to on* to which we now turn.

⁶ Cf Courtine, *op. cit.*, 133 [fn. 8] and 135 [fn. 11]; Boutot, *op. cit.*, 10: "...il existe un autre ouvrage de Heidegger entièrement consacré à Platon...qui, lui non plus, n'est pas encore publié: son cours de Marbourg du semestre d'hiver 1924-1925 sur le *Sophiste*"; and Brague, *op. cit.*, 251: "On a souvent remarqué, non parfois sans le regretter, que Heidegger s'est si peu occupé de Platon. En attendant la publication du cours de Marbourg (WS, 1924-1925) sur le *Sophiste* qui doit constituer le tome 19 de la *GA*..."

⁷ Rosen, *op. cit.*, 317.

⁸ Gadamer, *op. cit.*, 367: "Heideggers Marburger Vorlesung, über den »Sophistes« vom Jahre 1924, die ich nur in vager Erinnerung eines unreifen Zuhörers kenne, der ich war..."

⁹ Gadamer, "Auf dem Rückgang zum Anfang", *Gesammelte Werke, Bd. III*, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987), 405: "Der platonische Dialog, in dem dieser Satz [244a] steht, stellte offenkündig eine wahre Inspiration für Heidegger dar."

CHAPTER 3

THE ANALYSES OF *OUSIA* AND *TO ON*

Aber die Resultate dieser Überlegungen sind gewissermaßen in Herrschaft, *ohne daß* der Boden, dem sie abgenommen sind, in ausdrücklich forschender Erfahrung behalten oder allererst in eine solche gebracht wäre, ohne daß die artikulierende Frage, das heißt, ohne daß das Ganze des Erfahrungs- und Explikationsstandes der Forschung, der diese Kategorien entsprungen sind, noch lebendig wäre.¹

A. Between the ontical and the ontological

In his exposition of the Eleatic Stranger's summary of the Milesian, Ionian, and Sicilian traditions on the nature and number of beings, *ta onta*, Heidegger attributes to Plato the achievement of a shift, although incomplete, in metaphysical perspective. The discourses of these predecessors concerned the ontical rather than ontological, for they accounted for entities naively in terms of other entities rather than entering the dimension of the Being of entities itself (436, 441). Parmenides' position represents a decisive first move in the direction of ontology (444), but its insights nevertheless concern the ontical more than the ontological, since he wasn't clear about the distinction between Being and entities (439) and identified the universal ontological meaning of Being with the ontical region of entities as a whole (571). Heidegger is ambiguous regarding Plato's range between the ontical and the ontological. On the one hand, Plato is credited with shifting the fundamental orientation of philosophy from the ontical and merely entitative to the specifically ontological dimension of the Being of entities: "Die Kritik, die Plato and der Vorzeit übt, bewegt sich in der Tendenz, das

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, GA 20, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1979), 179.

Ontologische gegenüber dem Ontischen, die kategoriale Explikation des Seins gegenüber der ontischen Beschreibung des Seienden durchzusetzen" (438-439). Plato's originality lay in asserting, against both those who claim ontically that there are manifold entities and those Eleatics who claim that Being is one, that diversity is within Being itself (444). Heidegger does not, however, at this point explicitate what this diversity within Being really is or means. As a matter of fact he contends that Plato approximates his predecessors in their ontical preoccupation that precludes an exclusively ontological investigation (436-437). Heidegger finds a fundamental ambiguity in the connotation of Plato's *on* in the *Sophist* as either Being or entity (459). He claims that a precise concept of Being as differentiated from entities has not been worked out by Plato: the entire reflection pursued by Plato transpires "in der *Indifferenz des Ontischen und des Ontologischen...nicht nur hier, sondern letztlich bis zum Ende des Dialoges*, so daß in dieser für Plato noch selbst bestehenden Unklarheit die eigentliche Schwierigkeit des Verständnisses des Dialoges liegt" (459).² Henceforth the challenge for Heidegger of any reading of the *Sophist* is determined by conscientiously compensating for Plato's oversight of the differentiation between Being and entities. How does Heidegger's perception of Plato's ontological indifference influence his interpretation of *ousia* and *to on*?

² Heidegger suggests that the ambiguity of ontological indifference is visible "nur aus einer eindeutigen *Basis* ontologischer Fragestellung, in der die griechische mit einbegriffen ist und also lebendig werden kann. Die fundamentalen Klärungen gelingen auch später bei Plato nicht und auch nicht bei Aristoteles. Heute sind sie ebenso unerledigt, ja nicht einmal mehr als fundamentale Probleme verstanden. Die Unklarheiten können nicht anders erledigt werden als dadurch, daß die ontologische Basis erst ausgebildet wird" (460). In other words, the exclusive ontology of Being which proceeds separately from entities alone suffices to resolve the challenges posed by ancient Greek philosophy. Greek philosophy is opaque to itself and incapable of clarifying its own difficulties. The implication is that Heidegger is the first to be on the path towards articulating a sufficiently precise ontology of Being.

B. *Koinônia*: the Structure of Being

Circulating amidst this ontological indifference, Heidegger considers the emergence of the theme *koinônia* to be operative not only in lines 250a-259e but even in lines 246a-249e of the *Sophist*. He does not consider the progressive debate concerning the meaning of *ousia* in 246a-249e to represent a merely heuristic or arbitrary reflection which Plato then casts aside as irrelevant to his larger concerns in the dialogue, as if it were a mere caricature of other positions that bear no intrinsic relation to his own. As a subtext to the dialogue's overt narrative, the tenet of a community within Being exerts a formative influence over the unfolding drama in the battle between the furious friends of the earth and the heavenly friends of Forms. It not only exerts an influence, but on Heidegger's reading the very purpose of the battle is to facilitate the advent of the doctrine of *koinônia*. Besides being intimated on a few occasions (444, 461), Heidegger draws our precise attention to this subtext by discerning the theme of *koinônia* in several textual loci.³ The notion of community entails an interrelationship of different things with one another. This leads to the central inference that "*Sein besagt nichts anderes als: Miteinandersein-Können*" (480).⁴ The emphasis is decidedly

³ With respect to the phrase *to sumphues gegonos* in 247a2 he observes that "darin liegt schon beschlossen die *methexis* bzw. die *koinônia tòn genôn*. Ich betone ausdrücklich, daß gerade hier schon der ganze Strukturzusammenhang dessen, was Plato später herausstellt, herausverstanden werden muß..." (473). With respect to 248a he writes that "*koinônein* heißt also: sein zu einem Anderen, mit ihm sein, und, in bezug auf dieses Andere, sein mit dem Einen...Nun wird der Ausdruck *koinônein* aufgenommen; er ist das *eigentliche Zentrum der Betrachtung*" (478) which issues from the battle. Regarding 248b5 his most forceful formulation of the theme is found: "Also wiederum *das Miteinander-, das Aufeinanderbezogensein und die Möglichkeit dafür. Diese Möglichkeit dafür ist nichts anderes als der Sinn von Sein...so daß Sein jetzt besagt, wenn wir *koinônia* einsetzen: *dunamis koinônias*, die Möglichkeit des Miteinanderseins*" (478-479).

⁴ He repeats at the end of his exegesis of 246a-249a as an emphatic resumé of the current subtext that "*Sein selbst besagt dann für Plato, wenn der diese beiden Positionen verständlich machen will: *dunamis*, als *Möglichkeit zur Mit-Anwesenheit bei etwas...oder in der volleren Bestimmung: *parousia dunameôs koinônias*, *Vorhandensein der Möglichkeit zum Miteinandersein**" (486).*

on the content of Being, a content that includes diversity. Heidegger sees Plato breaking through to the conclusion that being means the capacity-to-be-with, being able to be present with something. The diversity within Being, previously attributed to Plato's originality, is increasingly affirmed with these indications. The exact kind of diversity this content includes is not yet explicitated, but clearly it is a diversity in Being's structure and not in a plurality of meanings. Significant for the moment is the recognition that the narrative after 250a is viewed by Heidegger as an assimilation, explicitation, and recapitulation of the main considerations surrounding *koinônia* developed in 246a-249a. "Es wird", he maintains, "dieselbe Betrachtung auf einem höheren Niveau wiederholt" (490). The text in 246a-249a serves as an imprecise propaedeutic to the subsequent account of the structures of Being unfolding in the dialectical discourse after line 250a.

With the advent of the doctrine of *koinônia*, Heidegger becomes increasingly attentive to the dimension of discourse and dialectic with which the dialogue culminates in 260a ff.. The reflection on the doctrine of community nonetheless takes into account "wie eine *koinônia* in den *onta* möglich ist" (512). The Form-Genera are, as intelligible things, considered to be entities. The Stranger's reflection at this point inevitably transpires on an ontical level that opens up to the ontological as to its horizon. The account of this possibility requires privileged entities "die als *onta* ausgezeichnet sind in ihrem Sein" (520). Although decidedly ontical in its orientation, the reflection nonetheless concerns the ontological dimension of Being exposed by the privileged entities, the five Form-Genera. This leads Heidegger into an astute exposition of the *megista genê* for over forty pages⁵ with a careful examination of their

⁵ Heidegger ends his exposition of the greatest Form-Genera on p. 561 with the conclusion: "Die Betrachtung der fünf *genê* zielte ab auf die Herausstellung des *heteron* und damit auf die Möglichkeit, das *mê on* als *on* verständlich zu machen...Mit der Aufklärung wird erst die *ousia* des *mê on* ganz deutlich. Mit der Aufklärung der *heteron* als *antithesis* und des *mê on* als *ousia* kommt die engere dialektische Betrachtung bezüglich des *mê on* zum Abschluß."

intricate interrelationship. As to the choice of the *megista genê*, Heidegger finds Plato deliberate in his choice of the particular *genê*. He regards them as the ground for the dialectical elaboration (254b-259d) and as the original, universal determinations of the Platonic configuration of Being.⁶ Further relevant to this discussion is Heidegger's analysis of the terms *genos* and *eidos*. In line with the consensus of commentators, he construes them as synonyms sharing an identical denotation of Form-Genera. "Bei dieser Aufklärung der Dialektik bzw. dessen, was sie behandelt, muß im Auge behalten werden, daß der Ausdruck *genos* hier gebraucht wird, und zwar nicht etwa in einer ausdrücklichen Unterscheidung gegen *eidos*, vielmehr gebraucht Plato *genos* und *eidos* promiscue..." (523). Again he asserts that "So sind fünf *genê* als eigenständige herausgestellt. Sie werden hier als *eidê* bezeichnet. Daraus ist ersichtlich, daß für Plato kein Unterschied zwischen *genos* und *eidos* besteht" (547). Specifically with *eidos* Heidegger claims that it designates the object of an intellectually perceived entity "und ist gerade so nicht die hinreichende Basis, um über das Sein der Ideen selbst ins klare zu kommen. *eidos* sagt im Grunde nichts aus über das Sein des Seienden" (524). The Forms, while they are the privileged things that offer a disclosure of Being, manifestly are not themselves the locus of Being itself. Clearly from the viewpoint of his own ontological difference, -- *ta onta*, *genê*, *eide* are all ontical, merely entitative in meaning, and do not effectively express Being.

⁶ Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes*, p. 547-548. "...diese fünf müssen als *Boden* der weiteren dialektischen Analyse festgehalten werden...Diese fünf aber sind formal allgemeine Seinscharaktere im platonischen Sinn." Also, the analogy of the vowels in the eideteic alphabet indicates "daß es möglicherweise auch bei den *onta* solches gibt, was *dia pantôn kechôrêken*, was bei allem Seienden schon da ist. Das sind nichts anderes als die *ursprünglichen Bestimmungen des Seins*...Auf sie ist gesagt, daß es unter den *onta* und allem, was in einer möglichen *koinônia* steht, bevorzugte gibt, die überall antreffbar sind" (519).

As a corollary to the Stranger's hypothesis of the greatest Form-Genera, Heidegger recognizes that the Form-Genera can be considered *kata phusin*, according to their own nature, or *pros alla*, in relation with other Forms. This is grounded etymologically already in a semantic differentiation between *eidos* and *genos*: the former pertains to the atomic content of what is given in the look of a single Form-Genus, while the latter applies to the structural configuration of Being itself (524). In other terms, the Form-Genera can be viewed according to how they look in their own categorical content or according to their categorical function in their possibilities for intereidetic combination (535). The categorical content that determines the nature of each Form is individual and atomic. The categorical function determines the presence of the Form-Genera to each other in a community of formal elements. Heidegger considers Plato to have used this distinction tacitly without explicating its significance (546). It is in the categorical function of the Form-Genera that the specifically ontological dimension of Being is disclosed. In the atmosphere of the *Sophist*, Being is structured as a diversified community whose elements are present to each other. This is the eminent ontological dimension of the reflection advanced by the Plato in the Stranger's dialectical conversation. As Heidegger discerns it, Being connotes a structured community. The analyses of *ousia* and *to on* consequently transpire, despite Plato's nescience concerning the ontological difference, amidst this overriding outlook on Being as a structured capacity for diversified community.

C. *Ousia*: Being as Presence

Heidegger attests to the tension between intertwining ontical and ontological perspectives in his analysis of 246a-249a when he asks "Um was geht es denn nun eigentlich in dieser *gigantomachia peri tés ousias*? Um die Entdeckung des Seienden, das dem Sinn von

Sein eigentlich genügt, und damit um den Ausweis des Sinnes der *ousia* selbst" (466). With the battle between the giants and the gods, metaphysical naïveté is equally attributed to both the somaticists and the eideticists, for both parties reduce *ousia* to bodily or spiritual entities respectively. In this respect he states that "Die Frage nach dem Sinn der *ousia* selbst ist für die Griechen ontologisch thematisch nicht lebendig, sondern sie fragen immer nur: Welches Seiende genügt eigentlich dem Sinn von Sein und welche Charaktere des Seins ergeben sich von da aus? Der Sinn des Seins bleibt ungefragt" (466). Heidegger does not suppose that the Stranger directly offers an explication of the meaning of *ousia*. The meaning of Being remains unasked and unaccounted for. The ontical attitudes of both battling parties are qualified, however, in so far as with their respective accounts the entities sufficient for disclosing the meaning of Being are increasingly ostensible. The somaticists insist that bodies, insofar as they proffer corporeal resistance and tangibility, constitute the fundamental reality (246a7). In this measure Heidegger remarks that "*Für diese Position ist seiend, was im Widerstand seinen Bestand bekundet...ousia, Anwesenheit, bekundet und dokumentiert sich für sie primär und einzig in körperhaftem Widerständigsein*" (464). The eideticists on the other hand submit that the bare meaning of Being is ostensible in the visible presence of the look of Forms seen in noetic visualization (465). In this dichotomous context Heidegger claims that the implicit meaning of *ousia* is apparent as presence: "*Der Sinn der ousia wird ausgewiesen dadurch, daß aufgewiesen wird das Seiende, das dem Sinn vom Sein genügt...Der Sinn, der unausdrücklich diese Ontologie leitet, besagt: Sein = Anwesenheit*" (466). As in the previous survey of the *Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation* and several of his later texts, Heidegger traces the meaning of *ousia* as presence back to the connotation of the term in the ordinary language of fourth century Greece: "Sein besagt: im vorhinein schon da sein, als Besitz, Hausstand, Anwesen -- überschärft: Anwesenheit" (467). An analysis in this respect

of the direct relationship between either a body or a Form and *ousia*, however, is not attempted. His main concern is to establish that, despite the ontical atmosphere of Plato's ontological narrative, there are entities sufficient for displaying the dominant meaning of *ousia* as presence. In fact, Plato's resolution of the ontical tension between the battling parties in the horizon of presence as a being-present-to-one-another is described as an "ontological solution".⁷

This meaning of *ousia* is reinforced by his reading of the modification which the Stranger solicits from the somaticists when they grant that the virtues are in the soul. Heidegger seizes on the appearance of the term *parousia* in 247a5. The Stranger is here discussing how the presence of the virtues demands that the soul is said to be in conjunction with the body. The presence of the virtues demands that the soul is seen as a living dimension of the body, and the somaticists are inclined to modify their position to allow an asomatic dimension to *ousia*. This instance of *parousia* thus establishes that "*Sein heißt hier also: im Stande sein zur Anwesenheit bei etwas...Vorausgreifend sei hier darauf hingewiesen, daß in diesem Begriff von Sein schon beschlossen liegt: 1. Anwesenheit, ousia 2. »mit«, sumplokê, koinônia 3. Können, dunamis*" (470-471). Anticipating the doctrine of the community of Form-Genera, Heidegger asserts that Being consists of the capacity-to-be-present-with. He later explicitly identifies *parousia* and *ousia* as virtual synonyms: "die Gegenwart, *parousia*, was oft verkürzt einfach als *ousia* gefaßt wird" (579). Significant at this point in the analysis is the intensification of *ousia* in terms of presence. This is confirmed by the Stranger's debate with the ontical account of the somaticists as the dominant configuration of Being. The analysis of *ousia* in 246a-249a concludes with the observation that "Sein hat in »Anwesend-sein« nur

⁷ "Wir wissen, daß Plato für seine eigene ontologische Lösung zwei Positionen voraussetzt: die eine, die sagt: *seiend ist, was im Widerstand seinen Bestand bekundet*; die andere, die sagt: *seiend ist das, was im legein bzw. noein als dem reinen Vernehmen sich zeigt*" (485).

einen ganz formalen Sinn. Diese Seinsaussage im Sinne des Formalen...bedeutet nichts für den sachlichen Gehalt im Sinne der Struktur des Seins selbst" (486). *Ousia* as presence is a purely formal aspect of Being that within itself has no immanent content or structure. It is necessary to be aware that "formal" in this sense is purged of all eidetic connotations whatsoever. By "Formalen" the Form-Genera are not being invoked. The formal aspect designates a ubiquitous mode of Being, not a particular kind of entity. It is an abstract dimension of the structure of Being without any determination of what that structure might be as a community. The structural content of Being is developed elsewhere, and notably comes into view with the dialectical discourse on the community of Forms. For now, it appears that Heidegger perceives a shift but not a complete break from the ontical to the ontological in the implicit horizon of presence disclosed in the accounts of *ousia*. In superceding the dichotomy between the somaticists and the eideticists with modifications to their versions of *ousia*, the formal dimension of Being as presence is ascertained.

The term *ousia* next occurs in the phrase *pros tēn tēs ousias koinōnian* in 250b9, and a considerable challenge is issued to the interpretation of presence. The context now is the discussion of Rest and Motion. The Stranger is trying to establish that *to on* is a third thing, a *triton ti*, which encircles and hence allows both *kinesis* and *stasis*, while mutually exclusive, equally to be. The result is that the couplet of Motion and Rest, while internally exclusive, participates in *ousia* and both are consequently said to be. Heidegger translates the phrase as "hin auf ihr Mitsein, »mit dem Sein selbst«" (493). *Ousia* is momentarily translated as *Sein* rather than *Anwesenheit*, but then comes the qualification. *Ousia* is to be interpreted, not in terms of "etwas Isoliertes, sondern auf *die koinōnia, das Mit-Anwesendsein des Seins, des on selbst*" (493). This slightly cryptic remark, in the absence of any further explication, is ambiguous. What it suggests is that *ousia*, while prescinding from any entitative associations,

nonetheless represents the presence of the entitative *to on* in its koinonic relation to Motion and Rest. The term *ousia* is subsumed in the relational combination of eidetic community, where different Forms are present-to-one-another in the structure of their community. *Ousia* is not an isolated entity itself, but the temporal mode of entities in their togetherness. It functions as a synonym in this instance for *koinônia*. In effect, *ousia* is converted into the temporality of *koinônia* itself.

While Heidegger offers no commentary on the occurrences of the term *ousia* in 251d1, 251d5, 251e9, and 252a2, he continues to develop the connection between presence and Form in the context of the elaboration of the community of Form-Genera in 250aff. As mentioned earlier, the entire complex of Form-Genera individually considered are entitative realities that fall short of the plenitude of Being, even though they are privileged in their community to disclose its ontological horizon. Nonetheless, despite its ontological paucity, the term *eidōs* etymologically preserves the insight "daß Seiendes primär erfaßt werden soll in seinem Aussehen, d.h. in seiner Präsenz, und zwar einer Präsenz für ein schlichtes Hinsehen darauf" (524). The Form-Genera are fundamentally seized in pure noetic vision on account of the presence of their look. This presence, moreover, is found not only in the categorical content of the look contained in any single Form-Genus according to its nature, but also is found by means of *diaireisis* in view of the relation to, being-present-towards, another Form-Genus (544). Presence is a fundamental dimension of the Form-Genera both in their categorical content as well as in their categorical function. Detecting this dimension of presence in the Forms prepares Heidegger for his claim regarding the occurrence of *ousia* in 258b2 that Otherness is no less present (*ousia estin*) than what it is set against, since as a Form-Genus it is essentially accessible in itself and in relation (565). With the elucidation of otherness as the constitutive dimension of *to mê on*, Heidegger further contends that both *to on* and *to mê*

on have "die volle Dignität der Anwesenheit, des Seins" (566). Although the phrase is not found in the text of the *Sophist* itself, Heidegger takes the liberty in reference to 258b9 to speak of the "*ousia mê ontos*" (555), "die *ousia* des *mê on*" (561), and even of the "*parousia* des *mê on*" (579), the presence of not-being in the community of Forms. With this culmination of the realization of the presence of not-being, Heidegger terminates his reflections on *ousia*. *Ousia* is consistently interpreted as presence in order to designate the perduring and immediately available aspect of Being displayed entitatively by the Form-Genera, whether considered individually in themselves or in relation to one another.

D. *To on*: Being and entitative Form

A careful scrutiny of Heidegger's reading of *to on* demonstrates that the term is translated and implemented in different ways. On the one hand, *on* is taken ontologically to signify *das Sein*. Thus Heidegger translates *to on* as "Sein" several times (434, 444, 459, 493, 495, 497, 498, 536, 537, 542, 546), prescind from explicit entitative associations only in a few instances (434, 444, 459, 493, 495, 497, 498). On the other hand *on* is taken ontically to signify an entity, a Form-Genus in the community of Form-Genera (518, 536, 537, 542, 543, 546, 549, 553, 554, 555, 557, 561). It is interesting to note meanwhile that *to on* is never translated or referred to as *das Seiende*, even though on the basis of the Stranger's dialectical discourse in 254ff it is counted in as one of the *onta* (554), entities, which as *genê* are understood by Heidegger as fundamental determinations of Being. In the poignant passage at 250b6,c1, where the Stranger solicits Theaetetus' agreement *triton ti to on*, that *to on* is a third thing beyond Motion and Rest, Heidegger appropriates *to on* in an ontological flourish. "Mit Ruhe und Bewegung haben wir also das Sein nicht schon verständlich gemacht, sondern

die Schwierigkeit, nach dem Sinn des Seins zu fragen, nur wesentlich erhöht" (497). With *to on* recognized as a third something, he proposes that we have arrived at a matter "was ganz gegen das ist, was wir überhaupt noch verstehen und aufklären können" (497). This is a captivating moment in the commentary. There is no profound elaboration of any thesis whether his own or Plato's, other than a testimony to the incomprehensibility of Being, despite Gadamer's contention that it was precisely this passage which most inspired Heidegger in his own *Seinsforschung*.⁸ If this passage constituted a profound stimulus to his own ontological thematic, it remained a private and unpublicized experience. Respecting Plato's own evasiveness, Heidegger in no way attempts to answer the question of the nature of Being. The analysis of *koinônia*, in accordance with the Platonic narrative, ensues. Regarding *to on* as an entitative Form-Genus, Heidegger consequently ventures no analysis of the categorical content of *on* itself *kata phusin*, according to its own nature, restricting his comments to observations regarding the categorical function of *to on pros allêlô*, in relation to the other greatest Form-Genera. In its categorical function, *to on* is differentiated from Motion, Rest, Sameness and Otherness in turn. No where is the meaning of *to on* in its categorical function of combination amidst the community isolated for exclusive reflection; in fact, Heidegger considers the entire dialectical narrative to aim at the demonstration of *heteron* in the structure of Being and hence the reality of *to mê on* (561).

A striking question, however, remains: given the thoroughly entitative connotation of

⁸ Gadamer, "Auf dem Rückgang zum Anfang", *Gesammelte Werke, Bd. III*, 405: "Ich glaube sogar den Satz gefunden zu haben, der diese Inspiration [um die Frage nach dem Sein] am stärksten formulierte (Heidegger hat mir später einmal bestätigt, daß es so sei, aber man soll die Verba magistri nie unbedingt gelten lassen). Im »Sophistes« wird die Frage nach dem, was Sein ist, mit den traditionellen Begriffen von dem, was ruht, und dem, was sich verändert, konfrontiert...Diese Frage wird offenkundig von Heidegger selbst gefragt...Die Frage selbst, wohin man denn eigentlich zu blicken hat, wenn man »Sein« sagt, war offenkundig immer noch die gleiche Verlegenheit, an der sich Heideggers eigene Denkversuche abarbeiteten..."

to on why did the Marburg phenomenologist steadfastly refuse to translate it with the German term *das Seiende*, opting instead for *das Sein*, despite the open admission that Plato never explicitated a concept of *das Sein* in differentiation from entities? Is there an apparent inconsistency in the transposition of Plato's text from Greek into his own German, phenomenological language? The conceptual difficulty arises when *Sein* is taken to signify both the ontical community of interrelated Form-Genera which determine it *and* the single Form-Genus *to on* which is one of the original determinations. The simplest dissolution of this problem presents itself in the consideration that *das Sein*, when used to refer to *to on*, is a proper name for that particular entity in its own nature, much as *Andersheit* is for *heteron* or *Bewegung* is for *kinêsis*. As a proper name for an entity, it refrains from designating Being in any ontological way as a community. This solution may pose the least complication, but it ignores the specifically Heideggerian direction of the commentary. Another possible explanation is that Heidegger may have wanted to emphasize the koinonic dimension of *to on* as the Form-Genus that circumscribes the other four Form-Genera and circulates throughout them all. In this sense, *to on* would be the totality of koinonic relations and connotes the entire *koinônia* itself. *To on* signifies the entire complex of eidetic community, since in fact each of other four Form-Genera are said to be on account of their combination with *to on*. Yet it still retains its duplicity as both the community itself and as one member along with four others that together constitute the community. This strain of Heidegger's analysis is reflected in his presentation of the Form-Genera as categorical determinations of *Sein*, and in his presentation of *to on* as *Sein*. The question emerges, how can *to on* be a categorical determination of itself? In his lecture of the summer semester 1926, in the wake of the

Sophistes-commentary,⁹ Heidegger pursues this dilemma posed by his own reading. Repeating his definition of *koinônia* in terms of *parousia* as the possibility of being-present-with-one-another, he displays the koinonic community as a combination of the original determinations of Being:

»Möglichkeit des Zusammenhangs der höchsten Bestimmungen«, die zum Sein überhaupt gehören. Zwischen den ursprünglichen Bestimmungen des Seins besteht eine solche *koinônia*, »Verklammerung«. Plato zeigt das an fünf Grundbestimmungen. Zum Sein gehören »Selbigkeit«, *tauton*; »Andersheit«, *heteron*; »Bewegung«, *kinêsis*; »Stehen«, *stasis*...Im Sein selbst ist schon mitanwesend Selbigkeit, Andersheit, Bewegung, *stasis*. (Das Sein selbst gehört mit zu den fünf Bestimmungen!).¹⁰

In this view, there is the simultaneous assertion that there are four Form-Genera that belong to Being, and that Being is one of five fundamental determinations. In Being itself, which in this ontical context is *to on*, the other four determinations are already present. Yet being itself belongs to one of the five determinations. Heidegger wryly remarks: "Freilich liegen darin Schwierigkeiten."¹¹ He specifically amplifies, "Ungelöst bleibt die Frage nach dem Zusammenhang des dialektischen Schemas selbst mit dem Sein. Das Sein bleibt die leitende Idee, auf die die anderen kategorialen Bestimmungen des Seins bezogen sind."¹² *To on* is here conceived both in terms of a substrate that is determined categorically by other Form-Genera and as one of the determinations itself, since it itself is one of the Genera, even if the highest. In sum, his analysis recognizes *to on* as that particular entity which, as a Form-Genus,

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Antiken Philosophie*, GA 22, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1993).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 283.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 283.

¹² *Ibid.*, 285. He previously noted the same aporia in a cryptic remark: "*koinônia tôn genôn, Seinsbestimmungen*...2. nicht gesagt, wie diese Seinsbestimmungen zur Idee des Seins selbst sich verhalten, Sein oberstes *genos*" (142).

facilitates combination in the community of Form-Genera and is recognized along with the other Form-Genera as one of the fundamental determinations of Being. In refusing to explicitate what the Form-Genus:Being might be in itself of its own nature, Heidegger is aligning himself with Plato's own silence on the matter.

E. *Ousia* and *to on* in Heidegger's analysis

The critical exposition of *ousia* and *to on* has to contend with a significant ambiguity in the liberal use of the term *Sein*. *Sein* variously connotes *ousia*/presence, *koinônia*/community, *ta onta*/the greatest Form-Genera, *to on*/the Form-Genus:Being, or phenomenological Being in its ontological plenitude as differentiated from entities.¹³ The context in which the term is used does not always clarify which signification is intended by the author. Basically, however, *ousia* and *to on* respectively have two different but interrelated meanings in Heidegger's analysis of Plato's narrative in 246a-259e that are interrelated. In their association, *ousia* constitutes the presence of the entitative *to on* in the community of Form-Genera. *Ousia* is a formal mode of *koinônia*, of the community of *onta* in their presence to one another, and it is also the mode of presence offered by the quidditative look of any given Form-Genus. *Ousia* thus constitutes presence within the categorical function of intereidetic

¹³ This ambiguity also persists in *GA 22* a mere year after the composition of *GA 19*. Heidegger manages to designate *Sein* in five ways. 1. as *ousia-parousia* "Sein: Anwesenheit" (142); 2. as *koinônia* "genauer aus ihr her Struktur des Seins: beisammen mitvorhanden...*Sein und Beziehung*" (142), "Zum Sinn des Seins gehört vielleicht Beziehung überhaupt" (117), "Was besagt dann Sein? *Mögliches Beisammen: Beisammen - Mit-anwesen*" (128); 3. as ontical, eidetic components "So ergibt sich gegenüber der Position im »Statt«, daß das Sein in sich selbst mannigfaltig ist...Es gibt eine mannigfaltigkeit der Ideen. Wie können die Grundbestimmungen im Zusammenhang begriffen werden?" (282), "Explizite Frage nach dem Seienden hinsichtlich seines Seins, aber dort gefaßt vom Seinenden und als solches" (143); 4. as *to on* "Im Sein selbst ist schon mitanwesend Selbigkeit, Andersheit, Bewegung, *stasis*. (Das Sein gehört mit zu den fünf Bestimmungen!)" (283); and 5. as phenomenological Being "Sein ist hinaus über alles Seiende" (106).

community as well as in the categorical content of eidetic ipseity. In this way it is a temporal mode of *to on* both in its own nature and in its relations with other Form-Genera. The moment has now arrived to proceed to an evaluation of the plausibility of Heidegger's interpretation of *ousia* and *to on* in lines 246a-259e of the *Sophist*.

CHAPTER 4

CRITIQUE OF HEIDEGGER'S INTERPRETATION

So verstummt ist diese Frage, daß man meint, sie zu stellen, ohne faktisch überhaupt in die Reichweite zu kommen, ohne zu sehen, daß man mit der eigenen Verwendung der alten Begriffe, der ausdrücklich bewußten, traditionellsten oder der noch häufigeren unbewußten, selbstverständlichen noch nicht und gerade nicht die Frage nach dem Sein hat, d.h. sich untersuchend in diesem Bezirk verhält.¹

The moment has arrived for a synthesis and critique of Heidegger's reading of *ousia* and *to on* in the *Sophist*. The reduction of *ousia* to the eidetic presence of the Forms, in themselves and in relation to each other, portrays Plato as the progenitor of a general concept of being. This compression of *ousia* into a temporal dimension of the Forms constitutes in effect the attribution to Plato of a one-dimensional account of being in lines 246a-259e. Plato is presented as sustaining a general concept of being determined by the dominant temporality of presence. The Forms are determined by presence in their interrelationship with one another and as immutable looks in their entitative quiddities. Heidegger confines the entire narrative between 246a-259e to a theoretical unity and as a result *ousia* and *to on* coalesce in his commentary into a univocal concept of being. This concept can be characterized as an eidetic parousiology: the Forms as presence and as present to one another. This one-dimensional account of Plato's ontology stands at the origin of, and is consistent with, the overall evolution of Heidegger's interpretation of *ousia* and the Forms, as surveyed in the "Introduction" of the current investigation. Although in his own language the title of ontology is a misnomer because of the entitative nature of Plato's reflections in the *Sophist*, taken more

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, GA 20, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1979), 179.

prosaically as proposed in "Chapter II" in terms of an account of being, Heidegger construes Plato, in the name of an eidetic parousiology, as maintaining a scientific ontology that generates a univocal concept of being. This dissertation will now attempt a critical interaction with Heidegger's exegesis on both a hermeneutical and analytical front.

At the forefront of the hermeneutical discussion looms the question of Heidegger's appreciation for the dramatic literary form of the Platonic dialogue. Brague laments, apart from the *Sophistes* commentary, that Plato is dealt with only sparingly in a fragmentary and disparate form in Heidegger's thinking, and suggests that this is due "au moins en partie, à la nature particulière des textes platoniciens comme dialogues".² Typical of Heidegger's appropriation of Plato is the fixation of certain terms or phrases into static theses. The same procedure appears evident in his restriction of the narrative in 246a-259e to a rigid conception that construes being in terms of an entitative parousiology. Amidst the hermeneutical agency of Aristotle, Heidegger is indifferent to the impact of the literary form of the text on the account of being that it contains: the dramatic, dialogical narrative of the *Sophist* is read as if it were the acroamatic, scientific treatise compiled under the title of *Metaphysics* regarding the science of being qua being. Heidegger, under the impulse of 253c4 and the mention of an *epistêmê megistê*, takes Plato's compressed reflection in 246a-259e to be animated in view of a dialectical science whose object is the Being of entities.³ This dialectical science results in the entitative parousiology whose object is the Forms qua presence. In other words, he

² Brague, *op. cit.*, 251.

³ GA 19, 523. Indeed, he begins his "Transition" from the reflection of *alêtheuein* in Aristotle to the exegesis of the *Sophist* with the following observation: "Was wir bisher betrachteten, hatte den Sinn einer *Vorbereitung* für das Verständnis eines platonischen *wissenschaftlichen* Dialogs. Ich betone ausdrücklich: eines wissenschaftlichen Dialogs, um anzudeuten, daß nicht alle platonischen Dialoge diese Höhe der wissenschaftlichen Betrachtung in sich tragen..." (189).

understands the Stranger's dialogical dialectic to consist of a scientific analysis bound to a definite object, instead of a rhetorical perusal of dramatized, and perhaps even disparate, accounts. In this respect, Rosen observes that "Heidegger tends to assimilate the rhetorical nature of the Platonic dialogue into dialectic, understood as the attempt to articulate an ontology, albeit an attempt that fails because of Plato's indifference to the distinction between the ontological and the ontic (pp. 449, 453). As I see it, he takes too seriously Plato's rhetorical endorsement of dialectic and fails to appreciate the sense in which the dialogue form is an implicit restriction on those endorsements."⁴ The very configuration of the narrative as a dialogue diminishes the rigidly scientific comprehension of its arguments. The Stranger, as seen earlier, provides both imprecise and precise accounts of being which are not rigidly fixed as static theses, let alone theses that are collapsed into a single scientific conception. A primary obfuscation of the intelligibility of Plato's polysemic and diverse discourses on being lies in Heidegger's indifference to the rhetorical and dramatic features of the *Sophist* as a dialogue. The effect of retrieving Plato through Aristotle begins to become evident with Heidegger's restriction of the narrative in 246a-259e to a scientific dialectic that attains to a univocal concept of the Forms as presence. This very restriction causes him to overlook the possibility of different accounts of being in the juxtaposition of the imprecise discourse (246a-249e) and precise discourse (250a-259e) of the Stranger.

The ramifications of Heidegger's disinterest in the dramatic and rhetorical form of the *Sophist* strikes at the core of his reorientation of *ousia* and *to on* into an entitative

⁴ Rosen, *The Question of Being*, 318. Also, "...the late dialogues are closer to tragic comedies or comic tragedies than to *Wissenschaft* or dialectic in Heidegger's sense...With all his perspicacity and attention to detail, Heidegger soon forgets, and tempts us to forget, that we are reading a drama..." (319). He elsewhere defends that "the most evident implication of the Platonic dialogues as fictional dramas is that there is no science of being qua being, and certainly none of Being or the Whole...", in "Is Metaphysics Possible", *The Review of Metaphysics*, 45 (1991):242.

parousiology. Indeed, the liability of Heidegger's exegesis lies in its conception of Plato's science as a one-dimensional theory centred on a general concept of being as presence. The earlier acquisition of a pantheistic ousiology and koinonic ontology in the Stranger's bivalent accounts of *ousia* and *to on*, irreducible and independent of each other as explicated in "Chapter II", stands in stark contrast to Heidegger's univocal parousiology. In fact, the Stranger's ontologies question the very existence and hence plausibility of a general concept of being in the *Sophist*. This counter-claim rests on the conviction that there is no general or univocal concept of being in the *Sophist* that corresponds to a unidimensional, scientific ontology. Heidegger's phenomenological interpretation of *ousia* as presence in the Forms is oblivious to the possibilities of a theocosmic discourse in 246a-249e. His subordination of the First Digression as a propaedeutic to the subsequent analyses of 250a-259e and his temporalization of *ousia* subdue the pantheistic elements of the Stranger's account that culminate in the recognition of *ousia* as *to on te kai to pân*. With the subversion of *ousia* into the temporal category of constant presence the cosmic dimension of one of the Stranger's ontologies is entirely precluded and concealed. In effect, once the narrative in 246a-249e is seized as an independent account of the cosmic sense of being as the divine totality of all that is, the notion of a general, Platonic concept of being as advocated by Heidegger loses its probative force. In short, there is no general concept of being in the *Sophist* which corresponds to Heidegger's theory. To the contrary, one finds in the dialogical narrative the rhetorical co-existence of two disparate ontologies. Plato himself makes no effort to draw a relationship between them. Rosen affirms: "Heidegger would be justified to hold that there is no doctrine of Being, no ontology of any kind, in Plato, but rather a variety of presentations...No doubt Plato was unable to delineate either Being in its specific structure or the specific mode of Being of the distinct types of beings; but the reason may have been that

there are no such specific structures, whether of Being in general or in each of its modes."⁵ While Rosen presses a strong thesis that there are *no* ontologies evident in Plato's hypothetical philosophy, one must bear in mind that by ontology he understands a specifically Aristotelian paradigm of ontology as a technical science proceeding from a strictly delineated subject-matter by means of discursive analysis and not in the prosaic sense of a hypothetical account of being. His claim that there are a "variety of presentations" is proportionate to the claim advanced above that the Stranger advances two prosaic ontologies.

Another question can be directed at Heidegger's flat, i.e. reductive, account on the basis of his own exegetical presuppositions. If one accepts the hermeneutical agency of Aristotle as a point of departure, should Heidegger not have integrated the theocosmic features of *ousia* into his exegesis? Aristotle's first philosophy, on Heidegger's own admission in the *Sophistes*-commentary, constitutes in its very essence an ontotheology.⁶ The aristotelian ontotheology is thus operative as the optic penetrating Plato's own investigative probing of being. If this is the framework out of which Plato's own account of *ta phainomena, die Sachen selbst* is made accessible for our appropriation, then it stands to reason that the theological dimension of Aristotle's first philosophy would sensibilise the reader to any theological dimension of the ontological accounts presented by the Stranger in the narrative between lines 246a-259e. In this instance, Aristotle's orientation of the horizons of ontology toward the divine could have illumined the divine quality of the cosmic totality. Aristotle's conception of *ousia* as divine (*Meta. IV*, 1026a19-20; *XI*, 1064a35-37) not only suggests but brings into view the possibility of divine nuances in the Stranger's account of *ousia* as *to on te kai to pân*. Heidegger's

⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶ *GA 19*, 222. Cf. *GA 22*, 179-181, 307.

temporalizing filter in the reception of Plato's use of the term *ousia* impedes this discovery.⁷ His flat account exhibits a discrepancy with his own explicitly stated hermeneutical intentions to appropriate Plato through Aristotle.

A further mitigation of the intelligibility and hence plausibility of Heidegger's interpretation of *ousia* as temporal presence resides in the inability of this schema to account for the meaning of *ousia* in several significant moments of the Stranger's analysis in 250aff. With the occurrences of *ousia* in 251d5,e9, and 252a2, the Stranger is discussing the possibilities of combination between Being and Motion, Being and Rest, and Motion and Rest in order to establish the last of three hypotheses that some things can be mingled while others cannot. The eidetic connotations of *ousia* at this point in the narrative, in the atmosphere of the issue of formal compatibility immediately prior to the analogy of the alphabet of formal elements, are forceful and cannot be discounted. Indeed, in these textual loci *ousia* is definitely a synonym for *to on*. *Ousia* is said to concatenate with (*prosaptômen*) Motion and Rest (251d5), Motion and Rest are said to participate (*methexeton*) in *ousia* (251e9), and in explicit view of this participation they are said to be in combination with (*proskoinônoun*) *ousia* (252a2). In these three instances, Motion and Rest are clearly intended as formal elements which are in relation with another formal element, *ousia*, in this case a synonym for the eidetic *to on*. Heidegger's insistence that *ousia* means temporal presence is difficult to defend in these contexts. If *ousia* really designated temporal presence not only in the factual use of quotidian ancient Greek language but also in its use for technical philosophical vocabulary, what sense could possibly be made out of the concatenation of temporal presence

⁷ The ultimate challenge is to be encountered finally, in this instance, in the interpretation of Aristotle: Heidegger's analysis of *ousia* as temporal presence emanates from his reading of Aristotle. Rosen for one argues that *ousia*, far from connoting presence, is absence because it is not graspable itself but only apprehended through its properties, *The Question of Being*, 51. Pursuing this challenge, however, takes the present dissertation too far afield.

with the formal elements Motion and Rest, the participation of Motion and Rest as formal elements in temporal presence, or the combination of Motion and Rest with temporal presence? If temporal presence really is a fundamental dimension of the Forms as quidditative looks or in their relationality, how can the formal elements possibly be said to concatenate, participate, or combine with their own quidditative looks or interrelationships? The Heideggerian rendition of *ousia* as temporal presence is vitally incapable of sustaining an intelligible interpretation of a significant portion of the occurrences of *ousia* in the narrative after 250a.

The consequences, furthermore, of Heidegger's aristotelian exegesis are evident in his analysis of *to on*. His analysis foundered, by his own concession, on the difficulty that *to on* is at once one of the fundamental determinations of Being, while it itself as the highest genus is Being. Is *to on* thus one determination along with four others, none of them alone or collectively co-extensive with Being, or is *to on* Being itself that has four determinations? The claim that *to on* constitutes a highest genus suggests that the other Form-Genera are species within this genus, genus being here understood as a vacuous generality that is empty of content. The schema which Heidegger is trying to impose on the Platonic dialectic appears to be the schema of a substrate in which accidental determinations inhere as well as an empty genus that is diversely specified. Either Being is the substrate with five determinations, or *to on* is the substrate with four determinations. The inadequacy of this schema is illuminated by recourse to Plato's own analogy of the alphabet. Heidegger's subversion of the Form-Genera into determinations fails to take into account their constitution as elements, *stoicheia* (252b3). An element is not a determination or mode of something else. It is fundamentally a formal entity unto itself. As elements, they both combine and don't combine, just like the letters of the alphabet, into intelligible patterns. The formal elements in the eidetic alphabet, each individually atomic, combine with each other. They aren't subsisting in a superstructure.

There is no substrate which they belong to. They constitute a community of monoeidetic elements that are capable of combination and separation amongst each other, with some restrictions. In this framework, *to on* is one of four other formal elements in the eidetic alphabet. It is not a substrate in which the four remaining eidetic determinations or modes inhere, nor is it one of five eidetic modes determining some other underlying substrate. Moreover, it isn't a generality prescinding from and devoid of its own content requiring specification from other Forms. Heidegger's imposition of an aristotelian schema onto *to on* and *ta onta* conceals more than it clarifies the Form-Genus:Being and community of Form-Genera.

A final conceptual difficulty accompanies the reduction of *ousia* to the temporal dimension of *to on* and the Form-Genera, of entities. That lies in the explicitly Heideggerian contention that *ousia* is presence, is that which is immediately available in the present moment. This contention rests upon the presupposition first that the Forms are present in noetic vision and second that the Forms are present to each other in dialectical discourse. The Heideggerian manoeuvre consisted of identifying this temporal aspect of the Forms, whether in their looks or relationality, as *ousia*. The question arises, then, whether in fact the Forms are actually present in noetic perception and in dialectical discourse. While this ultimately requires a host of considerations beyond the scope of the current critique, the possibility introduces itself that the Forms are not present in noetic vision or dialectical analysis, even though their eidetic intelligibility is disclosed. As Rosen contends, the Platonic Form "is 'absent' from my thinking or separated from it; hence I cannot fully grasp it and so there is no adequate discursive analysis of what I have seen in viewing an Idea...The Idea as it were

disappears in the fulfilment of its function as the *aitia* of disclosure."⁸ The Forms, rather than being characterized by the temporality of presence, are absent. They offer their intelligible look to eidetic vision but themselves are not captive to the perception. The Forms are elusive and not immediately available. A discursive analysis of the Form in its content and structure is not possible. Hence the silence of Plato concerning what *to on* is *kata phusin*, according to its nature. A similar consideration arises concerning the dialectical discernment of the interrelationship between Forms. Here too, what is dialectically discovered is not the Forms, but the intelligibility of their relationship. The intelligibility of the relationship is present as disclosed through *diaireisis*, but the actual community of Forms is absent, eluding the reification of dialectical exercise. The patterns of relationship are discerned, but not produced. Henceforth it is difficult to construe *ousia* as the temporal dimension of the Forms. It much more comes into view as the horizon of their absence, and in a more rigorous moment is even disengaged in every way from the Form-Genera as such in themselves or in the community of their interrelationship. This rebuttal to Heidegger's subversion of *ousia* as immediately available presence thus suggests the very possibility of the obverse: *ousia* is fundamentally absent from immediate perception. In fact, the phenomena themselves are more genuinely accounted for as stretching beyond our immediate purview, our capacity for complete noetic perception. The divine totality and the community of being within it is absent from the knower's immediate perception and can only be partially accounted for in dialectical *logoi* that originate in *noesis*. Both *ousia* and the Forms are alluded to by the traces of

⁸ *The Question of Being*, 51-52. Meanwhile, Rosen stretches the debate back to Aristotle with the claim that "strictly speaking, *parousia* in Aristotle means the presence of an attribute to an *ousia*, or essence. It does not mean the presence of the essence itself because the essence is not graspable in itself but only via its essential properties" (51). On the premise of Aristotle's hermeneutical agency, Heidegger's tenet of *ousia* as *Anwesenheit* in Plato is called into question.

intelligibility acquired in noesis and elaborated in diairesis, but they transcend our immediate capacity in the present for production or reflection. *Ousia* is not fundamentally an immanent presence at our disposal, but a transcending absence. It is an absence whose fullness, while drawing us noetically and dialectically into the alluring community of perspectives, resides in the divine and cosmic totality of reality.

In conclusion of this dissertation, the present critique culminates with Gadamer's trenchant observation: "Nun scheint mir, er hätte mehr finden können, vor allem im »Sophistes«."⁹ Indeed, the oversight of the ontological difference that Heidegger accuses Plato of perpetrating turns into Plato's accusation of Heidegger's indifference to his diverse accounts of being. Plato asserts a strong ontological difference between *ousia* as the divine totality and *to on* as a formal element in the intereidetic alphabet. The assertion of this difference, no doubt, is not accounted for in the *Sophist*. Heidegger's manoeuvre to collapse the disparate accounts into a homogeneous theory that cultivates a univocal concept of being is thus understandable as one possible response to this narrative circumstance of the dialogue's text. Rosen notices with respect to the textually documented instances of the mature Heidegger's approach to Plato that "Plato asserts things without explaining them; these assertions, on account of lack of explanation, tend to disappear in Heidegger's analysis".¹⁰ In the particular context of the current study, it has been demonstrated that the assertion of the independent co-existence of *ousia* and *to on* ostensibly disappears in the early Heidegger's interpretation of lines 246a-259e of the *Sophist*. Rosen further provocatively perceives that "when one actually focuses on the details, Plato's text is more precise than the clarification of it that is

⁹ Gadamer, "Auf dem Rückgang zum Anfang", *Gesammelte Werke, Bd. III*, 411.

¹⁰ *The Question of Being*, 17.

offered by Heidegger. Sometimes, of course, Heidegger can be extremely illuminating. But often he misleads or conceals instead of uncovering or bringing into the open."¹¹ These general remarks, originally written prior to the publication of volume 19 and ranged at other questions in Heidegger's overall response to Plato, are strikingly confirmed in the particular by the results of the present investigation into the analyses of *ousia* and *to on* in the *Sophist*. In the context of his commentary on that dialogue, the early Heidegger's interpretation of these terms renders opaque rather than clarifies the accounts presented by the Stranger. The charge of implausibility ranged at his exegesis in the face of significant dimensions of the Platonic text unaccounted for and obfuscated provides a strong relief against which the intelligibility and lucidity of Plato's hypothetical narratives on the divine totality and the formal element of being emerge, opening up the possibility of a renewed confrontation with the phenomena which we ourselves face and contend with in this ecological, postmodern age. With this conclusion, the negative task of this dissertation has been achieved. Heidegger's mistake, perhaps, lay in thinking that he himself fulfilled "die Verpflichtung, im Verständnis der sachlichen Problematik grundsätzlich weiter zu sein als das, was Gegenstand der Interpretation ist."¹² The attempt to liberate Plato's legacy in the *Sophist* on the basis of his own phenomenological constructs and projections appears in the full light of a Hegelian prejudice to recapitulate more adequately and truthfully the discoveries of one's predecessors. It is not the case that phenomenological constructs qua prejudices must be disqualified from the interpretation of an ancient text; rather, they must be accountable to the text and the phenomena the text discloses in a way that is not contradicted by them. In not providing adequate legitimization of his operative prejudices, Heidegger's interpretation constitutes a

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹² *GA 19*, 228.

fundamental distortion which not only obstructs the liberation of Plato's thinking but the progression of phenomenology itself towards the horizon of the totality and the community of entities within it. This dissertation has attained its modest and negative task with the retrieval of *ousia* and *to on* in the polysemic discourses proposed by the dialogical investigations of the Stranger. With this retrieval of *ousia* and *to on*, the retrieval and radicalization of the challenge of the phenomena has been achieved. With the deconstruction of Heidegger's concealing interpretation, the step back is opening up the horizons of the step forward. What Heidegger said of Plato now comes back to himself and his own exegesis of *ousia* and *to on*: "Der »Sophistes« - und jeder Dialog - zeigt Plato unterwegs; er zeigt das Zerbrechen der festen Sätze und das Zum-verstehen-Kommen der Phänomene; und er zeigt zugleich, wie Plato *stehen* bleiben muß und *nicht* durchdringt."¹³ Heidegger's commentary shows him underway in the breaking apart of his own principles and attempts to understand phenomena; and at the same time it shows him coming to a standstill and not breaking through. Now, as then, we continue to be faced with the question: what do you mean when you speak being?

¹³ *Ibid.*, 14.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE CORPUS HEIDEGGERIANUM

The following chronology is meant to facilitate a precise estimation of the chronological sequence of the various commentaries, essays, and books that Heidegger released in terms of their time of composition.

- 1912-1916 *Frühe Schriften*, GA 1.
1919 *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie*, GA 56/57.
WS 1919-1920 *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, GA 58.
SS 1920 *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks*, GA 59.
WS 1921-1922 *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Einführung in die Phänomenologische Forschung*, GA 61.
October 1922 *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Anzeige der Hermeneutischen Situation*.
SS 1923 *Ontologie: Hermeneutik der Faktizität*, GA 63.
July 1924 *Der Begriff der Zeit*.
WS 1924-1925 *Platon: Sophistes*, GA 19.
SS 1925 *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, GA 20.
WS 1925-1926 *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit*, GA 21.
SS 1926 *Die Grundbegriffe der Antiken Philosophie*, GA 22.
May 1927 *Sein und Zeit*.
SS 1927 *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, GA 24.
WS 1927-1928 *Phänomenologische Interpretation von Kants Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, GA 25.
SS 1928 *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang Leibniz*, GA 26.
1929 *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, GA 3.
WS 1929-1930 *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, GA 29/30.
SS 1930 *Wom Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit: Einleitung in die Philosophie*, GA 31.
WS 1930-1931 *Hegel's Phänomenologie des Geistes*, GA 32.
SS 1931 *Aristoteles, Metaphysik © 1-3*, GA 33.
WS 1931-1932 *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet*, GA 34.
WS 1934-1935 *Hölderlins Hymnen: »Germanien« und »Der Rhein«*, GA 39.
SS 1935 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40.
WS 1935-1936 *Die Frage nach dem Ding*, GA 41.
SS 1936 *Schelling: Über das Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit*, GA 42.
WS 1936-1937 *Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst*, GA 43.
SS 1937 *Nietzsche's Metaphysische Grundstellung im Abendländischen Denken*, GA 44.
WS 1937-1938 *Grundfragen der Philosophie*, GA 45.
1936-1939 *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, GA 65.
SS 1939 *Nietzsche's Lehre vom Willen zur Macht als Erkenntnis*, GA 47.
2.Tri. 1940 *Nietzsche: Der Europäische Nihilismus*, GA 48.
1.Tri. 1941 *Die Metaphysik des Deutschen Idealismus*, GA 49.
SS 1941 *Grundbegriffe*, GA 51.
WS 1941-1942 *Hölderlins Hymne »Andenken«*, GA 52.

- SS 1942 *Hölderlins Hymne »Der Ister«, GA 53.*
 1938-1942 *Hegel, GA 68*
 WS 1942-1943 *Parmenides, GA 54.*
 SS 1943 *Heraklit, GA 55.*
 1944 *Erläuterung zu Hölderlins Dichtung, GA 4.*
 WS 1944-1945 *1. Nietzsches Metaphysik 2. Einleitung in die Philosophie, GA 50.*
 1936-1946 *Holzwege, GA 5.*
 1939-1949 *Wegmarken, GA 9.*
 WS 1951-1952
 and SS 1952 *Was Heisst Denken?*
 1954 *Voträge und Aufsätze.*
 WS 1955-1956
 and SS 1956 *Der Satz vom Grund.*
 1956 *Was ist das -- die Philosophie?*
 1957 *Identität und Differenz.*
 1950-1959 *Unterwegs zur Sprache.*
 1959 *Gelassenheit.*
 1962 *Kants These über das Sein.*
 1969 *Zur Sache des Denkens.*
 1951-1973 *Seminare.*

GESAMTAUSGABE SERIES

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Title</u>
GA 1	<i>Frühe Schriften</i>
GA 3	<i>Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik</i>
GA 4	<i>Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung</i>
GA 5	<i>Holzwege</i>
GA 9	<i>Wegmarken</i>
GA 13	<i>Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens</i>
GA 15	<i>Seminare</i>
GA 19	<i>Platon: Sophistes</i>
GA 20	<i>Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs</i>
GA 21	<i>Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit</i>
GA 22	<i>Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie</i>
GA 24	<i>Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie</i>
GA 25	<i>Phänomenologische Interpretationen von Kants <u>Kritik der reinen Vernunft</u></i>
GA 26	<i>Logik</i>
GA 29/30	<i>Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik. Der Weltbegriff</i>
GA 31	<i>Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit</i>
GA 32	<i>Hegel's <u>Phänomenologie des Geistes</u></i>
GA 33	<i>Aristoteles: <u>Metaphysik</u> ① 1-3</i>
GA 34	<i>Vom Wesen der Wahrheit</i>
GA 39	<i>Hölderlins Hymnen »Germanien« und »Der Rhein«</i>
GA 40	<i>Einführung in die Metaphysik</i>
GA 41	<i>Die Frage nach dem Ding</i>
GA 42	<i>Schelling: Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit</i>
GA 43	<i>Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst</i>
GA 44	<i>Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung im abendländischen Denken</i>
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GA 48	<i>Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht. Der europäische Nihilismus</i>
GA 49	<i>Die Metaphysik der deutschen Idealismus</i>
GA 50	<i>1. Nietzsches Metaphysik 2. Einleitung in die Philosophie</i>
GA 51	<i>Grundbegriffe</i>
GA 52	<i>Hölderlins »Andenken«</i>
GA 53	<i>Hölderlins Hymne »Der Ister«</i>
GA 54	<i>Parmenides</i>
GA 55	<i>Heraklit</i>
GA 56/57	<i>Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie</i>
GA 58	<i>Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie</i>
GA 59	<i>Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks</i>
GA 61	<i>Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Einführung in die Phänomenologische Forschung</i>
GA 63	<i>Ontologie</i>
GA 65	<i>Beiträge zur Philosophie</i>
GA 68	<i>Hegel</i>

NESKE / NIEMEYER SERIES

Abbreviation Title

Neske Series

ID *Identität und Differenz.*
VA *Vorträge und Aufsätze.*
G *Gelassenheit.*
KTS *Kants These über das Sein.*
WP *Was ist das -- die Philosophie?*
SG *Der Satz vom Grund.*
US *Unterwegs zur Sprache.*

Niemeyer Series

WD *Was heisst Denken.*
SZ *Sein und Zeit.*
SD *Zur Sache des Denkens.*
BZ *Der Begriff der Zeit.*

Addenda

AHS *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation.*

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TEXTUAL REFERENCES TO PLATO'S DIALOGUES
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Meno (70a-100c)

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Euthydemus (271a-307c)

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Phaedrus (227a-279c)

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