

INTRODUCTION

1.1. *Why the Ontology of Time?*

The intention that directs this research consists in an attempt to provide a *hermeneutic analysis* of the drastic changes, which have occurred in 20th century philosophy, in identifying the new role ascribed to the subject of time and temporality within the scope of ontology. After the fundamental works of E. Husserl, M. Heidegger, P. Ricœur, and E. Levinas, it has been understood that the traditional issue (which could be traced back to Parmenides) between being and time, between the eternal and the transient (or historical), must once again be re-examined. Time itself is recognized now as the deepest ground of ontological inquiry, which sets in motion the entire system of fundamental philosophical concepts.

This does not mean, of course, that our understanding of time did not change in the course of these fundamental transformations. In order to comprehend the new role of time within “first philosophy,” the *concept of time* itself is to be subjected to a careful investigation and interpretation. It is necessary to come back to Aristotle’s questions in *Physics IV*: In what sense can we ascribe being to time itself, and what is the “nature” of time as (a) being? In other words, to understand the role of time within the scope of ontology means to develop simultaneously the *ontology of time*. This is what the title of this work intends to designate. Moreover, my aim is to demonstrate that in a definite sense the postmodern *onto-logy is chrono-logy*.

To be sure, *historical* attempts to understand the “nature of time” represent a tremendous variety of possible approaches and viewpoints, and we cannot hope to look at the question from all possible angles. That is why our investigation is confined to a particular ontological tradition embracing several more or less coherent (independently of their rather broad chronological limits) ways of thought. The central figure for us is *Martin Heidegger* and his “new start” in ontology, which has generated immense transformations in the philosophical thought of our century.

1.2. *The Method*

This “new start” absorbs, nevertheless, the metaphysical tradition from its very foundation by the Greeks, and we can understand Heidegger’s ontological turn only against the background of this great tradition as a peculiar transformation-in-

continuation, which Heidegger himself called “destruction of the history of ontology.” This phrase should be understood in a quite positive sense: de(con)struction is a necessary operation in the archaeology of thought, guided by the intention to rediscover the forgotten ways of thinking that somehow preserve their “effaced traces” within the historico-philosophical landscape. This sort of analysis can be carried out only on the condition that one takes into account not only the *synchronic* stratum of current conceptuality in its internal logical relationships, but also the *diachronic axis* of conceptual genesis as well. Philosophical concepts, topics, and motives always contain, concealed in them, traces of their development; they are interrelated not only on the synchronic plane of formal logical operations, but also (though in a non-manifest way) along all the depth of their chronology and genealogy.

Our general strategy consists in bringing together different (sometimes distant) but interrelated philosophical topics in order to clarify problems, to reveal hidden intentions behind them, and to proceed further along their pre-delineated paths. This hermeneutic analysis enables us sometimes to disclose deep and stable structural correspondences (“*homologies*”) between seemingly dissimilar lines of thought.

1.3. *The Aim*

The whole research is built around the attempt, first formulated as a task by Heidegger, to discriminate between entities (or “beings”) and their being. According to Heidegger’s intention, elaboration of this distinction (“*der Unterschied von Seiendem und Sein*”) makes it for the first time possible to thematize being (*das Sein*) as such, which means to build an “authentic” ontology. Heidegger coins a special *terminus technicus* — “ontological difference” — to designate the distinction between an entity or a being (*Seiendes*) and its being (*Sein*).¹ Our investigation culminates in the last chapter in a thorough analysis and “deciphering” of Heidegger’s enigmatic formula: “*Der Unterschied von Sein und Seiendem ist in der Zeitigung der Zeitlichkeit gezeitigt.*”² The “nature of time” and the “nature” of ontological difference prove to be, to say the least, closely interrelated within the framework of Heidegger’s ontology. In a sense, time “is” nothing else but the ontological difference. Yet strictly speaking time “is” not, because it is not a being among beings; it “temporalizes itself” as the ontological difference.³ The main goal of my research then consists in the clarification and demonstration of this last thesis.

¹ The more integral and distinct our idea of Heidegger’s philosophical task becomes, the better we understand that the ontological difference is the rock-bottom of Heidegger’s philosophy. That is how E. Levinas evaluated this concept. See also Th. de Boer, *The Rationality of Transcendence* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1997), pp. 115ff.

² M. Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Gesamtausgabe, Bd. 24, 2. Aufl. (Frankfurt a. M.: V. Klostermann, 1989), p. 454. Hereafter will be cited as GP with the appropriate page number. English translation by A. Hofstadter: *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988).

³ The German verb “*zeitigen*” means as a phenomenological *terminus technicus* “to temporalize” = “to produce time,” but retains simultaneously its common meaning of “to ripen,” “to let things grow ripe for something” and thus refers indirectly to the meaning of the verb “to temporize.”

As was already stated, in order to proceed along the ontological lines mentioned above, I pursue a certain hermeneutic strategy, trying to inscribe Heidegger's constructions into a broader historico-philosophical context. In doing this I partly follow Heidegger himself and choose the same *nomina actoris*. The *diachronic* dimension of our investigation (the dimension of "genealogy") leads from the "post-modern" concept of the ontological difference back to the Medieval controversies concerning the *distinctio et compositio essentiae et existentiae in ente creato*, and further on to some subtle distinctions within Aristotelian physics and metaphysics. This tracing-back, as it has been already said, is not simply a tribute to historical curiosity, but rather an attempt to *clarify the concept of ontological difference* (as primordial temporality) *via* the subsequent disclosure of its diachronic strata.

My deep conviction, which I share with many contemporary authors, is that it is the *Corpus Aristotelicum* that contains the most important clues for Heidegger's solutions. P. Ricœur writes that "a certain reappropriation of Aristotle under the guidance of Heideggerian concepts can lead back in turn to a better apprehension of the leading concepts of *Being and Time*."⁴ However, this is, I believe, too modest a description of the state of affairs concerning the relationship between Heidegger and Aristotle.⁵ Heidegger himself in his books and lecture courses interprets a large body of Aristotle's texts. It is not our goal in this research to evaluate, whatever the criteria of such an evaluation might be, whether Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle is "authentic" or not. Much more important is the task of observing and studying how Heidegger's ideas, and even terminology, "grows out" of this interpretation. For me, to follow this diachronic dialog is a way to inscribe the "ontology of time" into multidimensional hermeneutic space. Within this space fundamental ontological concepts are clarified not only according to their internal ("logical") structure, or through analysis of their *synchronic* relationships with other concepts (dialectics), but simultaneously by means of disclosing the *diachronic* strata, the genetic structures of their meaning.

A locus classicus (or, perhaps, **the locus classicus**) for the whole philosophy of time is the Fourth Book of Aristotle's *Physics*. Time, according to Aristotle, is inseparably connected with *movement*; time is a definite formal moment of movement, its "number." Moreover, Aristotle's *Physics* itself is in a sense a kind of *ontological justification* of movement and time after the sentence of death passed on them by Parmenides.

⁴ P. Ricœur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 311.

⁵ Today we know that in the decade preceding the publication of *Being and Time* Heidegger worked at great length on Aristotle, to the point that Rémi Brague, in his excellent book *Aristote et la question du monde* (Paris: PUF, 1988, p. 55), states that "de la sorte, l'œuvre majeure de Heidegger est le substitut d'un livre sur Aristote qui ne vit pas le jour. Qui plus est, je pense que *Sein und Zeit* n'est pas seulement à la place d'un livre sur Aristote au sens où il l'aurait simplement remplacé, en traitant d'un autre sujet. Il me semble au contraire que *Sein und Zeit* se donne pour but de dégager les présupposés de quelque chose que son auteur n'appelle pas encore 'la métaphysique', mais dont il trouve la première et paradigmatique formulation dans l'œuvre d'Aristote."

1.4. *Non-Being and Time*

The opening section of the *Ontology of Time* is dedicated to the pre-history of the concept of time found in Parmenides' Poem. The verse of crucial importance for the whole history of ontology (fr. 8 DK, 5f.) states that being (τὸ ἔόν) "has not ever been and will not be, since it is now, all together, one, indivisible. For what parentage of it will you look for?" Yet, what is said here is not a total condemnation or expulsion of *Chronos*. Rather the verse is a proclamation of the predominance of the "now." Since being is perfect in its immutability and persistence, since it abides in its totality without interruption, there is no room for another time, except the permanent "now," alongside of being. Παρουσία, the presence in the present, the presence as the present — this is the only ontologically legitimate meaning of time, all the rest has no sense and is a mere invention of mortals. But then Parmenides' "now" is indistinguishable from Parmenides' "being." "Time is not nor will be another thing alongside being." (8, 36f.) *Chronos* is a redundant, misplaced, void and dangerous name. Still the "now" is tacitly recognized as a notion almost equivalent to *being* itself.

Heidegger asks in his *Kantbuch*:

What project lies at the basis of this comprehension of being? [...] What is the significance of the fact that a being in the proper sense of the term is understood as οὐσία, παρουσία, i.e., basically as "presence," an immediate and always present possession?

The answer is:

The project relative to time (*der Entwurf auf die Zeit*), for even eternity, taken as the *nunc stans*, for example, is *thoroughly* conceivable as "now" and "persistent" only on the basis of time. [...] This project reveals that *being* is synonymous with *permanence in presence*.⁶

1.5. *Time as Number and Calculating Soul*

The next step in this "self-evident projection of being onto time" (*der Entwurf auf die Zeit*) which I analyze in chapter 2 is Aristotelian time theory. Aristotle defines time as the "number of movement in relation to the before and after" (*Phys.* IV 11, 219b1f.). If we want to really understand what Aristotle means, not to read our own contemporary notions into his text, we need to reconsider step by step his concept of κίνησις and ἐνέργεια (section 1), of number (section 2), of the *before-and-after* relation, of the "now" as permanent, and the "now" as fluent (sections 4, 5). This hermeneutical work, based upon both conceptual and philological analysis, forms a considerable part of the chapter.

Still the main question that guides our discussion here is *whether we can discover a prototype of the ontological difference already within Aristotelian time theory*. Of course, it seems legitimate in searching Aristotelian sources of ontological difference to reproduce quite literally Heidegger's definition — *der Unterschied von Seiendem und Sein* — in Greek, and to ask about the distinction between τὸ ὄν and

⁶ M. Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, 4. Aufl. (Frankfurt a. M.: V. Klostermann, 1973), § 44, p. 233. Hereafter cited as KPM.

τὸ εἶναι. But, as I try to show, it is another Aristotelian dichotomy that proves to be more important, namely the distinction articulated by means of an enigmatic formula (which has been for many years a matter of peculiar interest to Aristotle scholars): ὁ ποτε ὄν ἐστι τὸ X / τὸ εἶναι τῷ X. This way to posit the distinction is most frequently used by Aristotle precisely in the Fourth Book of his *Physics* in order to clarify the basic concepts belonging to the sphere of movement and temporality; in particular, this is Aristotle's way to discriminate between the two faces of the "now": the "now" as fluent and changing, and the "now" as permanent and self-identical. I attempt to establish (by means of "reappropriation of Aristotle under the guidance of Heideggerian concepts" and also using the *Commentarium in physicorum Aristotelis libros* of Thomas Aquinas) a fundamental correlation between this distinction on the one hand, and the ontological difference on the other. The principles of this demonstration will be briefly outlined.

One can always distinguish three main dimensions in Aristotle's method. I shall call the first one *metaphysical*: it consists in tracing back a problem under consideration to the ἀρχαί, the basic principles and concept of *first philosophy*. The second one (which is actually a side of the metaphysical consideration) can be termed the *logical dimension*. First philosophy asks about entity as entity, it asks *what* entity (a being) *is* insofar as it possesses being (*Metaph.* IV 1, 1003a21). Yet the question "*what is...?*" refers to the *meaning*. Clarification of the meaning of an entity as entity requires a systematization of the ways of speaking of "entity," of the ways of pronouncing the word "is." Aristotle's creation, which we call *logic* today, was for its creator himself the science dealing with the way entity exhibits itself (its being, its beingness-essence), the way it "bears witness" (in Greek — κατηγορεῖ) to itself in the logos. Logic is always onto-logic, an aspect of ontology, and this *onto-logical parallelism* should always be taken into account when interpreting Aristotle. Finally, the *psychological* (or rather *phenomenological*) dimension is of principal importance for Aristotle: if a philosopher asks about entity as entity he must, being faithful to the Parmenidian tradition, take into consideration how the soul (in particular, the intellect of the soul, νοῦς) encounters beings. This context is extremely important especially for Aristotelian *chrono-logy*, since here Aristotle searches for the answer to the questions concerning the *nature of time*, analyzing how movement and time *are given to the soul*, how we *perceive, distinguish and recognize temporal determinations*.

The fundamental premise of Aristotelian ontology (which I discuss at length in section 3 according to the scheme of onto-logical parallelism mentioned above) can be stated as follows: *A being* (τὸ ὄν), in the sense which is fundamental for this ontology, is to be understood as a participle derived from the *copula* "is" (*S is P*). That is, *being* (τὸ ὄν, *ens*), generally speaking, is not a self-sufficient term, it needs to be completed and (thereby) refined; it is "open" towards the subject *and* towards the predicate. To acquire its full meaning, the participle "*being*" must be put between an implied subject and an implied predicate, i.e., must be inscribed into the following construction:

S — being — (*what* or *as what*) P.

NON-BEING AND TIME

(The prehistory of the concept of time)

1. THE CIRCLE AND THE SPHERE

Φησὶ δὲ [Ξενοφάνης] οὐσίαν θεοῦ σφαιροειδῆ [εἶναι]

Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* IX 19.

Whatever one may say about Heidegger's philosophy and whatever one thinks about it, there can be absolutely no doubt that today's philosophy is, one way or another, a "philosophy after Heidegger." Today's philosophical thinking cannot ignore a strange and, at first sight, pretentious "philosophical myth," stating that it is being¹ itself, that in a given epoch and historical time reveals itself in a certain way — thus and not otherwise — and simultaneously conceals itself, illuminates itself and hides itself. According to this mythologeme the occurrence of self-giving does not obey definite *a priori* laws (disclosed and established laws are only posterior glimpses of the primordial self-illumination of being). Perhaps, it is the arbitrariness of the will or incomprehensibility of fate (*Geschick*), rather than *a priori* laws, that should be considered as the analogy of this self-giving (*Sich-schicken*) of being in history (*Geschichte*). Here lies the essential character of history as the history of being (*Seinsgeschichte*), and here the word "epoch" (*ἐποχή*) lays bare its original meaning of "a stop," "a pause," "a suspension," "a retention." Actually, the deep sense of the "historical" and of the "epochal" is determined by the way being reveals itself during one of its many successive stops, residences, pres-ences.

¹ A great difficulty one encounters time and again when interpreting and analyzing Heidegger (as well as Aristotle or medieval thinkers) in English is the formal impossibility to distinguish between *das Sein* (τὸ εἶναι, *esse*), on the one hand, and *das Seiende* (τὸ ὄν, *ens*), on the other hand. According to the tradition, which has already taken shape, I render as a general rule Heidegger's *Seiendes* as "entity," and *das Sein* as "being." But sometimes, when it seems to be justified, and especially in this section, I write "a being," or even "what-is," for *ein Seiendes*, or "(the) beings" for *das Seiende* in the sense of τὰ ὄντα, *entia*. In the latter case Heidegger's expressions referring to the *ontological difference*: "das Sein des Seienden," "das Sein ist kein Seiendes" are translated respectively as "the being of beings," "being is not a being." Parmenides' τὸ ἔόν is rendered in sect. 2 of this chapter as "being."

Heidegger has taught us not to neglect the opacity of the hidden backgrounds of this revelation, which means to be attentive to the erased traces of the fateful (*das Geschickliche*), to learn to abide by the *totality* of the historical (*das Geschichtliche*),² to stop searching within it for a kind of central point, a kind of spiritual ἀκμή where the closest proximity to the a-historical “eternal truth” has been achieved, in order to position oneself in that point and to take up residence there.

Hegel’s philosophical task, “to comprehend and to express the truth not as a substance only, but as a subject as well,”³ implies all the same that the “living substance,” in the movement of self-assertion, may outlive itself, become closed in itself, fulfill its cycle; restore, through a sequence of necessary steps of speculative thinking, the original unity with itself and, after absorbing everything, become, in its totality, Parmenides’ *well-rounded globe* (fr. 8DK, l. 43). This unity is “becoming itself (*das Werden seiner selbst*), a closed cycle which implies its own end as its goal and has it as its beginning, and which is actual only in its completion and its end.”⁴ The word “end,” repeated twice, refers to *spirit* or *mind*⁵ as to a form existing in itself and which has to become, through a kind of internal movement, existing for itself. Parmenides’ globe, the perfectly contented *sphairos*, is exactly a prototype of such a spirit, which exists within and for itself.

The self-willingness of being just mentioned implies that the spirit “breathes where it wills” and gives itself in the “occurrence” (*Ereignis*) of a gift when it wills, not because it has been compelled (or has compelled itself) and forced to regulate its steps according to the “necessity of the matter which proceeds coolly on her way,”⁶ i.e., to subject itself once and forever to itself,⁷ to its own pre-eternal morphology. For Heidegger, there exists a “giver” (*das Es, das gibt*)⁸ behind all “givenness” (*es gibt*), and this “giver” eludes our vision and our desire to name it; like a really generous giver, it hides its face from us.

² As we have mentioned, history, according to Heidegger, is not only and perhaps not so much the history of disclosure as the history of concealing and hiding; history is *der Irrtum*. The main formula of being’s concealment reads as follows: “Das Sein entzieht sich, indem es sich in das Seiende entbirgt.” See “Der Spruch des Anaximander,” in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt a. M.: V. Klostermann, 1957), p. 310. “Dergestalt beirrt das Sein, es lichtend, das Seiende mit der Irre. Das Seiende ist in die Irre ereignet, in der es das Sein umirrt und so den Irrtum (zu sagen wie Fürsten- und Dichtertum) stiftet” (*ibid*). The concealment is at the same time the *oblivion* of being, and “the oblivion of being is oblivion of the distinction between being and beings.” It follows that the restoration of the un-concealment, of the *alētheia*, the *truth* of being, is connected with unveiling and thematizing the *ontological difference*. The ontological difference, the distinction between being and beings, will be one of the most important subjects of our research.

³ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, hrsg. v. J. Hoffmeister (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1971), p. 19. Hereafter cited as PhG.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ Neither word is a wholly satisfactory translation of Hegel’s *Geist*. Cf. E. Craig, *The Mind of God and the Works of Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 174, fn. 2: “Mind is not theological enough in its overtones, spirit not intellectual enough...”

⁶ “kalt fortschreitende Notwendigkeit der Sache” (PhG 13).

⁷ Like the god of the Stoics. As Seneca says: “Ipse creator et conditor mundi semel iussit, semper parat.”

⁸ M. Heidegger, “Zeit und Sein” in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), pp. 1–25.

Yet the “self-willingness” of the truth cannot by any means justify our arbitrariness regarding the truth; Hegel’s demand to bear the burden of the concept cannot be ignored — but do we understand what a concept is and *how* it is? Has Hegel laid down the ultimate rules concerning the concept (*der Begriff*) as such?

In one of Heidegger’s later works, *The Anaximander Fragment* (1946),⁹ “eschatology” of thought is the subject matter. Such is the self-perception of today’s epoch of philosophizing: this epoch is τὸ ἔσχατον, a term, an ending, a temporal limit, a sunset before the coming night.¹⁰ Of course, a limit does not exclude the existence of something “beyond.” “The later philosophy” is just a term testifying to the long distance separating us from the Greek starting point, if not to an expectation (for expectation implies a different mood), at least to the acceptance of the possibility of a new start.¹¹

It is impossible not to take into account such a self-definition of philosophy. Perhaps such an eschatological departure from classical philosophy allows us, “the late philosophers” (*den Spätlingen der Philosophie*), to better hear the message of its dawn. In some surprising way the latest comes up with the earliest. “The early philosopher” Heraclitus says (fr. 103): ξυνὸν γὰρ ἀρχὴ καὶ πέρας ἐπὶ κύκλου περιφερείας — “on the border of a circle the beginning and the end (limit) coincide (literally: ‘are common’).” *Qua* “the late philosopher” Heidegger defines the eschato-logical philosophical thinking as coming together, merging, gathering together (λέγεσθαι, λόγος) its limits (τὰ ἔσχατα).

The attempt to perceive the earliest message, a movement towards the philosophical dawning and into the depth of chronology is, undoubtedly, a movement “away from the light and towards the darkness.”¹² Yet this movement is not a lapse into a confusion of notions and indistinctness. It is rather an attempt to trace back the origin and motive of distinction, the *morphogenesis* of the distinct. This task of tracing is precisely what is termed “late philosophical thinking.” It differs drastically from the intelligent tracing in contemplation of mutual participation or communication of the *ideas* or genera. Such is Plato’s way of philosophizing, called “*di-*

⁹ See fn. 2.

¹⁰ Heidegger alludes to Hölderlin’s “holy night,” where the last poets, the “priests of Dionysus” are wandering: “Aber sie sind, sagst du, wie Weingottes heilige Priester, / welche von Lande zu Land zogen in heiliger Nacht.” (*Brot und Wein*, 7)

¹¹ I would like to quote one passage from J. Derrida as evidence of such a self-consciousness of the “later philosophy.” “That philosophy died yesterday, since Hegel or Marx, Nietzsche, or Heidegger — and philosophy should still wander toward the meaning of its death — [...]; that philosophy died *one day*, *within* history, or that it has always fed on its own agony, on the violent way it opens to history by opposing itself to non-philosophy, which is its past and its concern, its death and wellspring; that beyond the death, or dying nature, of philosophy, perhaps even because of it, thought still has a future, or even, as is said today, is still entirely to come because of what philosophy has held in store; or, more strangely still, that future itself has future — all these are unanswerable questions. By right of birth, and for one time at least, these are problems put to philosophy as problems philosophy cannot resolve.” See J. Derrida, “Violence and Metaphysics. An Essay on the Thought of Emanuel Levinas” in *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 79.

¹² M. Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes* (Marburger Vorlesung Wintersemester 1924/25), Gesamtausgabe, Bd. 19 (Frankfurt a. M.: V. Klostermann, 1992), p. 10.

alectics” in *The Sophist*. The late philosophical thinking means: *Das bisherige Wesen des Seins geht in seine noch verhüllte Wahrheit unter*. The setting sun is here the old “essence” of being which was secretly prevailing, the being-ness of being which was disclosing itself as presence, as a permission-to-be-exposed to intelligent vision. The setting sun is Plato’s idea of the good that allows the other ideas — i. e., εἶδη, the intelligible *species* — to be present to in-spection and speculation of the intellect. This essence goes down into its as yet hidden truth.

“The midday philosopher” Hegel says: “In spirit (*im Geiste*) it is otherwise [as opposed to the ‘realm of nature’ — *A.Ch.*]; it (*sc. der Geist*) is consciousness, it is free because in it *the beginning and the end coincide*.”¹³ Hegel understands the eschatology of thinking as a *fulfillment* of time, as a coming of spirit to itself — from its embodied state in history to its disembodiment in its own element of speculative thinking. The history of philosophy, the existing, self-writing historical text of philosophy, is just an absolute form of movement, i. e., correlation of facets of the “one and self-identical idea,” which recognizes itself in the “dim mirror” of accidental historical circumstances while yet transgressing them (in the sense of Hegel’s *aufheben*). This “achronous” movement, which only takes on a shape of self-explication within time for a finite “individual” consciousness, is realized in its own element by speculative dialectics. “Philosophy has now become for itself the apprehension of this development and as conceiving thought, is itself this development in thought. The more progress made in this development, the more perfect is the philosophy.”¹⁴ Thus the perfection, the complete fulfillment of the form of philosophical thinking (the midday sun of the Idea, one could say, standing still at its zenith) removes the historical and frees the spirit from “lapsing into history.” To be more precise, according to this picture, it is genuine history itself that lapses into time, for the spirit’s pre-eternal history is indistinguishable from its morphology.¹⁵ For Hegel, “gathering together the limits” meant nothing but identifying the beginning of the speculative development of the Concept with its end, the fulfillment of “being-for-itself” what it already was in itself. This Gnostic myth, turned into a project of philosophical speculation, was worded as follows: “This being-at-home-with self, or coming-to-self of spirit may be described as its complete and highest end: it is this alone that it desires and nothing else. Everything that from eternity has happened in heaven and earth, the life of God and all the deeds of time are simply the struggles of spirit to know itself, to make itself objective to itself, to find itself, be for itself, and finally unite itself to itself. It is alienated and divided, but only so as to be able to find itself and *return to itself*.”¹⁶ Thus instead of searching for the erased traces of original thinking, to which we all are heirs in philosophy’s historical text, a mind loyal to this goal must rather be able to see in itself (such as it was created from

¹³ G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Book I, trans. E. S. Haldane (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 22. (The translation is modified.) “Im Geiste ist es anders. Er ist Bewußtsein, frei, darum, daß in ihm Anfang und Ende zusammenfällt.”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁵ “...die Entwicklung der Geschichte fällt in die Zeit.” G. W. F. Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, *Sämtliche Werke*, hrsg. v. G. Lasson, Bd. 8 (Leipzig: F. Meiner Verlag, 1923), p. 133.

¹⁶ G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, p. 23, italics mine.

the very beginning, not “made” by the historical *poiesis*), footprints of the “necessity of the matter which proceeds coolly on her way” and to fix what is happening by means of the only fitting word (the proper name of the thing itself — *der Sache selbst*), provided to thought by the ready-to-hand variety of the (German) language. Yet the “late philosophy” sees itself differently..

ὁ ἄναξ οὐ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει.

The lord whose oracle is in Delphi does not speak nor conceal, but signifies.¹⁷

In these words of Heraclitus, Heidegger sees a reference to the nature of philosophical discourse. Even when trying to be as clear and explicit as possible, philosophy does not tell all. It does not hide or conceal, for it is possible to conceal only what is already in one’s possession, what has been somehow discovered and is (or can be) in the well-lit circle of the meaning-ful. Unsaid remains what is by no means known, but borders on what is. Unsaid remains what is not questioned, what has not become (and this means in most cases: has not *yet* become) a matter of inquiry. This area of silence and non-manifestation surrounds and delimits philosophical discourse. The phenomenon of opening and disclosing meaning, which takes place in discourse, always remains within a limited, finite horizon, though the boundaries are not perceived from within the scope of already acquired and stored meanings. There is no external prohibition and no pious self-discipline, not even recognition of the inability to cope with what has *already* become an object to work on. The matter is rather the self-consciousness of “late philosophy” and the acceptance of *precisely such* a vision of the truth.

In a way late philosophy has no claims of its own, since it is heir to the tradition, and so accepts to bear the burden of unfulfilled promises. For it, the true is τὸ ἀληθές, i. e., un-concealed, un-forgotten, un-forgettable. Un-concealed does not mean manifest, open, publicly available. The true, as un-concealed, responds to the effort of discourse, to the attempt at telling, but remains unsaid, is retained (ἐπέχει) in expectation, postpones its revelation, limits the discourse, locates the discourse in the sense of Aristotelian physics where “location” or “place” (τόπος) is defined as “the limiting surface of the containing [or surrounding] body.”¹⁸ A late philosopher understands that an “epoch” (i.e., a retention of time, a retardation) is always defined not so much by what is expressed (for every new attempt at and every new outline of philosophical thinking appears unlimited to itself) as by what remains unsaid, by what will be articulated later. The logic of such a *logos*, which has renounced claim to the totality of meaning, which picks up and collects (λέγει) what has been given by being itself, while never turning it into a completed system, presupposes *sigaretic*¹⁹ thinking.

¹⁷ Heraclitus, fr. 93DK.

¹⁸ *Phys.* IV 4, 212a6f: πέρας τοῦ περιέχοντος σώματος.

¹⁹ The adjective is derived from the Greek σιγάω — “I do not say,” “I am silent.” Cf. M. Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, GA 65 (Frankfurt a. M.: V. Klostermann, 1994), p. 58: “das *anfängliche* Denken ist in sich *sigaretisch*.”

TIME AS NUMBER AND CALCULATING SOUL

(Aristotle's theory of time. The prototype of the ontological difference)

Vielleicht, daß man einige Jahrhunderte später urteilen wird, daß alles deutsche Philosophieren darin seine eigentliche Würde habe, ein schrittweise Wiedergewinnen des antiken Bodens zu sein, und daß jeder Anspruch auf „Originalität“ kleinlich und lächerlich klinge im Verhältnis zu jenem höheren Anspruche der Deutschen, das Band, das zerrissen schien, neu gebunden zu haben, das Band mit den Griechen, dem bisher höchst gearteten Typus „Mensch.“

Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht*, Aph. 419.¹

1. ENERGEIA AND ITS INTERNAL FORM

1.1. *The Definition of Movement*

Aristotle says:² “For time is just this — number of movement in respect of ‘before’ and ‘after’.”³

Time is inseparably connected with movement; it is, according to Aristotle, κινήσεως τι. Time is a definite formal moment of movement. In its turn movement is the main topic of Aristotle's physics. We have seen in the previous chapter that according to Parmenides “change,” as well as “time,” is a redundant, misplaced, and

¹ These words preface Heidegger's lectures on *Metaph.* Θ 1–3: *Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft* (1931), published as vol. 35 of *Gesamtausgabe* (2. Aufl. Frankfurt a. M.: V. Klostermann, 1990).

² As a general rule, citing Aristotle in English, I make use of the translations included in the two volumes of *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. J. Barnes (Princeton NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985). *Physics* is translated by R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye, *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* — by W. D. Ross, *On the Soul* — by J. A. Smith.

³ τούτο γάρ ἐστίν ὁ χρόνος, ἀριθμὸς κινήσεως κατὰ τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον. (*Phys.* IV 11, 219b1f.) We shall see later on that the expression refers to a definite relation — the “before-and-afterness,” so to speak. Everywhere in my book I render Aristotle's κίνησις as ‘movement’ (Hardie and Gaye: “motion,” Ross: “movement”); κίνησις is a very broad concept in Aristotle, which includes not only locomotion, but alteration and increase/decrease as well.

ontologically void name: there is no room for time and change (movement) alongside (πάρεξ) of being. The *Physics* is actually nothing but an *ontological justification* of movement.

Aristotle gives a definition of movement, and is the first to do so.⁴ The two main versions of this definition are:

Phys. III 1, 201a10f: ἡ τοῦ δυνάμει ὄντος ἐντελέχεια, ἥ τοιοῦτον, κίνησις ἐστίν...

The *entelecheia*⁵ of what is potentially, as such, is movement...

Metaph. XI 9, 1065b16: τὴν τοῦ δυνάμει ἢ τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν ἐνέργειαν λέγω κίνησιν

I call the *energeia* of [a being] in potentiality insofar as it is in potentiality, movement.⁶

This definition allows us to include motion within being, contrary to Parmenides' prohibition. Indeed, because potentiality is a genuine mode of being, as we shall see in section 3, change and motion are rightfully beings.

Aristotle's definition, paradoxical at first sight (indeed, its structural skeleton is: *the actuality of potentiality qua potentiality*), has been a constant object of attention for commentators since antiquity.⁷ Without discussing it in detail, I shall nonetheless indicate my understanding of it.

The definition speaks of the actuality of a *definite* possibility as, precisely, possibility. The *entelecheia* (or *energeia*) meant here carries out to perfection, makes actual, and constitutes a *definite* possibility *qua* this *definite* possibility, e.g., this piece of copper as a *possible* statue *and not* as a possible shield. In movement a certain tendency becomes manifest, and this presence of the meaning of a definite possibility must be connected to an *eidos* or form different from the form of copper *qua* copper as well as from the form of the finished statue. This quasi-form (I shall later explain why I choose such a cautious term), which forms the possible as possible, which al-

⁴ According to a testimony of Simplicius (397, 15) nobody before Aristotle attempted to give a definition of movement.

⁵ In what follows I leave this most important term of Aristotle's metaphysics without translation. The generally adopted rendering "actuality" does not allow it to be distinguished from ἐνέργεια. Of course, the two terms can be used as complete synonyms, but nevertheless the subtle differences in meaning are always retained. ἐντελέχεια signifies, according to the internal structure of the term (ἐν-τελής + ἔχειν), "being-at-the-goal," "completeness" or "perfection," and has nothing to do with *action* and *activity*. The common Latin translation of the term is "perfectio." In the *Revised Oxford Translation* the English equivalent for ἐντελέχεια is "fulfilment." However the same word is generally used as the translation of Husserl's *terminus technicus* *Erfüllung* (see chap. 5, sect. 2). The closed interrelation between ἐντελέχεια (ἐνέργεια) and *Erfüllung* will be discussed further on in connection with my "phenomenological interpretation" of Aristotle and "Aristotelian interpretation" of Husserl (cf. chap. 5; 7).

⁶ Ross: "I call the actuality of the potential as such, movement." I either leave Aristotle's term ἐνέργεια untranslated or render it as "actuality."

⁷ On various ways to interpret the Aristotelian definition of movement in the most important historical commentaries cf. F. Brentano, *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder'sche Verlagshandlung, 1862), Kap. IV, § 2. See also another excellent work taking into account the most important contemporary studies: R. Brague, *Aristote et la question du monde. Essais sur le contexte cosmologique et anthropologique de l'ontologie* (Paris: PUF, 1988), ch. IX, § 58.

lows the possible to have the meaning (λόγος) of the possible, *is* movement;⁸ this quasi-*eidos* allows the statue-of-Hermes-in-possibility to be *present* during casting as distinguished from the shield-in-possibility.

Thus movement constitutes the possible (the potential) as a *definite* possibility (potentiality). Yet how must we understand the way of being of this definiteness? Aristotle says: as *energeia* or *entelecheia*. And if we want to avoid a vicious circle in the definition, *energeia* cannot be interpreted here as the *energeia of movement* (ἐνέργεια κατὰ κίνησιν). The clue to solving the problem is given by the fact that the noun δύναμις (*possibility, force, ability, power*), as well as the noun ἐνέργεια, are used equivocally.

The following passage from *Metaph.* IX 6 is extremely important,⁹ because here we find a fundamental distinction between the two main meanings of ἐνέργεια:

Not all [entities] are said to be actual (ἐνέργεια) in the same way (univocally), they are called so only by analogy: as A is in B or relates to B, so also C is in D or relates to D. In one sense actuality (ἐνέργεια) relates to potentiality (δύναμις) as movement to the ability [to move], in another sense as substance to some sort of matter. (1048b6–9)

Thus the equivocality specified in this passage is not accidental homonymy: although, strictly speaking, there is no general term in Aristotle's language designating the two meanings of *energeia* just mentioned, because there is no common genus in relation to which they could be considered as species, these meanings are connected by the unity of analogy. Aristotle says (cf. *Metaph.* IX 6, 1048a36ff.) that the meaning of δύναμις and ἐνέργεια, like the meaning of τὸ ὄν or τὸ ἔν, is "one" only in the sense of analogy, κατ' ἀναλογίαν, and we must be content not to demand a definition (given by *genus* and *differentia*) but to grasp the analogy and see the nature of the underlying anonymous universal unity (which is not and cannot be in this case a common genus) by studying the instances of it. In one sense *energeia* is activity, actuality of change, and in relation to such *energeia* δύναμις is ability as the source or "principle" of change.¹⁰ In the second sense *energeia* is fulfilment, perfection of *eidos*, of the form of the thing embodied in matter;¹¹ and in relation to such *energeia* δύναμις is matter as something indeterminate (and therefore not present),

⁸ Cf. Brentano, *op. cit.*, p. 58: "Die κίνησις ist die Aktualität des Potenziellen als solchen, [...] d.h. sie ist die Aktualität (ἐνέργεια), die ein in Möglichkeit Seiendes (τοῦ δυνάμει ὄντος) zu dem macht, was es ist (ἢ τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν), nämlich zu diesem in Möglichkeit Seienden, oder mit anderen Worten, die ein Mögliches als Mögliches (ein im Zustande der Möglichkeit Befindliches als in diesem Zustande befindlich) konstituiert oder formiert."

⁹ In what follows we *retell*, not actually *translate* it.

¹⁰ It is defined as "the principle of change or transition, which lies in something other or in the thing itself insofar as it can be considered something other" (1046a11), – for example, when a physician treats himself for an illness, being at the same time his own patient.

¹¹ *Metaph.* 1048a30–33: "Actuality means the presence of a thing (ἔστι δὲ ἐνέργεια τὸ ὑπάρχειν τὸ πρᾶγμα) not in a way which we express by 'potentially,' we say that potentially, for instance, a statue of Hermes is in the block of wood and the half-line is in the whole, because it might be separated out, and even a man who is not contemplating [truth] we call a man of science if he is capable of contemplating." (Ross' translation is slightly modified.) ὑπάρχειν means among other things "to be already there," "to be available." Heidegger's "vorhanden-sein" is a very fitting translation of this Greek verb.

subject to determination, capable of embodying the form and so allowing it to be present within the *compositum*. Only what has been formed can be present, and that is why *energeia* in the second sense is almost synonymous with *eidos* and *presence* as such. *Energeia* means that the thing is present or available: τὸ ὑπάρχειν τὸ πρᾶγμα (1048a30f.). And it is only in this sense that *energeia* becomes synonymous with *entelecheia*, for the completeness or fulfilment of the form is the *goal* of all coming into being, and *entelecheia* signifies “being-at-the-goal.” Matter is the indefinite possibility of attaining the goal, that is to say, to be determined by the form and to embody it completely.

1.2. *The Concept of Energeia*

After distinguishing the two meanings of *energeia*, we can speak of *energeia in contradistinction* to movement. The way Aristotle posits and articulates this distinction deserves most serious attention. I am here referring to the famous fragment of *Metaph.* IX 6, 1048b18–35.¹² The text is very much corrupted, and the author’s manner extremely laconic and hasty;¹³ that is why the efforts of the editors to understand the passage in question and to render it understandable resulted in a multitude of variants. In what follows I cite the passage in my own translation (the comments in brackets inserted in the text seem to be inevitable, for they make the meaning I intend to convey manifest). I accept the reading suggested by R. Brague¹⁴ and, in general features, follow his interpretation of the fragment. Ross’ translation makes the text mute in some nuances,¹⁵ which are of crucial importance for the further development of my interpretation of Aristotle’s concept of *energeia*.

Since of the actions (πράξεις) which have a limit none is an end in itself, but they all belong among the means aiming at an end [other than themselves],— e. g., losing weight [by means of a prescribed treatment] is, indeed, of this sort in relation to the aim of weight to be lost,— and since the things involved in the process¹⁶ of making somebody lose weight are in movement in this way that the result itself for the sake of which the movement takes place is not yet readily present, this is not an action proper or at least not a perfect one: for it is not an end in itself. *But in a [proper or perfect] action the end must already be present, and [still the action must remain] an action.*¹⁷

¹² The history of transmission of this fragment is outlined in R. Brague, *Aristote et la question du monde*, pp. 454–456. The author calls it “un aérolithe aristotélicien.”

¹³ W. Jaeger in his edition of the *Metaphysics* (10th impression, Oxford 1989, p. 184) remarks in connection with this fragment: “oratio est admodum dura et obscura.”

¹⁴ R. Brague, *op. cit.*, pp. 456–461.

¹⁵ A cogent argument against Ross’ reading can be found in Brague, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Ross considers αὐτά in 1048b20 as referring to “the parts of the body themselves when one is reducing their bulk” (cf. *Aristotle’s Metaphysics. A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary by W.D. Ross*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, vol. II, p. 253), while Brague believes that here the “means aiming at and end” (τὰ περὶ τὸ τέλος in line 19) are meant. Since this matter is of no importance for my further analysis I choose a “neutral” way to interpret αὐτά as “the things involved in the process.”

¹⁷ In ll. 1048b22f. I accept the correction proposed by R. Brague, who reads: ἀλλ’ ἐκείνη (ἐκείνη codd.) ἐνυπάρχει τὸ τέλος καὶ ἡ πρᾶξις. Here ἐκείνη refers to πρᾶξις τελεία. Thus, the sentence says that the following two features belong to the perfect action simultaneously (are at once inherent in it):

Thus, somebody is seeing and at the same time has already seen, is understanding and has understood, and also is grasping mentally and has already grasped. But it is not true that at the same time somebody is learning and has learnt, or is being cured and has been cured. At the same time somebody is living well and, indeed, has already achieved a good life, is experiencing happiness and is already happy. If not, the activity would have had sometime to cease, just as the process of losing weight ceases [when the goal is achieved]; yet this is not what takes place but, on the contrary, somebody is both living and already alive. Of these activities, then, we must call the one set *movements*, and the other — *energeiai*. For every movement is incomplete: losing weight, learning, walking, building; these are movements, and incomplete. For it is not true that at the same time somebody is walking and has already walked or is building and has already built, or is coming to be and has come to be — in a word, it is not true that something is being moved and has already completed its movement: these are distinct [states of affairs]. But simultaneously somebody has seen and is seeing the same thing,¹⁸ and is grasping mentally and has already grasped. The latter sort [of actions], then, I call *energeia*, and the one mentioned earlier, movement.

From this difficult text we can gather at least the following: Aristotle divides activities or actions in the broadest sense into perfect, completed (πρᾶξις τελεία) and imperfect, incomplete, intermediate (ἄτελής).

The incomplete or imperfect actions must be called movements, and the completed ones, *energeiai*.

The latter are characterized by the end being inherent in them. In this case it is impossible to distinguish the action from that for the sake of which the action is per-

a certain state of affairs which has come to be as the result of the action and its end (this meaning is expressed by Greek perfect tense) and, on the other hand, the continuing activity (expressed by the present tense). Brouillon's translation of the passage 1048b18–23 goes as follows: “Puisque, parmi les actions, aucune de celles dont il y a une limite n'est une fin, mais qu'elles relèvent des (moyens) qui concernent ce but — par exemple, par rapport au fait de faire maigrir, la cure d'amaigrissement est justement cela —, et puisque ces moyens, chaque fois que l'on fait maigrir, sont en mouvement de façon telle qu'ils ne sont pas en eux-même les résultats en vue de quoi le mouvement (se produit), ces (moyens) ne sont pas une action, ou en tout cas pas une action parfaite. En effet (cette action) n'est pas une fin; en revanche, en celle-là (sc. dans cette action parfaite) est inhérente la fin et (du coup) l'action (qui y mène).” (*Op. cit.*, p. 458 f.)

¹⁸ I follow Jaeger's reading and excise καὶ κινεῖ καὶ κεκίνηκεν (1048b33). Ross preserves these words and considers ἕτερον in l. 32 and τὸ αὐτὸ (ll. 33 f.) as forming an opposition; hence his rendering of the passage: “...it is a different thing that is being moved and that has been moved and that is moving and has moved; but it is the same thing that at the same time has seen and is seeing, or is thinking and has thought.” Ross' summary of this fragment reads as follows: “It is not the case that a thing at the same time is being moved and has been moved; that which has been moved is different from that which is being moved, and that which has moved from that which is moving.” (*Aristotle's Metaphysic. A revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, p. 254.) This latter interpretation seems to be doubtful for two reasons. First, because Aristotle himself states *ex professo* that one always can say correctly that something is moving and has already moved αἰεὶ γὰρ ἅμα κινεῖ καὶ κεκίνηκεν (*Phys.* VII 5, 249b29f.). Second, because it seems to be obvious that τὸ αὐτὸ in ll. 33f. is not the subject but a direct object as in *Soph. El.* 178a9ff: ἄρ' ἐνδέχεται τὸ αὐτὸ ἅμα ποιεῖν τε καὶ πεποιηκέναι; οὐ. ἀλλὰ μὴν ὅραν γέ τι ἅμα καὶ ἑωρακέναι τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ κατὰ ταῦτ' ἐνδέχεται. Brouillon translates: “Est-il possible de faire et d'avoir fait en même temps la même chose? Non. Il est pourtant possible de voir et d'avoir vu la même chose sous le même rapport” (*op. cit.*, pp. 461f.). The opposition Aristotle intends to articulate in *Metaph.* 104818–35 is the opposition between two kinds of actions with different internal structures: it is not true that a thing at the same time is being moved and has completed its movement — here Greek *praesens* and Greek *perfectum* express two distinct meanings; but it is true that at the same time someone is seeing and has seen the same thing in the same aspect, and it is true, of course, that someone or something is moving a thing and (thus) has set the thing in motion (*praesens* = *perfectum*).

DISTINCTIO ET COMPOSITIO ESSENTIAE ET EXISTENTIAE
AS INTERPRETED BY MARTIN HEIDEGGER

1. MEDIEVAL DISCUSSION OF THE ONTOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE

Diversum est esse et id quod est.

Boethius, *Quomodo substantiae in eo quod sint bonae sint...*

1.1. *Medieval Ontology and "The Basic Problems of Phenomenology"*

During the years subsequent to the publication of *Being and Time* Heidegger's project to restate explicitly the question of being, the question that "has been forgotten" and lost some of its power but has never ceased to be at work in the history of philosophy, becomes more and more clearly outlined. *How must philosophy question being? What does it mean to "ask in a primordial manner," to ask de profundis?* In the second half of the 20's Heidegger already has an answer: "Only as phenomenology, is ontology possible" (SZ 35). The reverse is true also: "with regard to its subject-matter, phenomenology is the science of the being of beings — ontology" (SZ 37). Being of beings, being of the entity insofar as it *differs* from the entity, this enigmatic difference of being (*esse*) and entity (*ens*) — such is, according to Heidegger, the main problem of phenomenology. In a series of lectures entitled precisely *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology (Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie)*, delivered at Marburg University in summer 1927, while pursuing his usual hermeneutical strategy, Heidegger tries to introduce his audience to phenomenological ontology (or ontology-as-phenomenology) by explaining phenomenologically several important statements, or "theses" concerning being (*Thesen über das Sein*), "which have been advocated in the course of Western philosophy since Antiquity" (GP 20). One of these statements requiring a phenomenological elucidation is "the thesis of medieval ontology (Scholasticism) which goes back to Aristotle [and asserts that] to the constitution of being of a being belong (a) whatness (*Wassein, essentia*), and (b) being-at-hand or extantness (*Vorhandensein, existentia*) (*ibid.*).

Francisco Suarez's XXXI *Metaphysical Disputation*,¹ included in his great treatise *Disputationes metaphysicae* and entitled "De essentia entis finiti ut tale est, et de illius esse, eorumque distinctione" ("On the essence of the finite entity as such and on its being, and on the distinction between them"), is dedicated precisely to this topic. It is therefore not surprising that Heidegger's attention focuses on this text, in which Suarez not only expounds his own views concerning the distinction and composition of *essence* and *existence* in created entities, but also analyses carefully the problem's history, the tradition of its solution and the arguments of his precursors.

1.2. *Essence, Existence and Ontological Difference*

Why does the "thesis of medieval metaphysics" mentioned above seem so important to Heidegger? Why is it designed to serve as an introduction to phenomenological ontology — i. e., to ontology as such?

In the Marburg lecture course of 1927 mentioned above the notion of *ontological difference* is discussed for the first time. The term itself refers to a concept basic to Heidegger's ontology — to the difference between entity and being. Language allows us at least to articulate this difference by means of different suffixes: *das Seiende* — *das Sein*,² and so to initiate our understanding of it — which, however, may later reveal itself as an illusion. For "we do not always [actually] possess," as Leibniz wrote, "the idea of the subject we are aware of thinking about."

Strictly speaking, the scholastic distinction between essence and existence does not coincide with the ontological difference, as Heidegger defines it. For even before any detailed analysis of these concepts one can say that existence, *existentia*, signifies *presence*,³ or as we can formulate it now, — the *energeia* of being-present, the actuality of an entity, i. e., it signifies "the way in which something actual or existent (*Existierendes*) is" (GP 109); whereas essence, *essentia*, refers to the *what*-character belonging to the ontological constitution of an entity, to its *being-something*, "somethingness" or "thingness" (*realitas*, *Realität*, *Sachheit*), understood as "whatness" (*quidditas*, *Washeit*). Thus, Heidegger says, the distinction between essence (reality) and existence belongs on the side of one member distinguished (or to be distinguished) in the ontological difference: "neither *realitas* nor *existentia* is an entity; rather it is precisely two of them that make up the structure of being. The distinction between *realitas* and *existentia* articulates being more particularly in its essential constitution" (GP 109). Therefore the "distinction and composition" of *essentia* and *existentia*, as the basic articulation of being, namely, each single entity's being, are rather one of the *moments* or ways of positing the ontological difference.

¹ F. Suarez, *Opera omnia*, ed. C. Berton, T. XXVI (Paris, 1861).

² It is the German language, of course, that allows Heidegger to express immediately the difference in question. We already referred to the difficulties one encounters while discussing the same topic in English.

³ *Presence* in the sense of *extantness*, *being-ready-to-hand*. In Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* the terms *Existenz* and *Dasein* are complete synonyms.

1.3. *Semantic Distinctions*

Our starting point must be the assumption that the ontological difference — whether it proves to be intelligible or unintelligible, actual or imaginary — is already implied and expressed in language, and for the time being the way it is expressed has to become the matter of our analysis.

First philosophy takes as its subject τὸ ὄν ἢ ὅν,⁴ i. e., entity insofar it is entity (*ens*, *in quantum ens*), entity as such. But what can we say about an entity, a being as such? We say, “a being (an entity) *is*.” The last sentence would be little more than a tautology if the meaning of its subject and predicate were equally clear to us. Nonetheless it is its being that defines the entity as such. Suarez writes:

the entity, insofar as it is entity, receives its name from being (*esse*) and because of being; in other words, it has the meaning of entity (*rationem entis*) because of its destination to be...⁵

Thus strictly speaking *ens = aliquid habens realem actum essendi*:⁶ the entity is something which “has” — that is, *accomplishes or performs*, — *the act of being*. Consequently, the main problem of first philosophy — τί τὸ ὄν; “what is entity?” — seems to be identical with the question: τί τὸ εἶναι; “what is being?” Yet if the word ὄν, *ens*, *entity* were capturing *only this meaning* of the participle, the meaning of participating in an act (action, actuality), i.e. of participating in being, the distinction we are interested in would be just a ghost, an unimportant difference between two ways of expressing the same content.

Those scholars who discussed the problem of *the distinction and composition of essence and existence in created entities*⁷ in the Middle Ages faced a similar difficulty. It was discovered that the possibility of stating the distinction or difference between *ens* and *esse* or (in another form) between *essentia* and *existentia* as a proper subject of inquiry (that is, according to Heidegger, the possibility of the *basic articulation of being*), is determined by the remarkable ambiguity of the little word ὄν, *ens*.⁸ While discussing, with the thoroughness peculiar to him, the concept of entity, *conceptus obiectivus entis*, Suarez says that the meaning of the word (*vocis*) *ens* is twofold.

1. As a participle of the verb *sum*, which means, taken absolutely (not as a copula), nothing else but the act of being, *actus essendi*, *ens* is to be understood as *that which is*. It follows that in this sense *entity* refers to being as an *act* only, no matter

⁴ Aristotle, *Metaph.* IV 1, 1003a21. The traditional Latin translation of this formula (which Suarez also refers to) is: *ens in quantum ens*.

⁵ F. Suarez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, disp. XXXI, sect. I, 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, disp. II, sect. IV, 4.

⁷ *Distinctio et compositio essentiae et existentiae in ente creato*.

⁸ This vocable was uttered first, as we know, by the goddess of Parmenides’ metaphysical revelation. The Stranger in Plato’s *Sophist* says to Theaetetus: “it seems to me that Parmenides and all those who ever undertook an attempt to take the beings (τὰ ὄντα) on trial... have talked to us rather carelessly. [...] Every one of them seems to tell us a story as if we were children. [...] Then since we are in perplexity, do you (sc. Parmenides and the other great thinkers of the past) tell us plainly what you wish to designate when you say ‘a being’ (τὸ ὄν). For it is clear that you have known this all along, whereas we formerly thought we knew, but are now perplexed” (242c–244a). These last words were chosen by Heidegger as epigraph to *Being and Time*.

what the entity is (*extra rerum quidditatem*), irrespective of its definition as a particular existing thing, having its definite what-character. A participle, formally connected with the grammatical category of tense, always *implies temporality* in its meaning (*tempus consignificat*). Therefore *ens* means a “being-now” or *actual exercising or accomplishing of being* (*actuale exercitium essendi seu existendi*). Due to this fact *ens*, taken as a participle, refers to existence of an entity irrespective of its “whatness.”

2. Yet *ens* can be used in another — in the *secondary*, as Suarez puts it, — sense, being taken as a *noun* [substantive], *vi nominis*. Then the term *ens* “has the power” to name a thing in its semantic delineation, in its whatness (*quidditas*), thought separately from the act of existence.

It seems that this semantic analysis already constitutes a certain progress towards distinguishing between essence and existence. Yet we meet with serious difficulty here. There is a difference, Suarez says, in the usage of the words *ens* and *res*, even if the former is taken as a noun. *Ens* does not signify an arbitrary, more or less vaguely represented, semantic construction; it refers *only* to something which has a “real essence” (*essentiam realem*). In other words, an essence “apt to exist in reality” (*essentiam veram et aptam ad realiter existendum*), an essence which may happen to exist, a “true” essence, not a “fictional or chimerical one” (*non fictam, nec chymericam*).⁹ So, even if the word *ens* is taken as a noun (*sumptum nominaliter*), its connection with the “verbal character” of being is not completely lost: *ens* always implies an ability, a readiness, an aptitude, a fitness to *be* actually (this *being* is expressed by the verb in present tense). The word “essence” (*essentia*) itself points, in a way, to the verb “to be” (*esse*). That is why, as Thomas Aquinas remarks, the concept of essence does not completely coincide with the concept of “whatness” (*quidditas*). “Whatness” is the content expressed in the definition, and the essence is so called because a thing has its being through it and in it (*per eam et in ea ens habet esse*).¹⁰ Yet if the definition is not an arbitrary invention of the mind immersed in unfounded semantic constructions, but actually shows and brings to light the essence of the entity, as it is “in the nature of things” (*in rerum natura*), then the border line between *ens* taken as a noun and *ens* taken as a participle gets blurred. The noun becomes not just a noun, but also a noun referring to and implicitly containing in itself the verb “is,” the aptitude to be.

Thus the “being-ness” (*entitas*) of a being (*ens*), if the latter is taken as a noun (*sumptum nominaliter*), means that the entity is comprehensible in a strong sense of the word: it is intelligible in perfect clarity, non-deceptive, free from illusions of language and imagination. Here the concept of *entitas* (“being-ness”) and that of *essentia realis, realitas*, reality are getting as close as possible.

Leibniz carried this point of view to its extreme:¹¹ he identified the entity (*ens*) and the possible (*possibile*). The entity is characterized as a conjunction (*conjunctio*)

⁹ Disp. II, sect. IV, 5.

¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, ed. 3 (Torino: Marietti, 1957), cap. I, sect. 2.

¹¹ The fact that Leibniz (as well as Descartes) was strongly influenced by Suarez’ *Disputationes* is well known and amply discussed by the historians of philosophy.

of simple and mutually independent qualities or distinctive marks (*notae*). One can speak of a *possibile*, when the combination of marks or constituents (*requisita*) within the same medium (i.e. their predication relating to the same subject) does not lead to a logical contradiction. In this way the law of contradiction becomes the umpire establishing the distinction between *essentia realis* and *essentia ficta seu chymica*.

Hegel seized on this incipient movement and developed it further in the *Phänomenologie der Geist*.¹² Here he still understands “thing-ness” or “pure essence” as a “medium,” in which, as in a kind of a simple unity, various simple qualities “penetrate each other without, however, coming into touch with one another or influencing each other in this mutual penetration.” A thing is *das Auch*, a mere conjunction (*conjunctio*) of mutually indifferent (and therefore obedient to the law of contradiction) qualities. Such is the replica of the scholastic concept of *essentia realis* in Hegel’s phenomenology.

1.4. *Essence, Whatness, Nature*

The *essentia realis* allows the form of a thing to be present in the “perceiving intellect” (*intellectus percipiens*). This permission-to-be-present is, to the Scholastics, an expression of the thing’s *nature*.¹³ According to the definition given by Thomas Aquinas, a thing reveals its nature in the way it influences other things: the nature structures actions or “operations” (*operationes*) of the entity and marks them as proper precisely to this thing (*propria*). One of these “proper operations” is, as was mentioned above, the permission to be present to the mind. A thing is revealed to the mind as a definite “what,” *quid*, as “whatness,” *quidditas*. Whatness is expressed in the definition and presupposes grasping of the proximate genus and the relevant specific difference. That is why the essence means something which is proper to any nature and through which various entities are distributed between various genera and species.¹⁴ So, the terms “form,” “whatness” and “nature” correspond to different closely related and yet non-identical meanings of “essence.” We see that even this preliminary analysis includes in its scope a certain system of ontological ideas. Essence (*that in which and through which the entity possesses being*, the core of the meaning of being) is thus very closely connected with the ability to be present to the mind as something definite and distinct. Being-ness implies as its counterpart a possibility of adequate, that is, thoroughly clear knowledge where confusion is no longer possible. Through its essence, the entity possesses a *definite being* (*esse quid*), a “being-something”; after Aristotle, essence is referred to as *quod quid erat esse, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι*.

¹² See section II entitled “Die Wahrnehmung, das Ding und die Täuschung.”

¹³ This interpretation of the concept of *natura* can be traced back to Boethius. In the treatise entitled *Liber de persona et duabus naturis* Boethius says that in whatever sense one may understand a being (*ens*), it is due to the nature of this being that the intellect is capable to grasp it. Cf. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*, Ser. latina, t. 64, col. 1541B.

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 12.

ONTOLOGY OF HUMAN ACTION

(*Aristotle's Eth. Nic. VI and Heidegger's commentaries*)

ἐφηγῆρέ σ' ἄκονθ' ὁ πάνθ' ὄρων χρόνος
Sophocles, *Oedipus rex*, 1213

1.1. *The Topography of the Truth.*
How the Soul "Discloses the Truth"

Ontology understood as phenomenology starts with the idea that entity reveals itself, lets itself be encountered, goes out to meet us. In the midday epoch of philosophy the *place* of this meeting is designated by the two most important words with "concentrated" meaning: ἡ ψυχὴ and *das Bewußtsein*.

Ἀληθεύει ἡ ψυχὴ, "the soul achieves or discloses the truth," says Aristotle.¹ As an "area" where the truth is disclosed the soul has its own topography, described (or rather constructed) by Aristotle in book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle mentions here five ways in which the soul *discloses the truth* (ἀληθεύει) through affirmation or negation. These are: art or technical skill (τέχνη), science or scientific knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), prudence (φρόνησις), wisdom (σοφία) and intelligence (νοῦς).²

In the winter semester of 1924–25 Heidegger delivered lectures on Plato's *The Sophist*;³ almost one third of this lecture course is devoted to interpretation, or rather variations on the theme, of Aristotle's reasoning in *Eth. Nic. VI*. Here Heidegger discusses the ontological foundation of the concept of *truth* and interprets the Greek ἀ-λήθεια (*α* *privativum*) so: *nicht mehr verborgen sein, aufgedeckt sein* ("to be no more concealed," "to be uncovered") (PS 16).

¹ *Eth. Nic. VI* 3, 1139b15.

² *Ibid.* 1139b15ff.

³ M. Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes*, GA 19 (Frankfurt a. M.: V. Klostermann, 1992). Cited hereafter as PS.

Later on in Heidegger's language there will be a consistently used term to designate the Greek ἀλήθεια: *Unverborgenheit*, "unconcealment." Aristotle's phrase ἀληθεύει ἡ ψυχή is now rendered as "human *Dasein* remains in unhiddenness and unlocks the entity"; and ἀληθεύειν means "to be uncovered," "to free the world from closeness and concealment."⁴

Thus the truth is one of the characteristics of the entity itself insofar as it goes out to meet us, but in the proper sense of the word it is a determination of being of human *Dasein*. (PS 23)

I intend to show that Heidegger's search for *primordial* thinking about being, which underlies the project of "fundamental ontology," depends in many respects on Aristotle's "onto-psycho-logical" approach developed in the treatise *On the Soul* and, first of all, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (and which to a certain extent remains faithful to the "cartography" of the corresponding topics). The lengthy commentary by Heidegger creates a common textual space in which the discourses of both philosophers mix together, or rather in which Aristotle's discourse is strangely rendered in Heidegger's "German."

The most important result of the analysis of Aristotle's text is the discovery of different and equally primordial (having fundamental ontological significance) ways of arriving at the truth and abiding by the truth in its uncoveredness, i. e., of encountering entity in its being, of drawing entity in its being from hiddenness into unconcealment.

1.2. *Quarrel of Wisdom and Prudence*

The main collision depicted in book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is a quarrel about primogeniture, about superiority between wisdom (σοφία) and prudence (φρόνησις).⁵ Yet as Heidegger has rightly remarked, behind the choice between *phronesis* and *sophia* there is hidden the fundamental ontological decision concerning the primordial, "first" meaning of being, along with another decision, not less fundamental, concerning the ultimate Good, at which all things aim (*Eth. Nic.* I, 1 1094a3). The latter is modelled in Aristotle's text after the divine *summum bonum* and is achieved when the human mind becomes in a certain way similar to the divine mind steadily contemplating the loftiest thing, i. e., itself (*Metaph.* XII 9). Thus along with the ontological and ethical (or "soteriological") decision we also encounter here the most important *theological* decision. These three firmly interrelated decisions have in many respects determined the whole of the European ontological tradition.

⁴ Heidegger refuses to translate in his commentary the verb ἀληθεύειν in order to avoid habitual connotations. He writes: "Wir wollen dies nicht übersetzen. ἀληθεύειν meint: aufgedecktsein, die Welt aus der Verschlossenheit und Verdecktheit herausnehmen. Und das ist eine Seinsweise des menschlichen Daseins" (PS 17).

⁵ *Prudentia* is the commonly accepted Latin translation of Aristotle's φρόνησις. I keep the term "prudence" as its English substitution. Ross renders φρόνησις as "practical wisdom" Rackham (*Loeb Classical Library*, vol. 73) prefers "prudence."

1.3. "Parts" of the Soul and Their Virtues

At first Aristotle defines two "parts" (μέρη)⁶ of the soul: the one "possessing the logos" (the *rational*, as the Latin speaking world used to designate it) and the one "lacking logos" (*irrational*). The first is in its turn divided into the "scientific" or "knowing-epistemic" (τὸ ἐπιστημονικὸν μέρος) and the "calculating," "projecting," "scheming" (τὸ λογιστικόν) parts. Wisdom (σοφία) and prudence (φρόνησις) are "virtues" (ἀρεταί) of these two "parts of the soul"; *sophia* belongs to the scientific, and phronesis to the calculative⁷ part. *Virtue* is maturity, completeness, fulfilment (τελειώσις) of a certain ability of the soul, "the best disposition of the soul" (*Eth. Nic.* 1139a16), which manifests itself in an action proper to it, i.e. in the way of arriving at the truth.

1.3.1. The Soul as the First Entelecheia

We must not forget that whatever Aristotle deals with, his reasoning always retains a connection with "first philosophy," its system of concepts and its rules of thinking. The metaphysical definition of the soul affirms that it is the form, or the first *entelecheia*, of the living body.⁸ Aristotle calls *the first entelecheia* a fully developed, mature ability (δύναμις) so far as it remains *ability*. In some particular cases the formula: "I can... I am able... I perfectly understand how to..., but I do not act at the moment," may serve as an illustration of the meaning of the term.

In *De anima* II, 5 Aristotle explains the difference between the first and the second *entelecheia* as follows: A newborn child is able, as a human being, to read and write, because he can be instructed in grammar. That is to say: he possesses the potency to know grammar = he knows grammar in potentiality = he is "a grammarian in potentiality." And when he actually has learned to read and write but is neither reading nor writing at the present moment but, say, is exercising in a gymnasium, he is also (at this moment) a grammarian in potentiality, though in a different sense: he knows grammar and can at any time, without learning any more, actually begin to read or write ("provided that external causes do not prevent him"). Mastery of grammar is the first *entelecheia* with regard to the capacity to learn which the child possesses. The reading and writing activity is the second *entelecheia* with respect to the "I can" of a person actually knowing grammar. Accordingly two meanings of

⁶ To be sure, in Aristotle's terminology "parts" (μέρη) rather signify "faculties." To the irrational part of the soul belong, for example, nutrition and growth, and because these functions are common to all living things they constitute the so called *vegetative soul*. The other division of the irrational part is the seat of appetites and of desire in general. In a sense, it is amenable and obedient to the rational principle (cf. *Eth. Nic.* I 13, *De anima* II 2).

⁷ We need to be cautious here, because the adjective "calculative" can provoke misleading associations. Aristotle explains that calculation is the same as *deliberation* (τὸ γὰρ βουλευέσθαι καὶ λογίζεσθαι ταὐτόν, *Eth. Nic.* 1139a12f.). I preserve in my translations the formal distinctions between λογίζεσθαι ("to calculate") and βουλευέσθαι ("to deliberate").

⁸ "So the soul must be οὐσία in the sense of being the form of a natural body, which potentially has life." (*De anima* II 1, 412a20f.) "The soul may therefore be defined as the first *entelecheia* of a natural body potentially possessing life." (27f.)

potentiality can be distinguished (termed *potentia prima* and *potentia secunda* by the Schoolmen). The ability to learn is the first potentiality; with respect to this potentiality the *knowledge* (though not actually exercised) of a person having learned to read and write is the first actuality (*entelecheia*). In its turn this knowledge (or skill) is the second potentiality (*potentia secunda*) as regards the activity of reading and writing. At a certain period of his or her life a person manifests different abilities; he or she manifests these abilities in activity, though even before, and irrespective of, any activity he or she already possesses them in the element of “I can.” The soul as the first *entelecheia* is, according to Aristotle, a coherent system of such interconnected abilities (capacities, faculties, functions), which can immediately manifest themselves in an appropriate action — *in* the body possessing organs (412b5f.), *by means of* it or *in relation to* it.

That is why we can dismiss as unnecessary the question whether the soul and the body are one; it is as though we were to ask whether the wax and its shape are one, or generally the matter of a thing and that of which it is the matter. (6 ff.)

1.3.2. *Corporeality and Responsible Act*

The care that Aristotle takes in making distinctions and providing definitions, in order to single out the actions (πράξεις) which can be submitted to moral judgment,⁹ merits our close attention. Moral actions are not and cannot be exceptions to the “rule of corporeality,” i. e., being manifestations of the soul’s dispositions — which means in the language of metaphysics, being definite aspects of form — they cannot be separated from matter, which “incarnates” form. For every *moral action* is an *action*, and from the formal ontological point of view belongs to the category of ποιεῖν. As such it is in one way or another connected with the possibility of manifesting human being *ad extra*, i. e., with his/her corporeality. For Aristotle *the ethics of incorporeal beings* is an impossibility. A moral *action* is a *responsible* action which can be an object of praise or blame. To be responsible, the action must be voluntary. An initial distinction pairing actions performed despite oneself or involuntary (ἀκῶν, ἀκούσιος) with those performed freely or voluntary (ἐκῶν, ἐκούσιος) serves in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as the starting point for the subsequent investigation of moral action and virtue. Aristotle asks whether acts performed under the unbearable pressure of external circumstances are to be considered voluntary. His answer is *yes*, though with certain reservations. This is why in such a case “the origin of the movement of the parts of the body instrumental to the act lies in the agent (ἐν αὐτῷ); and when the moving principle is in oneself, it is in one’s own power, depends on oneself (ἐπ’ αὐτῷ), whether to act or not” (*Eth. Nic.* III 1, 1110a15–18). We see that the fact in itself that the source of the body’s movement lies in the human being (and not, say, in the wind which makes its body move along with the ship

⁹ In order to stress this peculiar character of human actions (to be subject to moral evaluation whenever it is a matter of submitting the action or the agent to the moral judgment), I call them sometimes in what follows “moral actions.” As just a specification of this kind of actions the adjective “moral” does not designate a “positive” quality of the action in contradistinction to the “immoral.”

to a certain place against the person's will) does not make the body's movement a moral *action*. The ἐν αὐτῷ is not so important as the ἐπ' αὐτῷ. The difference between the prepositions¹⁰ allows us to designate in a *preliminary* way the difference between a human action bearing an ethical determination, and a deliberate bodily movement, which cannot be an object of ethics. This difference becomes more precise in the subsequent development of the argument. And yet the context of the body, its instrumental parts and their movement determines the direction in which the search for a solution proceeds.

Going back to the discussion of the soul's topography we must remark that Aristotle, of course, cannot and does not mean, to use a Scholastic designation, the "real" parts of it, i. e., existing separately and independently. The soul is *the form* of the living body. The form is the principle of unity and the foundation of the entity's being [as such and such a *definite* thing].

"Unity" has many senses (as many as "is" has), but the proper one is that of *entelecheia*. (*De anima*, 412b9f.)

The soul as *entelecheia* or form is *simple*, and therefore does not have *real* parts. The "parts" Aristotle speaks of (in *the Nicomachean Ethics* too) are structural moments (faculties or functions), which cannot exist by themselves separated from the whole¹¹ just as a side of a triangle cannot exist as a side of a triangle separately from the triangle.

1.3.3. *Eternal and Temporal Truth* (αἰών and καιρός)

Yet since the abilities of the rational soul being discussed are connected with the logos, i. e., with understanding and calculating taken in the broadest sense, Aristotle distinguishes the "parts" (functions) of the soul according to the ontic character of the entity *manifested and brought to light* by their means, i. e., by means of the *energeiai* of manifestation (= perfect actions) inherent in them. "In a sense the soul is all beings," says Aristotle (*De anima* III 8, 431b21). "The soul is all beings" means that the forms of the things without matter are (potentially) located in the soul as in a "place of forms." The "parts" or faculties of the soul have a certain likeness or affinity to their "objects," "for it is in virtue of a certain likeness and kinship with their objects that they have the understanding (γνώσις) they have."¹² The parts of the soul correspond to the genera of the entities they are "receptive of" and, as a result, also to the ways of arriving at the truth. Now we could also say that they correspond to the ἐνέργειαι *of the truth*, i. e., to the actuality of the disclosed = the activity of disclosing = the specific character of disclosure.

¹⁰ Cf. the discussion of this passage in connection with the problem of the "ascription" of action to the agent in P. Ricœur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 88–112.

¹¹ The only exception is perhaps the so-called νοῦς ποιητικός discussed in *De anima* III 5. However, the meaning of this exception requires thorough analysis and clarification.

¹² *Eth. Nic.* VI 1, 1139a10f. For the reasons, which will become clear later, I substitute "understanding" for "knowledge" in Ross' translation.

GOD WITHOUT BEING AND THOUGHT WITHOUT THINKER

1. THE SOURCE OF BEING WHICH “IS NOT”
(ON THE DIVINE NAMES V 5)

We have already said that for “late philosophy,” the history of philosophy is not a mere illustration, a sort of complementary addition to the development of discourse: a method of enriching and specifying a meaning otherwise completely expressed in itself. History is the diachronic dimension of philosophical process, an essential aspect of positioning new meaning. “The history of philosophy,” G. Deleuze wrote in his dissertation, “in our opinion, has to play a role similar in many respects to the role of collage in painting.”¹ The collage allows us to make a new meaning out of meanings already expressed and historically connected with a certain context; the new meaning then appears as a figure of meanings, an arrangement or rather a consonance of meanings. I think we are dealing here not so much with *collage* as with a polyphonic development of the perennial philosophical theme — *what is a being as being?* We shall begin with a graphical illustration, at first taking the term “textual collage” almost literally.

1.1. *What Never Was Nor Will Be; What Is Not*

Parmenides, fr. 8DK, 5–6:

οὐδέ ποτ' ἦν οὐδ' ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ
πάν ἓν, συνεχές. τίνα γένναν διζήσεται αὐτοῦ;

“It never was nor will be, since it is now, all together, one, indivisible. For what parentage of it will you look for?”

Plato, *Parmenides* 141e:

οὔτε ποτὲ γέγονεν οὔτ' ἐγένετο οὔτ' ἦν ποτὲ,
οὔτε νῦν γέγονεν οὔτε γίγνεται οὔτε ἔστιν,
ἐπειτα γενήσεται οὔτε γενηθήσεται οὔτε
ἔσται [...] Οὐδαμῶς ἄρα τὸ ἓν οὐσίας μετέχει.

Dionysius the Areopagite,
On the Divine Names V 4:

οὔτε ἦν οὔτε ἔσται οὔτε ἐγένετο οὔτε
γίνεται οὔτε γενήσεται, μᾶλλον δὲ οὔτε
ἔστιν.

“[He] has not been, will not be and never was,
He did not come [into being], does not and
will not; more than that — He is not.”

Apocalypse 4, 8:

ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος κύριος ὁ Θεός ὁ
παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ἐρχόμενος.

¹ *Différence et répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1968), “Intodiction.”

"... it never came into being and never was coming into being and never was, it does not come into being now, and is not, and will not, and it will not be... So that the One in no way participates in being."

"Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come."

Parmenides' fragment speaks of τὸ ἕν. We are quick to pronounce the word "being," we are used to the fact that Western metaphysics is centred on this term. The tradition has taught us to define and position by means of this name the main (and essentially the only one) subject of thinking. Yet, as we have seen, the name itself, τὸ ἕν, was "established" by Parmenides in his "ontological revelation," it was revealed to him, was encountered by him on his wanderings "beyond the day and the night." For a philosopher, to wander means to question. In his wandering along the *way of being* (i. e., while asking what an entity is in its being, what it means for the beings to be), Parmenides finds many signs — σήματα πολλά — pointing to the "meaning of being."

One of these signs is τὸ ἕν, *the One*. This is the word taken up by Plato's Parmenides and it is the subject matter of the fragment cited above (*Parm.* 141e). This text, however, is only one of the subsequent steps of a dialectical argument, and can hardly be considered Plato's final judgment concerning the One. In the *Timaeus* it is said that the verb "to be" in the present tense (as opposed to "was" and "will be") expresses the eternal essence in an appropriate way (*Tim.* 37d — 38b).

The One (ἕν) belongs to the series of *Divine names* discussed by Dionysius in his treatise *On the Divine Names* (XIII 2).² In chapter V, from which the fragment we are dealing with ("...[He] has not been...") comes, another name is spoken of, [*He/Who-is* (ὁ ὄν)]. The author calls this name, following his (and his time's) predilection for pleonasms, poetic repetitions and alliterations, "the truly existing God-naming essential name of Him Who truly is" (V 1). This name is the first in order of superiority (πρεσβύτερον)³ in the series of theological terms for God, because it is contained in the Scripture as God's own answer to the question "Who art thou?"

² "He is called *One* since He is singly all in one pre-eminence of unity; for he is (without becoming multiple Himself) the cause of the unity of all [multiple beings]. There is nothing among beings that is without participation in this One. [...] Whatever is a being is so by being one." The Greek text of the treatise *On the Divine Names* and the classical *Scholia* of John of Skythopolis and Maximus the Confessor (included in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*) are cited after the edition by G. M. Prochorov: Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology* (St. Petersburg: Glagol, 1994). The text reproduces the critical edition: *Corpus Dionysiacum* I. Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita: *De divinis nominibus*, B. R. Suchla, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 33 (Berlin–New York, 1990). The fact that throughout this chapter I write "Dionysius" and not "Pseudo-Dionysius" does not mean that I believe (against all contemporary philological evidence) in the authenticity of the authorship of Dionysius the Areopagite mentioned in *Acts* 17, 34. I am not at all occupied here with the problem of authorship. It is enough for me that the *Corpus Areopagiticum* has become one of the most influential theological treatises in the Christian East (and in Russia in particular), as well as in the West. Already this "external" circumstance, to say nothing about the content of the Treatise, justifies one more attempt to understand it. The treatise of Dionysius is cited hereafter as DN.

³ DN V 5.

(*Exodus* 3, 14).⁴ In the essence itself, the *quidditas*, “what-ness” or, rather, the *quissitas*, “who-ness,” of God, is referred to (though, as we shall see further, not *shown*, nor *expressed*). It is not accidental that this name is connected with the *essential naming* or *naming of the essence*.

Yet besides that, the “supremacy” of this name is proved by the author with arguments of quite a metaphysical turn, which partly remind the reader of Aristotle’s reasons for establishing being *qua* being as the subject of “first philosophy,” and are borrowed in part from the Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophical armoury. Any other name, be it Good, Life or Wisdom, by creating a certain perspective for contemplation and by revealing God as being this or that, automatically reveals Him as an entity, for only an entity can be revealed or, rather, un-hidden. Even life itself and wisdom itself become entities through participation in being as such.⁵

Yet, in a wonderful way, the name *Who-is* (ὁ ὄν) impels the text in a direction where it “transgresses” itself — more precisely, since we are speaking of names, not of “concepts” in the usual sense, it would be more correct to say that it loses its naming ability. For if Parmenides says about being, “it has not been at any time and will not be, because it *is now*, whole, all at once,” and Plato states (*Tim.* 37c — 38a) that the expressions “was” and “will be” are legitimate in relation to *becoming* only, whereas “is” befits the *eternal essence*, Dionysius finds an insurmountable obstacle to a correct theology in the grammatical category of tense, in the fact that verbs *per definitionem* imply time.⁶ And then he says “He-Who-is is not.” Designating being by means of “is” already defines, i. e., limits being in a way.⁷ The grammatical terms for the forms of the verb themselves affirm it: “is” is a *verbum finitum*; the way to convey a meaning, proper to this verb, the grammarians call *modus finitus* (finite, i. e., limited, de-termined mode), whereas “to be” represents the *modus infinitivus*, infinitive, or rather undetermined, mode.

God is not somehow be-ing (ὄν), but simply and unlimitedly be-ing, comprehending and anticipating the whole being in itself... [He] is the Being for beings. Not only beings but even the Being itself for beings is from the be-ing before eternity. For God is the eternity of what is eternal, the One whose being precedes eternity. (V 4)

We see that in the text the distinction between being and beings is asserted (the ontological difference). More than that: as it seems, the author of the treatise distinguishes the being of an *entity* from a primordial and undetermined source of being. Any finite (created) entity *is* “somehow” (πῶς ἐστίν ὄν); for it, “to be” means “to

⁴ It goes without saying that Dionysius in his speculations leans upon the text of the *Septuagint*. The answer of God to the second question of Moses (“ [If] they ask me, ‘What is his *name*?’ what shall I say to them?”) reads in Greek: ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ὄν. ὁ ὄν is the participle of the masculine gender derived from the verb “to be.” In order to render the structure of this word in English I use sometimes the expression “[He] Who is,” and sometimes an artificial construction “be-ing.”

⁵ DNV 5.

⁶ This is the definition of the verb in general, given by Aristotle in *De interpretatione* 3.

⁷ This is a sort of explanation that can be traced back to Plato’s *Parmenides* and can be found in an explicit form in connection with the problem under consideration in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Cf. Francis Ruello, *Les “noms divins” et leur “raisons” selon St. Albert le Grand, commentateur du “De divinis nominibus”* (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1963), p. 51.

be present,” whereas the *pre-eternal* Being (is) simple and unlimited (un-determined). Yet whatever the mode (sense) of being spoken of, we cannot say “being is,” for *what is* is an entity. In particular this means that although present being is correctly *expressed* by the verb “is,” “is” cannot *be predicated of being* (*esse*) as such. Yet here a kind of hermeneutical ἐποχή is to be accomplished and the temptation overcome to interpret Dionysius in the sense of Hegel’s logic, which distinguishes between pure being (*Sein*) as “the simple immediacy” and being-extant (*Dasein*) as a result of mediation. We have to let the text speak for itself, and to do this we have to *understand how it speaks and how the Divine names name*.

1.2. *On the Poetic Way of Naming*

The expression “divine names” (τὰ θεία ὀνόματα) as a designation of a philosophical topic originated in *Cratylus* (401b and further). It was the wisdom, Plato’s Socrates says, of the first name-giver,⁸ i. e., of the first poet, of the proto-poet, to give names to the gods which in one way or another articulate, show, express their essential features. Dionysius’ assertion is quite the contrary:

The aim of our discourse (including naming God — *A. Ch.*) is not to manifest (ἐκφάνειν) the Being beyond being as beyond being⁹ for this is ineffable, unknown, and completely non-manifest... [but] to celebrate (ὕμνησαι) the being-producing procession of the thearchic source of the essence in all beings. (V 1)

For Dionysius naming is not the same as predication, i. e., logical clarification or *apophansis*. Certainly naming is a special method of showing, and consequently of manifesting, discovering, laying bare the thing named, making it accessible to the mind’s eye. It seems that the Divine names are designed, by naming God, to display (ἀποφάνεσθαι) Him as being the Good, Life, Wisdom, the Word... A name refers to something else as itself, it names *the thing named* (for otherwise, Plato says, it would be the name of a name);¹⁰ and so it seems that the name somehow retains the formal structure of predication: *something of or about something* (τὶ κατὰ τινος). Yet the paradox of using the Divine names is that the “thing” named is never present as

⁸ ὁ θεόμενος πρῶτος τὰ ὀνόματα (436b).

⁹ ὑπερούσιος οὐσία. I avoid rendering the prefix ὑπερ- traditionally as “super-,” because by doing so we lose the negative, *apophatic* character of many of Dionysius’ terms. ὑπερ- as “over” and “above” refer not only to excess, surplus, preeminence, superiority etc., but alludes also to “beyond,” “outside the limits.” In this case ὑπερ- has the same meaning as ἐπέκεινα (*praep. cum. gen.*). The relationship between the ὑπερούσιος οὐσία of Dionysius and Plato’s ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας (*Resp. VI, 509b*) is rather obvious and perfectly explicable historically. Another morphological part of the adjective ὑπερούσιος is derived from οὐσία. The latter is not to be understood in a too technical Aristotelian sense as *essence* or *substance*. It signifies just being-ness of beings. That is why I refrain from translating ὑπερούσιος as “superessential” or “supersubstantial.” Calling the divinity “superessential essence” would mean that the divinity transcends every finite being and is preeminently essential or substantial. In my opinion, this is not what Dionysius intends to say. The ὑπερούσιος οὐσία is rather “beingness beyond being,” “otherwise than being or beyond essence” (to reproduce the title of one of Levinas’ books). Of course, all these attempts to find English counterparts of the main terms in Dionysius can only provide a space where interpretation *begins* its work.

¹⁰ *The Sophist*, 244d.

something, it is beyond essence and *a fortiori* beyond *whatness* (it has no “what” of its own, it is without a “what,” ἄνευ τοῦ τί). The naming *apophansis* is only a reference to, or a designation of, the *locus* of what forever remains hidden in its essence.

We must, with all possible earnestness, consider the word ὑμνήσαι, “to celebrate,” “to glorify in words,” as the designation of a *method*. Dionysius speaks of a poetic clarification, a *poetic apophansis*. Is not *glorifying* and *glory*, in the sense of the Greek δόξα θεοῦ, actually the primary way of showing, manifesting, bringing to light? In Plato’s *Cratylus* the name is a tool in the hands of the person who seeks and attains knowledge, which enables him “to catch up with” (440a) the object of his investigation. The name enters as it were into conversation with beings and charms them by the very fact of being enunciated: an entity stands still then, “without transcending the boundaries of its idea,” its meaningful aspect, *eidos*, is moulded into a firm and immutable shape, and now the entity is accessible to the mind’s eye. “How can a thing,” Plato’s Socrates asks, “which never remains in the same condition, be *something* (τί)?” Such an entity “leaks like a cracked pot¹¹ and is just like a person with a cold in his head” (440c). Only *a something* (τί) always-remaining-in-itself can be named, and, conversely, to be named means for an entity to keep in itself an *eidos* accessible to the mind, and this means to attract and to keep directed to itself mental vision, the *noesis*. *He Who is*, however, has no “what” of His own (He is ἄνευ τοῦ τί). That is why for Him to be named is to remain in glory; this is a latent method of revealing and being revealed for a “content,” which eludes the direct vision.

Establishing names is the eternal task of poets. “What remains, is established by the poets,” Hölderlin says.¹² The art of giving poetic names has a nature of its own. The poet frees the entity out of the indifference of common sense, by calling it *not by its own name*, but by using a *metaphor*, remarking and establishing ὁμοίωσις, similarity. The metaphor manifests *this* through *something other*, and *the one* through its connection with *the other*; it weaves the thing into the world’s whole. The metaphor, according to Aristotle, the author of the first *Poetics* in history, is a *transfer*, “giving the thing a name that belongs to something else” (*Poet.* 1457b6f.). The metaphor allows the poet to name by analogy, in a special way, even things which have no name.¹³ Yet the not proper, the alien (ἄλλότριον), exists only in opposition to the proper (τὸ ἴδιον). Of course, Aristotle is interested not in the habit or rules of *usage*, but in an ontological understanding of an entity’s proper *logos* (λόγος οἰκείος). This *logos* must express the *ontic* foundation of the entity, that is τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, the true “what,” the internal form of the thing. To express in discourse the being of an entity in its proper *logos* is to express τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, to express *what* it means (and has always meant, and always will mean) *to be this thing*. A person skilled in logic expresses the essence in words, brings it to light, not merely by giving *a name* to the en-

¹¹ Plato imitates here the famous πάντα ῥεῖ ascribed to Heraclitus and says: πάντα — ὡσπερ κεραμῖα — ῥεῖ, “everything leaks like cracked pottery.”

¹² “Was bleibet aber, stiften die Dichter.” *Andenken*. See F. Hölderlin, *Gedichte*, hrsg. v. J. Schmidt (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992), pp. 360–362.

¹³ Aristotle refers to the verse: “the sun sows the god-given light.” The action of spreading the light and warmth has no proper name, but it bears the same relation to the sun as sowing to the sower, and thus acquires its poetical name (*Poet.* 1457b25–30).