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[N.B. Since the publication of this paper, Heidegger's notes for the winter semester 1930–31 seminar on Plato's *Parmenides* have been published in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 83: *Seminare: Platon—Aristoteles—Augustinus*, ed. Mark Michalski (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2012), 23–37. However, the *Gesamtausgabe* edition does not incorporate the transcript of seminar notes in the Herbert Marcuse Archive discussed in this paper, and does not even mention its existence; the editor even conjectures that the announced continuation of the seminar in the summer semester of 1931, documented in the transcript, did not take place (see Mark Michalski, editor's epilogue, GA 83, 667–68). Apparently, no authorized student protocol of the seminar was made, probably due to the unofficial and "private" character of the seminar.]

All of a Sudden: Heidegger and Plato's *Parmenides*

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Abstract: The paper will study an unpublished 1930–31 seminar in which Heidegger reads Plato's *Parmenides*, showing that in spite of his much-criticized habit of dismissing Plato as the progenitor of "idealist" metaphysics, Heidegger was quite aware of the radical potential of his later dialogues. Through a temporal account of the notion of oneness (*to hen*), the *Parmenides* attempts to reconcile the plurality of beings with the unity of Being. In Heidegger's reading, the dialogue culminates in the notion of the "instant" (*to exaiphnēs*, *Augenblick*) in which the temporal plurality of presence and un-presence converges into a unified disclosure.

There is a standard objection to Heidegger's version of the destinal history (*Geschichte*) of Western metaphysics from its "first inception" (*der erste Anfang*) in Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Parmenides up to its "completion" (*Vollendung*) in Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche. This objection concerns the role given, in this history, to Plato.

The later Heidegger's remarks on Plato present him as the founder of metaphysics proper, as the "first end of the first beginning" of Occidental thinking.¹ By this Heidegger means that whereas the Presocratic thinkers already prefigured Western metaphysics in thinking emergence-into-Being, *physis*, in terms of pure and positive presence, they still had a strong experience of the event-character of this presence, of presence as "presencing" (*Anwesenung*), as expressed by Parmenides' founding words: *esti gar einai*, "for Being is taking place."² Plato, however, loses sight of this fundamentally temporal event-character of reality and approaches Being from the viewpoint of ideally accomplished present-ness and accessibility, *ousia*. The model of present-ness or being-

ness is basically, for Plato, the ideal and essential whatness of a thing's presence – its form or "look" (*idea, eidos*) – which precisely in its ideality is *more* present and accessible than the concrete reality of incomplete, temporal, and changing particular things.³ This ideal of perfect beingness has since haunted Western metaphysics up to what Nietzsche calls his "inverted Platonism."⁴

The possibility of experiencing Being as a dynamic, ongoing, and finite event of *taking-place* (*Ereignis*) – within the temporal place or context of meaningfulness furnished by human being (*Dasein*) – has thus been definitely suppressed and supplanted by the static ideal of supra-temporal beingness. As Heidegger argues in the two lecture courses entitled "On the Essence of Truth" from 1931–32 and 1933–34 and in the essay "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" (1940), in Plato's allegory of the cave, the initial experience of truth as *alētheia*, as having-emerged from concealment, is reformulated as and restricted to *orthotēs*, correctness (*Richtigkeit*), i.e., the correct directedness of thinking to the ideal – ultimately, to the *idea tou agathou*, the Idea of the Good, the source of meaningfulness for all other Ideas.⁵

While this radical ontological reading of Plato has profoundly influenced "continental" Plato scholarship, many of Heidegger's own pupils and colleagues – Hans-Georg Gadamer and Karl Jaspers, in particular – were struck by its obvious one-sidedness.⁶ This is definitely not the whole truth about Plato. Heidegger seems to deliberately disregard many dimensions of Platonic thought, thus violently reducing Plato's ontological potential in order to fit him neatly into his own grand metaphysical narrative. He also seems strangely insensitive to the subtleties of the dialogue form and makes many disparaging remarks about the dialectical method as such.⁷ As is the case with Aristotle's critique of Plato, most of Heidegger's remarks seem, in fact, to apply to a dogmatic form of Platonism rather than to Plato's own thought in its complexity, ambiguity, plurivocity, and playfulness. As Heidegger himself admitted to his pupil Georg Picht, in the end, Plato eluded him:

Shortly after the war, we took a walk in the forest above his [Heidegger's] house. I got up my courage and tried to explain to him why his interpretation of Plato's allegory of the cave did not convince me. This was a central point, because his entire interpretation of European metaphysics relied on it. . . . After posing, with restrained passion, a number of apt, exact questions, which I did not evade, he stood still and said, "I must say one thing to you: the structure of Platonic thinking is completely unclear to me."⁸

As Gadamer has pointed out, especially the dialogues that are considered to have been composed by Plato late in his life seem, in fact, to offer ample resources for the radical overcoming (*Überwindung*) of metaphysics that Heidegger was working on.⁹ In his later works, Plato himself indeed seems to "overcome" his own earlier "doctrine" of Ideas. Ever since the publication of Heidegger's 1924–25 lecture course on the *Sophist*, we have known that Heidegger was quite aware of the radical developments in the later Plato—even though he here suggests that these developments could be attributed to the growing influence, within Plato's Academy, of the young Aristotle.¹⁰ In the *Sophist*, Being (*to on*) is fundamentally understood as the mediating possibility (*dynamis*) of the mutual interaction or complicity (*koinōnia*) between the dialectically opposed supreme kinds (*megista genē*) of Being—namely, becoming (*kinēsis*) and static presence (*stasis*), sameness (*tauton*) and otherness (*heteron*), in general, Being and Un-being (*to mē on*), or presence and un-presence.¹¹

There is, however, another later dialogue that is closely connected to the themes of the *Sophist* and has given interpreters even more trouble: the *Parmenides*. This extremely intense and compact dialectical investigation is considered by many to be the most demanding work ever written by Plato. It is therefore striking that in his published lectures and writings, Heidegger almost never so much as mentions this dialogue.¹² In a letter to Heidegger in 1949, Jaspers points out this omission:

If the second half of his [Plato's] *Parmenides* would be performed anew with today's methods (and not Neoplatonically), then all bad metaphysics would be overcome, and the space would be open for a pure hearing of the language of Being.¹³

There is no record of a reply from Heidegger to Jaspers' remark. It seems almost as though the *Parmenides* was for him something like a taboo. Nevertheless, we know from the course catalogue published in William Richardson's *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (1963) that during the winter semester of 1930–31 Heidegger did give a seminar entitled "Plato's *Parmenides*."¹⁴ A transcript of notes from this unpublished seminar is available at the Herbert Marcuse Archive in Frankfurt.¹⁵ Even though the transcript only comprises 24 pages, it gives us a good idea of the rich and intense character of Heidegger's reading of the dialogue. I can here highlight only some of the central features and conclusions of this reading.

The seminar on the *Parmenides* was supposed to be a joint seminar, co-directed by Heidegger and the younger classics scholar Wolfgang Schadewaldt (1900–1974), who later became quite famous within his discipline. What Schadewaldt's actual role in the seminar was is unclear; the style and content conveyed by the transcript are, in any case, unmistakably Heideggerian.¹⁶ On the basis of Heidegger's systematic, if not very detailed and somewhat inconclusive reading, let us briefly look into the basic setting, structure and point of the *Parmenides*.

The setting of the *Parmenides* is a very indirectly narrated and obviously fictitious encounter, situated in an almost mythical past, between the young Socrates and two philosophers from Elea in Italy, old Parmenides and his younger accomplice Zeno, who have supposedly come to Athens to celebrate the Greater Panathenaic festival. A youngster by the name of Aristotle is also present; it is obviously tempting to take this as an allusion to Plato's famous pupil.¹⁷

The central theme of the dialogue is the Eleatic thesis of the unity of Being and its implications. In the opening sequence, Zeno is reading aloud a treatise where he argues that reality cannot *really* be many or manifold, as this would lead to absurdities.

Socrates here mocks Zeno: Zeno has in fact given many arguments in order to show that reality is not manifold. What Socrates implicitly calls into question is whether or not Zeno, in saying that reality is not manifold, is really saying the same as his revered teacher Parmenides, who famously teaches that reality is one and unified.¹⁸ Socrates then proceeds to state the main problem of the dialogue. It can easily be shown that the same thing can be both one and many in what Aristotle would call the “accidental” (*kata symbebēkos*) sense. For example, I am many – I participate in the Idea of plurality – in the sense that I have many parts, a front side and a back side, hands and legs, etc. I am also one – oneness is present in me – in the sense that I am one of the many people that are present in this room. However, there is no essential connection here – plurality and unity just both happen to be present in me.¹⁹ What Socrates would like to know, and what he sees as a most demanding task to demonstrate, is whether or not there is an essential and radical connection between the One and the Many – whether oneness as such presupposes plurality and vice versa. “Yet I will indeed be astonished if [someone] will demonstrate that what as such is one [*ho estin hen*] is itself many, and that, accordingly, the many are indeed one.”²⁰

From here, Parmenides himself takes over. Parmenides is presented as a much more profound thinker than his pupil Zeno. The entire dialogue seems to imply that Plato’s main aim in the *Parmenides* and in the *Sophist* is by no means to refute Parmenides, but rather to reappropriate Parmenides’ thesis of unity on a more radical and fundamental level than his Eleatic followers, Zeno and Melissus, had done.²¹ In the dialogue *Theaetetus*, for instance, referring back to the *Parmenides*, the old Socrates refuses to discuss Parmenides with the other Eleatics, as he recalls having been so forcefully struck by the profundity of this thinker in his youth.²² It is, in fact, quite possible that the reading of the *Parmenides* decisively modified Heidegger’s own understanding of Parmenides and of the Presocratics. Whereas in the 1920s he tends to see Plato and Aristotle as being ontologically more original than Parmenides with his static conception of immobile Being,²³ the later Heidegger stresses the role of

Parmenides as a genuinely pre-metaphysical, “inceptual” (*anfänglich*) thinker of the event of Being.²⁴ It must be noted that Heidegger gave his first major lecture course on Anaximander and Parmenides, entitled “The Inception of Occidental Metaphysics,” in 1932, shortly after the seminar on Plato’s *Parmenides*.²⁵

In the dialogue, Parmenides takes up Socrates’ question concerning the essential connection between the One and the Many, and transforms it into a critical re-examination of Socrates’ early views on the Ideas. Parmenides certainly seems to think that the young philosopher is off to a good start. Yet he points out that Socrates’ understanding of the relationship that he calls “participation” or, more literally, “mutual involvement” (*methexis*), between the one Idea and the plurality of concrete individual things, is rather vague.²⁶ Parmenides here takes up what is famously known as the Third Man Argument. If we assume, like the young Socrates, that the unifying Idea or Form—for example, being-human as such—is an entity independent of and separate from the individual, concrete humans, then the only way to account for their mutual relationship is to posit a wider context, a third being-human, that comprises and brings together both the primary Idea and the individual beings. This, of course, leads to an infinite regress.²⁷ Nor, however, can we simply deny, in a nominalistic fashion, that there is a stable, permanent, and unifying human essence apart from the plurality of individual humans, for then all our discourse concerning humanity or being-human as such would be devoid of any stable meaning.²⁸ The notion of the “involvement” of the many things in the one and single Idea thus remains obscure; in fact, it seems to turn out to be an “empty poetic metaphor,” as Aristotle puts it in the *Metaphysics*.²⁹

An endless amount of literature on the Third Man Argument and its validity exists. In a Heideggerian reading, however, its main thrust is clear: if the Being of beings is conceived of on the same level with beings—if, in other words, the ontological difference between Being and beings is not taken into account in a radical way—then no sense can be made of their mutual relationship.³⁰

With this problem, Parmenides has the young Socrates cornered; obviously Socrates has not taken it into account. Along with certain other Plato scholars, Heidegger seems to think that in posing the question concerning the relationship between the many beings and their unifying Being anew in this manner, Plato reaches a more radical formulation of the question of Being than is attained in his early and middle dialogues, such as the *Phaedo*, which gives the classical version of the doctrine of Ideas.³¹ The *Parmenides* demonstrates the aging Plato's startling ability to make a new philosophical beginning.³² The main theme of the dialogue—the question of a possible essential connection between the Many and the One—is for Heidegger at once the question concerning the relation of beings, which are many, to Being, which is one. Unlike most interpreters, Heidegger actually finds in the dialogue a positive solution, or at least a profound indication of a solution, to this problem.³³ What makes the dialogue *Parmenides* uniquely radical is the fact that this solution explicitly involves *temporality*.

Parmenides and Zeno now advise Socrates that the only path ahead in this difficult problem is an exercise (*gymnasia*) in dialectic, more precisely, in the hypothetical form of investigation that examines the necessary consequences of certain hypotheses as well as their negations—for, as Zeno points out, “Without such a thorough passage and wandering through all [relevant things] it is impossible for the mind to attain the truth.”³⁴ After several requests from those present, Parmenides himself finally agrees to perform such a dialectical exercise with the young Aristotle as his partner, even though he emphasizes how extremely strenuous this exercise will be.³⁵ The elaborate and painstaking passage through several hypotheses—basically of the form “the One is”—and some of their contraries—basically, “the One is not”—constitutes the long second part of the *Parmenides*. Many interpreters have seen the second part as completely detached from the first one—some take it to be a mere sample exercise in Plato's late dialectic, without much relevance for the general theme of the dialogue.³⁶ It has even been suspected of being a sophisticated joke.³⁷ For

Heidegger, however, the second part is not only intimately connected to and consistent with the first one, but in fact he takes it as proposing a solution to the initial problem.³⁸

The first hypothesis, “the One is” (137c4–142a8), leads to an impasse. Parmenides shows that the One, considered as an absolute unity, that is, as a unity that excludes all plurality and otherness, is in fact an impossible notion. Absolute unity is something of which nothing can be said or thought, as all discourse and predication necessarily involves plurality and difference. Absolute unity has no attributes at all. Taken as absolute, unity cannot even be said to be or to participate in beingness (*metechein ousias*)—it can be characterized only in negative terms.³⁹ The Neoplatonic interpreters of Plato, Plotinus, and Proclus among them, took the first hypothesis to be the proper culmination of the dialogue; here, Plato would point to the absolute, unspeakable, and incomprehensible One, the fundamental source that is itself “beyond Being” (*epekeina tou ontos*) and from which all secondary reality emanates.⁴⁰ This ineffable unity is the cornerstone of the elaborate Neoplatonic metaphysics of late antiquity.

The extensive second hypothesis (142b1–155e3), however, presents a different notion of unity: a unity that does participate in beingness, and is therefore not absolute unity, but One and Many. Here Parmenides attains a remarkable insight: since we can say of such a unity that it is, it must be temporal, as “is” is the present tense of the verb “to be” and thus refers to present time.⁴¹ If the unity of Being is not to be absolutely detached from the plurality of beings, it must have an essential relationship to the temporality and manifoldness of the givenness of these beings.

The third hypothesis (155e4–157b5), which is auxiliary to the second one and deals specifically with the question of the temporality of the One, is for Heidegger the culmination of the dialogue *Parmenides*. He refers to it as the “core of the entire dialogue,” even as the “utmost point that Plato attained in a positive way.”⁴² The first semester of the seminar ends abruptly with Heidegger’s blunt and astounding remark:

The third passage of the *Parmenides* is the most profound point to which Occidental metaphysics has ever advanced. It is the most radical advance into the problem of Being

and time—an advance which afterwards was not caught up with [*aufgefangen*] but instead intercepted [*abgefangen*] (by Aristotle).⁴³

What Heidegger is saying here seems to contradict practically everything else he ever said about Plato and Aristotle. Fortunately, according to the transcript, the seminar was continued into the summer semester of 1931. Here, Heidegger has the opportunity to elaborate a bit. By comparing the third hypothesis of the *Parmenides* to Aristotle's treatise on time in the fourth book of the *Physics*, he shows in what sense Plato's account of the temporal unity of Being makes Plato's views on temporality more radical than those of Aristotle.⁴⁴ However, in his lectures on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Theta, also from the summer semester of 1931, he seems to partially take back this strong statement:

Plato attained the insight that Non-being, the false, the bad, the transitory—hence Unbeing [*Unseiende*—also is. . . . If, however, ever since ancient times Being is one (*hen*), then this intrusion of notness [*Nichthaftes*] into the unity signifies its folding out into multiplicity. Thereby, however, the Many (the manifold) are no longer simply shut out from the One, the simple; rather, both are recognized as belonging together. . . . Whether Aristotle's *pollachōs* [the manifold meaning of Being] represents only a continuation of Plato's later teachings that the One is many (*hen – polla*), or whether, conversely, the Platonic *hen – polla* represents the still-viable Platonic form of coming to grips with the already awakened Aristotelian *pollachōs* by the elder Plato, will probably never be decided.⁴⁵

Heidegger also argues that the account of the temporal unity of plurality formulated in the *Parmenides* is even more radical than the solution to the question of Un-being attained in the *Sophist*⁴⁶; this is all the more surprising, considering that the *Parmenides* is generally considered to have been composed before the *Sophist*.⁴⁷ To conclude, we will take a brief and sketchy look at the temporal account given in the *Parmenides*.

If, as Parmenides proposes, the unity of Being is not absolute but rather relative and temporal, then it must be unity in relation to plurality, static presence in relation to becoming, identity in relation to otherness – on the whole, temporal presence in relation to temporal absence, being-present in relation to not-yet-being and to not-being-anymore. But then the true unified nature of reality can be established only if there is some kind of mediation between these opposites, between presence and absence. There must be a point of view on reality where reality is neither simply present nor simply absent – neither simply now nor simply not-yet or not-anymore. This point of view cannot be the temporal “now,” if this is conceived simply as the present part of time. Therefore Parmenides comes up with a concept of presence which is neither presence nor absence, neither becoming nor static, but relative to both – namely, the transition, mediation, or “overturning” (*metabolē*) between these fundamental pairs of opposites that constitute reality. This kind of presence he calls the instant, the “all-of-a-sudden” (*to exaiphnēs*).

For the “instant” [*to exaiphnēs*] seems to indicate precisely something out of which transition [*metabolē*] takes place into either direction [that is, becoming or static presence]. . . . Precisely this odd, instant kind of reality [*physis*] is posed in between becoming [*kinēsis*] and static presence [*stasis*]. Itself it is not within any time; what is in the state of becoming passes over into it and out from it into static presence, and what is static passes on to becoming.⁴⁸

Heidegger is one of the few interpreters to lay great weight on this notion of the instant, and apart from Hegel⁴⁹ and Kierkegaard he is perhaps the only one to find here the solution to the entire problematic of the dialogue and a peak within Plato’s thinking as a whole. Kierkegaard, in *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844), sees the “instant” of Plato’s *Parmenides* as radically prefiguring the Christian experience of the paradoxical mediation between the immanence of temporality and the transcendence of eternity in the incarnation of Christ, and derives thence his own concept of the “instant” or of the

“glance of the eye” (Danish *Øieblikket*, German *Augenblick*).⁵⁰ Although Heidegger does not mention Kierkegaard here, he also translates *to exaiphnēs* with *Augenblick*—a concept that plays a central part in the analysis of temporality in *Being and Time*. It must be noted that in his lectures from 1929–30, Heidegger makes the following enigmatic remark:

What we here designate as the “instant” [*Augenblick*] is what was really comprehended for the first time in philosophy by *Kierkegaard*—a comprehending with which the *possibility* of a completely new epoch of philosophy has begun for the first time since antiquity.⁵¹

Plato’s “instant” is that peculiar kind of unified presence which mediates between simple presence and simple absence, between simple static Being and becoming, between identity and otherness, between the One and the Many. The instant is presence *as* temporal, as *one-and-many*, as Heraclitus’s *hen diapheron heautō*, the One differentiating from itself—as *presence-by-absence*, to use Thomas Sheehan’s apt expression⁵², or, in Derridean terms, as *différance*. Time, for the Greeks, was the opposite of unity, self-identity, and presence—insofar as reality is temporal, it is also scattered, manifold, and ecstatic. The instant is the temporal presence where the ecstases of time—the already or the no-longer, the not-yet as well as the here and now—are folded together. It is the unified presence of reality *as* temporally scattered and manifold.

Unlike the temporal “now,” understood as a point in time, the “instant” is not in time—it is not “temporal” in the ordinary sense. However, in Heidegger’s reading, the “instant” is not *within* time, but rather manifests the essence of the temporality of Being as such: “As to the *exaiphnēs*, we say it is *time itself*. Time is not eternity, but rather the instant [*Augenblick*].”⁵³ And Heidegger sums up the third passage even more bluntly: “Being is *metabolē* [transition / overturning], *metabolē* is *exaiphnēs* [instant].”⁵⁴

We do not have the opportunity here to study the latter part of the dialogue, consisting of six shorter hypotheses that draw the intricate consequences from this radical notion of unity. The main point of these last hypotheses is that if there is unity, if

reality is one, then this unity of reality both comprises all things and is no thing.⁵⁵ If there is no unity, if reality is not unified, then there is no manifold reality at all but only nothing.⁵⁶ Heidegger interprets: Being itself, insofar as it unifies reality and renders beings possible, is itself no being at all, but rather intimately characterized by nothingness [*Nichtigkeit*].⁵⁷ As we already know from Heidegger: Being is the Nothing [*Nichts*], the background which makes the Something possible in the first place.⁵⁸ The dialogue *Parmenides* concludes with these astounding words of Parmenides:

Let this therefore be said, and let us also say the following, as it seems appropriate. Whether or not there is a unity, the unity itself and the manifold otherness, both in relation to themselves as well as to each other—all this, in every way, both is and is not, appears [*phainetai*] and does not appear. —This is most true [*alēthestata*].⁵⁹

The concluding word is the character Aristotle's grandiose *alēthestata*: "This is most true." The most profound articulation of reality as one-in-many, as identity-in-differentiation, as presence-by-absence, has been attained. Heidegger concludes his seminar with the following words:

Maximal truth has been attained when appearance and Non-being have been included within truth and Being. The dialogue literally leads to Nothing [*Nichts*]. . . . Thereby the question of Being has been transformed, everything is now otherwise. The *on* is both *hen* and *polla*, and it is *hen*, insofar as it is *polla* and vice versa. The One and the Many are only insofar as they are in themselves negative [*nichtig*].⁶⁰

Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* [1936–38], Gesamtausgabe, 65 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989), 211, 219 (hereafter, GA 65); *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 147, 153; *Besinnung* [1938–39], Gesamtausgabe, 66 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1997), 383 (hereafter, GA 66); *Mindfulness*, trans. Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (London: Continuum, 2006), 339–40.
2. Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* [1935], 6th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998), 10–14 [hereafter, EM]; *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 13–17; GA 66, 85–87, 366–72; *Mindfulness*, 71–73, 325–30; *Heraklit* [1943–44], Gesamtausgabe, 55 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1979), 85–108; *Was heisst Denken?* [1951–52], 5th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997), 138–49, 174–75; *What Is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 226–44; “*Alētheiēs eukykleos atremes ētor*” [1973], in *Seminare*, Gesamtausgabe, 15 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1986), 403–07; “*Parmenides: Alētheiēs eukykleos atremes ētor*,” in *Four Seminars*, trans. Andrew Mitchell and François Raffoul (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 94–97.
3. Heidegger, EM, 137–52; *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 180–99; GA 65, 206–24; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 144–56; “*Die Metaphysik als Geschichte des Seins*” [1941], in *Nietzsche*, vol. 2, 6th ed. (Stuttgart: Neske, 1998), 363–73 (hereafter, N II); “*Metaphysics as History of Being*,” in *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 1–10; “*Entwürfe zur Geschichte des Seins als Metaphysik*” [1941], in N II, 417; “*Sketches for a History of Being as Metaphysics*,” in *The End of Philosophy*, 55.
4. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, 6th ed. (Stuttgart: Neske, 1998), 153–224; *Nietzsche*, vol. 1: *The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 151–220.
5. Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet* [1931–32], Gesamtausgabe, 34 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1988), 21–147; *The Essence of Truth: On Plato’s Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002), 17–106; “*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*” [1933–34], in *Sein und Wahrheit*, Gesamtausgabe, 36/37 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2001), 81–264, 283–98; “*Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit*” [1940], in *Wegmarken*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1996), 203–38; “*Plato’s Doctrine of Truth*,” trans. Thomas Sheehan, in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 155–82.
6. Besides the works of Gadamer, Jaspers, and Picht referred to below, see Robert J. Dostal, “*Beyond Being: Heidegger’s Plato*,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 23: 1 (1985): 71–98; Adriaan T. Peperzak, “*Heidegger and Plato’s Idea of the Good*,” in *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*, ed. John Sallis (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 259–85; Stanley Rosen, *The Question of Being: A Reversal of Heidegger* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Peter Warnek, “*Reading Plato before Platonism (after Heidegger)*,” *Research in Phenomenology* 27 (1997): 61–89.
7. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger famously calls Plato’s dialectic “*a genuine philosophical embarrassment [Verlegenheit]*” that “*becomes superfluous*” as Aristotle “*raises it to a new level [aufhob]*”; Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* [1927], 18th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), 25; *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 47–48. In the *Sophist* lectures from 1924–25, Heidegger expounds on this, asserting that dialectic, *dialegesthai*, “*can indeed relinquish idle talk [Gerede]* but cannot do more than *attempt* to press on to the things themselves. . . . The fact that Plato did not advance far enough so as ultimately to see beings themselves and in a certain sense to

- overcome [überwinden] dialectic is a deficiency included in his own dialectical procedure." Martin Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes* [1924–25], Gesamtausgabe, 19 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1992), 197–98 (hereafter, GA 19); *Plato's Sophist*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 136–37. See also Martin Heidegger, "Colloquium über Dialektik" [1952], *Hegel-Studien* 25 (1991): 9–40. Cf. Walter Brogan, "Plato's Dialectical Soul: Heidegger on Plato's Ambiguous Relationship to Rhetoric," *Research in Phenomenology* 27 (1997): 3–15; Günter Figal, "Refraining from Dialectic: Heidegger's Interpretation of Plato in the *Sophist* Lectures (1924/25)," in *Interrogating the Tradition: Hermeneutics and the History of Philosophy*, ed. Charles E. Scott and John Sallis (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 95–109; Francisco Gonzalez, "On the Way to *Sophia*: Heidegger on Plato's Dialectic, Ethics, and *Sophist*," *Research in Phenomenology* 27 (1997): 16–60; "Dialectic as 'Philosophical Embarrassment': Heidegger's Critique of Plato's Method," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40:3 (2002): 361–89; Catalin Partenie, "Imprint: Heidegger's Interpretation of Platonic Dialectic in the *Sophist* Lectures (1924–25)," in *Heidegger and Plato: Toward Dialogue*, ed. Catalin Partenie and Tom Rockmore (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 42–71.
8. Georg Picht, "Die Macht des Denkens," in *Erinnerungen an Martin Heidegger*, ed. Günther Neske (Pfullingen: Neske, 1977), 203; "The Power of Thinking," in *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism: Questions and Answers*, ed. Günther Neske and Emil Kettering, trans. Lisa Harries (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 166.
 9. For Gadamer's critique of Heidegger's reading of Plato, which explicitly appeals to the radical potential of the *Parmenides*, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Zur Vorgeschichte der Metaphysik," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985), 9–29; "Plato," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 238–48; "Plato," in *Heidegger's Ways*, trans. John W. Stanley (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 81–93; "Der platonische 'Parmenides' und seine Nachwirkung," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 313–27; "Plato's *Parmenides* and its Influence," trans. Margaret Kirby, *Dionysius* 7 (December 1983): 3–16; "Auf dem Rückgang zum Anfang," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3, 394–416. Cf. Walter Lammi, "Hans-Georg Gadamer's Platonic *Destruction* of the Later Heidegger," *Philosophy Today* 41:3–4 (1997): 394–404.
 10. Heidegger, GA 19, 483–85; *Plato's Sophist*, 334–36. This view was originally put forward by Hermann Siebeck, "Platon als Kritiker aristotelischer Ansichten," *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, NF 108 (1896): 5–9. For a critique, see Fran O'Rourke, "Plato's Approach to Being in the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, and Heidegger's Attribution of Aristotelian Influence," *Diotima* 31 (2003): 47–58.
 11. This is, of course, Heidegger's interpretation; see Heidegger, GA 19, 477–610; *Plato's Sophist*, 330–422. The relevant passage in the *Sophist* (in *Platonis opera*, vol. 1, ed. E. A. Duke et al. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995]) is 249c10–259b8.
 12. In Heidegger's published writings and lectures, we find only a handful of very cursory references to this dialogue. In the *Sophist* lectures he asserts that in writing the *Sophist*, "Plato (the dialogue *Parmenides* preceded the *Sophist*, if the chronology is correct) had already properly understood and appropriated [*sich zugeeignet*] *Parmenides'* far-reaching discovery." However, in a marginal note to Simon Moser's typescript of the course, he adds that these dialogues are " 'contemporaneous' in terms of production, not of publication"; Heidegger, GA 19, 239; *Plato's Sophist*, 165. In the 1926 course on the fundamental concepts of ancient philosophy, Heidegger points out that whereas in the *Sophist* we

find Plato's most comprehensive discussion of the problem of the unity and plurality of the Ideas, it is in the *Parmenides* where the greatest advance in this questioning is carried out; Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie* [1926], Gesamtausgabe, 22 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1993), 264 (hereafter, GA 22). In the 1931 course on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Θ .1–3, which is contemporaneous with the seminar on the *Parmenides*, Heidegger discusses the problem of unity and plurality, but without an explicit reference to the *Parmenides*; Martin Heidegger, *Aristoteles, Metaphysik* Θ 1–3: *Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft* [1931], Gesamtausgabe, 33 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1981), 11–48 (hereafter, GA 33); *Aristotle's Metaphysics* Θ 1–3: *On the Essence and Actuality of Force*, trans. Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 8–39.

13. Karl Jaspers to Heidegger on July 10, 1949, in Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, *Martin Heidegger – Karl Jaspers: Briefwechsel 1920–1963*, ed. Walter Biemel and Hans Saner (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1990), 176; *The Heidegger-Jaspers Correspondence (1920–1963)*, trans. Gary E. Aylesworth (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003), 167. Translation modified.

Besides Gadamer and Jaspers, even some more recent commentators have noted the possibility of using the *Parmenides* as an argument against Heidegger's reading of Plato. Alain Boutot, in his *Heidegger et Platon: le problème du nihilisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987), 65–88, examines this line of reading Plato, but ends up rejecting it. Cf. Günter Figal, "Platons Destruktion der Ontologie: Zum Sinn des *Parmenides*," *Antike und Abendland* 39 (1993): 29–47; Christian Link, "Der Augenblick: Das Problem des platonischen Zeitverständnisses," in *Die Erfahrung der Zeit: Gedenkschrift für Georg Picht*, ed. Christian Link (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), 51–84.

14. The seminar of the winter semester 1930–31 is listed in the course catalogue as "Advanced students: Plato's *Parmenides* (with Schadewaldt)." According to the transcript, the seminar was continued in the summer semester of 1931, but there is no mention of this in the catalogue; William Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1963), 667.
15. The transcript is available as manuscript 0020.01 in the "Heideggeriana" section of the Herbert Marcuse Archive at the university library of Frankfurt am Main. Herbert Marcuse studied in Freiburg from 1928 until 1933, and during this period he compiled and transcribed an extensive collection of notes taken by himself and others from Heidegger's lectures and seminars, all the way from the summer semester of 1920 up to the summer semester of 1932. The author of the *Parmenides* notes is not indicated; it is quite possible that they were taken by Marcuse himself. For a list of the contents of this collection, see Thomas Regehly, "Übersicht über die 'Heideggeriana' im Herbert Marcuse-Archiv der Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek in Frankfurt am Main," *Heidegger Studies* 7 (1991): 179–209.
16. In a letter to the classics scholar Julius Stenzel, dated August 17, 1930, Heidegger expresses his hope that Stenzel visit Freiburg in order to discuss with him Plato's *Sophist* and *Parmenides*. This, he says, would be instructive from the point of view of his seminar on the *Parmenides* in the coming semester. He adds: "Schadewaldt will have a hand [*mitmachen*] in the exercises"; Martin Heidegger, "Briefe Martin Heideggers an Julius Stenzel," *Heidegger Studies* 16 (2000): 11–33.
17. It is perhaps also significant that it is this Aristotle who is chosen to be *Parmenides*' collocutor in the second part of the dialogue, as he is the youngest person present; Plato, *Parmenides*, in *Platonis opera*, vol. 2, ed. John Burnet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901), 137b5–c3 (hereafter, *Parm.*). Plato, however – probably in order to maintain chronological plausibility – is quick to identify this Aristotle as one of the Thirty Tyrants who took over in Athens soon after the Peloponnesian War (127d2–3).

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- Heidegger mentions this presence of Aristotle as a possible argument for the influence of the young Aristotle on the later Plato (Heidegger, GA 19, 485; *Plato's Sophist*, 336).
18. Plato, *Parm.* 127a7–128e4. Significantly, Parmenides and Aristotle do not enter the scene until after Zeno has finished reading.
 19. Plato, *Parm.* 128e5–130a2.
 20. Plato, *Parm.* 129b6–c1. My translation.
 21. See Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, unpublished typescript of the winter semester 1930–31 seminar, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, Frankfurt am Main / Archivzentrum / Nachlass Herbert Marcuse, 11.
 22. “As to Melissus and the others who argue that the All [*to pan*] is a static unity [*hen hestos*], let us not examine them coarsely, for I am ashamed before them; and I am even more ashamed before Parmenides, this singular being [*hena onta*]. To me, Parmenides appears to be, in Homer’s words, ‘venerable as well as marvelous [*deinos*].’ As a matter of fact, I conversed with him at a time when I was quite young and he was quite old, and he appeared to me to possess an altogether noble kind of profundity. I therefore fear that we would not be able to follow his discourse, let alone what he was thinking of when he pronounced it.” Plato, *Theaetetus*, in *Platonis opera*, vol. 1, 183e3–184a3. My translation.
 23. Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie* [1924], Gesamtausgabe, 18 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2002), 285–86; GA 19, 204–05, 237–39, 433; *Plato's Sophist*, 141–42, 163–65, 299; GA 22, 44–45.
 24. Heidegger, *Parmenides* [1942–43], Gesamtausgabe, 54 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1982), 1–23; *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojewicz (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 1–16.
 25. In the course catalogue, “Der Anfang der abendländischen Philosophie: Anaximander und Parmenides”; Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, 667. Forthcoming as volume 35 of the *Gesamtausgabe*.
 26. Plato, *Parm.* 130a8–131e7.
 27. Plato, *Parm.* 131e8–132b2. The example used here is not the Idea of a human being, but the Idea of greatness. However, in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle uses “third man” or “third human being” (*ho tritos anthrōpos*) as an established name for this argument; Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 2 vols., ed. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924), A.9.990b17 (hereafter, *Met.*). It is probable that he is not referring directly to the *Parmenides* but to a common form of this argument known within the Academy. See David Ross’s comment, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, vol. 1, 194–96.
 28. Plato, *Parm.* 135b5–c7.
 29. Aristotle, *Met.* A.9.991a20–22.
 30. Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, 3.
 31. “For it appears to me that if there is something beautiful [*kalon*], other than beauty itself [*auto to kalon*], it is not beautiful by any other virtue than its involvement [*metechei*] in that beauty, and this goes indeed for all things. . . . Nothing other renders it beautiful than either the presence [*parousia*] or the complicity [*koinōnia*] of that beauty, or whatever other way or sense in which this [beauty] be predicated [of the beautiful thing]. You see, I do not yet thoroughly settle this matter, but only the fact that all beautiful things are beautiful by virtue of beauty [*tō kalō panta ta kala kala*].” Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Platonis opera*, vol. 1, 100c4–6, d4–8. My translation.

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32. Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, 1–2.
33. However, it should be noted that some more recent commentators have, quite independently of Heidegger’s reading, arrived at a very similar interpretation of the meaning of the *Parmenides*. See, e.g., Harrison J. Pemberton, *Plato’s Parmenides: The Critical Moment for Socrates* (Darby, PA: Norwood, 1985), 89–115; Mitchell H. Miller Jr., *Plato’s Parmenides: The Conversion of the Soul* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 115–20; Constance C. Meinwald, *Plato’s Parmenides* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
34. Plato, *Parm.* 136e1–3. My translation.
35. Plato, *Parm.* 136c6–b4.
36. See, e.g., Francis M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides: Parmenides’ Way of Truth and Plato’s Parmenides Translated with an Introduction and a Running Commentary* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958).
37. Albert E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (London: Methuen, 1960), 349–70.
38. Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, 8.
39. Plato, *Parm.* 141d7–142a8.
40. See Plotinus, *Enneads*, in *Plotini opera*, 3 vols., ed. Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer (Leiden: Brill, 1951–73), V.1.23–27. The elaborate commentary on the *Parmenides* by Proclus, with its final section that has been preserved only in a Latin translation, runs only up to the end of the first hypothesis; Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, in *Procli philosophi Platonici opera inedita*, vol. 3, ed. Victor Cousin (Paris: Durand, 1864), 617–1244. If we suppose that there is no further lost part to the commentary, this fact is telling enough. Cf. Gadamer, “Der platonische ‘Parmenides’ und seine Nachwirkung,” 316; “Plato’s *Parmenides* and its Influence,” 6.
- Considering Heidegger’s silence on the dialogue *Parmenides*, it is perhaps not surprising that he is also largely silent on the topic of Neoplatonism. Some commentators have emphasized the affinities between Heidegger’s thinking of Being and the Neoplatonic “henological” idea of the ultimate Unity. See Pierre Aubenque, “Plotin et le dépassement de l’ontologie grecque classique,” in *Le néoplatonisme* (Paris: Éditions du Centre nationale de la recherche scientifique, 1971), 101–08; Eugene F. Bales, “A Heideggerian Interpretation of Negative Theology in Plotinus,” *The Thomist* 47:2 (1983), 197–208; Werner Beierwaltes, “*Epekeina*: A Remark on Heidegger’s Reception of Plato,” trans. Marcus Brainard, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 17:1–2 (1994): 83–99; Alain Boutot, *Heidegger et Platon*, 269–79; Annick Charles-Saget, “*Apharesis* et ‘Gelassenheit,’ Heidegger et Plotin,” in *Herméneutique et ontologie: hommage à Pierre Aubenque*, ed. Rémi Brague and Jean-François Courtine (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990), 323–44; Jean-Marc Narbonne, *La métaphysique de Plotin*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Vrin, 2001), 149–66; *Hénologie, ontologie et Ereignis (Plotin – Proclus – Heidegger)* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2001). However, Heidegger’s reading of the *Parmenides*, as well as some inconclusive remarks, make it evident that in Heidegger’s eyes, Neoplatonism is a metaphysical epoch based on an increasingly “onto-theological” interpretation or, rather, reconfiguration, of Plato’s thinking; see, e.g., Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, Gesamtausgabe, 60 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995), 281; *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch, Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 211–12; GA 19, 496; *Plato’s Sophist*, 343.
41. Plato, *Parm.* 151e3–155e3.
42. Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, 8. My translation.
43. Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, 15. My translation.

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44. Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, 15–21.
 45. Heidegger, GA 33, 27–28; *Aristotle's Metaphysics* Θ 1-3, 22–23. Translation modified.
 46. Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, 24.
 47. There is a general agreement that the *Parmenides* is to be situated chronologically between the dialogues of Plato's middle period – notably, *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic* – in which the doctrine of Ideas is worked out in its classical form, and the late dialogues – *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, and *Laws* – in which this classical formulation once again becomes problematic and subject to revision. This view is convincingly argued for on stylistic and thematic grounds by Lewis Campbell, "On the Place of the *Parmenides* in the Chronological Order of the Platonic Dialogues," *The Classical Review* 10:3 (1896): 129–36. Campbell considers the *Parmenides* and the *Theaetetus* to be "sister dialogues," of which *Parmenides* is probably the earlier one; interestingly, he sees the concept of the instant precisely as "clearing a path" for Plato's late thinking, rather than as its culmination.
 48. Plato, *Parm.* 156d3–4, 6–e3.
 49. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel considers the *Parmenides* to be the "masterpiece of the Platonic dialectic" and "the pure Platonic doctrine of Ideas"; G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 2, Jubileumsaufgabe, 18 (Stuttgart: Frommanns, 1959), 237–43; *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1996), 253–59.
 50. Søren Kierkegaard, *Begrebet Angest: en simpel psykologisk-paapegende Overveielse i Retning af det dogmatiske Problem om Arvensynden, af Vigilius Haufniensis*, in *Samlede Værker*, vol. 6 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1991), 171–78; *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin*, trans. Reidar Thomte and Albert B. Anderson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 82–90.
 51. Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt – Endlichkeit – Einsamkeit* [1929–30], Gesamtausgabe, 29/30 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983), 225; *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 150. Translation modified.
 52. Thomas Sheehan, "Heidegger's Topic: Excess, Recess, Access," *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 41:4 (1979): 629; "Heidegger's Philosophy of Mind," in *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey*, vol. 4, ed. Guttorm Fløistad (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1983), 307; "On the Way to *Ereignis*: Heidegger's Interpretation of *Physis*," in *Continental Philosophy in America*, ed. Hugh Silverman, John Sallis and Thomas M. Seebohm (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1983), 149; "Time and Being, 1925–7," in *Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, vol. 1, ed. Christopher Macann (London: Routledge, 1992), 30–31.
 53. Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, 15. My translation.
 54. Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, 13. My translation.
 55. Plato, *Parm.* 160b2–4.
 56. Plato, *Parm.* 166a7–b2.
 57. Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, 13, 24.
 58. Martin Heidegger, "Was ist Metaphysik?" [1929], in *Wegmarken*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1996), 114–15; "What Is Metaphysics?" trans. David Farrell Krell, in *Pathmarks*, 90–91.
 59. Plato, *Parm.* 166c2–5. My translation.
 60. Heidegger, *Plato: Parmenides*, 24. My translation.