

## 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. Ricoeur, 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 re-discover 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*).<sup>1</sup> 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*.”<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> The main goal of my research then consists in the clarification and demonstration of this last thesis.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>3</sup> 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*."<sup>4</sup> However, this is, I believe, too modest a description of the state of affairs concerning the relationship between Heidegger and Aristotle.<sup>5</sup> 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.

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

<sup>5</sup> 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 ἓόν) "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*.<sup>6</sup>

### 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

<sup>6</sup> 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.

The Ontology of Time

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