Delimitation and Being in the *Sophist*

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Abstract

In this paper I present a solution to a puzzle in Plato's *Sophist*. The puzzle is that Being is delimited as that which has the power to affect or be affected yet such a delimitation is impossible because it would require something for Being to be delimited *from*. In the first sections of this paper, I make clear what a delimitation of Being would require. Then, I argue that neither of the two possible candidates for that which Being is delimited *from*— absolute not-being and relative not-being—seem suitable contenders. Lastly, I suggest that absolute not-being can in fact be made sense of as that *from* which Being is delimited.

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Introduction

One Hundred Years of Solitude begins:

Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buenída was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice. At that time Macondo was a village of twenty adobe houses, built on the bank of a river of clear water that ran along a bed of polished stones, which were white and enormous, like prehistoric eggs. The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point.¹

Gabriel García Marquez illustrates a time when the world itself was so young that things had not yet received names; to pick those things out people had to point. But just as young Aureliano will become colonel and the recently founded Macondo will grow beyond twenty adobe houses, the objects of pointing will one day become effable. In the same way that both Aureliano and Macondo will lose their states of adolescence to the march of time, things previously unspeakable will lose their ineffability to a name.

Could the inability to speak about something instead be due to the very nature of that thing? Even if it is because of the nature of that thing, is there any reason to leave room for such a thing in a philosophical system? Further, is there a way to allow for such a thing without speaking of it and thus contradicting oneself? The aim of this paper is to suggest a reading of parts of the *Sophist* that allows for affirmative answers to the aforementioned questions. This interpretation is motivated by its merit in providing a

¹ Gabriel García Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Translated by Gregory Rabassa. (London: Penguin Group, 1972), 1.

response to another puzzling question that comes into view upon examination of 247e. This question is: how is a delimitation of Being possible at all?

The ὄρος at 247e

There is a peculiar use of ὄρος in Plato's *Sophist*. At 247e3-4 the Eleatic Stranger (ES) says:

I'm saying that a thing really is if it has any power at all, either by nature to do something to something else or to have even the smallest thing done to it by even the most trivial thing, even if it only happens once. I'll take it as a definition that *those which are* amount to nothing other than *power*.²

The last sentence is a rendering of the Greek text: τίθεμαι γὰρ ὅρον ὀρίζειν τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν οὐκ ἄλλο τι πλὴν δύναμις. In the following paragraphs I will discuss why the text might more clearly be translated as *I set forth a delimitation delimiting Being as nothing other than power*.

What was translated previously as *definition*, I render *delimitation*. There is a debate about whether this is in fact a *definition* of Being or a mere *mark*.³ A definition of x will be that which picks out all and only x's and provides that in virtue of which all x's *are* x's. A *mark*, on the other hand, will not provide that in virtue of which all x's are x's. I use "delimitation" to remain neutral between *definition* and *mark*.

² Throughout this paper I will make use of the translation by Nicholas P. White. In a number of instances, however, I have altered White's translation with suggestions that seem to me to make the text more readable. In no case should these changes fundamentally alter the meaning of the text. For example, here White has "capacity" where I translate "power." Plato, *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997): 269.

³ Though the context may hint that this $\delta\rho\sigma\zeta$ is a *definition*, there are reasons to think it is a *mark*. Cornford suggests that this $\delta\rho\sigma\zeta$ is a mark because Plato does not use $\lambda\delta\gamma\sigma\zeta$, which would more clearly mean *definition*. He points to the *mark* of man at *Gorgias* 470b as an example of a case where $\delta\rho\sigma\zeta$ means *mark* and not *definition*. Lesley Brown takes the $\delta\rho\sigma\zeta$ of the corporealists at 246b to be a mark, as opposed to a definition and the one at 247e, *if* it is endorsed by Plato, to be a criterion at best. Francis MacDonald Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957): 238, footnote 3. Lesley Brown, "Innovation and Continuity: The Battle of Gods and Giants, *Sophist* 245-249," in *Method in Ancient Philosophy*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 186, 193.

I have rendered the delimitation as one of Being as opposed to of beings or of those which are. As G.E.L. Owen notes, this $\"{o}po{\varsigma}$ comes in the context of an earlier $\`{o}po{\varsigma}$ of Being (singular) as identical to body at 246b1.⁴ This delimitation was that of the corporealists who are said to "drag everything down to the earth from the heavenly region of the invisible."⁵ In the immediate context, the delimitation at 247e comes as a suggestion to the reformed corporealists who admit of invisible moral qualities. ⁶ Because the delimitations that form the foci of these two discussions are clearly tied, it seems mistaken to read the latter as one of beings rather than Being even though τ{a} $\`{o}v{\tau}a$ is in the plural.⁷

My translation makes clear ES' duplication of forms of the word ὄρος (ὄρον ὀρίζειν). The translation of Nicholas P. White omits the infinitive ὀρίζειν, which I rendered "delimiting." ⁸ After all, it seems redundant to say that a delimitation *delimits*. Considerations of this sort likely motivate White to omit the infinitive ὀρίζειν and

⁴ G.E.L. Owen, "Plato on Not-Being", in *Plato I: Metaphysics and Epistemology*, ed. G. Vlastos (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970, repr. University of Notre Dame Press, 1978): 229, footnote 13.

⁵ Plato, *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997): 267.

⁶ 247b-c

⁷ I want to draw attention to two things. First, I write "Being" not only in the singular, but also without the definite article. I think it is clear from the context that Being itself is intended (as opposed to *the being of something*). Second, there is the interesting question of why should δύναμις be singular while τὰ ὄντα is plural. In discussion, István Bodnár suggested that it is because the force of the claim at 247e emphasizes power's role—which has been brought together and articulated as active or passive—in this delimitation of Being. Equally, the plural τὰ ὄντα emphasizes that this ὅρος will apply to *each and every* being. ⁸ Given that the infinitive is permitted, there are two ways to interpret the text at 247e. One is to take ὅρον, the accusative object of τίθεμαι, as an accusative paired with the infinitive ὀίζειν. The other is to read the infinitive ὀiζειν as supplementing the finite verb τίθεμαι. The first construes the text as "I put forth a delimitation..." Of the two, the latter construal seems less plausible hence the former should be accepted.

perhaps even provide impetus to the tradition of editors that move to throw out the infinitive altogether.⁹

Against this move is the fact that the text as it reaches the present from manuscript families β and T contains $\delta\rho(\zeta_{EIV})$. The question becomes whether $\delta\rho(\zeta_{EIV})$ is meant to emphasize some sense of the word $\delta\rho\circ\varsigma$ or the word $\delta\rho(\zeta_{EIV})$ is a mistake to be removed from the text. In favor of the former option seems the fact that a form of the word $\delta\rho\circ\varsigma$ is used in the same context a third time. The same delimitation of Being from 247e is recalled at 248c4-5. ES says, "We took it as a sufficient *delimitation* of *Being* that the capacity be present in a thing to do something or have something done to it, to or by even the smallest thing or degree."¹⁰ The already present repetition of forms of $\delta\rho\circ\varsigma$. Because of this and the fact that $\delta\rho(\zeta_{EIV})$ is present in both manuscript families β and T it seems more reasonable for the $\delta\rho(\zeta_{EIV})$ be a redundant error deserving excision.

⁹ Burnet suggests throwing out ὀρίζειν along with Ast. Badham goes even further and omits ὀρίζειν τὰ ὄντα. Plato *Platonis Opera: TOMVS I*, edited by Ioannes Burnet. (Oxonii: E. typographeo Clarendoniano, 1900).

¹⁰ White here translates "definition" where I render "delimitation." White has "beings" where I have "Being." Plato, *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997): 270.

A puzzle about Delimitation and Being

Why does Plato use forms of the word ὄρος twice at 247e and then a third time, with reference to the same delimitation of Being, at 248c? If nothing else, this repetition serves to draw the reader's attention to the word ὄρος itself. Focus on the word ὄρος will both stress the word's sense *delimitation* and emphasize that it is a *delimitation* of *Being* under discussion.¹¹

In the spirit of the dialogue, itself full of perplexities about Being, a delimitation of Being becomes puzzling upon reflection.¹² It seems easy to imagine a delimitation of an area, say, by a wall. It seems harder but still possible to think of a delimitation of blue on a color spectrum. In both cases there is something on the other side of the delimitation (enemy territory and bluish shades of green). But, it is not at all clear what, if anything, could be on the other side of a delimitation of Being. So how can Being have a delimitation?¹³

The reader might think that I have simply used "delimitation" in a strange way. It seems harder, after all, to get from this sense of *delimitation* back to *definition*, which the word "delimitation" was originally meant to allow for. In the next section, however, I will make clear that this sense of *delimitation* is tied up with the word őpoç at least from

¹¹ Even more, if Plato had not wanted to emphasize some further sense of the word ὅρος he could have easily used the word λόγος because λόγος is free from the sense of *delimitation* one finds in ὅρος. ¹² Further, consider the *Sophist*'s traditional subtitle "on Being."

¹³ To my knowledge this puzzle has gone unrecognized. This is not to say that the puzzle should have been recognized. After all, the puzzle seems more likely to arise if the delimitation of Being at 247e is, in fact, ascribed to Plato. That the puzzle was not recognized, then, likely speaks to a tradition of interpreters *not* ascribing the delimitation of Being at 247e to Plato.

Homer. This will allow me to articulate the conditions of possibility for a delimitation and so further clarify the meaning of $\[5mu]{o}poc$. I will then suggest how Plato might account for these criteria by drawing on the *Sophist* and, briefly, the *Parmenides*. After that, I will examine all of the uses of forms of the word $\[5mu]{o}poc$ in the *Sophist* and argue that in each instance the conditions identified in the Homeric usage of $\[5mu]{o}poc$ are present.

After discussing the uses of forms of ὄρος in the *Sophist* I will more clearly articulate the puzzling nature of a delimitation of Being. The following is an outline of this puzzle:

- 1. A delimitation, or ὅρος, of Being is possible.
- If a ὅρος of Being is possible, then Being will be delimited either from absolute not-being or relative not-being.
- 3. Being cannot be delimited from absolute not-being.
- 4. Being cannot be delimited from relative not-being.
- 5. A őpoç of Being is not possible.

Five is the negation of one hence both cannot be true at the same time. Yet, I argue that given the meaning of delimitation, or őpoç, five just follows from the above premises. The sections following my discussion of the word őpoç in the *Sophist* will individually be devoted to explaining and providing support for each of the premises of the puzzle outlined above. After that, I will briefly summarize and clarify the results of my arguments. Then, in the final section of this paper, I will suggest a solution to this puzzle, namely the rejection of premise three.

The meaning of ὄρος

An early and illuminating use of a form of ὄρος is found in Homer. Lines 420 to 425 of Book 12 of the *Iliad* read:

For neither could the mighty Lycians break the wall of the Danaans, and make a path to the ships, nor ever could the Danaan spearmen thrust back the Lycians [420] from the wall, when once they had drawn nigh thereto. But as two men with measuring-rods in hand strive about the *boundaries* in a common field, and in a narrow space contend each for his equal share; even so did the battlements hold these apart, and over them [425] they smote the bull's-hide bucklers about one another's breasts, the round shields and fluttering targets.¹⁴

The word translated above as "boundaries," οὕροισι, is a plural dative of ὅρος. The struggle of the Lycians and the Danaans is compared to men quarrelling over shares of land. They quarrel about the boundaries that will serve to separate one's land from that of the other. Already, some considerations essential to a ὅρος can be identified.¹⁵

First, that which one man tries to keep inside the boundary is not identical with that which lies on the other side of the boundary. The example of men with measuring rods comes up in the context of the struggle between Lycians and Danaans. The Lycians,

¹⁴ Here Murray has "boundary-stones" where I have rendered "boundaries." Homer. The Iliad with an English Translation by A.T. Murray, Ph.D. in two volumes. Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann, Ltd. 1924.

¹⁵ Some commentators note this sense of ὄρος as boundary or delimitation. Some examples include: Lesley Brown in "Innovation and Continuity: The Battle of Gods and Giants, *Sophist* 245-249," in *Method in Ancient Philosophy*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 193. Sylvain Delcomminette in "Odysseus and the Home of the Stranger from Elea", *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 02 (2014): 540. And Dana Miller in "Fast and Loose about Being: Criticism of Competing Ontologies in Plato's *Sophist*", *Ancient Philosophy*, 24, (2004): 350, footnote 10.

fighting for Troy, struggle to push beyond the battlements of the Danaans and clear a way to their ships while the Danaans hold them at bay. Of course, what is on one side of the battlement is not identical to what is on the other.

Equally, that which is on one side of the battlement is not contained in some way—for example, as a part is contained by a whole—by what is on the other. It would be absurd if the battlement were such that, say, the Lycians pushing to breach the wall were already beyond it!

It is important to note that Homer's use of $\[5poc]$ is as a boundary, or delimitation, of spatial regions. Though the above requirements of a $\[5poc]$ —1) that the two sides of the $\[5poc]$ are not identical, 2) that the far side of the $\[5poc]$ does not contain the close one and 3) that the far side of the $\[5poc]$ is not contained by the close one—seem tied to the spatial nature of Homer's subject matter, they need not be. In the following sections I will articulate how these criteria of a $\[5poc]$ can be satisfied in Plato as applying to things that need not be spatial and then argue that these conditions of a $\[5poc]$ are preserved in the *Sophist*.

Non-Identity and Containment

Are the three criteria of a ὄρος, or delimitation, preserved in Plato's *Sophist*? I will argue that they are in fact preserved. In support of this I will examine every form of ὄρος used in the *Sophist*. But first, *how* the criteria could be preserved is in need of explanation. Something must be said about the notions of non-identity and containment in Plato.

In order to clarify criterion 1)—which says that the two sides of the delimitation are not identical—I will examine Plato's notion of non-identity. In the *Sophist*, ES defines difference, or non-identity, as having a share in the Different. At 255e ES says:

And we're going to say that [the Different] pervades all of [the greatest kinds], since each of them is different from the others, not because of its own nature but because of sharing in the type of the Different.¹⁶

The Different pervades all of the greatest kinds—a group of very important forms that will be discussed in depth later in this paper—and it is in virtue of the Different that all of them are different. Insofar as the Different is responsible for the difference of the greatest kinds, and those kinds are the *greatest* kinds, it makes sense that the Different will also be accountable for the difference of individual things. This means that criterion 1) of a delimitation will be satisfied if the two sides of a delimitation partake in the Different with respect to one another.

¹⁶ Plato, *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997): 278.

Both "contain" and "contained by" in criteria 2) and 3) need elucidation. At *Parmenides* 150e-151a the notion of containment is clarified: "And yet, since it is in itself, it would also be around itself on the outside, and as a container it would be greater than itself, but as contained it would be less. And thus the one would be greater and less than itself."¹⁷ The point here is that if something is around another thing—in this case the one, which is puzzlingly around itself—the thing first thing will contain the second; for x to contain y means that x is around y.

Though containment is brought up in a *spatial* sense, subsequent mention of the part whole relation suggests that there is at least some sense in which the part is contained by the whole.¹⁸ Consider the example of the sail earlier in the *Parmenides* at 131b-c. The sail was meant as a simile for how particulars may get their share of the whole of a form. On that view, each part of the form is contained by the whole just as individuals covered by parts of the sail are contained by that sail.

In the case of forms, containment need not be tied to spatial containment. In the *Sophist* ES says that the Different is "chopped up among all beings in relation to each other."¹⁹ Talk of the Different being chopped up clearly evokes the part-whole relation, yet it would be strange to understand *every* part of the Different as spatial.²⁰ Because of this it seems the notion of containment can be made sense of in a non-spatial way.

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¹⁷ Ibid., 383.

¹⁸ 151b-c

¹⁹ Ibid., 282.

²⁰ Consider, for example, the moral qualities leveled against the corporealists at 247b in the *Sophist*. The corporealists are reluctant to admit that invisible things, like justice and virtue, can come to be present. If it is accepted that moral qualities can come to be present, the question arises: where are they before they come to be present? These moral qualities will share in the Different, insofar as they are different from

This type of parthood, and so containment, is emphasized throughout the frequent mentions of parts in the *Sophist*. In various cases subordinate kinds are called parts of a superior kind.²¹ For example, at 220b hunting is divided into two parts: enclosure-hunting and strike-hunting. Enclosure-hunting is explicitly called a μ épo ς , or part, of hunting.²² Here, insofar enclosure-hunting is a part of hunting; hunting will contain enclosure-hunting and enclosure-hunting will be contained by hunting. Importantly, superior kinds give their character to subordinate kinds. Just as the Different is responsible for difference wherever the parts it are found, it makes sense enclosure-hunting get part of its character, that of *hunting*, from hunting itself. This means that criteria 2) and 3) can be satisfied with respect to kinds if neither of the two sides of the delimitation is subordinate to the other.

Importantly, there will be kinds that are not proper parts—by "proper parts" I mean divisions of a whole that are not coextensive with the whole—that are, nonetheless, subordinate to superior kinds insofar as the superior kinds give the subordinate ones part of their character. These will be the intermingling greatest kinds, but they will form the focus of a later section.

other things, hence will have a part of the Different. If moral qualities can exist without being present in something (I have in mind Justice, for example), then it seems the Different can have non-spatial parts. ²¹ To give a few examples, at 220c7 hunting with baskets, nets, slipknots and creels is collectively called enclosure hunting, which is named a part (μ έρος) of hunting. At 221b3 the acquisitive half of art is called a part (μ έρος) of acquisition. At 223d6 exchange is said to be the part (μ έρος) of purveying done within the city. At 225a2 combat is called a part (μ έρος) of acquisition. ²² 220c

Όρος in the Sophist

I will now examine all of the uses of forms of "poc in Plato's *Sophist* and suggest that the three requirements for a delimitation of x—1) that x not be identical to that which it is delimited from, call it y, 2) that x not contain y and 3) that x not be contained by y—are preserved throughout the dialogue.

Forms of the word ὄρος occur ten times throughout the dialogue. Four of these have already been discussed. These were the two occurrences at 247e, the one at 248c and the corporealist *delimitation* at 246b.

At 222c ES uses the word ὁρισάμενοι, a participle of the verb ὁρίζω, a verbal form of ὅρος. ES says, "Then let's say that the hunting of tame animals falls into two parts…Let's take piracy, enslavement, tyranny, along with everything that has to do with war, and let's *delimit* them all together as hunting by force."²³ One part of the hunting of tame animals is *delimited*, "delimit" is a translation of ὀρισάμενοι, as all that is listed above. Hunting by force stands in contrast with the other part of the hunting of tame animals, which will be called persuasion at 222d.

It seems clear that 1) hunting by force is not the same as persuasion. It will be true that 2) hunting by force does not contain persuasion, this is because persuasion is not subordinate to hunting by force, and equally that 3) persuasion does not contain hunting by force, insofar as hunting by force is not subordinate to persuasion.

²³ White has "define" where I have put "delimit." Ibid., 243.

The word $\delta\rho\omega\nu$ is used at 231a. Two pairs of items are compared here. The first pair is the sophist and the honorable expert in elenctic purification (purification of the soul through examination by cross-questioning), which is matched with a second pair, the wolf and the dog. ES is reluctant to grant too much honor to the sophist. The implication is that to do so would be to make him too similar to the elenctic purifier. The one who comes to mind as the honorable elenctic purifier seems none other than Socrates.²⁴

Individuals mentioned bear similarities to their partner. The sophist and Socrates are similar in that they both practice a version of *elenchus*. The wolf and the dog are similar in that they physically resemble one another. But the individuals are also different from their partners. ES is reluctant to ascribe honor to the sophist, while Socrates is deserving of honor. The wolf is the wildest animal while the dog is the tamest. ES tells Theaetetus to be wary of the similarities between the partners of the two pairs. He then, acknowledging these similarities, urges Theaetetus to allow for the definition of the sophist that makes him similar to Socrates.

At the end of this passage ES remarks, "...I certainly don't think that when the sophists are enough on their guard the dispute will be about an unimportant *distinction*."²⁵ The

²⁴ That this individual is Socrates seems uncontroversial. See Francis MacDonald Cornford. *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957): 181-182.

²⁵ Plato, *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997): 251.

word "distinction" is a translation of $ö\rho\omega v$.²⁶ ES' point seems to be that, should the definition of the sophist as elenctic be accepted, the debate will not be about that which keeps the sophist apart from Socrates or the absence of which allows them to be classed together.

That which keeps two things from being classed together may be a different quality. For instance, the dog is *tame* hence cannot be grouped with the wolf. This explains why White translates $\delta\rho\omega\nu$ as "distinction." When what is at issue is kept in mind, namely the classing together or separating of the sophist and Socrates, the three criteria of $\delta\rho\sigma\varsigma$ seem satisfied. Just as the class of wolves 1) is not identical to the class of dogs, 2) does not contain the class of dogs and 3) is not contained by the class of dogs, given that the sophist and elenctic purifier are to be kept apart, the elenctic purifier 1) will not be identical to the sophist, his class 2) will not contain the sophist and his class 3) will not be contained by that of the sophist.

The plural aorist participle $\dot{\alpha}\phi o\rho (\sigma \alpha v \tau \epsilon \zeta)$, of the verb $\dot{\alpha}\phi o\rho (\zeta \omega)$, which is another verbal form of $\delta \rho o \zeta$, occurs at 240c7.²⁷ ES asks Theaetetus, "Well then, how can we *delimit* [the Sophist's] field of expertise, so as to be consistent?"²⁸ Beginning at 239c, the worry about

²⁶ The text does not make clear the subject of φυλάττωσιν, or "are on their guard." Some translate the subject as *people*. I do not think it makes a difference to my arguments if this subject is taken as sophists or people, though there may be reasons to take it one way rather than the other. At the beginning of 231a σοφιστάς, the *plural*, is used. This might speak in favor of taking the subject to be the sophists, insofar as the verb is in the third person *plural*. Against this is the consideration that it seems characteristic of sophists to be concerned with unimportant distinctions.

²⁷ This form is composed of ὁρίζειν and the preposition ἀπό meaning "from." The sense of singling something out is thus emphasized, as ἀφορίζω might be understood as "delimiting *from*." ²⁸ White has "define" where I have put "delimit." Ibid., 261.

locating the sophist is that it is not clear where he can fall within the two divisions of imitation. On one hand, if he is located in the appearance-making branch he will twist the words of his pursuers to his advantage, using falsehood, which implies not-being.²⁹ On the other hand, if he is called a copy-maker he will question what is meant by "copy" suggesting that a copy is and is not.³⁰

The problem faced at 240c that motivates ES' use of *delimit* seems to be that both branches of imitation, appearance-making and copy-making, commit to not-being (which is explicitly rejected in the section leading up to 240).³¹ The initial motivation to class the sophist within imitation is that he does not deal with actual knowledge of real things.³² The assumption behind this first move, and so behind ES' question of how to *delimit* the sophist's field of expertise, seems then to be that 1) whatever the sophist does is not identical to actually knowing, 2) the sophist's work does not contain actually knowing and 3) his field of expertise is not contained by actual knowing.

At 227c5 ἀφορίσθαι, the middle/passive infinitive of ἀφορίζω, occurs:

As far as that's concerned, it doesn't matter to our method which name would seem to be the most appropriate, just so long as it keeps the cleansing of the soul separate from the cleansing of everything else. For the time being, the method has

²⁹ 240d

³⁰ 240b-c

³¹ See 236d-239c.

³² 234a-235a

only tried to *delimit* the cleansing that concerns thinking from the other kinds—if, that is, we understand what its aim is.³³

Here ES expresses his concern to delimit the cleansing of thinking from other types of cleansing. These types include cleansing of the inside of the body, by medicine and gymnastics, the cleansing of the outside of the body, by bathing, and the care of non-living bodies.³⁴ Call these collectively "the other forms of cleansing." It seems clear that at 227c ES' concern is to keep the cleansing of thinking distinct from these types of cleansing. Hence, it makes sense that 1) cleansing of thinking is not identical to the other forms of cleansing, 2) cleansing of thinking does not contain the other forms of cleansing.

The aorist passive participle of $\dot{\alpha}\phi o \rho i \sigma \theta \dot{\epsilon} v$, can be found at 257c. ES says:

Knowledge is a single thing, too, I suppose. But each part of it that has to do with something is *delimited* and has a name peculiar to itself. That's why there are said to be many expertises and many kinds of knowledge.³⁵

This case clearly exemplifies the three criteria of a ὄρος. In order for it to hold true that there are many distinct expertises and types of knowledge, it will be the case that 1) a given part of knowledge is not identical to the other parts. Also, it will be true that 2) that part cannot contain the other parts, insofar as those parts are themselves to be distinct parts of knowledge. Equally, it can be said that 3) the first part of knowledge will not be

³³ White has "distinguish" where I have "delimit." Ibid., 248.

³⁴ 226e-227a

³⁵ White has "marked off" where I have "delimited." Ibid., 281.

contained by the other parts, insofar as that part is meant to be classed separately from those other parts.³⁶

The word ἀφορισθέν occurs again at 257e. ES asks, "Isn't it in the following way that *the not beautiful* turns out to be, namely by being both *delimited* within one kind of *beings*, and also set over against one *being*?"³⁷ The not beautiful here is delimited within a class of beings against the beautiful. It is clear by the meaning of the Different at 258a-b that 1) the not beautiful is different from the beautiful. It seems trivially true that 2) the not beautiful does not contain the beautiful and 3) the not-beautiful is not contained by the beautiful.

Above I have argued that the three criteria of a $\[5mm]{o}poc$ are preserved throughout the uses of forms of the word in the *Sophist*. It seems correct to say, then, that this sense of $\[5mm]{o}poc$ as delimitation is emphasized throughout the text. The point of this section was to make clear the criteria that will apply to the delimitation of Being at 247e. Recall that the delimitation of Being was articulated with a peculiar double use of forms of $\[5mm]{o}poc$ ($\[5mm]{o}poc$) $\[5mm]{o}poc$ ($\[5mm]{o}poc$).

³⁶ One might object, for example, that knowledge of horses is a part of knowledge of animals and so is contained by the latter. However, I think ES has in mind parts that are comparable at the same level of division. For example, just as it would be too hasty to divide hunting of land animals immediately with hunting by force (for this would skip the division between hunting of tame animals and hunting of wild ones), it would seem overly swift to divide something like knowledge of horses out of knowledge before first dividing knowledge of animals. Because of this, though the knowledge of animals and the knowledge of horses *strictly speaking* are both parts of knowledge, it seems more plausible that ES does not refer to *parts of knowledge* in a way that could apply to both at the same time.

³⁷ White here has "marked off" where I have "delimited," "those that are" where I have "beings" and "against one of those that are" where I have "against one being." Ibid., 281.

One might raise the skeptical worry: could it not be that Plato wrote forms of the same word twice merely coincidentally? This is not impossible, but I think it is implausible that this be a coincidence. The more clearly *philosophical* discussion in the *Sophist* is bordered on either side by dialectical definitions of the sophist. The *Politicus*, the companion piece to the *Sophist*, is also thematically structured around dialectic (though the target is the statesman). At 285c-d in *Politicus*, ES says to young Socrates:

What if someone put the following question about our pupils sitting together learning their letters. When one of them is asked what letters make up some word or other, are we to say that for him on that occasion the inquiry takes place more for the sake of the single question set before him, or for the sake of his becoming more able to answer questions relating to letters?... What then about our inquiry now about the statesman? Has it been set before us more for the sake of that very thing, or for the sake of our becoming better dialecticians in relation to all subjects?³⁸

ES emphasizes that the point of doing dialectic is less to find the thing in question than to become better at dialectic itself. It would seem implausible that, although ES says this to young Socrates, Plato does not intend this to be directed towards readers having just witnessed numerous demonstrations of dialectic. Hence, Plato emphasizes dialectic, *for readers*, so that they themselves may become better dialecticians.

Dialectic, extensively treated in the *Phaedrus*, has two parts: collection and division. Collection is the bringing together of various elements for discussion such that they form

³⁸ Ibid., 328.

a whole with natural joints.³⁹ "Natural joints" will be relevant for the other part of dialectic, division. At 265e Socrates says, "[division], in turn, is to be able to cut up each kind according to its species along its natural joints, and to try not to splinter any part, as a bad butcher might do."⁴⁰ Socrates' point here is that kinds brought together as subjects of discourse via collection already have natural divisions within themselves assuming that collection is done properly. Hunting by force and persuasion, for example, both separate naturally out of the hunting of tame animals just a corpse, with the help of a skilled butcher, will split naturally along its joints.

The resonance between $\delta\iota\alpha\tau\dot{\epsilon}\mu\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$ (dividing) in the *Phaedrus* and $\dot{\circ}\rho\dot{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$ (delimiting) seems clear. Division separates kinds which are not identical to one another and do not contain each other. This is supported by a passage at 253d of the *Sophist*, though here the word used is $\delta\iota\alpha\dot{\iota}\rho\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$. ES asks Theaetetus whether, "we going to say that it takes expertise in dialectic to divide things by kinds and not to think that the same form is a different one or that a different form is the same," which Theaetetus allows.⁴¹ If one thing could fall into multiple kinds at the same level of division it would be strange to say that a division was in fact happening. For example, if some activity were classed as both hunting by force and persuasion, one would question whether the two really were distinct classes at all. Equally, it would be strange if, at the same level of division, one kind were already a part of the other. Again, it is not clear this result could be reached without there being some error or confusion in division.

³⁹ See Phaedrus 265d

⁴⁰ Ibid., 542.

⁴¹ Ibid., 276.

How does this answer the question of whether Plato could have used sequential forms of the same word, as if to emphasize the sense of " öpoç as delimitation, but done so coincidentally? It would seem curious that Plato would draw the reader's attention to dialectic and division—and do so in order to make readers better at the art of dialectic—while also remaining ignorant of the resonance division bears to delimitation. Given that Plato would not have been unaware of this resonance, it seems impossible that he would draw attention to " öpoç in this way in the middle of a dialogue that stresses the resonant notion of division. Hence, it is more plausible to hold that Plato used forms of the word öpoç sequentially in order to draw the reader's attention to the sense of öpoç as delimitation and the relation of öpoç and Being.⁴²

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A ὅρος of Being is possible

Is the delimitation of Being at 247e Plato's? If it is then the charitable interpretive assumption will be that the $\delta\rho\sigma\varsigma$ *is* possible. If it is possible, then the question of how a delimitation of Being could be possible receives its motivation. Imagine a thinker says that California is closer to France than Hungary. It is uncharitable to take this at face value simply as a mistaken claim. Rather, a charitable interpreter will assume that it is possible that California be closer to France than Hungary and then entertain the question of *how* it could be true that California is closer to France than Hungary.

So, can this ὄρος be attributed to Plato? On one hand, it seems intuitive that the ὅρος at 247e be Plato's. After all, the dialogue's primary speaker, ES, is the one who puts forth the ὅρος. On the other hand, the ὅρος at 247e appears to only play a dialectical role in the dialogue; it seems merely a concession to the reformed corporealists.

To answer the question of whether this ὄρος can be ascribed to Plato I will draw upon Sylvain Delcomminette's recent work on the *Sophist*. I want to emphasize that though I will make use of Delcomminette's interpretation, any interpretation of the text that would ascribe the ὅρος to Plato would suffice for the conclusion I want to draw, namely that a ὅρος of Being is possible.⁴⁴

⁴³ California is closer to France when travel distance is considered and travelling west is not an option.

⁴⁴ Fiona Leigh, for example, supports the view that "Plato endorsed [this delimitation] and subsequently developed it and put it to work in the later sections of the dialogue." Leigh, Fiona, "Being and Power in Plato's Sophist", *Apeiron*, 43 (2010): 64.

First, the context of the ὄρος must be articulated. ES and Theaetetus discuss two philosophical positions, that of the corporealists and that of the friends of forms. The corporealists split into two camps: the sons of the dragon's teeth and the reformed corporealists. The sons of the dragon's teeth strictly identify Being with corporeality; they grant no Being to that which is non-bodily.⁴⁵ The reformed corporealists admit of some incorporeal Being; namely of wisdom, virtue and the like.⁴⁶ The friends of the forms, on the other hand, limit Being to non-bodily forms that can be accessed through thought.⁴⁷

Delcomminette draws attention to the fact that the disagreement between the corporealists and the friends of forms is compared to a $\gamma t\gamma \alpha v \tau o \mu \alpha \chi (\alpha)$ —or the battle of Gods and Giants—at 246a. He points out that this is a clear reference to the $\gamma t\gamma \alpha v \tau o \mu \alpha \chi (\alpha)$ of Greek mythology: the battle between the Giants and the Gods of Olympus.⁴⁸ Delcomminette identifies two important elements of Plato's allusion to the mythological $\gamma t\gamma \alpha v \tau o \mu \alpha \chi (\alpha)$. The first is that in the mythological $\gamma t\gamma \alpha v \tau o \mu \alpha \chi (\alpha)$ there is a winner, namely the Olympian Gods.⁴⁹ The corporealists are called "earthborn" and "sons of the dragon's teeth."⁵⁰ It is clear from these earthy descriptions that Plato identifies them with the losers of the $\gamma t\gamma \alpha v \tau o \mu \alpha \chi (\alpha)$, the Giants. This means that the friends of the forms are identified with the winners, the Gods of Olympus.

⁴⁵ 247c

⁴⁶ 247b

⁴⁷ 246b-c

⁴⁸ Sylvain Delcomminette, "Odysseus and the Home of the Stranger from Elea", *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 02 (2014): 537.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 537.

^{50 247}c and 248c

The second important element of Plato's reference to the mythological $\gamma i\gamma \alpha v \tau o \mu \alpha \chi i \alpha$ is that the Gods defeat the Giants only with the help of Heracles.⁵¹ Heracles is not himself a God, but an exceptional mortal. Insofar as he is from the earth, he is closer to the Giants.

What parallels Heracles in Plato's γιγαντομαχία? Delcomminette suggests that it is the őρος of Being at 247e.⁵² This ὅρος, after all, is offered to the reformed corporealists to account for the incorporeal Being that the true sons of the dragon's teeth will not allow. This more expansive delimitation of Being as power serves as a weapon against the sons of the dragon's teeth insofar as both it and the delimitation of Being as body cannot both be correct. Yet this delimitation is not completely divorced from earthy corporealism. Delcomminette suggests that it is "earthy," just as Heracles is earthy, because it is presented to the reformed corporealists.⁵³

The question of whether this is Plato's $\[5mm]{o}poc\]$ becomes: do the friends of the forms, as the winners of the $\gamma t\gamma \alpha v \tau 0 \mu \alpha \chi (\alpha)$, accept the $\[5mm]{o}poc\]$? And if so, to what extent do they do so? Delcomminette draws attention to the use of $\kappa 0 t v \omega v \varepsilon \tilde{t} v$, or "coming into relations."⁵⁴ ES uses talk of coming into relations to characterize both sense perceptions and reasoning. Sense perceptions involve the relations between the body and becoming, while reasoning has to do with relations between the soul and Being, which, according to the view of the friends, is immobile.

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⁵¹ Ibid., 538.

⁵² Ibid., 538.

⁵³ Importantly, this account also parallels the view offered at *Theaetetus* 156a. The contrast between the sons of the dragon's teeth and the reformed coporealists, on Delcomminette's account, is analogous to the difference between the uninitiated and the more sophisticated thinkers. Ibid., 538 footnote 17. ⁵⁴ Ibid., 538.

The friends of forms reject the interpretation of coming into relations as acting and being acted upon because they restrict activity and passivity to the realm of becoming.⁵⁵ They then accept that both knowing and being known are neither active nor passive in order to avoid the consequence that Being, as the object of knowledge, is in motion.⁵⁶

The question of how Plato, and perhaps a philosophically stronger friend of the forms, might proceed is the subject of interpretive debate.⁵⁷ Delcomminette, following Lesley Brown, suggests that the friends have available to them that being known is active.⁵⁸ This is to say that when Being is known by Theaetetus, Being itself is the active partner in this relation (and not Theaetetus, as the grammar of "Theaetetus *knows* Being" suggests). The motivation for this is to avoid the consequence that Being, as the object of knowledge, is moved. Hence, the suggestion is that the object of knowledge may act while remaining at rest.⁵⁹ If the friends accepted such a view it would allow that Being itself be known and yet remain unmoved.⁶⁰ Though this is not explicitly pursued by the friends, it should be

⁵⁵ 248a-b

⁵⁶ 248 d-e

⁵⁷ David Keyt formulates the problem as, "1. Real being is completely changeless. 2. Being is known. 3. To know is to act on something. 4. If to know is to act on something, then that which is known is acted upon. 5. To be acted upon is to be changed... [given that 1-5 seem acceptable in the *Sophist*] which of the five would Plato himself surrender in order to avoid contradiction?" 2 and 4 seem untouchable. As will be seen, Delcomminette and Brown reject 3. Keyt will let go of 1. David Keyt, "Plato's Paradox that the Immutable is Unknowable", *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 74 (1969): 2-3, 7-12.

⁵⁸ Sylvain Delcomminette, "Odysseus and the Home of the Stranger from Elea", *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 02 (2014): 538. Delcomminette follows Lesley Brown, "Innovation and Continuity: The Battle of Gods and Giants, *Sophist* 245-249," in *Method in Ancient Philosophy*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 201.

⁵⁹ Sylvain Delcomminette, "Odysseus and the Home of the Stranger from Elea", *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 02 (2014): 538.

⁶⁰ Important questions still need to be worked out. For instance, how can the form of Motion be known? Surely it cannot be at rest while it is known because it never partakes in Rest (250a, 254d). I think the correct answer to this problem is to completely dissociate Motion and Rest from activity and passivity (but such that some activities may involve motion and others may not). Let it be that the object of knowledge remain the active partner, but let it be indifferent whether the object of knowledge is at motion or rest. A

clear that this at least allows that the ὅρος be accepted by a philosophically stronger friend.

That the $\delta\rho\sigma\varsigma$ might be accepted by the friends is not enough for the conclusion that it is *Plato's*. Delcomminette makes clear that κοινωνεῖν reoccurs several times throughout the dialogue. These uses have to do with the interaction of forms. Hence, views articulated in these parts of the dialogue are more easily ascribed to Plato. Delcomminette convincingly argues that these uses of κοινωνεῖν happen in the context of words related to δύναμις.⁶¹ Power, δύναμις, was a central part of the ὄρος of Being at 247e. Delcomminette concludes:

There is therefore every reason to believe that the definition of being as $\delta \dot{\nu} \alpha \mu \eta \zeta$ to act and to be acted upon is still valid at this point of the dialogue, but has been reinterpreted in such a way as to lose its earthy scent and not to imply motion in any physical sense any more: for a Form, to be acted upon by another Form does certainly not mean to be altered by it but rather to be determined in an eternal way.⁶²

Delcomminette's point is that given the ties between $\kappa_{01}\omega_{01}\alpha$ and both activity and passivity—and hence between $\kappa_{01}\omega_{01}\alpha$ and the $\delta\rho_{01}\alpha$ of Being as the power to be active or passive—and also the importance of $\kappa_{01}\omega_{01}\alpha$ to the forms, it seems implausible to assume that the delimitation of Being is not preserved. Because it is retained, and is

second problem is that, at 249d, Being is said to be both moved and at immovable. Yet the friends struggle to avoid the view that Being is moved. Hence, though a full argument will be the topic of another paper, my intuition is that activity and passivity should be dissociated from Motion and Rest.

⁶¹ Delcomminette notes 251d9 (δυνατὰ ἐπικοινωνεῖν), 251e6 (δὐναμιν ἔχειν κοινωνίας), 252d2-3 (δύναμιν ἔχειν ἐπικοινωνίας), 253c2 (ὥστε συμμείγνυσθαι δυνατὰ εἶναι), 253e1 (ἦ τε κοινωνεῖν ἕκαστα δύναται), 254c5-6 (ἔπειτα κοινωνίας ἀλλήλων πῶς ἔχει δυνάμεως), and the use of δυνατὰ κοινωνεῖν at 253a8. Ibid., 539.

⁶² Ibid., 539.

linked to views in the dialogue more easily ascribed to Plato, it seems more likely than not that this $\delta\rho\sigma\varsigma$ is Plato's. Given these considerations the charitable interpretive supposition will be to hold that a $\delta\rho\sigma\varsigma$ of Being is possible.⁶³

⁶³ It should be noted that it will be sufficient for my arguments that the delimitation is Plato's even in only a weak sense. Taking the aporatic dialogues as evidence, it is clear that to be an authority on a given topic is no easy feat. Michael Frede argues that this can explain why Plato chose to write philosophical dialogues as opposed to treatises. Philosophical dialogues have the effect of obscuring whether or not the author's own view is portrayed. Frede's suggestion is that Plato makes use of dialogue because he recognizes that he will fall short of the Socratic criteria of being an authority. Frede notes that this does not mean that Plato did not have philosophical views and did not express them, however. The idea is that Plato was able to portray his own views given the condition that he not mislead readers into thinking that he was an expert, hence the philosophical dialogue seems the perfect tool for the job. Drawing on Frede's work, my point here is it will be sufficient for my arguments even if the delimitation is not fully endorsed so long as the delimitation is not interpreted as involving the undermining of its own possibility as relates to the notion of *delimitation* itself. Michael Frede, "Plato's Arguments and the Dialogue Form", in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, Supplementary Volume (1992): 214, 215.

If a ὄρος of Being is possible, then Being will be delimited either from absolute not-being or relative not-being

Given that a öpoç of Being is possible, a öpoç of Being will require something for Being to be delimited *from*. Whatever it is, it will have to satisfy the three criteria of a öpoç. Before examining whether candidates meet these conditions, those candidates need to be pointed out and characterized. In this section two possibilities will be seen to exhaust that which Being could be delimited from: absolute not-being (ANB) and relative not-being (RNB).

ANB comes to be the topic of discussion following difficulties related to appearance making at 236c. At 237a ES quotes Parmenides' poem:

Never shall this force itself on us, that not-being may be;

While you search, keep your thought far away from this path.⁶⁴

Parmenides draws attention to the impossibility of not-being's being and then discourages inquirers from even attempting to discover the being of not-being. ES follows this quotation with the claim that an examination of speech itself will clarify Parmenides' point and in doing so leads Theaetetus to discussion about ANB.

At 237b ES asks Theaetetus, "do we dare to utter the sound $\tau \dot{\rho} \mu \eta \delta \alpha \mu \tilde{\rho} \zeta$ ov?" to which Theaetetus agrees.⁶⁵ The phrase $\tau \dot{\rho} \mu \eta \delta \alpha \mu \tilde{\rho} \zeta$ ov can be translated as "that which in no way is." I use "absolute not-being" (ANB) as shorthand for this.

⁶⁴ White has "that which is not" where I have written "not-being." Plato, *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997): 257.

ES then asks what the word "ANB" *could* refer to.⁶⁶ It is agreed that "ANB" cannot be applied to any being, i.e. anything that partakes in Being. "ANB" also cannot function like "something" or "some things."⁶⁷ This is because, as ES says, "It's obvious to us that we always apply this *something* to a being, since it's impossible to say it by itself, as if it were naked and isolated from all beings."⁶⁸ The word "something" picks out some one thing, and "some things" indicates some definite number of things.⁶⁹ In both cases the referents will have to be beings. This means that if "ANB" did function like "something" or "some things," it would apply to a being or beings, which was explicitly rejected at 237c.

The worries about "ANB"'s failure to refer is extended to a larger point about speaking ($\lambda \epsilon \gamma \epsilon i v$). It is concluded at 237e that one who makes linguistic use of "ANB" does not speak about nothing, but instead fails to speak at all.

It is here that a distinction between utterance and speech—understood as *meaningful* well-formed utterance—is first suggested. The grammatically correct usage of $\tau \dot{\sigma}$ µηδαμῶς ὄν would suggest that one can construct and utter sentences with "ANB" in the subject position.⁷⁰ But because when uttering "ANB" one fails to speak, speech will have to be more restrictive than utterance.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 257.

⁶⁶ 237c

⁶⁷ 237c-d

⁶⁸ Ibid., 258.

⁶⁹ 237d

⁷⁰ Though, as will be seen, "ANB" will not function like a true name, like "Theaetetus," in speech.

The distinction between utterance and speech is developed at 261c. Two grammatical units are distinguished: the name and the verb.⁷¹ Verbs are indications that pick out actions and names refer to the things that carry out actions.⁷² Speech cannot be composed of only verbs or names but rather requires the proper combination of the two.⁷³ The collection of verbs "writes types argues" counts no more as speech than the series of names "cat dog human." These two sequences of words, since they fail to be proper combinations, can be called poorly-formed utterances.

But speech is not merely well-formed utterance, i.e. utterance composed with the proper combination of words. ES says, "Whenever there's speech it has to be about something."⁷⁴ Theaetetus then agrees that speech is about what the name in the subject position picks out when he says that the sentence "Theaetetus sits" is about himself.⁷⁵ In contrast with earlier uses of $\tau \dot{\rho} \mu \eta \delta \alpha \mu \tilde{\omega} \zeta$ $\check{\rho} v$, speech may be thought of as *meaningful well-formed utterance* i.e. utterance that is constructed with the proper combination of words and is about something. Hence, even though one can construct what appears to be a well-formed utterance with "ANB," they will end up *not speaking* because "ANB" does not pick out anything at all.⁷⁶

⁷¹ 262a

⁷² It is important to keep in mind that this understanding of *names* fits better with the way we would understand *nouns* or things that can function like nouns in sentences.

⁷³ 262a

⁷⁴ Ibid., 286.

⁷⁵ 262e-263a

⁷⁶ Some points must be made. Strictly speaking, "ANB sits" would not even be well-formed since "ANB" is does not pick out something that carries out the action picked out by a verb, hence is not a name. This is supported by a passage in the *Cratylus* at 388b-c. Socrates says, "So just as a shuttle is a tool for dividing warp and woof, a name is a tool for giving instruction, that is to say, for dividing being" to which Hermogenes agrees. "ANB" does not divide Being, hence, again, "ANB" would not be a name. Even

ES then draws Theaetetus' attention to a related difficulty with ANB. He begins with what will be an important point for the rest of this paper this paper:

To a being there might belong some other of those which are... But shall we say that any of those which are can ever belong to ANB?⁷⁷

It is conceded, as opposed to how some being might have others belonging to it, that no beings can belong to ANB. From 238a-b it is agreed that numbers are beings, and hence neither *one* nor *plurality* can be applied to ANB because this would be to apply beings to ANB.⁷⁸

Based on the above it is again concluded that one cannot speak of ANB because in doing so one will inevitably apply number to ANB. Using "ANB" in the singular, for example in "ANB is red," will apply *one* to ANB.⁷⁹ Equally, "ANB" in the plural, say "ANBs" in "ANBs are red" will apply *plurality* to ANB.⁸⁰ But if ANB is to be spoken of at all,

⁸⁰ 238c

though "ANB sits" will not strictly speaking be well-formed, it is helpful to class it as a well-formed utterance because I think it bears more similarity to well-formed utterance than poorly-formed utterance (like "sits types argues"). This is because the word "ANB" seems to masquerade as a referring term and so a construction involving it, like "ANB sits," appears to be speech. Because I will focus more on the distinction between utterance and speech, rather than the distinction between well and poorly-formed utterance, I will not discuss this further. A third point in favor of "ANB" not being a name is that at 237b, ANB was introduced with ES asking whether or not we *utter* "ANB." ES does not ask whether we *speak* of ANB. The infinitive used is $\Phi\theta$ éyyɛơθαι (to utter) and not λέγειν (to speak). Ibid., 107.

⁷⁷ Where I have "a being" White has "that which is" and where I have "ANB," White has "that which is not." Ibid., 258.

⁷⁸ It is worth pointing out that, though the conclusions of this argument and the previous one are similar, the second argument is marked as important. Before ES makes the claim at 238a, he says, "There are still more confusions to come, including the primary and most fundamental one, which actually happens to be at the source of the whole problem" to which Theaetetus responds, "What do you mean? Don't hold back. Tell me." The suggestion seems to be that what follows, that which I have quoted above, is the primary difficulty; that nothing that is can blend with ANB. Ibid., 258.

⁷⁹ 238c

"ANB" must be either in the singular or plural. It follows then, emphasizing the conclusion of the previous argument, that ANB is ineffable.

The two previous arguments lend support to Parmenides' prohibition of inquiry into ANB; they seem to, in different ways, demonstrate that in each case one will fail to speak about ANB. At 238d ES follows these arguments with:

My good young friend, don't you notice on the basis of the things we said that ANB even confuses the person who's refuting it in just this way, that whenever someone tries to refute it, he's forced to say mutually contrary things about it?⁸¹

ES' motivation for this is that utterances like "ANB is ineffable," leveled as refutations of ANB, fail to be instances of speech. This is because, on one hand, the apparent subject of "ANB is ineffable" picks out nothing, and hence that utterance cannot be speech. On the other hand, the utterance "ANB is ineffable" itself applies singularity, hence *one*, to ANB contrary to the earlier claim that no being can apply to ANB.

Interestingly ES' point appears to do the opposite of what it purports to do.⁸² It seems instead that ES *stresses* the upshots of the previous two arguments. Specifically, ES' claim at 238d draws attention to how the two arguments demonstrate their own conclusions, that ANB is insurmountably ineffable even to the detriment of refutations of ANB *as* ineffable.⁸³

implication is that this thesis is what should be rejected. It should be noted, however, that Notomi's

⁸¹ White has "that which is not" where I have "ANB." Ibid., 259.

⁸² An interesting parallel will be that the apparent, though non-genuine, name "ANB" also does the opposite of what it purports to do in appearing to be a name (i.e. refer) when it fails to refer.
⁸³ Noburu Notomi calls this a "pragmatic self-contradiction... directed against *uttering* and *speaking* of the very statement of [ANB's ineffability]." He ascribes the origin of the thesis that leads to this problem, that ANB cannot combine with any being to Parmenides' view that Being and not-being cannot mix. The

Relative not-being (RNB) enters the dialogue after the reader is introduced to the five greatest kinds. Due to the importance of the greatest kinds in making sense of RNB, it will be helpful to characterize them before turning to RNB. The first two are Motion and Rest. In short, Motion must be admitted because the presence of understanding and life will mean that the soul that possesses them must have Motion.⁸⁴

The argument from 249b-249c for the being of Rest can be summarized as follows: since knowledge requires sameness, and sameness requires Rest, there must be Rest. The idea is that even someone who makes a claim denying the being of Rest, like "everything moves," will purport to have something like knowledge. But then they will undermine their own position insofar as making room for claims like knowledge claims will be to admit Rest.

arguments rest on his taking ANB to just be RNB considered in isolation. I argue against this view in the coming paragraphs. "Plato on What is Not" in *Maieusis: Essays in Ancient Philosophy in Honour of Myles Burnyeat*. (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2007): 265, 266, 268-9.

⁸⁴ At 248e ES begins, "But for heaven's sake, are we going to be convinced that it's true that motion, life, soul, and intelligence are not present in *Being*, and that it neither lives nor thinks, but stays motionless, solemn, and holy without any understanding?" First, a note on the text: where the text says "Being," White translates "that which wholly is" and where the text says "motion" and "motionless" White writes "change" and "changeless." Already at 248e it is suggested that the presence of life, soul and intelligence in Being will entail motion and that motionlessness precludes understanding. At 249a it is agreed that in order for there to be understanding there need be life. It is then agreed that in order that there be life and understanding, there has to be a soul to *have* them (249a). It is then conceded that if something has intelligence, life and soul it would be unreasonable to say that it did not also have motion (249a-b). ES sums this up, "And so, Theaetetus, it turns out that if no beings change then nothing anywhere possesses any intelligence about anything." An interesting line of thought, pointed out to me by István Bodnár, follows the question of whether or not there could be a pure intelligence itself. Plato, *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997): 271-2.

At 250a ES says, "Now, wouldn't you say that Motion and Rest are completely contrary to each other?" to which Theaetetus agrees.⁸⁵ At 250b this is interpreted to mean that both Rest cannot be at motion and Motion cannot be at rest.⁸⁶ This point is emphasized at 254d when it is agreed that Rest and Motion do not blend with one another but Being blends with the two.

When Being blends with something, in virtue of that very blending, that thing *is*.⁸⁷ But how many things blend with Being?⁸⁸ It was seen that, "To a being there might belong some other of those which are."⁸⁹ This was contrasted to that which no being can belong to, ANB. The point of this contrast was to say that number, as a being, could not belong to ANB and so conclude the ineffability of ANB. From this a positive characterization of what it means to partake in Being can be drawn: if something partakes in Being and only if it does, it can blend with other beings (like number, for example).⁹⁰ It will follow from

⁸⁵ White has "change" where I have "Motion." I have also capitalized "Rest." Ibid., 272.

⁸⁶ Again, the argument is slightly more complex. The claim at 250a is interpreted to mean that to say both *are* cannot mean that *both* are at motion or *both* are at rest. Given that Motion can be at motion and Rest can be at rest, the point becomes that Rest cannot be at motion and Motion cannot be at rest.

⁸⁷ For example, at 256a ES says, "But [Motion] is, *because* it shares in Being." White has "that which is" where I have "Being." Ibid., 272.

⁸⁸ There is a debate about how broadly to understand the scope of Being, specifically the *delimitation* at 247e. Given how I will articulate Being here, it would be natural to also interpret the proposal at 247e in a similar way. The reading I am drawn to is that Being is all inclusive. Swindler uses the reasoning I employ above. Runciman and Moravcsik both hold this sort of view as well. Owen, in this vein, writes, "In fact the requirement to be met if X is to be said to do something to Y, or have something done to it by Y, seems to come to no more than this: that there should be statements in which the name of X stands as subject to some active or passive verb, and the name of Y stands accordingly as object or in the instrumental case; and that these statements should be at some time (but not timelessly) true." Julius M.E. Moravcsik, "Being and Meaning in the "Sophist", *Acta Philosophica Fennica*. XIV, (1962): 41. W.G. Runciman, *Plato's Later Epistemology*. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1962): 65. Owen, G.E.L., "Plato and Parmenides on the Timeless Present", *The Monist* 50 (1966): 337. For arguments against this sort of reading, see Lesley Brown, "Innovation and Continuity: The Battle of Gods and Giants, *Sophist* 245-249," in *Method in Ancient Philosophy*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 189-193.

⁸⁹ Where I have "a being" White has "that which is." Plato, *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997): 258.

⁹⁰ J.K. Swindler stresses this point as well. See "Parmenides' Paradox: Negative Reference and Negative Existentials", *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (1980): 738.

this that anything that can be successfully spoken of, which is to say picked out with a singular or plural name; will count as a being insofar as number can be applied to it.

Both Motion and Rest *are*. They *are* insofar as they blend with Being. But, neither are identical to Being.⁹¹ Motion is not identical to Being because when Rest is said to *be*, it does not mean that Rest *moves*. Also, when Motion is said to *be*, Motion does not rest; hence Rest is not the same as Being. Thus Being itself must be a third kind, apart from Motion and Rest.

The final two greatest kinds are introduced at 254d: the Same and the Different. Neither the Same nor the Different are identical to either Motion or Rest.⁹² This is because if either were identical to the Same or the Different, then Motion and Rest would mix with one another. But as was said earlier, Motion and Rest will never mix with one another. Thus neither Motion nor rest can be identical to the Same or the Different.⁹³

As one might guess, everything has a share of the Same.⁹⁴ At 256a-b ES explains how the Same works:

We have to agree without any qualms that Motion is the same and not the Same. When we say that it's the same and not the Same, we aren't speaking the same way. When we say it's the same, that's because it shares in the Same in relation to

⁹¹ 250b

⁹² 255a

⁹³ How exactly would this work? Imagine that Motion is identical to the Same. If this is so then Rest, insofar as *it is the same* as itself, will move. If Motion is identical to the Different, then Rest, insofar as it is different from Being, will move. It is impossible that Motion or Rest be predicated of the other since the two do not intermingle; it should be clear how a similar result follows with Rest instead of Motion (255b).
⁹⁴ "But still it [Motion] was the same, we said, because everything has a share of that." Ibid., 279.

itself. But when we say it's not the Same, that's because of its association with the Different. Because of it's association with the Different, Motion is separated from the Same, and so becomes not it but different. So that it's right to say that it's not *the Same*.⁹⁵

This means that Motion is the same insofar as it partakes in the Same in relation to itself. Yet it is not the Same because it partakes in the Different with respect to the Same. With this in mind ES' argument for the difference of the Same and Being can be understood. ES says, "But if Being and the Same don't signify distinct things, then when we say that Motion and Rest both are, we'll be labeling both of them as being the same."⁹⁶ The point is best understood as if the Same and Being were identical, and if Motion and Rest are said to *both* be, then they will have to be the same.⁹⁷ Yet, as has been seen, Motion and Rest are fundamentally contrary to one another and hence cannot be the same. Because of this, ES concludes that the Same is the fourth of the greatest kinds.

ES then argues that the Different and Being are not the same. At 255d ES says, "the Different is always said in relation to another."⁹⁸ Yet ES appears to make room for participation in Being that is not in relation to anything else insofar as he argues, "then some of the things that are different would be different without being different in relation

⁹⁵ Where I have "Motion," White had "change." I have capitalized the uses of "same" and "different" that should be understood as kinds, i.e. the Same and the Different. Ibid., 279.

⁹⁶ Where White has "that which is" I have "Being" and where he has "change" I have put "Motion" Ibid., 278.

⁹⁷ Why should it be understood that Motion and Rest here are said to *both* be? The pronoun meaning both $(\dot{\alpha}\mu\phi\dot{\sigma}\epsilon\rho\alpha)$ is used twice in this sentence, suggesting that Motion and Rest are meant to be thought of as being in some way *together*.

⁹⁸ I have capitalized "Different" wherever it occurs as the greatest kind to mark it off *as* the greatest kind. Ibid., 278.

to anything different [if Being were the same as the Different]."⁹⁹ The argument, then, seems to be that difference is a relation between something and something *else* in all cases and being is not. Hence, since predications of being and difference do not function in the same way, Being and the Different are not the same.¹⁰⁰

RNB is introduced after a clarification of the meaning of negation at 257b-258a as *other than* as opposed to *opposite of*. ES says:

So it seems that the setting against each other of the nature of a part of the Different and the nature of *Being* is not any less being—if we're allowed to say such a thing—than *Being* itself. And it does not signify something contrary to *Being* but only something different from it... Obviously *not-being* [RNB]—which we were looking for because of the sophist—is just exactly this.¹⁰¹

The not-being mentioned above is being, no less than Being is, because it partakes in Being. It is also different from Being because it partakes in the Different with respect to Being. Call that which *is* yet is also different from Being, insofar as it partakes in the Different, *relative not-being* (RNB). Just as the "not-tall" picks out that which is other than tall—for example the nearly-tall, the middle sized and the small—"not-being" simply picks out what is other than Being.

Because RNB is just what is not identical to Being, RNB and ANB seem to exhaust the possibilities for what Being could be delimited from. Recall that Being cannot be

⁹⁹ Ibid., 278.

¹⁰⁰ 255e

¹⁰¹ I have translated "Being" for White's "*that which is.*" I have also capitalized "the Different." I have "not-being" for White's "*that which is not.*" Ibid., 281-2.

delimited from itself just as hunting by force cannot be delimited from itself (but requires persuasion). Anything that partakes in Being but is not identical to Being will be RNB. That which partakes in Being in no way and hence is ineffable, is ANB. It is not clear that there could be other options.¹⁰²

One might object that ANB and RNB do not make up two independent possibilities for that which Being could be delimited from but are merely the same thing taken in different light. For instance, it might be argued that ANB just is RNB understood in complete separation from everything else.¹⁰³ This view, however, seems questionable insofar as it involves a dubious identity claim between ANB and RNB, a claim like, "ANB *is* RNB considered divorced from all relations." This claim, and any claim about ANB, is self-defeating insofar as it will demonstrate the ineffability of ANB.¹⁰⁴

Further, the distinction between ANB and RNB is emphasized in the text itself. After characterizing RNB at 258b, ES goes on to say at 258e-259a:

Nobody can say that this not-being, which we've made to appear and now dare to say is, is the contrary of Being. We've said good-bye long ago to any contrary of

¹⁰² It might be wondered why Being should not be delimited from Motion, Rest, the Same or the Different. The greatest kinds will not be a distinct possibility for the reason stressed above. They partake in Being, yet, as was argued in text and made clear, they are not identical to Being. If they are not identical to Being, yet *are*, then they are RNB.

¹⁰³ This is the view of Noburu Notomi. See, "Plato on What is Not" in *Maieusis: Essays in Ancient Philosophy in Honour of Myles Burnyeat*. (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2007): 266.

¹⁰⁴ Even more, it seems odd that something that can be spoken of (RNB) should be the same as something that is insurmountably ineffable (ANB).

Being, and to whether it is or not, and also to whether or not an account can be given of it.¹⁰⁵

It is clear that the not-being referenced above that has been shown to appear and *be* is RNB. ANB, on the other hand, would be the contrary of Being. If RNB and ANB were the same thing considered under different light it would seem odd that ES makes such a contrast between this new form of not-being and an older one that has been said good-bye to.

Lastly, it must be pointed out that the fact that ES said good-bye to ANB need not mean that ANB was excised entirely from the metaphysical picture of the *Sophist*. Although it seems that ANB has been waved away, insofar as it has been seen to be insurmountably ineffable, that apparent "saying good-bye" may merely indicate that ES and Theaetetus have taken to heart the ineffability of ANB and so have given up attempts at talking about it. What remains to be seen is whether or not the insurmountably ineffable will play some role in the metaphysical picture of the *Sophist*.

¹⁰⁵ White translates "that which is not" and "that which is" where I have inserted "not-being" and "Being," respectively. Plato, *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997): 282.

Being cannot be delimited from absolute not-being

Recall that absolute not-being (ANB) was that which in no way is. Given the analysis of delimitation, or őpoç, if Being is to be delimited from ANB then the three criteria of a őpoç, here expressed as 1a, 2a and 3a, must be satisfied:

1a. Being is not identical to ANB.

2a. Being does not contain ANB.

3a. Being is not contained by ANB.

I begin with 2a, the claim that Being does not contain ANB. Consider hunting by force. It *is* insofar as it partakes in Being. It must partake in Being since constructions like "Let's take piracy, enslavement, tyranny, along with everything that has to do with war, and let's *delimit* them all together as hunting by force"¹⁰⁶ are nowhere indicated to be other than meaningful examples of speech.¹⁰⁷ Hunting by force, because Being is responsible for the fact that it *is* at all, will be contained by Being.

Hunting by force is, however, distinct from Being insofar as it partakes in the Different with respect to Being. This means that there is a sense in which hunting by force is notbeing. However, the type of not-being that hunting by force is does not amount to ANB, that which in no way is, but rather relative not-being (RNB), which was defined as that

¹⁰⁶ Again, I have "delimit" where White has "define." Ibid., 243.

¹⁰⁷ It also might be said that hunting by force *is* because it is a kind and Being is one of the greatest kinds. Equally, it might be said that hunting by force is because, as a form of acquisitive art, it is distinguished by the fact that its object or target already exists.

which partakes in Being yet is not identical to Being.¹⁰⁸ It seems that RNB, insofar as it *is*, will be subordinate to hence contained by both Being and the Different because Being and the Different are responsible for RNB's being RNB. It makes sense that it should hold for any kind other than Being that that kind is RNB and so is contained by Being.¹⁰⁹

This would work for individual entities as well. Take the train that goes from Budapest to Miskolc. It is safe to say that the train *is*, since meaningful speech can be constructed about it. The train also is not identical to Being. Thus the train, since it *is* yet is also not identical to Being, is RNB. The train, as RNB, is subordinate to Being since Being is responsible for its being RNB.¹¹⁰ Hence, just as, by earlier reasoning, any kind other than Being will be RNB, any individual entity also will be RNB.

Insofar as *everything* that is contained by Being (including both kinds and entities, given that the thing in question can be referred to) *can be a candidate of successful reference*, it seems correct to say that Being cannot contain ANB. If it were *not* the case that everything contained by Being could be a candidate of successful reference, whatever that thing that cannot be a candidate of successful reference *is* would have to be neither a kind nor an entity, since, as I have argued, both kinds and entities can be successfully

¹⁰⁸ 257b-258a

¹⁰⁹ It should be noted that this will apply to all of the greatest kinds. The Same and the Different, however, will also contain Being insofar as Being partakes in them. This is paralleled by descriptions of blending. It is agreed that "some things will blend and some won't, they'll be a good deal like letters of the alphabet. Some of them fit together with each other and some don't." Ibid., 275.

¹¹⁰ This is assuming that superiority/subordination relations can hold between a kind and an entity. If the reader rejects this, then this paragraph can be simply skipped.

referred to. But it is not clear what a thing that is neither a kind or an entity could be. Hence, 2a seems available.

3a, that Being is not contained by ANB, also seems true. Recall that x is contained by y when x is classed within or subordinate to y. It is not clear how Being—a kind—could be classed as subordinate to anything but a kind. There are two types of kinds. First, there is Being itself, which *is*. The second type of kind contains all those kinds that are different from Being. Because they are different from Being they will partake in the Different. Since they partake in the Different, and the Different partakes in Being, they will also partake in Being. But because ANB cannot be in any way, ANB cannot be located in either of these classes of kinds. Hence, ANB is not a kind. Since only a kind could contain Being and ANB is not a kind, 3a, that Being is not contained by ANB, seems available.

What about 1a? 1a says that if Being is to be delimited from ANB, Being must not be identical to ANB. Recall that at 255e ES said that something is different from, hence nonidentical to, another thing when it partakes in the Different with respect to that thing; Rest is *different* from Being because Rest partakes in the Different with respect to Being. Being, however, cannot participate in the Different with respect to ANB because this would mean that a being (namely, the Different) belongs to ANB. The key premise from the second argument for the ineffability of ANB explicitly prohibited this; it said that *nothing* that *is* can belong to ANB.¹¹¹ Hence just as number could not belong to ANB, the Different also cannot belong to ANB. It seems that even though 2a and 3a are satisfied,

¹¹¹ 238a

1a is unavailable. In order to find that which Being is delimited from one must, thus, look elsewhere.

Being cannot be delimited from relative not-being

Absolute not-being (ANB) appears an unsuitable candidate for that which Being is delimited from. This leaves relative not-being (RNB). If RNB is to be that which Being is delimited from then the three criteria of a $\delta\rho\sigma\varsigma$ of Being, expressed here as 1b, 2b and 3b, must hold true:

1b. Being is not identical to RNB.

2b. Being does not contain RNB.

3b. Being is not contained by RNB.

That Being is not identical to RNB, 1b, is true by the definition of RNB. Recall that at 258a-b RNB was defined as that which partakes in the Different with respect to, and hence is not identical to, Being.

But would a collection of RNB that is completely coextensive with Being still be different from Being? What would such a collection look like? Beginning at 250b, Being is argued to be a greatest kind alongside Rest and Motion. Being mixes with Rest and Motion, insofar as both *are*, yet it would be strange to say that Being itself is *entirely* at rest or at motion. At 250c-d ES asks:

If something isn't in motion, how can it not be resting? And how can something not move if it doesn't in any way rest? But now *Being* appears to fall outside of both of them. Is that possible?¹¹²

¹¹² Here White translates "changing", I have rendered the text, "in motion." I have also capitalized "Being." Ibid., 272.

Theaetetus answers that it is *not* possible for Being to be outside of both Rest and Motion. But if Being can neither be entirely at rest or at motion and also not be outside of Rest and Motion, the only possibility remaining seems to be that Being is at both motion and at rest.

That Being be at rest and at motion accords with ES' claim at 249c-d:

The philosopher—the person who values these things [knowledge, understanding and intelligence] most—absolutely has to refuse to accept the claim that everything is at rest, either from defenders of the one or from friends of the many forms. In addition he has to refuse to listen to people who make *Being* change in every way. He has to be like a child begging for "both," and say that Being—everything—is both motionless and in motion.¹¹³

The philosopher, taking both like a child, will hold that Being is both motionless and at motion. The states of motionlessness, i.e. rest, and motion are agreed to be incompatible at 250a. Given what Plato says about incompatible states of affairs elsewhere, it makes sense to understand the philosopher's view stated above as "*some* of Being is motionless and *some* is at motion."¹¹⁴

Recall ES' question from 250c-d: how can Being be outside of motion and rest? The reason Theaetetus has such a strong reaction to the suggestion that Being falls outside of both seems to be because he has the intuition that *everything* is either at motion *or* at rest.

¹¹³ Here the words ἀκίνητα καὶ κεκινημένα are at issue. I translate these as "motionless and in motion" rather than, as White translates, "unchanging and that which changes." I have also capitalized "Being." Ibid., 271.

¹¹⁴ Consider the statement of incompatibility at *Republic* Book IV, 436b.

The philosopher's view at 249c-d will embody Theaetetus' intuition. ES' words are ... $\tau \dot{o}$ $\check{o}v \kappa \alpha i \tau \dot{o} \pi \tilde{\alpha}v...$ which is translated as "...Being—everything..." This translation makes clear the intuitive sense of the $\kappa \alpha i$ connecting $\tau \dot{o} \check{o}v$ and $\tau \dot{o} \pi \tilde{\alpha}v$; namely, that it is an exegetical $\kappa \alpha i$. This means that the $\kappa \alpha i$ here, usually translated as "and," caries the force of the word "namely." Thus an identification between Being and everything is made. This means that the philosopher's view appears to assume Theaetetus' intuition—the intuition that everything is either at motion or rest—insofar as the possibility that Being is, and even the possibility that a part of it is, outside of both Motion and Rest is not at all considered.

If Being, taken as everything, is not at motion or rest but at motion *and* rest as the philosopher would have it, then there is no part of Being that is *neither* at motion or rest. If everything is at motion or rest; then the totality of Motion, Rest and things at motion and rest will be at least coextensive with Being itself. Motion is not identical to Being, yet *is*; hence it is RNB. Rest is not identical to Being, yet it *is* and thus also is RNB. Equally, anything that participates in Motion or Rest *is*—for those things are either a *thing* or *things* thus will participate in number—and hence, insofar as anything at motion or rest is not identical to Being (setting aside Being itself, which is both at motion and motionless), those things will also be RNB. Call the collection of RNB that includes Motion, Rest and all that is at motion or rest and also partakes in the Different with respect to Being *a complete collection of RNB*.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Why do I use the indefinite article here? Because there could be other co-extensive collections of RNB and do not want to suggest that the one I have drawn up is *the only* complete collection of RNB. How could

In this case, it is intuitive to think that a complete collection of RNB *would* be identical to Being. Take a spatial analogy. A square with sides of four units can be divided into four equal parts. The area of each part taken on its own, four units, is not identical to the area of the whole of the square, sixteen units. But the area of each of the parts added together *is* identical to the area of the whole; both are sixteen units. If the addition of pieces of RNB together into a complete collection of RNB functions in the same way as the addition of pieces of the square, it seems that the whole of RNB would be identical to Being.

There is an important difference between the combined areas of the pieces of the square and a complete collection of RNB, however. A complete collection of RNB, insofar as it is composed of RNB, partakes in the Different with respect to Being. RNB was defined as that which *is* yet is not identical—hence partakes in the Different—with respect to Being. Hence even if a complete collection of RNB is coextensive with Being, that collection will remain non-identical to Being insofar as it is a collection of *RNB*.

It seems that 1b, that Being is not identical to RNB, can be granted. Even if the whole of RNB is considered, which would be coextensive with Being, a complete collection of RNB *qua being RNB* still partakes in the Different with respect to Being, hence is not identical to Being.

there be another whole of RNB? This could be done with any other pair of kinds that would jointly apply to everything. Just as one could both tally up a group of people by counting the sleeping ones and awake ones separately and then adding the two sums together, and by counting the number of people who are smiling and not-smiling and then adding those numbers together and then in both cases reach the same sum.

2b, which says that Being does not contain RNB, seems implausible. Recall that x is contained by y when x is classed within or subordinate to y. By definition, RNB, and even a complete collection of RNB, will be contained by Being. This is because, insofar as RNB—which *is* yet also partakes in the Different with respect to Being—*is*, RNB will be subordinate to Being.

This point is made explicit by ES at 258a:

And we'll speak about the others in the same way too, since the nature of the Different appeared as being one of *those that are*. And because it *is*, we have to posit its parts as no less beings.¹¹⁶

Here the parts of the Different, which will be present throughout RNB, are said to be *because* the Different itself *is*.¹¹⁷ Because of this, the parts of the Different throughout RNB will be subordinate to the Different. Since the Different will only be insofar as it shares in Being, it seems that equally the parts of the Different throughout RNB will be subordinate to Being.¹¹⁸

Though 2b seems implausible, 3b seems available. It would be strange to say that RNB, defined as something that *is* somehow contains Being. It appears that what makes 2b

¹¹⁶Ibid., 281.

¹¹⁷ I want to note that the word here translated as "parts" is μόρια and not μέρος, the word earlier rendered as "part." The usage, however, seems sufficiently close to make the point that a part of the Different is also subordinate to the Different.

¹¹⁸ For text in support of this, see 256a where Motion *is* because it shares in Being.

false, the fact that RNB is contained within Being, seems to guarantee the truth of 3b, that RNB does not contain Being.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ There are, of course, the greatest kinds that will contain each other. The Same, taken as RNB, will contain Being (and also be contained by Being). The vast majority of RNB, however, will not. That 3b be available is not crucial to my argument, I am comfortable with letting 3b go.

A ὅρος of Being is not possible

In the previous sections I have argued for the first four of these claims:

- 1. A ὅρος of Being is possible.
- If a ὅρος of Being is possible, then Being is delimited from absolute not-being or relative not-being.
- 3. Being cannot be delimited from absolute not-being.
- 4. Being cannot be delimited from relative not-being.
- 5. A ὅρος of Being is not possible.

If one through four are accepted, five follows. Premise one is supported by any considerations that would ascribe the $\delta\rho\sigma\varsigma$ at 247e to Plato. This is because it seems uncharitable to attribute a $\delta\rho\sigma\varsigma$ to Plato when one is simply not possible. I presented Sylvain Delcomminette's interpretation of the *Sophist* in favor of the ascription of this $\delta\rho\sigma\varsigma$ to Plato noting, however, that other interpretations of the dialogue that attribute the delimitation of Being to Plato would suffice.

Premise two said that, given that a $\[0.5ex]{opc}\]$ of Being is possible, Being is delimited either from absolute not-being (ANB) or relative not-being (RNB). I argued that ANB and RNB exhausted all possibilities for that which Being could be delimited from. ANB was understood as that which in no way is, $\tau \[0.5ex]{opt}\[0.5$ In order for premise three—that Being cannot be delimited from ANB—to be true, at least one of the following three conditions of a ὄρος of Being needed to fail:

1a. Being is not identical to ANB.

2a. Being does not contain ANB.

3a. Being is not contained by ANB.

I argued that, though 2a and 3a seem to hold, 1a was false. This was because nonidentity, or difference, was defined as participation in the Different.¹²⁰ But the Different cannot be participated in by ANB with respect to Being insofar as, given 238a, nothing that is can blend with ANB. Thus 1a could not be satisfied and so premise three held.

Premise four was the claim that Being cannot be delimited from RNB. For it to be true at least one of the following claims needed to be false:

1b. Being is not identical to RNB.

2b. Being does not contain RNB.

3b. Being is not contained by RNB.

1b and 3b, I argued, were true. 2b, on the other hand, seemed false. This was because RNB is contained by Being insofar as RNB *is*, which is just to say that RNB partakes in Being. Just as hunting by force is contained by the hunting of tame animals, insofar as it is a part of the hunting of tame animals, it seems correct to say that RNB is contained by Being insofar as it *is*.

¹²⁰ 255e

If all of these premises are granted, a ὅρος, or delimitation, of Being turns out to be impossible. This is because, since delimitations require that which the delimited thing is delimited from—as specified in the three criteria of a ὅρος—and neither ANB nor RNB are suitable candidates, there seems no other option for that which Being is delimited from.

An interpretive impasse is now reached. Five is simply the negation of premise one, that a $\[5mm]{o}\rho\sigma\zeta$ of Being is possible. I take it as a goal of interpreting philosophers to do so in a consistent way, i.e. to read them in a manner that does not commit them to a claim and its negation. Hence it is problematic that Plato be committed to both one and five: that a delimitation or $\[5mm]{o}\rho\sigma\zeta$ of Being is possible and is not possible.

A way forward

One and five cannot be jointly held because five is the negation of one. If an interpreter of the *Sophist* does not provide a way forward, they risk ascribing an inconsistent position to Plato himself. The delimitation at 247e will seem either poorly thought through or simply mistaken. Both of these results are, to my mind, unacceptable.

I will now propose a way forward that avoids the ascription of an inconsistent set of views to Plato. I suggest that premise three, that Being cannot be delimited from ANB, is false. Recall that the original motivation for three was that *not* all of the criteria of a ὄρος of Being could be satisfied. These were the following:

1a. Being is not identical to ANB.

2a. Being does not contain ANB.

3a. Being is not contained by ANB.

Though I argued that 2a and 3a could be satisfied, 1a seemed problematic because it was clear that Being does not partake in the Different with respect to ANB.

I suggest, however, that a version of 1a can be true because Being is *remote* from ANB. Originally the first criterion of a öpoc of x—that x is not identical to that which is delimited out—was interpreted to mean that x *partakes in the Different* with respect to that which is delimited out. Being could not be non-identical to ANB, in the sense of partaking in the Different, because nothing that *is* can mix with ANB. Hence, it seems that the problem with 1a lies in the original interpretation of non-identity in terms of difference, i.e. participation in the Different.

In order to form a satisfying reading of the first criterion of a ὄρος (and so allow that Being be delimited from ANB), *remoteness* will have to avoid reference to the Different. If a notion of *remoteness* can be elucidated in a way that is tied to the text and that notion can do the same work that *difference* (i.e. participation in the Different) does in 1a, then it seems acceptable that Being be delimited from ANB given that 1a*) Being is *remote* from ANB, 2a) Being does not contain ANB and 3a) Being is not contained by ANB.

What would it mean for one thing to be *remote* from another? I suggest that one thing is remote from another when it is not the same as that other thing, which it to say that it does not partake in the Same with respect to that thing, and also when both things are explanatory of incompatible states.

Take Motion and Rest, for example. Motion does not partake in the Same with respect to Rest, hence is not the same as Rest. Also, Motion explains why things are at motion; moving things' share in Motion is that in virtue of which they are at motion. Rest, on the other hand, explains why things are at rest. Resting things' share in Rest is that in virtue of which they are at rest. A thing cannot be both at motion and at rest at the same time and in the same respect; hence being at motion and being at rest are incompatible states. Since Motion and Rest are not the same and are explanatory of incompatible states, Motion and Rest are *remote* from one another.

What about Being and ANB? Just as it could not be said that Being was different from ANB, because nothing that *is* (the Different in that case) can blend with ANB, it seems correct to say that Being also cannot be *the same* as ANB. At 256a-b ES says, "when we say [Motion

is] the same, that's because it shares in the Same in relation to itself."¹²¹ It is clear that sameness is a relation something bears to itself. Being will be the same as itself because it partakes in the Same in relation to itself. Being, however, cannot partake in the Same with relation to ANB. If Being did participate in the Same with respect to ANB, then something that is (the Same) would blend with ANB. Yet again, at 238a ES made clear that *nothing* that is can blend with ANB. Thus the first requirement for Being to be remote from ANB, i.e. that Being not be the same as ANB, is satisfied because Being does not partake in the Same with respect to ANB.¹²²

The second condition for Being's being remote from ANB, that Being and ANB explain incompatible states, also seems available. Consider the following utterances:

- a) Motion is at motion.
- b) Theaetetus flies.
- c) ANB flies.

The above utterances *appear* to be grammatically well-formed but not all are examples of speech. "Motion is at motion" is an instance of speech because it contains a genuinely referring name and a proper combination of grammatical units as does "Theaetetus flies," which is also speech. The final utterance, "ANB flies," will not be speech because "ANB" does not refer. Strictly speaking, c) is not even well-formed since "ANB" is not a name. This is because a name is "the kind of spoken sign that's applied to things that perform actions."¹²³ "ANB" neither picks out a being nor can refer to something thus it seems absurd to think that it could be applied to a *thing* that performs any action.

¹²¹ I have "Motion," White had "change." I have capitalized the uses of "same" that refer to the kind. Ibid., 279.

¹²² I assume that an account of true statements of the form "x is not F" is available.

¹²³ Ibid., 285.

Being explains the fact that a) and b) are instances of speech because it explains why Motion and Theaetetus themselves can be candidates of successful reference. At 255e-256a ES says, "First let's say that Motion is completely different from Rest... So it is not Rest... But it *is*, because it shares in *Being*."¹²⁴ In this passage, for example, Being is said to be responsible for the fact that things *are*. This means that Being explains why Motion and Theaetetus *are*, and hence why they can be referred to (they are beings and only beings can be referred to). Because of this—and because speech must be about something, i.e. contain a name—Being explains the fact that a) and b) are instances of speech.¹²⁵

What explains why "ANB" fails to refer and why c) is merely an utterance?¹²⁶ Being or some being cannot account for this because "ANB," though it seems to suggest that it does, neither refers to a *being* nor functions to pick out some definite number of things (i.e. *beings*) like "something" or "some things." But something must account for why "ANB" fails to refer.¹²⁷ ANB itself seems the only other option. Since Being or some being cannot account for why

¹²⁴ Where White had "change" and "*that which is*" I have put "Motion" and "*Being*." I have also capitalized "Rest." Ibid., 278.

¹²⁵ Two things need to be clarified. First, I am not suggesting that a name is the only thing required for speech. On the contrary, speech must be about something (what the name picks out) and *have some quality* (263a). The first utterance, a), has the quality of being true because it says things that are the same as what is. That Theaetetus flies, on the other hand, is false because it says something different than what is since flying is different from everything that belongs to Theaetetus. Second, it seems intuitive to move from the above point about Motion and Theaetetus to a general point about anything that *is*. Being explains why that thing *is*, and so why the name of that thing refers and hence why meaningful speech can be composed about that thing.

¹²⁶ There might be a class of utterances that appear to be names yet fail to refer like "ANB." Consider something stipulated to not refer, like "asdf." It seems intuitive, given that "asdf" does not refer, that "asdf flies" would not count as an instance of speech. Even more, it would seem strange to say that Being explains failure of reference here insofar as there is no being that "asdf" picks out. I restrict this discussion to a footnote because it remains to be seen whether constructions like "asdf" (setting aside, of course, τὸ μηδαμῶς ὄν) would have been available to Plato. Something similar to "asdf" does occur after Plato, however. Diogenes Laertius, in *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* Book VII.57, presents βλίτυρι as an unintelligible word set in stark contrast with meaningful uses of language. For the Diogenes text, see A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987): 195.

¹²⁷ What if this is denied, what if it is submitted that *nothing* need explain why "ANB" fails to refer? On one hand, it seems more plausible to me that Plato should have something explained rather than leaving it unexplained. On the other hand, I wonder how close saying that there is no explanation for x, or that *nothing* explains x, comes to saying that ANB explains x.

"ANB" fails to refer and why c) is a mere utterance, it seems correct to say that the fact that "ANB" fails to refer, and hence that c) cannot be speech, can only be explained by ANB.¹²⁸

The distinction between genuine names and "ANB," which appears to play the role of a name but falls short of reference, is a clear-cut one. Both cannot be uttered at the same time; an utterance that purports to refer either will in fact refer or it will not. Thus the speaking of a genuine name and the uttering of "ANB" can be said to be incompatible states. Insofar as Being accounts for the fact that named objects can be successfully referred to and the only thing that appears able to explain the failure of reference of "ANB" is ANB itself, it seems correct to say that both Being and ANB are responsible for incompatible states.

I return to a), b) and c). The two examples of speech, a) and b), are meaningful but c) is not. I apply "meaningful" to utterances that are well-formed and about something. Being will account for why a) and b) are meaningful since it explains why Motion and Theaetetus can be referred to. ANB, as I suggested, appears the only thing that can account for the reference failure of "ANB" and hence for the meaninglessness of c). Because *meaningfulness* and *meaninglessness* are incompatible determinations the state of uttering, say, a) and that of uttering c) will also be incompatible.¹²⁹ Hence, Being and ANB again seem explanatory of incompatible states. Due to this, and the fact that Being is responsible for genuine names while "ANB" can only be explained by ANB itself, the second requirement for the

¹²⁸ There is a problem with formulating this explanatory relation. ANB is insurmountably ineffable, so how can I say that it explains anything? Strictly speaking, I cannot say *anything* about ANB. I have not given up hope that there will be a better way to put my claim in order to avoid this problem. For now, at the very least, I can point out that there is a sense in which what I try to say (though I inevitably fail) when I utter "ANB explains x" is understood. This stands in stark contrast with how what I try to say when I utter "asdf zxcv" is completely missed.

¹²⁹ Uttering any two things at the same time in the same respect will be incompatible. There seems intuitively, however, a stronger sense in which uttering a) and uttering c) are incompatible. It is difficult to articulate how this can be, however.

remoteness of Being and ANB—that Being and ANB are explanatory of incompatible states—seems twice satisfied.¹³⁰

The move from the above distinctions to the remoteness of Being and ANB seems one particularly fitting to the *Sophist*. The hunt for the definition of the sophist begins with the search for that of the angler. The angler is chosen because he is simpler and can be taken as a model for the more important and difficult to capture sophist.¹³¹ The parallel in my arguments is that, even though the remoteness of Being and ANB cannot be explicitly formulated (since ANB is ineffable), the distinction between successful reference and speech on one hand, and reference failure and meaningless utterance on the other is clearly apparent. This difference can be seen as a model for the remoteness of Being and ANB—just as the angler was a model for the sophist—despite the fact that this remoteness cannot be formulated in speech.

¹³⁰ It should be noted that such a view would not be completely out of place in the ancient world. There are two contexts one might try to situate this view in. The first is ancient arguments for the infinity or finitude of the cosmos. Archytas' A24 gives one famous argument for the infinity of the cosmos. The argument questions how a limit of the cosmos could be possible. The idea is that if such a limit were body or mere place, then that would not in fact be a limit. Aristotle, on the other hand, rejects the possibility of an infinitely extended body (*Physics* III.5) and also void (Physics IV.6-9). Body does not contain the cosmos (Physics IV.5) and since void is rejected, the cosmos is also not bounded by void. It seems Aristotle does, contra Archytas, allow for a delimitation of the cosmos without something on the other side. Though this debate is about an issue similar to the one at hand, there is an important difference. Namely, this debate is about there being a limit or not to the cosmos while the point I suggest Plato makes is one about the limitedness of Being. The other context, the one in which I think my point is better located, is that of Eleatic discussion of the limit of Being. Parmenidean Being is called limited at B8.42-49 and compared to a sphere. Patricia Curd emphasizes that the sphere is an analogy, according to her Parmenides' point is that Being appears the same from any perspective just as a perfect sphere does. Melissus, on the other hand, argues that Being is unlimited in time (B4). Melissus' B5 says, "[From "unlimited" he concluded "one," from the argument:] If it is not one, it will come to a limit in relation to something else." B5 suggests that when there is plurality, there is a limit but not when there is only one thing, thus calling into question Parmenides' limit of Being. The Sophist, on my view, can be seen as clarifying and answering these issues about a limit under the guise of őpoç. For discussion of Archytas' A24 see C.A. Huffman, Archytas of Tarentum: Pythagorean, Philosopher and Mathematician King, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 540-550. For discussion of Parmenides and Melissus see Patricia Curd, The Legacy of Parmenides: Eleatic Monism and Later Presocratic Thought. (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2004): 92, 93. For discussion of limit in Eleatic philosophy, see also Adam Drozdek, "Eleatic Being: Finite or Infinite?". Hermes, 129. Bd., H. 3 (2001): 306-313. For more on Presocratics generally, and the Melissus quote above, see Richard D. McKirahan. Philosophy Before Socrates, An Introduction With Texts And Commentary. 2nd edition. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2011): 294. ¹³¹ 218d

Lastly, it seems implausible that *remoteness* not be able to do the same work as *difference* in the other delimitations, uses of forms of $\delta \rho o \varsigma$, throughout the dialogue. In each case it will be true that the two things do not partake in the Same with respect to one another and explain incompatible states. Take the delimitation of hunting by force at 222c. Both hunting by force and persuasion are contained by a broader kind, the hunting of tame animals. Hunting by force is not the same as persuasion because it does not partake in the Same with respect to persuasion. Equally, both hunting by force and persuasion are responsible for incompatible states. An individual's committing piracy, on one hand, and political oratory, on the other, are incompatible states. One involves force, and the other does not hence they cannot both occur at the same time in the same respect. This difference is explained by hunting by force and persuasion themselves. Hence, hunting by force will be *remote* from persuasion. Given that *remoteness* can account for this delimitation, my intuition is that it is implausible that *remoteness* not be able to do the same for the other delimitations in the *Sophist*.¹³²

 $^{^{132}}$ I want to stress what I have not done. I have not thoroughly filled out what an interpretation of the *Sophist* accepting the Being is delimited from ANB would look like. I have not explored all of the benefits and problems related to such an interpretation. Moreover, beyond the original motivation for the puzzle of Being's őpoç, I have not argued against the alternative ways to escape this puzzle. For instance, it might seem attractive to take the puzzle I have articulated as a reductio of the view that this delimitation is Plato's and so reject premise one. Ultimately my arguments will rely on the strength of an account in favor of the ascription of this delimitation to Plato. I will be satisfied if I have convinced the reader of the presence of such a puzzle in the *Sophist* and delimited a path one might further pursue in order to escape this puzzle.

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