

The Role of *Kinêsis* and *Stasis* in Plato's *Sophist*:

An Inquiry into the Two Forgotten *Megista Genê* of the *Sophist*

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

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Summary

This dissertation addresses the general question of the relation between the problem of being and the theory of the five great kinds (*megista genê*) in Plato's dialogue the *Sophist*. In contemporary scholarship, the two issues have been dealt with separately, and the *megista genê* theory has mostly been understood as Plato's tool for solving the problem of not-being and falsehood. This dissertation intends to challenge the current state of the art with regard to the *megista genê* theory and its relation to the question about being by focusing primarily on the role of two great kinds, Kinêsis and Stasis (the other three are Being, Sameness and Otherness). The role of Kinêsis and Stasis has been relatively neglected, and they have often been regarded as kinds of minor importance compared to the other three. In what follows, I shall defend a significantly different interpretation of the role of Kinêsis and Stasis, according to which Kinêsis and Stasis are the key to the metaphysical foundation of the theory of the five great kinds in the *Sophist*. For they are, I argue, the two crucial parts of the part-whole structure that is Being. The two main claims I defend in the dissertation are that (1) Kinêsis and Stasis are essentially related to Being and that (2) the structure of this relation is that of parts (Kinêsis and Stasis) to a whole (Being).

The first chapter is dedicated to the use of Kinêsis and Stasis in the Gigantomachia passage, and by extension, in the *Sophist*. It is addressed to the question of whether Kinêsis and Stasis can apply to the same beings. The affirmative answer to this question I call the coreferentiality thesis; the negative answer I call non-coreferentiality thesis. In this chapter, I defend the non-coreferentiality thesis, that is, the view that Kinêsis and Stasis do not apply to the same beings, and argue that the changing beings and the unchangeable beings form two groups of beings which never overlap. I argue for the non-coreferentiality thesis in the Gigantomachia passage but also in the rest of the dialogue, by showing that there is no evidence of a shift in the use of Kinêsis and Stasis after the end of the Gigantomachia. The main consequence of this thesis is that Kinêsis and Stasis are not used for features, or qualities that beings may or may not have, but for groups of beings which never overlap, namely: the changing beings and the changeless beings.

The second chapter deals with the role of Kinêsis and Stasis in the enquiry about being. The question I raise is whether Kinêsis and Stasis are meant to be solely criteria of being, or whether they contribute to the definition of being. In this chapter, I argue in favour of the definitional reading in two ways. First, I show that contrary to what critics have generally assumed, it cannot be shown textually that the Gigantomachia passage is addressed only to the question 'what is there?' and to the question 'what are beings like?', and not also to the question 'what is being?'. Instead, I show that there is evidence that the latter question is also addressed. Second, I show, on the basis of the requirements to answer a *ti esti* question set up by Socrates in the early dialogues, how Kinêsis and Stasis contribute to giving a definition of being. In particular, it emerges that Kinêsis and Stasis differ in two important respects from being merely criteria of being: first, Kinêsis and Stasis are not only that by reference to which one can determine whether or not something is a being, but they are also standards in the sense of models of being; second, they are also explanatory.

The purpose of the third chapter is to consider, on the basis of the findings of the preceding chapters, what is the relation that unites Kinêsis and Stasis to Being. It has been established in Chapters I and II that Kinêsis and Stasis stand in relation to one another in a specific way: first, Kinêsis and Stasis are essentially related to Being; second Kinêsis and Stasis taken together have the same extension as Being. Having shown first that the relation among the three kinds, especially the essential relation, does not correspond to a case of participation among Forms, nor to a genus-species structure, I go on to argue in the rest of the chapter that the three kinds are united as a whole (Being) to its parts (Kinêsis and Stasis). Central to this claim is the thesis, defended by Harte in her book *Plato on Parts and Whole* (2002), that Plato's own view on composition is that the whole is a unity over and above its parts. This is set against another view about composition, defended by the Eleatics, according to which composition is identity.

Chapter IV considers the role of Sameness and Otherness in relation to the whole of parts formed by Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. The question addressed is what motivates the introduction of Sameness and Otherness as the fourth and fifth kinds. Based on an analysis of the passages from 251 to 259b, I defend the claim that Sameness and Otherness are introduced as necessary but not sufficient conditions for composition. I examine how the Late Learners passage raises a new problem about composition, linked to Plato's view that a whole is a unity over and above its parts, and how Plato intends to solve it by introducing the claim that there are some kinds whose role is to make composition among other kinds possible. Those kinds are, precisely, Sameness and Otherness, and I argue for this by showing that each and every argument for the establishment of Sameness and Otherness as the fourth and fifth kind, distinct from the other three, start from the view that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis form a whole of parts. A central outcome of this chapter is the reconsideration of the 'communion of kinds', the notion that lies at the core of the 252-259 passages where Sameness and Otherness are introduced, as involving a relation of composition between the kinds, or Forms, as opposed to the mere attribution of different characteristics to a kind.

Finally, the fifth and final chapter introduces Plotinus' interpretation of the theory of the five great kinds of the *Sophist* which is developed in *Enn.* VI 2. Often, Plotinus' reading has been understood by critics as a free interpretation of the *Sophist*, which addresses problems that are not those of Plato's dialogue. By contrast, I argue here, on the basis of the previous chapters, that Plotinus' theory of the five great kinds is fundamentally in agreement with the metaphysical project of the greatest kinds as developed by Plato in the *Sophist*. In particular, I show that Plotinus shares the view that: (i) the *megista genê* is a theory about the essence of Being; (ii) the essence of Being cannot be reduced to a single principle, but involves a plurality of principles; (iii) these principles must be related to one another by a particular structure. This marks an important difference to other readings of Plotinus' *Enn.* VI 2 and it holds out a prospect for reconsidering the role and significance of a metaphysics of kinds of being, in so far as such a metaphysics goes back to Plato and especially the dialogue *Sophist*, in Antiquity.

Abbreviations of titles of Plato's works used in the text and footnotes

<i>Charm.</i>	<i>Charmides</i>
<i>Crat.</i>	<i>Cratylus</i>
<i>Lach.</i>	<i>Laches</i>
<i>Men.</i>	<i>Meno</i>
<i>Phd.</i>	<i>Phaedo</i>
<i>Phdr.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
<i>Plt.</i>	<i>Politicus</i>
<i>Parm.</i>	<i>Parmenides</i>
<i>Rep.</i>	<i>Respublica</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	<i>Sophista</i>
<i>Tht.</i>	<i>Theaetetus</i>

Introduction

§. *Being in the Sophist*

Plato's dialogue the *Sophist* is perhaps his most developed contribution to the central questions of being and not-being. In the last sixty years, attention has been dedicated principally to the latter question, in relation to connected issues in philosophy of language, especially the problem of negation and falsehood, while the former question has been largely ignored. The completion in 2012, of a major work on the *Sophist* entitled *Plato on Falsehood* by Crivelli confirms this tendency. Though the book goes through almost all passages of the dialogue, its main emphasis lies on Plato's original contribution to the problem of falsehood, which is in turn focused on the problem of not-being in the dialogue. Contrary to the modern take on the dialogue, the *Sophist* is known from Antiquity, by prominent figures like Aristotle and Plotinus, as a dialogue that is also, if not primarily, about being. In contemporary scholarship, the treatment of the question of being has been mostly addressed as a semantic question about the meaning of the word 'being' (*to on*, *ousia*, *einai*) and has generated a very important discussion over the distinction between the different uses of the verb 'to be'. It is only recently that a metaphysical approach to the question of being has emerged again. However, characteristic of this approach is that Plato's project about being has not been understood as a project about the essence of being, but as a project about what there is. Moreover, research on the question of being in the *Sophist* has been mostly confined to some portions of the dialogue, focusing, in particular, on the passages in which Plato discusses the view of his predecessors about being. Discussions about being in the *Sophist* have not been carried out in relation to later and central parts of the dialogue, that is, after 250a. In particular, the problem about being has been dealt with independently from the development, in the sections following 250a, of Plato's theory of the five great kinds.

The theory of the five great kinds (*megista genê*) is the theory that Plato develops in the central passages of the *Sophist*. It proposes that the five great kinds are, Being (*to on*), Change (*kinêsis*), Rest (*stasis*), Sameness (*to tauton*) and Otherness (*to thateron*). In the order of the dialogue, the first three kinds are introduced first, while Sameness and Otherness are introduced later, after a series of arguments which aim at showing that they

are distinct from the first three kinds. There is no agreement among critics over the *megista genê* theory. Nevertheless, we can recognise certain tendencies in the literature. First of all, the theory of the five great kinds is mostly understood as Plato's tool for solving the problem of not-being and falsehood. In this respect, Being, Sameness and Otherness are the crucial kinds, for it is by working out those three that Plato solves the problem about not-being in the dialogue. By contrast, the study of Kinêsis and Stasis has been relatively neglected, and they have often been regarded as kinds of relatively minor importance. Another tendency is for critics to assume that the five great kinds (*genê*) are actually nothing but Forms (*eidê*). In support of this view, they have put forward that in many places, Plato uses *genê* and *eidê* interchangeably. In the *Sophist*, an example of this is at 254c2-3, where the Stranger declares that they will not intend to enquire about the totality of Forms, but that they will select, among them, that is, among the Forms (*eidê*), some of the greatest. But then, immediately afterwards, at 254d4, he call them 'kinds' again, instead of Forms. Third, most critics have disregarded the question of the coherence of the *megista genê* theory, that is, whether there is anything particular that unites, precisely and only, these five kinds. They have been influenced in this view by the passage at 254c4, in which the Stranger says that they are going to select 'some of' (*atta*) the greatest Forms, which suggests that these five are only selected as examples.

The tendency to read the *megista genê* passage independently of the problem about being is problematic, if only because three of these kinds, namely Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, are introduced as part of Plato's review of the theories of his predecessors about being. It is hard to think that there is no connection between these passages and the *megista genê* theory.

This dissertation intends to challenge the current state of the art with regard to the *megista genê* theory and its relation to the question about being by focusing primarily on the role of two of them in the dialogue, Kinêsis and Stasis.

§. *A problem about being, but what problem?*

It is not so much a matter of debate whether the *Sophist* is also addressed to the problem of being. Rather, the issue concerns what is meant here by a problem of being, what it is that Plato is enquiring about in relation to being. There are different questions that Plato may be addressing, and depending on which question is at issue, one may understand the role and

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importance of the problem of being in the *Sophist* differently. I shall outline here some of the main candidates.¹ Note, though, that these different questions do not exclude one another, and it is possible that Plato is addressing more than one question.

First, the question can be about language: what is meant by the word ‘being’? When someone says that something ‘is’, ‘is black’ or ‘is on the table’, what is meant by the verb ‘to be’ in all these cases? Is it the same thing? This question has been regarded as the major question about being in the *Sophist* from the 1950s by prominent scholars like Ackrill, Frede, Owen, Kahn, Brown. The bone of contention is the question of whether Plato distinguishes, in the *Sophist*, between different uses of the verb to be: a complete or absolute use, in which the verb does not stand in need of completion, but is used alone, and an incomplete use, in which the verb ‘to be’ is followed by a complement. Until Kahn challenged this view, the complete, or absolute use was mainly associated with the existential meaning of the verb.² As for the incomplete use, it can be divided between predication and identity. This view is particularly associated with some passages in the dialogue, like at 244a6, in which the Stranger asks his predecessors what it is that they indicate when they utter the word ‘is’. This question, as such, is not a metaphysical question, and it does not imply that any metaphysical issue is solved before one can answer that question. It is, above all, a question about language, and mainly, a question of disambiguation. The idea is that ‘being’ is actually an ambiguous word, and that it is not clear at all, when one says that something ‘is’, what one means by that.

Second the *Sophist* may be addressed to the question ‘what is there?’. The aim of this question is to enquire into what one recognises as real, what one includes in his ‘ontological box’. For instance, a traditional dispute concerns the question of whether there are only concrete objects, or whether there are also abstract objects. Concrete objects are things that exist in space and time. Physical objects are common examples of concrete

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1. A similar reconstruction can be found in Frede (1996). Frede also explains how the problem of being is related to the other issues of the dialogue, namely not-being and falsehood.
 2. In 1973, Kahn published his seminal work on the verb ‘be’ in ancient Greek. He called into question the semantic existence/copula dichotomy by showing that the verb *einai* carries above all a veritative dimension, what he calls ‘the veritative use’ of the verb. Brown (1986) brought significant developments to Kahn’s thesis by refuting the dichotomy on the syntactical level. The core of her argument lies in her description of the incomplete and complete use of the verb. Relying on the ‘Jane teaches/Jane teaches French’ example, she demonstrates that *einai* could always have a complement, even when used alone. It follows that *einai* can be described as a semantic continuum, ‘to be’ meaning ‘to be something or other’, never mind whether there is a complement or whether it is elided. Hence the copula encompasses the existential dimension in a single concept of being equivalent to ‘to be something’, where ‘something’ means to ‘be true’, ‘be real’. Brown’s view is quite influential. In a later paper on the topic, Kahn (2004) himself endorsed her conclusions and admits that the copula use is implicitly existential.

objects. By contrast, abstract objects do not exist in space and time, and they are non-physical. This question can be linked to the question of the ultimate constituents of reality, what reality is ultimately made of. Indeed, one may answer the question ‘what is there?’ by giving a list of all the things that are real, but one may also contend that ultimately, all that there is is what is made up of X or Y. In any case, answering the question ‘what is there?’ requires a criterion according to which one can decide whether or not something is real. Critics have identified this question as being at issue in the passage in which Plato addresses the view of his predecessors about being.³ These thinkers have, indeed, various views about what there is: some hold that everything is entirely reducible to the Hot and the Cold, some hold that there is just one thing and that this thing is the One, others hold that all there is is what they can perceive, while others think that the only real beings are immaterial things to which we have access through thinking only. The question ‘what is there?’ is a universal question, in that it is addressed to the whole of reality. But it is also a limited question, in that it does not include the question of what this very thing is, namely being. All that is needed is to be able to tell which the beings are.

Finally, a last candidate is precisely the question ‘what is being?’ understood as a question about the essence of being, that is: what is this very thing, being? What is it for something, anything, to be? We can see that this question has a broader scope than the previous two questions, not only because it, too, is addressed to the whole of reality, but also because it may require getting clear about the other two questions to answer it. We recognise in the question ‘what is being?’ the well-known Platonic *ti esti* question, ‘*ti esti X?*’, what is it for something, anything, to be X? Frede has argued that the question ‘what is being?’ understood as a question about the essence of being, is the question that Plato addresses in the dialogue.⁴ What is remarkable about Frede’s view is that he not only claims that this is the question addressed, but he also argues that this question is actually answered in the dialogue. But Frede thinks that Plato answers this question independently of the *megista genê* theory, that all that is needed to answer it is the Form of Being itself — Frede famously argues that the definition of being is to be found at 255c12-13, in the passage in which the Stranger distinguishes between beings that are themselves by themselves and beings that are in relation to something else.⁵ However, there are reasons to

3. See in particular Cornford (1935), Frank (1986), Brown (1998).

4. Frede (1996).

5. See Frede (1996), p. 195ff.

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doubt this view, and it is the purpose of this dissertation to identify the connection between the question ‘what is being?’ and the *megista genê* theory. Let us turn to that.

§. The connection between the search for the essence of being and the megista genê theory

When one tries to understand how the *megista genê* theory could possibly be an answer to the question ‘what is being?’, one is immediately confronted with the following problem: how is it possible to claim both that the five great kinds are involved in an account of what it is for something to be while Being itself is one of the greatest kinds? It seems, rather, that Being should be the only one element that is relevant for determining what it is for something to be, just like Justice in relation to just things. Let us give some reasons not to be deterred from our task by this problem. What this problem may be pointing to is that the question ‘what is being?’ cannot be answered by a single element, but involves a plurality of elements. In other words, Being may be too complex to be reducible to a single element. Now, it cannot possibly be meant by this that Being is too complex in the sense that there are many different instances of Being, many different beings. Surely, there are many beings, and these beings are different from one another, but this is not the point. For instance, there are many books in the world, some are different sizes, different colours, different topics, but this does not prevent me from giving a single account of what a book is. What would, however, prevent me from saying that a book is a single thing, or would prevent me from saying that with so much confidence, is if there were two instances of books which seemed to be both called ‘books’ in completely different — and maybe even opposite — ways. This, I shall argue, is what might happen with Being: it might be that there are instances of Being that are called ‘being’ in completely different ways, such that one might even doubt that both are properly referred to as beings. If Being is complex in just this way, then answering the question ‘what is Being?’ may indeed involve different elements, and not just Being.

Two things follow from that. First, it follows that we must find a way of understanding the four kinds, other than Being, as addressing the question ‘what is being?’. Earlier, we said that Kinêsis and Stasis emerge from the part of the dialogue where Plato examines the doctrines of his predecessors about being. Now, it is not at all obvious how Kinêsis and Stasis can contribute to the question ‘what is it for something, anything, to be?’. If they do, it must be that Kinêsis and Stasis are used in a specific way, and may not

simply refer to change and rest in general. Indeed, the question ‘what is being?’ is a question about what things are *qua* being the beings that they are, prior to anything else like being white, being just, being in Dublin. Furthermore, there is a question as to whether Kinêsis and Stasis contribute to answering this question for all beings, or for some beings only. In particular, Kinêsis raises concerns related to Plato’s own views about reality. Plato is well-known for holding the view that reality is divided into two realms, the sensible realm and the intelligible realm. The sensible realm is characterised as being constantly changing: sensible things do not have an essence, there is nothing that they always are, but rather, they ‘are’ and ‘are not’ depending on their relation to the intelligible realm. By contrast, the intelligible is the realm of the eternal and immutable entities like the Platonic Forms, which always ‘are’. There is, thus, an important question as to how Plato can think that both Kinêsis and Stasis are part of an account of what it is for something to be.

Second, the idea that answering the question ‘what is being?’ requires the conjunction of Being with other elements raises a certain number of questions. First, what does this conjunction amount to? What is the nature of the relation between Being and the other kinds? Is it addition? Is it fusion? Second, are the four other kinds jointly related to Being, or is Being alternatively related to the one or to the other? In this respect, what is puzzling is the apparent heterogeneity of the other great kinds, for there are two substantive kinds, namely Kinêsis and Stasis, and two formal kinds, namely Sameness and Otherness. The first question has some primacy over the second one, for depending on what the structure of the relation between Being and the other kinds is, that may have implications as to whether all kinds are jointly connected with Being or not. Thus, if we are to defend the view that the *megista genê* theory is addressed to the question ‘what is being?’, then the enquiry about the structure of the *megista genê* is going to be a crucial part of this project. Already, we can say that the adequate structure should have the following characteristics. To begin with, the relation between Being and the other *megista genê* must make it possible that Being forms a close unity with them. Indeed, as already mentioned, the question addressed here is the basic question of what it is for something to be a being, as opposed to being red, a cat, tall, or the number two. In this way, we are not talking about properties which are added to Being in order to make this thing *x*, *y* or *z*. Next, although this unity between the other kinds and Being must be very tight, Being must not be conflated with them, for we are not certain that all these kinds are compatible with one another, especially Kinêsis and Stasis. Finally, the structure of the relation

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between Being and the other kinds must be such as to make it possible to account for everything, and not only for some beings.

§. Part-whole structure and the megista genê theory

A major work on Plato's metaphysics of structure which has emerged in recent years is Harte's book *Plato on Parts and Wholes, The Metaphysic of Structure*. In this book, Harte defends the view that the part-whole relation plays a central role in Plato's conception of structure. She convincingly argues that Plato develops his own view about composition, in opposition to another, competing view about composition, championed by the Eleatics. The Eleatics hold that a whole is the mere sum of its parts, a view which is otherwise referred to as the view that composition is identity. The main consequence of this view is that composition is ontologically innocent, that is, that the composition of a whole out of parts does not add anything to the sum of existing things, the whole being entirely reducible to its parts. As she argues, the main problem with this view, and a problem that Plato recognises, is that it inevitably ends up with the same thing, namely the whole, being at the same time one, in virtue of being the whole that it is, and many, in virtue of being its many parts. She refers to this problem as the one-and-many problem. In response to the Eleatics, Plato develops his own view about composition, according to which a whole is not the mere sum of its parts, but is instead, a unity over and above its parts. On this view, composition is not an identity relation, and accordingly, composition is not ontologically innocent but ontologically creative. This means that the whole is not reducible to its parts, but counts as a further entity, in addition to the parts. On the latter view about composition, the one Harte attributes to Plato, structure plays a crucial role, for parts and whole must stand in a specific relation to one another such that they are both united into something, but at the same time are distinct from one another.

In her book, Harte does not consider the *megista genê* of the *Sophist* as a possible example of a part-whole relation, although she argues that considerations about parts and wholes are present in the *Sophist*. Nevertheless, it seems that the part-whole relation is promising for the question of the relation between Being and the other kinds, especially if this relation is not understood as identity. First, a part-whole structure has precisely this unity that we said Being must have with the other kinds. Indeed, a whole is a unity made of a multiplicity; it is a one which is made up of many. Second, the part-whole relation, as she

describes it, that is, with the whole being a unity over and above its parts as opposed to being identical to them, prevents Being from simply disappearing into its parts. A whole is closely related to its parts, but it is not reducible to them. Finally, it seems that the part-whole structure is particularly adapted to the question of ‘what is being?’; for regardless of the sort of being it is asked about, the question calls for a unified answer.

§. *Kinêsis and Stasis as two megista genê*

The central hypothesis defended in this dissertation is that Kinêsis and Stasis form the basis of an answer to the question ‘what is being?’ which is articulated in the *megista genê* theory.

Kinêsis and Stasis are first introduced in the passage known as the Gigantomachia, which depicts the battle between the Friends of the Forms and the Giants about being. This battle takes place at the end of a long passage, which starts at 242c, in which Plato examines the doctrine of his predecessors. The Friends of the Forms and the Giants are the last groups of philosophers involved in the discussion, but the conclusion that is reached at the end of the Gigantomachia, at 249d, is not only addressed to them, but also to the philosophers who were addressed at the beginning, namely the Eleatics, and to the philosopher, in general. It is, thus, a sort of general conclusion, which is supposed to sum up what the outcome of this long passage is. What this conclusion states, precisely, is that being and the totality consists of everything that is changing and everything that is at rest.⁶ Here, we can see that Kinêsis and Stasis play a central role in this conclusion. The question, however, is: what role do they play? What do Kinêsis and Stasis stand for here? Do they contribute to the question, ‘what is being?’ and, if so, how? These will be the questions addressed in the first two chapter of this dissertation.

If we think about it, there are different possibilities available to us. A first, and maybe natural possibility, is to read this conclusion as saying that if we look at things that are, we can see that they are changing in different respects, and at different times, but that they are also at rest in other respects, and at different times. In this way, Kinêsis and Stasis are properties that beings may or may not have. There are many ways something can be changing, e.g. it can be changing locally, from being in Paris to being in Dublin, it can be

6. *Soph.* 249d3-4.

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changing qualitatively, from being red to being green, it can be changing quantitatively, from being 5 inches tall to being 6.5 inches tall. Likewise, there are many ways something can be at rest, e.g. it can remain in the same place, it can persevere in the same state, etc. On this reading, what the Stranger is saying in the conclusion at 249d is that there is something common to all beings, such that beings are things that are subject to change and rest. This is a first way of understanding the conclusion of the Gigantomachia, and as we shall see in Chapter I, this is a view that has been defended by a number of scholars. But this is not the only way of reading the conclusion. Consider, for a moment, that by Stasis and Kinêsis here, what is meant is that there are some beings which are properly characterised as unchangeable beings, and other beings, which are properly characterised as changing beings. Then, it seems that the picture that we have drawn earlier has changed in a radical and significant way, namely: what is at issue is not the question of whether these things may or may not be changing or at rest in different respects, but the question of whether they belong to the group of beings that is properly characterised as changing beings or to the group of beings that is properly characterised as unchangeable beings. This is what I shall call the non-coreferentiality thesis in Chapter I. It is the thesis that Kinêsis and Stasis do not apply to the same beings, but that the changing beings and the unchangeable beings form two groups of beings which never overlap. On this reading, Kinêsis and Stasis are not properties that beings may or may not have, but rather, they divide reality into two non-overlapping groups.

If we take on board the second reading, namely the non-coreferential reading of Kinêsis and Stasis, then what follows is that reality is divided between two kinds of beings which seem to have little to do with one another. On the one hand are the changing beings, that is, beings that are properly characterised as changing beings, like, for instance, physical things or the soul. On the other hand are unchangeable beings, that is, beings that are properly characterised as unchangeable beings, that is, as beings that are not subject to change at all, such as, for instance, intelligible incorporeal things like virtues, or intelligible Forms. Now, it is important to note that, as this distinction between the changing beings and the unchangeable beings is stated in the conclusion of the Gigantomachia, it is not only addressed to Platonists, but also, to all those other philosophers whose views have been examined since the beginning, and indeed to the philosopher as such. This is a point that I make and argue for in the dissertation, namely: that the *megista genê* theory is not only addressed to Platonists — whom we may

minimally define as people who think that reality is ultimately divided between beings that are Forms and other beings that depend on these Forms and participate in them — but to all those who have ever argued about being.⁷ On this point, my reading differs from most other readings of the *Sophist*. It is generally assumed that the metaphysical view Plato is defending in the dialogue is either addressed to Platonists only, or is addressed to all thinkers, but this, precisely, because it is addressed to a less ambitious question than the question ‘what is being?’. By contrast, on the reading I shall defend in the dissertation, not only are the metaphysical views that Plato develops in the *Sophist* addressed to all thinkers, including thinkers who do not believe in Forms, but also, the agreement they reach is a significant one. This agreement is that they all agree that, ultimately, the answer to the question ‘what is being?’ must involve *Kinêsis* and *Stasis*, conceived as non-overlapping kinds, although they may not agree on all that follows from that, and especially, they may not agree on the exact answer to the question ‘what is there?’. I shall come back to this point several times in the dissertation, and argue for it on textual grounds.

On the reading I am defending, we can properly see how *Kinêsis* and *Stasis* ground the answer to the question ‘what is being?’. The question that immediately arises is then: what is it that makes these things, which are described not only in different but indeed opposite terms, both things that are? How can they be united, such that in both cases, we are talking about ‘beings’ and not about something else, and we are talking not ambiguously or in a loose way? This question will be the focus of Chapter III. Now, since *Kinêsis* and *Stasis* are opposites, in the sense described above, that is, as applying to two non-overlapping groups of beings, they cannot simply be unified by being added to each other, nor can they simply be mixed with one another. What is needed is a third thing that unites them. This third thing, as I shall argue, is Being itself, and the way Being unites them is by constituting the whole whose parts are *Kinêsis* and *Stasis*. This is the part of the argument to which Harte’s book on the metaphysics of the part-whole relation is most relevant. Central to Chapter III is the claim, which she defends in the book, that Plato rejects the view that composition is an identity relation between the parts and the whole, and that he instead asserts that a whole is a unity over and above its parts. This is crucial,

7. This is a paraphrase of *Soph.* 251c8-d1. We shall see, however, that it nonetheless excludes some thinkers, namely those of the Giants who would never ever surrender that there is anything that they cannot grasp in their hands.

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for if Plato were to conceive the part-whole relation as an identity relation, then Kinêsis and Stasis could not be united in a whole, for Kinêsis and Stasis, being what they are, cannot be identified with one another. This, basically, is the reason why the *megista genê*, understood as elements in an account of what being is, include Being itself.

That Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are united as parts and whole leads us, in turn, to reconsider the role of Sameness and Otherness in relation to them. We have just said that the claim that Being unites Kinêsis and Stasis as a whole relies on the denial that composition is an identity relation. Now, as I shall argue in Chapter IV, this is precisely what Sameness and Otherness contribute to, namely to the claim that the whole is not the same as its parts, but that parts and whole are distinct kinds. As we shall see, Plato formulates the claim in the following way: Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are each the same as themselves and different from the other kinds. This, as we shall see, is, according to Plato, a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for composition.

To conclude, from the hypothesis that Kinêsis and Stasis are not mere examples of opposites, nor properties that beings may or may not have, but represent the division of reality into two kinds of beings while searching for answer to the question ‘what is being?’, the picture that emerges from the *megista genê* theory is quite different from what has been defended in the literature. First, and most importantly, it follows from the interpretation I am defending that the *megista genê* is primarily, but perhaps not only, a theory about the essence of Being, about its nature. It is indeed based on the essential relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. Second, the *megista genê* is a coherent theory, and not simply a list of great kinds. Indeed, each of the five great kinds plays a precise role, and the theory cannot hold without all five of them. Third, the *megista genê* theory involves a reflection on structure, in particular on the part-whole structure, about which Plato proves to be particularly innovative. Finally, it emerges through the dialogue that the *megista genê* theory is not only a theory about being, addressed to Platonists, but a theory that is supposed to be acceptable to other thinkers who are ready to share the premise that reality is ultimately divided, in one way or another, between the changing beings and the unchangeable beings.

I would like to think that this dissertation contributes to the debate over Plato’s account of the problems regarding being in the *Sophist*, and that it does so in quite an innovative way. However, I have found that the gist, at any rate, of my reading was anticipated by Plotinus more than 1,700 years ago, though I certainly feel honoured to have

Plotinus as a companion on this long journey through the *megista genê* theory. Plotinus' interpretation of the *megista genê* theory, which is to be found in *Enn.* VI 2, has been understood by critics as a free interpretation of the *Sophist*, which addresses problems that are not raised or addressed in Plato's dialogue. By contrast, I shall argue in Chapter V that Plotinus' theory of the five great kinds is fundamentally in agreement with the metaphysical project of the greatest kinds of being as it is developed in the *Sophist*. This makes an important difference in that it holds out the prospect for reconsidering the role and significance of a metaphysics of kinds of being, and especially one based on Plato's *Sophist*, in Antiquity.

CHAPTER I: The non-coreferentiality of Kinêsis and Stasis

1.0. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role of Kinêsis and Stasis as two of the five great kinds of the *Sophist* by looking at the passage in which they are first introduced. The proper place to start is the battle between the Gods and the Giants (*Gigantomachia*), from 245e5 to 249d5, in which they are introduced in the dialogue for the first time. The *Gigantomachia* is the debate about being (*peri tês ousias*, 245a5) that pits the physicalists (Giants) against the Friends of the Forms (Gods).⁸ It is the final stage of the development of a broader process, which begins at 242c, and which consists in an examination, by the Stranger and Theaetetus, of the views of their predecessors about being. At this stage of the dialogue, Kinêsis and Stasis have not been formally introduced as two of the greatest kinds — it is only much later, at 254d4-5, that Kinêsis and Stasis are identified as such. Rather, Kinêsis and Stasis gradually emerge as the bone of contention between the factions in this battle. The Giants, on the one hand, hold the view that all there is is what they can grasp in their hands, that is, physical things. The Friends of the Forms, on the other hand, distinguish between ‘becoming’ (*genesis*) and ‘true being’ (*hê alêthinê ousia*), the latter realm, they say, encompasses some intelligible and incorporeal Forms (*noêta atta kai asômata eidê*), while the former realm is subject to change. Through the course of the debate, the proponents of each side are gradually lead to revise their views: the Giants are persuaded that there are not only changing corporeal beings, but also unchangeable incorporeal ones; the Friends of the Forms are persuaded that there are not only unchangeable intelligible beings, but also some changing beings. The passage then culminates in the concluding assertion, addressed not only to the contenders of the debate but also to the philosopher in general, that ‘being (*to on*) and the totality (*to pan*) are both together everything that is changeless (*akinêta*) and everything that is changing (*kekinêmena*)’.

In this chapter, I shall focus on the following question: in the *Gigantomachia*,

8. References to pages, sections, and lines of Plato’s works are based on Burnet’s edition. Translations are mines, unless otherwise indicated.

which marks their initial introduction, and in the *Sophist*, more generally, can Kinêsis and Stasis apply to the same beings? This question is central because the answer to it will determine whether Kinêsis and Stasis are features, or properties shared by beings, or are meant to stand for groups of beings. The affirmative answer to this question I call the coreferentiality answer: yes, Kinêsis and Stasis can apply to the same beings, for the same thing can change and rest in different respects or at different times. On the coreferential view, Kinêsis and Stasis are, thus, features, or qualities, or properties that beings may have or may not have. By contrast, I call the non-coreferentiality answer the negative answer to this question. It maintains that Kinêsis and Stasis cannot apply to the same beings, and, thus, the changing beings and the changeless beings form two groups of beings which never overlap. On the non-coreferential view, Kinêsis and Stasis are used to designate groups of beings, rather than features that may or may not apply to the beings. In this chapter, I shall defend the non-coreferentiality answer.

The difference between Kinêsis and Stasis construed as features that beings may or may not have and Kinêsis and Stasis designating groups of beings is crucial. On the one hand, if Kinêsis and Stasis are features of beings, then being changing or being changeless is just like being beautiful, just, or tall. For instance, changing colour (qualitative change) or remaining in the same place (physical rest) are examples of features that things may jointly display. What is thus referred to here as ‘being at rest’ or as ‘being changing’ is being capable of any sort of rest or change, though of course not in the same respect, and not necessarily at the same time nor even at all times. On the other hand, if Kinêsis and Stasis are used to designate groups of beings, then change and rest are not properties that beings may or may not have, but terms, or concepts, which divide beings into two exclusive groups. In this way, they refer to what sort, or to what kind of being something is: either a changing being or an unchangeable being. What is at issue, then, is not a means of determining whether something can possess a certain property or not, but rather a means by which to designate something as belonging to the one group of beings or to the other. Along these lines, being a changing being or an unchangeable being is not something that may or may not display at different times or in different respects, but rather, a being is always, as long as it exists, either a changing being or an unchangeable being.

One might object that even with properties, we can divide things according to whether they possess the property X — say, redness — or not. The difference, however, is that exhibiting the property red, or not, only indirectly tells you what kind of thing the

thing that possesses the property red is. Indeed, if something exhibits the property red, then this thing is likely to be something physical. Hence, behind the distinction between things that can be red and things that cannot, lies the distinction between concrete and abstract objects. But being a concrete or an abstract object is not exactly the same as being red, for being ‘concrete’ or ‘abstract’ is not, strictly speaking, a property. It is something along these lines that is meant by saying that Kinêsis and Stasis are not properties beings exhibit, but groups of beings. The division between abstract and concrete objects is helpful here, because it is a basic division of reality. From the little we know at this stage of the enquiry — this will become more clear as we are progressing through the dialogue — we can nevertheless expect that the division between changing and unchangeable beings is also a basic division of reality, for, as can be seen in the conclusion, it is a division that applies to all beings, and is part of a debate that is not just any debate, but a debate over being itself.

In the literature, the coreferentiality thesis has taken different forms. Some scholars hold the view that Kinêsis and Stasis apply to each and every being, while for others, it is enough that there are at least some beings to which both Kinêsis and Stasis apply, although there may be some other beings to which only one of the two applies. As it happens, a majority of critics who have defended the coreferentiality thesis have done so on the basis of arguing that, in the *Sophist*, Forms also are subject to change in a certain, very particular, respect. Now, the question of whether or not Forms are subject to change in the *Sophist* is not, on its own, a sufficient criterion for distinguishing between the coreferentiality and the non-coreferentiality theses, for as we shall see, some critics hold a version of the coreferentiality thesis in which Kinêsis does not apply to Forms; these critics, nevertheless, maintain that there are other beings, namely physical beings, to which both Kinêsis and Stasis apply. For the non-coreferentiality thesis however, what has to be determined is whether Forms are characterised as changing beings or as unchangeable beings, but not as both changing and unchangeable. It is, thus, in this respect that the question of the changeability or of the unchangeability of Forms will be raised in this chapter, but the non-coreferentiality thesis cannot be motivated on the basis of Forms alone. The question of what Kinêsis and Stasis apply to must thus be raised in a general way, that is, it must be raised for all beings which are under consideration in the *Gigantomachia*. Finally, note that my argument does not rely on Forms being Platonic Forms, in the sense of being Forms as we find them in other dialogues. By ‘Forms’, I thus

mean no more than the Friends of the Forms' candidate for being and I shall keep clear of the issue whether the Friends of the Forms represent Plato's earlier self.

A decisive question, that will be addressed at the end of this chapter, is whether the non-coreferentiality thesis holds true only in the Gigantomachia passage, or whether we have to admit that Kinêsis and Stasis are also non-coreferential in the rest of the dialogue, and especially, in the *megista genê* passage. So far, critics who have supported the non-coreferential view in the Gigantomachia passage have fallen short of showing the non-coreferentiality thesis in the *megista genê* passage as well.⁹ Others have actually positively argued for there being a shift in the way Kinêsis and Stasis are used after the Gigantomachia, from a non-coreferential use to a broad use of Kinêsis and Stasis as referring to change and rest in general.¹⁰ By contrast, I shall defend the non-coreferentiality claim as being true of Kinêsis and Stasis in the entire dialogue, including in the *megista genê* passage.

In what follows, I shall defend the non-coreferentiality thesis by demonstrating, based on close textual analysis, that in the Gigantomachia, Kinêsis and Stasis are never used of the same beings. On the one hand, I shall argue that Plato uses the two terms *stasimon* and *akinêton* interchangeably and only of things that never move and are not capable of movement or change. On the other hand, I shall argue that *kinoumenon* or *kekinêmenon* is used exclusively of things that are capable of change, although this does not imply that those beings are constantly changing. I shall argue for this first in the debate with the Friends of the Forms, where the debate over Kinêsis and Stasis properly starts, and then retrospectively in the debate with the Giants. Third, turning to the conclusion of the debate between the Giants and the Friends of the Forms at 249c10-d4, I shall defend a reading of the conclusion on the basis of the non-coreferential reading, that is: being consists in all changing beings and all unchangeable beings, where the changing beings and the unchangeable beings form two groups of beings which never overlap. Although the Giants and the Friends of the Forms do not agree on which the changing beings and the

9. See for instance Frank (1986); Brown (1998); Politis (2006); Crivelli (2012). These critics argue that Kinêsis applies to some beings whereas Stasis applies to other, different beings, but they do not pursue this claim further after the Gigantomachia passage. Note also that these critics have not paused to ask the question whether Kinêsis and Stasis are properties that beings may or may not have, or whether they are kinds, sorts of being, some of them actually clearly assuming that they are properties (see esp. Frank (1986), pp. 15, 17, 18).

10. As we shall see in the last subsection of this chapter, the main contender of this view is Cornford (1935).

changeless beings are, we shall see that they do agree on what being a changing being or an unchangeable being consists in. Recognising, however, that the meaning of a word may not be fully determined by its reference, I will finally argue that there is no such move in the *Sophist*, even after the Gigantomachia passage, namely: a move from the use of *stasimon/akinêton* to refer to groups of beings to its use to refer, simply, to change and rest in general.

1.1. Kinêsis and Stasis in the debate with the Friends of the Forms

In this section, I shall argue that the Friends of the Forms use Kinêsis and Stasis in a non-coreferential way. First, we shall see that at the beginning of the debate, the Friends of the Forms apply Stasis to what they call Forms — again, independently of the question whether these are also Plato's Forms — which, they say, are unchangeable, and they apply Kinêsis to *genesis*. Next, I shall argue that the debate with the Friends of the Forms consists not in persuading them to recognise that their candidates for being are also changing, nor in persuading them to recognise that Stasis also applies to other beings while they are at rest, but in persuading them to introduce other beings, which they did not recognise in the first place as beings, and whose proper nature is to be changing. We shall see that those beings are properly referred to as changing beings.

1.1.1. The Friends of the Forms's initial position

The Gigantomachia does not start as a debate over the question of whether beings are changeable or unchangeable, but as a debate over the question of whether beings are corporeal or incorporeal.¹¹ It is only in the course of the debate that the changeability/unchangeability issue becomes central; the corporeality/incorporeality issue is gradually left aside, and in the conclusion and in the rest of the dialogue, reference is made only to the changeability/unchangeability problem. At the beginning of the passage, when the Giants' view is examined, the question of the corporeality or of the incorporeality is still addressed independently from the question of the unchangeability or of the changeability

11. See Brown (1998), p. 194: 'the debate, originally about whether material or immaterial things have being, is transformed into one in terms of changing versus unchanging objects'.

of the beings, and it is only later that the connection between the two is made clear.¹² Even when the Friends of the Forms are introduced for the first time at 246b6-c2, the emphasis is on the incorporeality of the Forms rather than on them being unchangeable. Indeed, the Friends of the Forms are first introduced as those who claim that ‘certain intelligible (*noêta* *atta*) and incorporeal (*asômata*) Forms (*eidê*) [...] are true being (*alêthina ousia*)’.¹³ In this passage, only the characterisation of *genesis* as ‘moving’ (*pheromenê*) anticipates the changeability/unchangeability issue. Apart from that, there is no mention of change and rest from 245e6 to 248a4.¹⁴

Strictly speaking, the word ‘stasis’ is not used before 249c1, and ‘kinêsis’ only appears at 248e6. Nevertheless, the problem of change and rest emerges in the debate as early as 248a4, that is, right after the Stranger has come to an agreement with the Giants and turns to the Friends of the Forms. At this point in the dialogue, the debate shifts from the question of whether beings are corporeal or incorporeal, to the question of whether beings are subject to change or not. Accordingly, the Friends of the Forms’s initial position, which was first presented at 246b6-c2, is reformulated at 248a10-13 so as to match with the new emphasis:

{ΞΕ.} Καὶ σώματι μὲν ἡμᾶς γενέσει δι' αἰσθήσεως κοι-	248a10
ωνεῖν, διὰ λογισμοῦ δὲ ψυχῆ πρὸς τὴν ὄντως οὐσίαν,	
ἣν ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτα ὡσαύτως ἔχειν φατέ, γένεσιν δὲ ἄλλοτε	
ἄλλως.	248a13

STR.: And <it is> by the body through sensation <that we> have communion with becoming, and by the soul through reasoning <that we have communion> with real being, which you say is always the same in the same way, while becoming <is> different at different times.

Although neither the word *kinêsis* nor the word *stasis* is used in this passage, we can nonetheless recognise them as standing behind the distinction between ‘real being’ (*ousia*) and ‘becoming’ (*genesis*). Real being is described here as ‘what is always the same in the same way’. In other words, being is never different in any respect, that is, it is never subject to change. By contrast, becoming is ‘different at different times’, which implies that it is changing. Here, it is crucial to note that the notions of change and rest are not used in a general way, but they have a technical sense. Indeed, what is at issue here is not the

12. See 1.2.1. in this chapter.

13. *Soph.* 246b6-c2.

14. We shall see in the next section how the debate with the Giants connects with the change and rest problem. See 1.2.1.

question of whether some beings are changing in some respects, while being at rest in another respect, just like one could say that because my fingers are moving as I type, I am currently changing in one respect, whereas because I am remaining seated in my chair, I am at rest in another respect. There are many ways in which physical beings can be both at rest and changing in different respects, or at different times, but, surely, this is not what the Friends of the Forms have in mind when they characterise becoming as changing and true being as unchangeable. Rather, what is at issue is the division of reality into two realms: the upper realm of true being, which is characterised as essentially unchangeable, and the lower realm of becoming, which is characterised as essentially changing.¹⁵ Hence, the changing/unchangeable distinction does not amount to a distinction between properties that things may or may not have, but between groups of things, as is clear from the *ousial/genesis* distinction. Consequently we may conclude that the Friends of the Forms initially use change and rest in a non-coreferential way, that is, to refer to two distinct and exclusive groups of beings.

This interpretation is supported by other passages in the Platonic corpus. The phrase that the Stranger uses to characterise real being is indeed a familiar one. That Forms, and more generally true being, are ‘what is always the same in the same way’ is a well-known Platonic leitmotif, and it is this exact phrase that we find in several dialogues.¹⁶ In the *Phaedo* for instance, the phrase ‘always the same in the same way’ (*aei kata tauta hōsautôs echein*) is found five times between 78b and 80a, and even more if we include sentences where the phrase is not used in its full version, but only as ‘*kata tauta echein*’ or as ‘*hōsautôs echein*’. It is important to note that in other dialogues like the *Phaedo*, there is some flexibility not in the way this phrase is used, for it is systematically used to depict the intelligible realm, but in the way it is formulated. Indeed, it will be useful to remember this when we turn to the second occurrence of this phrase at 249b12.¹⁷ The comparison with the *Phaedo* passage is also fruitful for the non-coreferentiality thesis

15. Bostock (1984), p. 107 mentions this option: ‘it may be that, as in the struggle between gods and giants, what Plato really has in mind is the distinction between things that are capable of change and things not so capable’.

16. The same point is made by Brown (1998), n. 21 p. 194: ‘Note in particular the phrases “always in the same state with respect to the same things” (used of Forms at *Phd.* 78d2, d6, d8, 79a9-10, d5, e4, and echoed at *Soph.* 248a12, 249b12) and “in different states at different times” (used of material objects at *Soph.* 248a12; cf. *Phd.* 78d3). This striking phraseology may be said to be a hallmark of the theory of Forms as expounded in *Phd.* and *Rep.*’

17. See 1.1.2. in this chapter.

in several respects. First, the aim of the passage around 78-80 is precisely to differentiate the very same two groups of beings that the Friends of the Forms distinguish, namely the unchangeable intelligible Forms and the changeable physical beings. Note, in particular, the line at 79a6, where Socrates says that these are the ‘two sorts of beings’ (*duo eidê tôn ontôn*). Second, in the *Phaedo* passage, the phrase ‘always the same in the same way’ serves as a way of deciding whether something belongs to the one sort of beings or to the other. In this way, Socrates explicitly denies that composite things (*ta suntheta*, 78c8), the many things (*ta polla*, 78e2), and the visible (*to horaton* 79a10) are in any sense ‘always the same in the same way’. Only Forms are, and this distinguishes them from the sensible realm. Third, the passage at 78c10-d9 makes it clear that ‘what is always the same in the same way’ cannot change in any respect, that it is completely immune from change. It is clearly spelled out at 78d6-7: it ‘never admits any alteration in any way or respect whatever’.¹⁸ Again, this is important when it comes to the question of whether what is ‘always the same in the same way’ can in some respects be subject to change, even in a minimal way, to which the answer we get in the *Phaedo* is: no, what is ‘always the same in the same way’ is properly unchangeable, it cannot be subject to any sort of change.

1.1.2. Are the Friends of the Forms committed to the claim that Forms change in a certain respect?

Having seen that the Friends of the Forms initially use change and rest to mark the distinction between two tiers of reality, we now need to consider how their position is revised. Indeed, we know from the conclusion that the Friends of the Forms are ultimately persuaded to include some change into being. The question is, thus, how the Friends of the Forms arrive at this conclusion. There are two main options: either they are forced to admit that their candidate for being, namely intelligible unchangeable Forms, are also subject to change in some respects, or they are forced to admit that there are beings, other than Forms, that are changing beings.¹⁹ On the former option, the Friends of the Forms ultimately use Kinêsis and Stasis in a coreferential way, that is, as both applying to Forms. On the latter option, there are two possibilities: either those new beings are exclusively

18. *Phd.* 78d6-7: [...] ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχει καὶ οὐδέποτε οὐδαμῆ οὐδαμῶς ἀλλοίωσιν οὐδεμίαν ἐνδέχεται;

19. The view that Forms are subject to change in some respects has been supported by Moravcsik (1962) and Owen (1966). For a criticism of these views, see, in particular, Brown (1998).

referred to as changing beings, or they are referred to as both changing and at rest.²⁰ Only the first possibility is compatible with the non-coreferential reading. In what follows, I shall argue for this, starting with the denial that the conclusion that Forms are subject to change is ever drawn in the passage.

The revision of the Friends of the Forms is a two-step process, which starts with the Friends of the Forms being confronted with the conclusion of the debate with the Giants, from 248a4 to 248e5, and then continues with an objection related to the possibility of *nous* from 248e6. Starting with the first step, the debate with the Giants ends with the Stranger offering them a characterisation of being supposed to apply to both the corporeal beings and to the incorporeal beings that they have been compelled to include in their ontology. This characterisation of being, known as the *dunamis* proposal, is spelled out at 247d8-e4. It consists in the characterisation of being as what has the *dunamis* either to act (*to poiein*) on another thing or to be affected (*to pathein*), be it only once, in the slightest way, by the most insignificant thing.²¹ These few lines have provided fodder for much debate among critics. A first issue concerns the question of whether the *dunamis* proposal offers a criterion for being, or a proper definition of being. I shall set this issue aside, as we shall examine it properly in Chapter II. Another issue is the question of whether the *dunamis* proposal is accepted by the Friends of the Forms, as it has previously been accepted by the Giants, and whether or not it implies that Forms are subject to change. The latter two issues are, of course, closely related. With respect to these issues, it seems that all possible positions have been defended. It has been argued that: (a) the *dunamis* proposal is accepted by the Friends of the Forms and it implies that Forms are moved (Moravcsik (1962), Owen (1966)); (b) the *dunamis* proposal is not accepted and, hence, Forms remain unchangeable (Politis (2006)); (c) the *dunamis* proposal is not accepted, but it could have been accepted, because it does not imply that Forms are subject to change (Brown (1998)); (d) the *dunamis* proposal is accepted but Forms are not subject to change (Vlastos (1973); Leigh (2010)). For present purposes, I need not decide on the question whether the

20. Keyt (1969), Frank (1986) and Politis (2006) are clear examples of critics who support the former view, while Buckels (2015), for instance, supports the latter. However, many critics, like Brown (1998) remain unclear on the matter. While she argues that Forms, from beginning to end, remain unchangeable, she does not say whether *Stasis* applies to physical beings in some respects, or not.

21. *Soph.* 247d8-e4: Λέγω δὴ τὸ καὶ ὅποιανοῦν τινα κεκτημένον δύναμιν εἴτ' εἰς τὸ ποιεῖν ἕτερον ὀτιοῦν πεφυκὸς εἴτ' εἰς τὸ παθεῖν καὶ σμικρότατον ὑπὸ τοῦ φαυλοτάτου, κἂν εἰ μόνον εἰς ἅπαξ, πᾶν τοῦτο ὄντως εἶναι· τίθεμαι γὰρ ὅρον ὀρίζειν τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν οὐκ ἄλλο τι πλὴν δύναμις. I follow the text edited by Diēs and do not bracket *τινα* (247d8) and ὀρίζειν (247e3).

dunamis proposal is accepted by the Friends of the Forms or not. All I need to show is that, regardless of whether the *dunamis* proposal is ultimately dropped or not, the claim that Forms are unchangeable is left untouched.²² By this, I mean the claim that Kinêsis does not apply to Forms at all, that is, that Forms are not subject to any sort of change, even changes like external changes or Cambridge changes, which, as some critics have argued, are compatible with Forms remaining the same.²³ As a result, the interpretation I shall defend is compatible with views (b), (c) and (d). Only (a) has to be rejected. Regarding (a), this view has already been criticised by Brown.²⁴ She argues, first, that this reading of the *dunamis* proposal relies on a non-substantial reading of ‘to be affected’, according to which something can be ‘affected’ by merely being the subject of a predicate, and this, she says, is not supported by the text. Second, she objects that the passage following the *dunamis* proposal proves this interpretation wrong, for not only does it show that a strong reading of ‘being affected’ is required, as opposed to a non-substantial reading, but also, the unchangeability of the Forms is reasserted at 249b12-c1.²⁵ Following Brown, I shall argue, on textual grounds, that the claim that the Forms are unchangeable is maintained, by which I mean that the Forms are neither changed nor affected.

When first proposed to the Giants, the *dunamis* proposal is introduced as an attempt to find what is common to the Giants’ corporeal and incorporeal beings. However, as soon as the Friends of the Forms enter the debate, the discussion immediately shifts to the problem of change and rest. The Friends of the Forms’ immediate reaction is to reject the *dunamis* proposal, on the grounds that this is not an appropriate characterisation of *ousia*, only of *genesis*. To them, it is straightforward that the *dunamis* proposal amounts to the claim that everything that is is subject to change. The crux of the argument is that if knowing (*to gignôskein*) is a case of acting (*poiein ti*), then it necessarily follows (*anankaion sumbanei*) that what is known (*to gignôskomenon*) is in turn affected (*paschein*).²⁶ Hence, the following consequence:

22. I thank D. Meißner for this helpful suggestion.

23. See, for instance, Moravcsik (1962); Owen (1966); Runciman (1962); Reeve (1985); Künne (2004); Buckels (2015). Against the claim that with respect to Forms anything like Cambridge change is relevant in the *Sophist*, see Brown (1998); Leigh (2012b).

24. Brown (1998), pp. 190-192.

25. For Moravcsik (1962), p. 37, ‘anything which can be a subject or a predicate in a genuine assertion exists’ is affected; for Owen (1966), p. 339 ‘it is a sufficient condition of change that something should become true of the subject at some time that was not true before’.

26. *Soph.* 248d10-e1.

{ΞΕ.} [...] τὴν οὐσίαν δὴ κατὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦτον γινωσκομένην ὑπὸ τῆς 248e2
 γνώσεως, καθ' ὅσον γινώσκειται, κατὰ τοσοῦτον κινεῖσθαι διὰ
 τὸ πάσχειν, ὃ δὴ φαμεν οὐκ ἂν γενέσθαι περὶ τὸ ἡρεμοῦν. 248e4

STR: [...] therefore by this argument when being is known by knowledge,
 insofar as it is being known, it is to that extent being changed, namely
 through the fact of being affected, which is something we say could not
 happen in relation to what is at rest.²⁷

This passage is interesting for several reasons. First, as we shall see in the next paragraph, the passage prepares for the last argument (starting at 249b5), before the conclusion of the Gigantomachia. Second, it makes the connection between being affected and being subject to change. Third, it shows that the unchangeability of being must be understood in the strongest sense, for even the minimal sort of change that is here implied is enough for the Friends of the Forms to reject the *dunamis* proposal. Finally, the word ‘stasis’ is not used in the passage, but being is here described as *to éremoun*, which is a synonym for being at rest.

From this passage, it seems clear that the Friends of the Forms stick to the claim that Forms are unchangeable. Finally, support for this comes from the last argument before the conclusion of the Gigantomachia, at 249b5-c9, in which we find the same expression as we spotted earlier, namely being the same in the same way and in the same respect, which is again applied to beings which are only described as *stasima*, and not also as *kinoumena*. Let us start by quoting the passage entirely, for we will also need it when it comes to the Giants:

{ΞΕ.} Συμβαίνει δ' οὖν, ὃ Θεαίτητε, ἀκινήτων τε ὄντων 249b5
 νοῦν μηδενὶ περὶ μηδενὸς εἶναι μηδαμοῦ.
 {ΘΕΑΙ.} Κομιδῆ μὲν οὖν.
 {ΞΕ.} Καὶ μὴν ἐὰν αὖ φερόμενα καὶ κινούμενα πάντ' εἶναι
 συγχωρῶμεν, καὶ τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ ταῦτόν τοῦτο ἐκ τῶν ὄντων
 ἐξαιρήσομεν. 249b10
 {ΘΕΑΙ.} Πῶς;
 {ΞΕ.} Τὸ κατὰ ταῦτά καὶ ὡσαύτως καὶ περὶ τὸ αὐτὸ δοκεῖ
 σοι χωρὶς στάσεως γενέσθαι ποτ' ἂν; 249c1
 {ΘΕΑΙ.} Οὐδαμῶς.
 {ΞΕ.} Τί δ'; ἄνευ τούτων νοῦν καθορᾶς ὄντα ἢ γενόμενον
 ἂν καὶ ὅπου οὖν;
 {ΘΕΑΙ.} Ἦκιστα. 249c5

27. Rowe (2015), slightly modified.

STR: It follows, then, Theaetetus, that if <they> are unchanging, there is no *nous* in anything anywhere and about anything.

THT: Certainly.

STR: And yet, if we concede, instead, that all <things that are> are moving and changing, by this argument too we shall be removing this same thing [= *nous*] from the things that are.

THT: How so?

STR: Does it seem to you that, what is the same in the same way and about the same, could ever come to be without *stasis*?

THT: Not at all.

STR: Well then, without these conditions, do you see *nous* being or how it could ever come to be anywhere?

THT: Not in the least.

The Stranger's point is the following: on the one hand, if everything is at rest, then there is no *nous*, but on the other hand, if everything is changing, then there is no *nous* either. Let us set aside the first half of the argument for the moment, and focus on the second half. The Stranger is considering the hypothesis that everything is subject to change, from which it follows, he says, that there is no *nous*. The reason he gives is that if everything is subject to change, then there is no *stasis*, and if there is no *stasis*, then nothing 'is the same in the same way and about the same'. With regard to the move from 'everything is subject to change' to 'there is no *stasis*', the Stranger cannot mean by this that if beings are changing in some respects, then they cannot be at rest in another respect, for this would be absurd. Rather, he must mean something along the following lines: that if everything is a changing thing, then there is no room for unchanging things. This reading finds some support in the second move, namely the move from 'there is no *stasis*' to 'nothing is the same in the same way and about the same'. Indeed, the expression is reminiscent of the one we found earlier in the dialogue, which, as we said, was used to characterise the Forms as unchangeable beings set in opposition to the realm of becoming. Admittedly, the formulation differs slightly from the first occurrence of the phrase, in particular, it lacks the word *aei*. One may wonder whether this may be a sign that the expression is now used to refer also to things that are subject to change in some respects. This, however, is unlikely. First, let us remind ourselves what we observed earlier, namely that in the *Phaedo* also, the phrase is not always used in its full-version. Second, the similarity between the two occurrences is striking: the first passage where the phrase is used is a passage about the soul having communion with what is unchangeable, and the second occurrence is about *nous*, which comes to be in a soul, and whose object is the unchangeable. Finally, if the point were that

the object of *nous* is no longer unchangeable, but also changing in some respects, then we should expect *kinêsis* to be mentioned together with *stasis*. We may conclude, thus, that up to the last argument, the Friends of the Forms stick to the claim that Forms are unchangeable, that is, that they are not subject to change at all, and that *Stasis* is used by the Friends of the Forms to refer to a group of beings, the unchangeable beings as opposed to the changing beings.

1.1.3. To what do the Friends of the Forms apply *Kinêsis*?

Earlier in this chapter, we identified two ways in which the Friends of the Forms can be lead to the conclusion that *Kinêsis* also must be included into being: either they are persuaded that their candidate for being, namely intelligible unchangeable Forms, are also subject to change in some respects, or they are persuaded that there are beings, other than Forms, that are changing beings. Now that the first option has been ruled out — we have seen that the Friends of the Forms do not surrender the unchangeability of the Forms — let us turn to the second option. The central task for the non-coreferentiality reading is to find out whether these new beings are also referred to as beings which are at rest, or whether they are exclusively referred to as changing beings.

The conclusion that ‘what is changing’ (*to kinoumenon*) and ‘change’ (*kinêsis*) are things that are (*onta*) is reached at 249b2-3. This passage immediately follows the *dunamis* proposal passage and precedes the final argument, starting at 249b5, that we have just examined. After the Friends of the Forms’ ultimate rejection of the claim that knowing Forms renders them subject to change, which we examined earlier, the Stranger adopts a new argumentative strategy. He no longer attempts to convince them that knowing/being known is a *poiêma/pathêma* relation, but raises the objection that the Friends of the Forms cannot, on the one hand, hold that change (*kinêsis*), life (*zôê*), the soul (*psuchê*) and *phronêsis* are present in being (*to pantelôs on*), and, on the other hand, hold that being is unchanging (*akinêton*).²⁸ There is debate in the literature over the meaning of the phrase *to*

28. Moravcsik (1962) p. 39 has argued that the movement mentioned at 248e6 is the movement of the soul, which he takes to be knowing. Because of this, he thinks that this passage ultimately validates the claim that to know is to affect, and thus that Forms also are subject to change in some respects. The argument seems to me far-fetched, for had the Stranger finally managed to convince the Friends of the Forms that to know is to affect, he would certainly have signalled it clearly to his interlocutors, given the important debate that this proposal has generated. Moreover, there is no indication in the text, or in the argument, that the conclusion of the present argument at 249b2-3 also applies to the beings which the Friends of the

pantelôs on. The question is whether *to pantelôs on* means ‘perfect being’, that is, primary being, or whether it means ‘complete being’, that is, everything that is.²⁹ If, on the one hand, *to pantelôs on* means ‘perfect being’, it shows that the Friends of the Forms now count changing beings as primary beings.³⁰ If, on the other hand, *to pantelôs on* means ‘complete being’, it shows that the Friends of the Forms now include changing things into being, but without specifying whether they mean the upper-tier or the lower-tier of being.³¹ For present purposes, I need not decide on this issue, as it does not make any difference, for the non-coreferentiality reading, whether the changing beings are among the primary beings or not; all that matters is whether they are also referred to as being at rest in a certain respect. Now, for reasons that will become clear in Chapter II, it will emerge that I, ultimately, defend the ‘complete being’ reading. As a result, I shall give some arguments in favour of the ‘complete being’ reading at the end of this section. But to begin with, let us look at the passage itself, and try to sort out the non-coreferentiality issue.

The argument goes as follows: (P1) being has *nous* and life; (P2) what has *nous* and life has them in a soul; (P3) what is ensouled (*empsuchon*) cannot be unchangeable (*akinêton*); (C1) therefore what is changing (*to kinoumenon*) and change (*kinêsis*) are things that are (*onta*). The crux of the argument is the move from being having life and *nous* to it having them in a soul, and hence being ensouled. Some scholars have argued that what is ensouled is the body, and hence that the Stranger is here also providing an argument that forces the Friends of the Forms to recognise bodies and the change specific to them as things that are.³² Again, it does not matter for the non-coreferentiality claim whether bodies are also included in being, or whether just souls are. All that matters is knowing whether ‘what is changing’ (*to kinoumenon*) is also referred to as being at rest or not. Judging from this passage, it seems that the answer to this question is negative, for *Kinêsis* is here introduced in relation to certain new beings, which are immediately characterised as changing beings. This supports the claim that *Kinêsis* is used for a group

Forms already recognise as beings. It should be noted, though, that for Moravcsik, that the Forms are subject to change means no more than that ‘date (temporal) propositions are true of them’ (p. 40). It does not mean that their nature is changed, which he explicitly rejects p. 40.

29. For more on the debate, see De Vogel (1953), and more recently, Politis (2006), esp. pp. 160-163 and n.7-8 p. 173. See also Menn (1995), n. 1 pp. 69-70 for a comparison with the Neoplatonists’ view on the matter.

30. This view has been defended by De Vogel (1953) and Politis (2006).

31. This view has been defended by Menn (1995) and Brown (1998).

32. See for instance Menn (1995), p. 23; Brown (1998), pp. 201-202. Note the previous reference to the ensouled body (*sôma empsuchon*) at 246e7, in the debate with the Giants.

of beings, namely changing beings, and not for properties that beings may or may not have. Confirmation comes also from the next and final argument at 249b5. If we now turn to the first part of the argument, which we left aside earlier, we can see that it starts from the conclusion that we have just reached. Indeed, that *nous* cannot be in anything (*mêdeni*) anywhere (*mêdamou*) and about anything (*peri mêdenos*) if there are just unchanging beings, merely repeats the point made by the Stranger, namely that what has *nous* (*nous echein*) has it in a soul, and that what is ensouled cannot be unchanging.³³ Hence the claim, immediately accepted by Theaetetus, that if there are only unchanging beings, then *nous* could not come to be in anything. What this passage shows, in complement to the previous one, is that Kinêsis is here used to refer to changing beings. As we have already seen earlier, Stasis is in turn used in this passage for unchangeable beings that are the object of *nous*. In conclusion, from beginning to end, the Friends of the Forms use Kinêsis and Stasis in a non-coreferential way, that is, to refer to groups of beings as opposed to properties that beings may or may not have.

Before we move to the next section, and to the debate with the Giants, let us come back to issue of the ‘complete being’ versus ‘perfect being’ reading. Once more, it should be clear that nothing that I shall say now affects the non-coreferential reading of the passage that I have just defended. What is behind the ‘complete being’ versus ‘perfect reading’ issue is the larger question whether, in the Gigantomachia, Plato defends a tierless, a tiered or a tier-insensitive ontology. The vocabulary is borrowed from Politis, who has dedicated a whole article to this question.³⁴ On a tierless ontology, reality is not divided into tiers, and there is no distinction between levels of reality. By contrast, on a tiered-ontology, reality is divided into tiers, some beings having some sort of primacy over other beings. Finally, a tier-insensitive ontology is a view that remains neutral between the two. Within the context of the debate, the Giants initially hold a tierless ontology, for they recognise only one sort of being, namely corporeal beings. By contrast, the Friends of the Forms hold a tiered-ontology, for they distinguish two levels of reality, the higher level (‘true being’) consisting of unchangeable intelligible Forms, the lower level (‘becoming’) consisting of things that are subject to change.

In our passage, the ‘complete being’ versus ‘perfect being’ issue matters only in so

33. On the relation between *nous* and soul, see the enlightening pages in Menn (1995), pp. 22-23.

34. See Politis (2006).

far as it has an impact on how one reads the final conclusion of the Gigantomachia, at 249c10-d4, and it is in preparation for the conclusion that I am addressing this issue here. Indeed, even on the supposition that the Friends of the Forms admit some changing beings into perfect being, it does not follow from this that they now hold a tierless ontology.³⁵ From the point of view of the debate with the Friends of the Forms alone, it seems that supporters of the ‘perfect being’ reading have a point. Indeed, as we have seen, the passage that immediately precedes this addresses the question of whether Kinêsis applies to Forms, that is, whether Kinêsis applies to perfect being. Likewise, the passage that follows deals with *nous*. Moreover, on the ‘complete being’ reading, it is not at all clear that we need an argument to persuade the Friends of the Forms that changing things are something as opposed to nothing at all, for it is actually part of their initial position. Indeed, when the Friends of the Forms distinguish between being and becoming, they do not deny that becoming is something as opposed to nothing at all, what they deny is that becoming belongs to true being.³⁶

However, from the point of view of the argument running through the Gigantomachia as a whole, it makes more sense if *to pantelôs on* is actually read as ‘complete being’. First, as I shall argue in the next section, the last argument before the conclusion is not only addressed to the Friends of the Forms, but also to the Giants.³⁷ Now, we know from the beginning that the Giants hold a tierless ontology, and nothing indicates that the reformed Giants think otherwise. If I am right that the next argument is also addressed to them, then it cannot rely on the distinction between tiers of being. As a result, the Giants cannot take *nous* to refer to perfect being. Second, as Politis’ article makes clear, the way we read *to pantelôs on* has consequences for how we understand the conclusion of the Gigantomachia. For the record, the conclusion states that being consists of everything that is changing and everything that is unchangeable. Now, if the Friends of the Forms have been persuaded to admit changing beings into perfect being, then they certainly read the conclusion accordingly, that is, as saying that both changing and unchangeable beings are included in perfect being. But the Giants cannot read it that way, for they do not recognise that there are tiers of reality. To them, the conclusion can only be about everything that is, with no further distinction. Consequently, as Politis himself argues, the

35. On this point, see again Politis (2006), esp. pp. 170-171.

36. This point has first be made by Politis (2006), pp. 151, 173.

37. See 1.2.2.

conclusion has to be understood differently by the Giants and by the Friends of the Forms. I shall, later in this chapter, argue against this reading, on the grounds that it allows for too little agreement about being, Kinêsis and Stasis, to serve as a basis for the rest of the dialogue, especially the *megista genê* theory.³⁸ Based on these considerations, I shall endorse the complete being reading. Accordingly, I shall read *to pantelôs on* as anticipating the final conclusion of the Gigantomachia about everything that is changing and everything that is unchangeable.

1.2. The Giants and the problem of change and rest

As we said at the beginning, the debate with the Giants does not begin with the problem of change and rest, and it is only with the Friends of the Forms that this issue becomes central. In this section, we shall first examine how the problem emerges for the Giants. In particular, we shall see that the Giant's initial position amounts to the view that there are only changing beings, to which they apply Kinêsis. Then, we shall move to the reformed Giants, and focus on their use of Stasis. This will lead us to reconsider once more the final argument at 249b5-c9. On the whole, I shall argue that just like the Friends of the Forms, the Giants also use Kinêsis and Stasis in a non-coreferential way.

1.2.1. How the problem of change and rest emerges for the Giants

At the beginning, the Giants do not describe themselves as holding the view that being is changing or unchanging, and any reference to change and rest is remarkably missing from the debate with them. Even the *dunamis* proposal, which is immediately understood by the Friends of the Forms as a claim involving the mutability of beings, is not introduced as a statement about change and rest, but as an attempt to find what is common to both corporeal and incorporeal things. That their position nevertheless amounts to the view that only Kinêsis is included into Being can be shown from several passages. To start with, it can be seen from the Friends of the Forms' comment on the Giant's initial position. At 246b9-c2, the Friends of the Forms say about the Giants that what they take for being is actually only becoming, and at 248a12-13, they characterise becoming as being subject to

38. See 1.3.1.

change. Likewise when the *dunamis* proposal is introduced, and accepted by the Giants, the Friends of the Forms immediately associate it with the claim that being is subject to change. Two further passages allow us to identify the Giants with the view that there is only Kinêsis in being. A first passage is 249d1-2, and is part of the conclusion of the Gigantomachia. Before drawing the final conclusion, the Stranger starts by reviewing the different positions which have been examined throughout the debate, including a reference to the Eleatics, whose views have been examined before the Gigantomachia, at 242c.³⁹ Let us quote the passage:

{ΞΕ.} Τῷ δὴ φιλοσόφῳ καὶ ταῦτα μάλιστα τιμῶντι πᾶσα,	249c10
ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀνάγκη διὰ ταῦτα μήτε τῶν ἐν ἧ καὶ τὰ πολλὰ	
εἶδη λεγόντων τὸ πᾶν ἐστηκὸς ἀποδέχεσθαι, τῶν τε αὖ	249d1
πανταχῆ τὸ ὄν κινούντων μηδὲ τὸ παράπαν ἀκούειν, ἀλλὰ	
κατὰ τὴν τῶν παιδῶν εὐχὴν, ὅσα ἀκίνητα καὶ κεκινημένα, τὸ	
ὄν τε καὶ τὸ πᾶν συναμότερα λέγειν.	249d4

STR: To the philosopher, and to those who honour these things most, it is necessary on these grounds, it seems, neither to approve the supporters of the One or the many Forms who say that the totality is at rest, nor to listen to those who in turn say that being is in every way changing, but just like in the wish of children, we should say that being and the totality are both together everything that is changeless and everything that is changing.

In this passage, we can see that the Stranger draws a clear line between those who think that being is at rest and those who, by contrast, think that being is changing. Note in passing that both the Eleatics and the Friends of the Forms are characterised as holding the view that everything is at rest, although they do not agree on what those beings are — the One for the former, the many Forms for the latter; this will be important to remember when we come to the conclusion of the Gigantomachia. From what we already know about the Giants, we can safely assume that the thinkers, who are here described as holding that being is in every way changing, are the Giants.⁴⁰ Later in the dialogue, at 252a5-10, the same division among the thinkers is repeated:

39. I shall examine the debate with the Eleatics in Chapter III.

40. Here, I take it that *pantachê(i)* goes with *to on*, and so do Diès (1925) and Cornford (1935). Rowe (2015), by contrast, reads *pantachê(i)* as related to the Giants' attempt and translate 'people who will do anything and everything (*pantachê*) to bring change to what is'. I think Diès and Cornford's reconstruction is more natural, but in any case, the non-coreferential reading that I am defending does not depend on the beings being changing 'in every respect', for as I have argued since the beginning, I do not take Kinêsis to refer to a property that beings may or may not have.

{ΞΕ.} [...] πάντα ἀνάστατα 252a5
 γέγονεν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἅμα τε τῶν τὸ πᾶν κινούντων καὶ τῶν
 ὡς ἐν ἰσtάντων καὶ ὅσοι κατ' εἶδη τὰ ὄντα κατὰ ταῦτᾶ
 ὡσαύτως ἔχοντα εἶναι φασιν ἀεὶ· πάντες γὰρ οὗτοι τό γε
 εἶναι προσάπτουσιν, οἱ μὲν ὄντως κινεῖσθαι λέγοντες, οἱ δὲ
 ὄντως ἐστηκότ' εἶναι. 252a10

STR: [...] everything is turned upside down, whether for those who have the totality changing, for those who make it one and resting, or for those who bring the things that are to Forms that are always the same in the same way, for all of these people add in 'being', the ones saying that things really are changing, the others saying that they really are at rest.⁴¹

Once more, the divided line between the thinkers is that between those who hold that being is changing and those who hold that being is at rest, and the Giants are described as siding with the former view.⁴² What the last line also makes clear, through the *hoi mên...hoi de* contrast, is that one holds the one or the other view, but not both. On these grounds, we may conclude that the Giants initially use Kinêsis in a non-coreferential way, that is, to refer to a group of being that they recognise, namely the changing beings, as opposed to another group of beings whose reality they deny, namely unchangeable beings.

1.2.2. Do the Giants ultimately recognise unchangeable beings?

Having seen that the unreformed Giants' view amounts to the claim that being is only changing, let us now turn to the reformed Giants. The reformed Giants have been led to acknowledge that there are not only corporeal beings, but also incorporeal beings, like justice, *phronêsis*, the rest of the virtues and their opposites.⁴³ Are those incorporeal beings changing beings, unchangeable beings, or both? Nothing is said on this point in the first place, but we know from the conclusion that everything that is is ultimately reduced to Kinêsis and Stasis. Thus, we must discover where the point is made, and whether the reformed Giants use Kinêsis and Stasis in a non-coreferential way or not. The passage to look at is again at 249b5-c9. Critics have generally assumed that this passage is mainly addressed to the Friends of the Forms, for it starts off with the claim that if everything is unchangeable, then *nous* does not come to be anywhere, which is precisely the point that

41. Rowe (2015)'s translation, modified and emphasis removed.

42. Note here that the verb *histêmi* is used as a synonym for 'being always the same in the same way'.

43. *Soph.* 247b1-2.

has just been made by the Stranger against the Friends of the Forms.⁴⁴ No doubt that the passage is in the first instance addressed to the Friends of the Forms, but it is crucial to see that it is also addressed to the Giants, and, hence, is a preparation for the general conclusion, which is addressed to both sides. Again, this will be something to remember when we turn to this passage.

The main reason for thinking that the passage is also addressed to the Giants is the debate over *stasis*. Having restated that *nous* cannot be in anything if there are only unchangeable beings, for *nous* comes to be in a soul and souls are changing beings, the Stranger moves to the converse claim, namely: if all things are in motion (*pheromena*) and changing (*kinoumena*), then *nous* is not one of the beings. In contrast to the first half of the argument, Theaetetus does not immediately give his consent to this, but asks for an explanation (*pôds*). This is surprising if Theaetetus is acting here as the mouthpiece for the Friends of the Forms, for it is part of their initial position that there are unchangeable beings.⁴⁵ The only ones who are likely to be willing to resist this claim are the Giants, for this claim is new to them. Indeed, the reformed Giants have included incorporeal beings, but as we have seen, nothing indicates so far that they take these incorporeal beings to be unchangeable. Moreover, the distinction between ‘moving’ and ‘changing’ suggests that the argument is also addressed to the Giants, for *pheromenê* is precisely the word used at 246c2 by the Friends of the Forms to describe their opponents’ view about being.

Admittedly, the main difficulty with this reading is that if the point that the incorporeal beings, which the Giants have previously accepted, are also unchangeable beings is made here, as I am suggesting, then Plato is guilty of arriving at this conclusion too quickly and of providing almost no argument.⁴⁶ It is all the more problematic that it seems that the *dunamis* proposal precisely shows that the Giants do not take incorporeal entities to be unchangeable, otherwise they would have rejected the proposal, just like the Friends of the Forms did. About the latter point, note that in itself, the *dunamis* proposal does not directly imply that everything is changing. As critics have already noted, the *dunamis* proposal is formulated in such a way that beings can have either (*eite*) a *dunamis* to act or (*eite*) a *dunamis* to be affected. This is important, for if to be affected is without doubt incompatible with unchangeability, this may not be the case for the *dunamis* to act

44. See for instance Crivelli (2012), p. 92.

45. *Soph.* 248a10-13.

46. On this point, see Crivelli (2012), pp. 93-94.

on something. As Brown points out, even Plato describes the Form of Beauty as ‘making’ the other things beautiful at *Phd.* 100d5, while at the same time maintaining that the Form Beauty is immutable.⁴⁷ As a result, we may refrain from concluding, on the basis of the reaction of the Friends of the Forms alone, that the Giants also understand the *dunamis* proposal as implying that everything is changing. Coming back to our original point, the only way I can make sense of the lack of a proper argument for the unchangeability of the Giants’ incorporeal beings is that it shows that for Plato, the crucial step, and the one he thinks is really difficult to achieve, is to make the Giants accept that there are incorporeal beings, that is, that there are beings of which they can have no sense-perception. That he thinks the first step, namely there being not only corporeal beings but also incorporeal beings, is the difficult step to obtain can be seen from the fact that he explicitly admits that not all the Giants would accept it. He makes a distinction between the ‘better’ (*beltious*) Giants, the ones the Stranger and Theaetetus are actually arguing with, and the other Giants, the ones who would never accept that there are incorporeal beings. The distinction between the two groups is introduced at 246d5, and it is repeated at 247c3, that is, after the point has been made that some virtues are incorporeal: the better Giants have been reformed while the other Giants stick to the claim that everything is corporeal. The discussion then continues with the ‘better’ Giants alone, while the other Giants are left aside and do not come in again in the *Gigantomachia*.⁴⁸

Now, it remains to be seen on what basis the Giants would be ready to grant first, that there is such a thing as *nous*, and second, that *nous* can only be about unchangeable beings. That they accept that there is *nous* is not surprising, for *nous* is like *phronêsis*, and the two are used in a similar way in the argument. Earlier in the debate, the Giants had been persuaded to admit that *phronêsis* is among the beings, as one of the things that come to be present and cease to be present in the soul and make it wise. In our present passage, *nous* is used exactly in the same way, namely as something that is present in the soul and causes it to have *nous* (*nous echein*).⁴⁹ As a result, the Giants can easily grant the first half of the argument, which says that *nous* does not come to be in anything if there are only unchangeable beings, for they take *nous* and *phronêsis* to come to be in the corporeal soul. But then, why would they think that *nous* has unchangeable objects? It is almost

47. Brown (1998), p. 199. Leigh (2010) quotes Brown on that point, p. 69.

48. I thank Jamie Dow for bringing this point to my attention.

49. Compare for instance the use of the verb *pareinai* at 249a1 with *parousia* at 247a5.

impossible to justify it if one thinks that by accepting this, the Giants commit themselves to the existence of Platonic Forms. But this need not be the case. It seems that the argument allows that they take *nous* itself to be an unchangeable being. Indeed, in contrast to the first part of the argument, which says that *nous* does not come to be in anything if there are only unchangeable beings, the second half simply says that if everything is changing and moving, then *nous* (*touto*) is suppressed from the beings. On this reading, the only thing that they are conceding is that these very things that they had included earlier, e.g. *nous*, *phronêsis* and justice, which are of a type other than corporeal beings, are not only incorporeal but also unchangeable. It is still a quick move that Plato is making here, but it is a reasonable move if we think that the Giants are only granting that *nous* itself is an unchangeable being, and not that *nous* has unchangeable objects.

All in all, the point is that the Giants are led to recognise that there are not only changing beings, but also unchangeable beings. The latter are the incorporeal virtues that they included earlier. In the end, the Giants still use Kinêsis and Stasis in a non-coreferential way: they use Stasis to refer to incorporeal unchangeable beings, which come to be in the soul, like virtues and their opposites, while they use Kinêsis to refer to corporeal changing beings including the soul.

1.3. The conclusion of the Gigantomachia and its outcome

So far, I have argued that Kinêsis and Stasis are not properties that beings may or may not have, but that they apply to groups of beings: the changing beings on the one hand, and the unchangeable beings on the other hand. We have seen that this is how Kinêsis and Stasis are used at the beginning of the debate, that is, before each side is reformed, and that this is also the way they are used after each side has been reformed. Thus, both the Giants and the Friends of the Forms use Kinêsis and Stasis in a non-coreferential way, although they do not properly agree on which are the unchangeable beings and which are the changeable beings. For example, although the Giants also include some unchangeable beings, they do not take these beings to be Forms. Another example is that both the Giants and the Friends of the Forms include the soul among the changing beings, but the Giants take the soul to be corporeal while it is unlikely that the Friends of the Forms do — although, admittedly, they do not spell it out. This brings us up to 249c9. On this basis, we would expect the conclusion of the passage to be along the following lines: that both sides agree that being

consists of some beings that are changing, and some beings that are unchangeable. But this is not what we get. The conclusion formulated by the Stranger is much wider in scope: it is addressed not only to the Giants and the Friends of the Forms, but also to the Eleatics and, more generally, to the philosopher. Moreover, the conclusion is not about some unchangeable and some changeable things, but is about all unchangeable and all changeable beings.

As a result, one may ask whether Kinêsis and Stasis, in the conclusion, are still used in the same way as in the preceding passages, or whether they have a broader, general meaning. This brings us to another concern, namely the connection between Kinêsis and Stasis as they are used in the Gigantomachia, and Kinêsis and Stasis in the rest of the dialogue, especially in the *megista genê* passage. Some critics, and especially Cornford, have argued that the specific way in which they are used in the Gigantomachia does not prefigure their role in the rest of the dialogue.⁵⁰ Indeed, when it comes to their role as two of the greatest kinds, one might think that Kinêsis and Stasis are chosen to have the widest possible application, and not, as I have argued so far, to have a specific use.⁵¹ This reading suggests that there would be a break, and a shift, between the end of the Gigantomachia and the rest of the dialogue. I shall now turn to this concern, and consider whether there are reasons to think that Kinêsis and Stasis are used in a different way after the Gigantomachia. I shall argue that there are no such reasons, and hence, that from the Gigantomachia onwards, Kinêsis and Stasis are used in a non-coreferential way, that is, as standing for two groups of beings which never overlap.

1.3.1. The conclusion of the Gigantomachia

Let us remind ourselves of the final line of the conclusion one more time:

{ΞΕ.}[...] ὅσα ἀκίνητα καὶ κεκινημένα, τὸ 249d3
ὄν τε καὶ τὸ πᾶν συναμφότερα λέγειν.

STR: [...] we should say that being and the totality are both together
everything that is changeless and everything that is changing.

The difficulty is the following: the conclusion suggests that both sides now accept any changing thing and any unchangeable thing, and, thus, that they are now in agreement. But

50. Cornford (1935).

51. See for instance Buckels (2015).

all that we have seen so far is that the Giants and the Friends of the Forms have been persuaded to include some changing beings and some unchangeable beings, and that these beings are not the same. How, then, can the Stranger come to this conclusion?

Let us first rule out an initial possibility, namely that the conclusion is not about all changing beings and all unchangeable beings, as my translation suggests, but about all beings, which are both changing and at rest. Indeed, one may be tempted to construe the sentence not as implying that *akinêta* and *kekinêmena* refer to two distinct groups of beings but as referring to one single thing, being, to which both *akinêta* and *kekinêmena* apply. The latter option has, for instance, been defended by Owen, who recommends translating ‘reality is all things that are changed and unchanged’ as opposed to ‘all things that are unchanged and some, viz. souls, that change’.⁵² Keyt has already provided a criticism of Owen’s view, and I shall restate here some of his criticisms.⁵³ Keyt develops two kinds of arguments, grammatical arguments and arguments based on the context of the passage. From the point of view of the grammar of the passage, Keyt suggests that Owen’s reading is possible but not ‘grammatically necessary’.⁵⁴ In particular, Keyt points out that the neuter plural suggests that ‘one class is being added to another’, and refers to Cornford’s translation as a support for this.⁵⁵ From the point of view of the context of the argument, Keyt attacks what underlies Owen’s reading, namely the view that Forms also are subject to change in some respects, namely when they are known. Several points that Keyt makes are points that we have defended earlier, for instance that the phrase at 249b12-c1 is the same phrase that the Friends of the Forms used earlier to describe the unchangeability of Forms. On the whole, the problem with Owen’s construal of the sentence is that it requires that at least some beings, if not all beings, have been characterised as both changing and unchangeable. But as I have argued since the beginning, this is not the case, and Kinêsis and Stasis have constantly been used by the contenders to refer to two distinct groups of beings, the changing beings and the unchangeable beings.

Another solution consists in avoiding the problem by translating *hosa* not as ‘all’ or as ‘everything’, as most translators do, but as ‘as many as’. This translation is supported by Keyt himself, against Owen’s translation: ‘reality is as many things that are unchanged and

52. Owen (1966), n. 16 p. 339. Accordingly, Owen renders ‘*akinêta*’ by ‘unchanged’ as opposed to ‘unchangeable’.

53. Keyt (1969), p. 6.

54. Keyt (1969), p. 6.

55. Keyt (1969), p. 6. Cornford (1935), p. 242.

as many things that are changed'.⁵⁶ In this way, the difficulty vanishes, for 'as many as' does not imply that the Giants and the Friends of the Forms now include more beings in their ontology than they have actually been persuaded to do. Indeed, the emphasis is on the equality in number between the two groups of beings. However, the problem is that the quantitative aspect that it carries does not fit with the passage. Keyt sees in the conclusion an answer to the question 'how many beings are there?' (*ta onta...posa estin*), which is raised at 242c6. The question, which is coupled with the question 'which are the beings?', 'of what kind are the beings?' (*ta onta...poia...estin*), introduces the examination of the very first group of thinkers, which is often referred to in the literature as the monists and the pluralists. Among them, we find the Eleatics but also various thinkers who, for instance, hold that being is the Hot and the Cold.⁵⁷ Now, the problem for Keyt's reading is that if the question 'how many' is certainly addressed by the first group of thinkers, it is less clear that it is addressed just in that way in the Gigantomachia. Moreover, it is not clear what it could possibly mean that there are as many changing beings as they are unchangeable beings, for surely, the problem is not to count whether there are as many physical beings as there are Forms. A better way to understand Keyt's proposal is to take it as meaning that both groups of beings are equally important, or that they equally constitute being and the totality. Although tempting, I do not see any way of construing the sentence so that it accords with this reading.

The safest way forward is, thus, to keep the common rendering of *hosa* as 'all', or 'every'. But then, the question must be raised again: what can possibly licence the move from some unchangeable and some changing beings are to every unchangeable being and every changing being is? Another, drastic solution, defended by Politis, consists in saying that nothing licences this move, for there actually is no such move.⁵⁸ Politis' point is that no common standpoint between the two sides has been reached. He rejects the view that there is a perfect symmetry between the debate with the Giants and the debate with the Friends of the Forms.⁵⁹ If there was a perfect symmetry, then the Giants would have been forced to include precisely those beings that the Friends of the Forms accept, namely Forms, and conversely, the Friends of the Forms would have been forced to include

56. Keyt (1969), p. 6.

57. I shall address this passage in Chapter II and III.

58. Politis (2006). Central to Politis' paper is the issue of a tiered-ontology in the passage. However, I shall set this issue aside for present purposes.

59. Politis (2006), pp. 155, 156, 170.

precisely those beings that the Giants accept, namely physical beings. This, he argues, we do not find in the Gigantomachia. There is a certain symmetry in the debate, to the extent that the Friends of the Forms are forced to include changing beings while the Giants are forced to include unchangeable beings, but no more. Regarding the conclusion, Politis' explanation is that the conclusion is formulated in such a way as to be flexible enough to be read — and hence, to be accepted — differently by both sides: to the Giants, it means that being and the totality are constituted by corporeal, changing beings, like bodies, and the change proper to them, and by incorporeal, unchangeable beings, like justice and *phronêsis*, and the rest proper to them; to the Friends of the Forms, it means that being and the totality are constituted by unchangeable beings, like Forms, and the unchangeability proper to them, and changing beings, like the soul in its rational state, and the change proper to them, and a fundamentally different sort of changing thing, namely becoming and the change proper to them.

Just like Politis, I have also defended an interpretation of the Gigantomachia in which the symmetry of the argumentation between the two camps is only partial, in that each side does not include the same beings in its 'ontological box'. Nevertheless, his suggestion that the conclusion should simply be read differently by the two sides, no common ground being reached, is problematic. To begin with, it barely explains the motive behind the move from *some* to *any*. Admittedly, it makes this move unproblematic, but it also makes it uninteresting. Next, it is not clear what such a conclusion would bring to the debate, for little can be built on what actually is only a superficial agreement between the two sides. Finally, and most importantly, it is hard to see how the two great kinds Kinêsis and Stasis can emerge out of such a conclusion. Of course, one may deny that there is such a continuity between the Gigantomachia and the *megista genê* passage in the first place, but granting for a moment that there is — I shall argue for it in the next subsection — then there is a problem as to what they can stand for given that, according to Politis, the Giants and the Friends of the Forms understand by 'kinêsis' and 'stasis' neither the same beings, nor the same sort of change or rest associated with them.

This last point calls for another solution. A familiar solution, which has been defended by Brown and Crivelli, conjectures that since the Giants and the Friends of the Forms have respectively been convinced that some unchangeable beings and some changing beings are, as opposed to there being no unchangeable being and no changing being at all, they are left with no ground for excluding any unchangeable thing and any

changing thing from being.⁶⁰ As it stands, this reading is not convincing because there is no straightforward move from acknowledging that there are unchangeable virtues to acknowledging that there are unchangeable Forms, as we have seen, and even more problematic, there is no straightforward move from acknowledging that there are souls subject to a specific sort of change coming from their rational activity to acknowledging that there are bodies subject to physical change. Now, in all these cases, change and rest are used only in a loose sense, to gather things which have apparently little to do with one another, like physical change and change linked to rational activity. It is precisely on this point that there may be room for another solution. It seems to me that Brown and Crivelli's solution may work, and does not simply saddle Plato with a poor argument, if by change and rest, what is meant is not simply some beings and their specific changes, likewise for rest, but if there is a single and unitary thing which is meant by being a changing being or by being an unchangeable being. In this case, and only in this case, may the move from accepting some unchangeable beings and some changing beings to accepting any unchangeable being or changing being no longer be problematic.

Is there any sign of something close to that in the passage? Recall the last argument before the conclusion, at 249b5-c9, and especially the part of the argument related to *stasis*. There, I have argued, the passage is not only addressed to the Friends of the Forms, but also to the Giants. What has emerged is that the Friends of the Forms and the Giants agree on a single characterisation of what being an unchangeable being amounts to — to be an unchangeable being is to be the same in the same respect and about the same — though they do not agree on which the unchangeable beings are, for the Giants do not acknowledge Forms but virtues like justice and their contraries. As a result, when turning to the conclusion, the Stranger asserts that every unchangeable thing is part of being, both of them can agree with this statement. First, if they have already granted that to be an unchangeable being is to be the same in the same respect and about the same, then there is no problem in saying that anything that is such should be included among the beings. Second, this does not directly commit them to include their opponents' beings. If the Giants can no longer deny that there are Forms on the grounds that there are no incorporeal beings, they may have other reasons to reject that those incorporeal beings are Forms. On this point, the Stranger's argumentative strategy, which does not try to persuade them that

60. Brown (1998), p. 204; Crivelli (2012), p. 95.

there are Forms but which focuses on virtues instead, may be evidence of this.

The strength of the suggested solution is to make both ends meet: on the one hand, the Friends of the Forms and the Giants do not surrender more than what has actually been argued for, and they still hold different positions; on the other hand, their agreement is not merely superficial, for there really is something they agree on, namely what to be a changing being and to be an unchangeable being amounts to. Now, more needs to be done on what the agreement between the Friends of the Forms and the Giants implies, and I shall undertake this task in Chapter II. Especially because the idea that they agree on what to be a changing being and to be an unchangeable being amounts to suggests that there is more to the conclusion of the Gigantomachia than an answer to the question what there is; the conclusion of the Gigantomachia might be playing a more important role. These questions will be raised and addressed in Chapter II. For the time being, what is important is that no move from a non-coreferential to a coreferential use of Kinêsis and Stasis is entailed in the conclusion. We may conclude, then, that from beginning to end, Kinêsis and Stasis are used in a non-coreferential way in the Gigantomachia.

1.3.2. Kinêsis and Stasis after the Gigantomachia

So far, my argument for the non-coreferentiality thesis has relied on the claim that the words *kinêsis* and *stasis* — and the related terms like *to êremoun*, *to akinêton*, *histêmi*, *kekinêmena*, *to kinoumenon*, *kinein* — are used to refer to certain beings only: Kinêsis applies to one type of beings, namely beings which are subject to change, while Stasis applies to another type of beings, namely beings which are never subject to change but always remain the same. Now, one might reasonably object that this is not what these words mean by themselves. For instance, in the allegory of the Cave in Book VII of the *Republic*, it is said of the heads of the prisoners in the cave that they are *akinêta*, and it would be unreasonable to think that what is meant by this is that the prisoners' head is 'unchangeable', or that what is referred to here are the prisoners' heads as a group of beings.⁶¹ On this basis, one could wonder whether the two great kinds Kinêsis and Stasis are still determined by the way they are used in the Gigantomachia, or whether they are then determined by their common, general meaning. The latter view implies that there is a

61. *Rep.* 515a9: Πῶς γάρ, ἔφη, εἰ ἀκινήτους γε τὰς κεφαλὰς ἔχειν ἠναγκασμένοι εἶεν διὰ βίου;

shift, and a break, between the end of the Gigantomachia and the rest of the dialogue. In what follows, I shall examine the force of this view and show that there is little evidence for it. By contrast, we shall see that many elements point to a continuous reading from the Gigantomachia to the *megista genê* passage.

From a textual point of view, there is no sign of such a break. To begin with, the words *stasis* and *kinêsis* are both introduced before the end of the Gigantomachia. Kinêsis is introduced first at 248e6, and the link between what is changing and change is made at 249b2, when the Stranger asserts that both what is changing (*to kinoumenon*) and change (*kinêsis*) have to be counted as *beings (onta)*. In a similar way, the link between Stasis and the *akinêta* is drawn at 249b5-c1. In particular, the sentence at 249b12-c1 ties up *stasis* with what is ‘the same in the same way and about the same’, that is with what is unchangeable. It is, thus, not the case that Kinêsis and Stasis come from nowhere, they are already introduced before the conclusion. Moreover, the passage that comes after the Gigantomachia at 250a is presented by the Stranger as forming a continuous strand of argument with what precedes: at 249e7, the Stranger states that the purpose of the passage is to examine ‘what has just been said’ (*ta nun sunomologountes*) and then adds that he is now going to lead the enquiry in the same way as in the Hot and Cold passage at 243d7, thereby making a reference to a passage that precedes the Gigantomachia. Now, this task cannot be carried out properly if the meaning of Kinêsis and Stasis is modified between the end of the Gigantomachia and 250a.

Furthermore, after the Gigantomachia, Kinêsis and Stasis are chiefly characterised as being opposites. The claim is introduced for the first time at 250a8-9, where the Stranger declares that Kinêsis and Stasis are ‘most opposed to one another’ (*enantiôtata allêlois*). Again, this speaks in favour of a continuity in use between the Gigantomachia and the rest of the dialogue. Indeed, compare the force of this claim in the case in which Kinêsis and Stasis simply stand for any sort of change and rest, broadly construed, and in the case in which Kinêsis and Stasis are non-coreferential, as I have defended in this chapter. In the first case, there is only a limited sense in which Kinêsis and Stasis exclude one another, namely, to the extent that the same thing cannot be both changing and resting in the same respect at the same time. But nothing prevents the very same thing from changing or resting in different times or in different respects. By contrast, in the second case, the claim that they are opposites takes a much stronger sense, for Kinêsis and Stasis really exclude one another: either something is a changing being or it is an unchangeable

being, but nothing can ever be both.

Finally, that the Kinêsis/Stasis dichotomy is both exclusive and exhaustive is something we find traces of after the Gigantomachia, for instance at 250c12-d2. This passage follows the claim that neither Kinêsis nor Stasis apply to Being. In other words, Being itself is neither a changing being nor an unchangeable being.⁶² This claim is very much surprising, for as we have seen, everything that is is either unchangeable or changing. Accordingly, the Stranger interrogates Theaetetus:

{ΞΕ.} [...] εἰ γάρ τι μὴ 250c12

κινεῖται, πῶς οὐχ ἔστηκεν; ἢ τὸ μηδαμῶς ἐστὸς πῶς οὐκ

αὐτὸ κινεῖται; 250d2

STR: [...] If a thing is not changing, how is it not at rest? Or if it is in no way at rest, how is it not changing?⁶³

This passage stresses that if something is not a changing being, then it follows that it is an unchangeable being, and conversely if something is not an unchangeable being, then necessarily it is a changing being. Note also the precision in the statement that what changes is not at rest in any way (*mêdamôs*). It rules out the claim that Kinêsis applies also to things that are at rest in some respects. Along these lines, *mêdamôs* stresses that what is changing is what is not at rest at all, and conversely, that what is at rest is not subject to change at all.

From a textual point of view, therefore, it seems that the burden of proof lies with those who want to argue that there is no continuity between *akinêta* and *kekinêmena* in the Gigantomachia and Stasis and Kinêsis later in the dialogue. And indeed, the motives advocated are often not textual, but based on interpretative issues. A first motive is related to the difficulty of making sense of the assertion that Being neither changes nor rests.⁶⁴ Indeed, this assertion seems to contradict the way that Kinêsis and Stasis are used in the Gigantomachia: first, it is clear from the Gigantomachia that everything either rests or moves; second, since Stasis applies to Forms in the Gigantomachia, if Stasis was used in the same way afterwards, then it should also apply to Being itself, for Being *qua* intelligible entity, is at rest. In the same vein, Plato never says in the dialogue that the other

62. For a detailed analysis of this passage, see Chapter III. Note that Theaetetus' answer to the passage quoted above, which is that 'this is impossible' (250d4), is not an answer to the description of Kinêsis and Stasis, but to the Stranger's assertion that Being is outside the Kinêsis/Stasis dichotomy.

63. Translation Rowe (2015).

64. This is the reason put forward by Cornford (1935), pp. 248-251. It is also advocated by Leigh (2012b), pp. 244-253.

megista genê share in Stasis, although he does say that they share in Being, Sameness and Otherness. He even denies several times that Kinêsis shares in Stasis. Surely, if Stasis was used in the same way as in the Gigantomachia, namely as standing for unchangeable intelligible beings, then the other *megista genê*, *qua* intelligible entities, should share in Stasis.

These are two difficult issues which I shall address thoroughly in Chapter III and IV. For the time being, let me point out that in any case, the solution cannot be that Kinêsis and Stasis now stand for any sort of change and rest that may or may not apply to things. Let us take the example of Stasis, and imagine, for a moment, that Stasis does not any more refer to the group of unchangeable beings, but simply applies to everything that is at rest in some respects. This would imply that Stasis also applies to corporeal beings while they are at rest in one respect, but it does not imply that it would not apply to Forms any more. Hence, the problem would remain unsolved, for it still provides no reason why Stasis does not apply to Being. The only shift in meaning which would immediately solve the problem would be to say that Stasis stands for physical rest exclusively, from which it follows that Forms do not share in Stasis. This is a view which has been defended by Leigh.⁶⁵ According to her interpretation, Stasis is properly understood in the *Sophist* as a property of physical things. Hence, since Forms are not physical but intelligible beings, there is no reason that Forms participate in Stasis. Her view is that Forms are ‘restless’, in that they do not participate in Rest, but also ‘changeless’, in that they do not participate in Kinêsis either. Leigh’s interpretation relies on the claim that, in the *Sophist*, Plato draws a distinction between being ‘changeless’, that is, negatively, not participating in Kinêsis, and being ‘at rest’, that is, positively, participating in Rest. For instance, about the conclusion of the Gigantomachia, she claims that the *akinêta* are beings which do not participate in Kinêsis, but she denies that these beings are those which participate in Stasis.⁶⁶ However, no such distinction between being ‘changeless’ and being ‘restless’ can be found in the dialogue. On the contrary, as I have argued, and as critics have generally acknowledged,

65. See Leigh (2012b). Note, though, that Leigh does not think that there is a break between the Gigantomachia passage and the rest of the dialogue, rather, she thinks that Plato consistently argues that Forms are not at rest. See for instance p. 253. On a different basis, Karfik (2011) also defends that Kinêsis and Stasis only apply to the sensible (pp. 142-143). According to Karfik, Plato moves, in the *Sophist*, from taking Kinêsis and Stasis as necessary conditions for intelligible beings to realising that it is actually Sameness and Otherness which play this role (pp. 135-138). However, nothing in the text suggests that Sameness and Otherness are meant to play that role instead of Kinêsis and Stasis.

66. Leigh (2012b), p. 248.

stasis is used synonymously with other words like *to êremoun*, *to akinêton*. Moreover, contrary to what she suggests, *stasis* is explicitly linked to intelligible unchangeability at 249b12-c1, and in several other places like 248e4 if we also take its synonyms into account.

Finally, a last reason for the view that there is a shift at the end of the Gigantomachia is the idea that the Gigantomachia passage and the *megista genê* passage are addressed to two different and independent questions. Cornford is a good example of such a view. Cornford argues that at the end of the Gigantomachia, there is a shift from metaphysics to logic.⁶⁷ This corresponds to a change in the question addressed: whereas in the Gigantomachia, the Stranger was inquiring about what there is, he is now pursuing another question regarding the nature of ‘Existence’.⁶⁸ The consequence of this shift in focus is that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis have to be taken ‘in isolation from any existing thing that may partake of them and indeed from everything else’.⁶⁹ He writes that this is a mistake to treat these two *genê* ‘with reference to the part they play in the economy of the universe’, viz. to their role in the Gigantomachia.⁷⁰ Cornford’s view raises a major question, namely: to what question is the Gigantomachia passage addressed? But behind Cornford’s reading, there is another major assumption, namely: that Plato can address the question ‘what is there’ independently of, and with no reference to the question ‘what is the nature of being?’, and conversely, that he can address the latter question without referring at all to what has been established about what there is. This assumption deserves at least some examination, together with the central question concerning the question addressed in the Gigantomachia. I shall turn to this in the next chapter.

1.4. Conclusion: Kinêsis and Stasis are non-coreferential

To conclude, we have seen first that the Friends of the Forms consistently use Stasis to refer to one group of beings, namely unchangeable beings, while they use Kinêsis for another group of beings, namely changing beings. With regard to the Giants, it has emerged that they also use Kinêsis to refer to changing beings, and we have observed that

67. Cornford (1935), p. 252: ‘he [the Stranger] has changed the subject from a metaphysical consideration of the nature of the real to a different field, which we should call Logic’.

68. Cornford (1935), pp. 249, 278.

69. Cornford (1935), p. 252.

70. Cornford (1935), p. 277.

they do not use both Kinêsis and Stasis to refer to those beings. As for Stasis, the Stranger ultimately persuades them that the incorporeal beings, which they have accepted in the first place, are not only incorporeal but also unchangeable. As far as I have been able to tell, nowhere in this do we find a move from Kinêsis and Stasis being used to refer to groups of beings to them being used for properties that things may or may not have. Finally, we have seen that such a move is not found after the Gigantomachia either, and that there rather seems to be a continuity with the rest of the dialogue. On this basis, I have shown that Kinêsis and Stasis are non-coreferential in the *Sophist*.

CHAPTER II: Kinêsis and Stasis as what is it for something to be

2.0. Introduction

The previous chapter was dedicated to the introduction of Kinêsis and Stasis in the Gigantomachia, and especially to the question of their application to the beings, from which it has emerged that Kinêsis and Stasis are non-coreferential; that is, they apply to two distinct and non-overlapping groups of beings. Now, in itself, the non-coreferentiality claim does not tell us what role Kinêsis and Stasis play in the enquiry about being, and it is to this that the present chapter is addressed. The question is the following: in the Gigantomachia, are Kinêsis and Stasis introduced as criteria of being or as part of the definition of being, that is, as contributing to the definition of being? By definition of being here, I mean no more than an account (*logos*) that is an answer to the question ‘what is being?’ (*ti esti to on*). This is set against the view that Kinêsis and Stasis are criteria of being, or marks of being, only.⁷¹ By criteria of being, what is meant is characteristics, features, shared by all and only beings and which allow to distinguish the beings from the non-beings. In this chapter, I will defend the definitional answer, namely the claim that Kinêsis and Stasis are part of the definition of being, as opposed to criteria, that is to say, only criteria.

The dominant view in the literature is that there is no definition of being in the Gigantomachia. There are two main versions of this view: (i) there is no definition of being either in the Gigantomachia or in the rest of the dialogue, for this is precisely what Plato wants to teach us in the *Sophist*, namely that it is not possible to define being;⁷² (ii) there is no definition of being in the Gigantomachia because the passage is only a first step in the enquiry into being, and, thus, has a limited aim, but it is expected that Plato endeavours to find the *logos* of being later in the dialogue.⁷³ Several positions are subsumed under (i), but

71. Crivelli (2012), p. 70 ff., for instance, does not talk about ‘criterion’ of being but about ‘characterisation’ of being. What he means by this is nonetheless the same.

72. Moravcsik (1962), p. 28: ‘I wish to argue that in addition to criticizing rival accounts Plato seeks to establish his own account of Existence. He claims that Existence is undefinable and that it is necessarily all-inclusive.’ See also Diès (1932), though Diès argues that the *dunamis* proposal is a definition of being, but that it is only provisional; Rosen (1983).

73. Cornford (1935); Seligman (1974); Bluck (1975); Frede (1996); Brown (1998). Note that (ii) is compatible with the claim that the definition of being is to be found later in the dialogue, as Frede (1996)

one, at least, is compatible with the definitional reading, that is, the view that there are attempts at defining being in the *Sophist*, but that they are ultimately rejected. For instance, Diès argues that the *dunamis* proposal is a definition of being, though he thinks that it is finally rejected for the reason just mentioned, namely that it is not possible to define being.⁷⁴ For present purposes, it is not the success of these attempts that matters, but whether these attempts are attempts at defining being as opposed to finding only a criterion of being. As a result, I will also count, as a support for the definitional reading, results from critics who have argued that there are definitions of being in the Gigantomachia but who have then claimed that all these attempts are ultimately rejected. Turning to (ii), the most common view is that all that is to be found in the Gigantomachia is a criterion of being.⁷⁵ On this view, Plato's limited purpose in this passage is to show, against the Friends of the Forms and the Giants, that they have no reason not to include everything in being. His strategy consists in forcing them to abandon their initial criterion of being, as being too restrictive, and making them adopt a new, adequate one which encompasses what each party respectively excluded from being at the start of the discussion. On that account, it is intentional that the *logos* of being is not to be found there, for it is not the point of the passage. A variation of view (ii) refuses to enter the definitional versus criterion debate and simply states that the Gigantomachia establishes a 'characterisation' of being.⁷⁶ However, as we will see shortly, the characterisation reading shares some decisive features with the criterion reading, and will accordingly not be addressed separately.

Now, what do critics mean by 'criterion' of being and most importantly, what distinguishes a criterion of being from a *logos* of being in the *Sophist* according to them? Note that none of the supporters of the criterion reading has paused to ask these questions or has tried to give an overview of the distinction between the two. Nevertheless, some distinctive features can be gathered from what they write. First and foremost, the function of a criterion is to distinguish beings from non-beings.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the criterion does not only apply to some of the beings, but to all of them. It thus 'delimits' all the beings.⁷⁸ It is,

argues for instance.

74. Diès (1932), p. 17.

75. Some critics who fall under view (i) would agree with this first claim of (ii). For instance, Moravcsik (1962), pp. 28, 37, argues that Plato's point is that being is undefinable and as a consequence, that there is no *logos* of being in the Gigantomachia but a mere characterisation of being.

76. The main representative of this view is Crivelli (2012).

77. Brown (1998), pp. 189-193.

78. Brown (1998), p. 189.

however, no more than that, in the sense that it is not supposed to give an account of the nature of being, and this is, precisely, what a definition does.⁷⁹ Second, they argue that a criterion is indicated by the term *horos* whereas *logos* is restricted to definition.⁸⁰ *Horos* can mean definition, but it can also mean ‘limit’, ‘mark’ and it is based on the latter sense that it is interpreted as ‘criterion’. Third, and in relation to the first point, a criterion is not addressed to the question ‘what is being?’ but to another question. The two questions which they have identified as being relevant to the Gigantomachia are the questions ‘what is there?’ and the question ‘what are beings like?’. It is not clear which exactly they think is the question that is answered by the criterion, whether it is the former, the latter, or both. What is clear, however, is that they think that the criterion of being is not the answer to the question ‘what is being?’. Even if indirectly, as some of them have argued, the question ‘what is being?’ is the crucial question, the one that Plato’s predecessors failed to address and the one that Plato is ultimately enquiring about, it remains, however, that the *ti esti* question plays no role in the Gigantomachia.⁸¹ To finish with, note that, with the exception of the *horos/logos* distinction, what applies to the criterion of being as opposed to the definition of being also applies to the characterisation of being, that is: it is an answer to the question ‘what are beings like?’, which might be ultimately related to, but does not amount to answering the question ‘what is being?’ and it does not give the nature of being, but only features which are common to all beings.⁸² As a result, I will not distinguish between the two cases in what follows.

Brown is representative of view (ii). In her 1998 seminal paper on the Gigantomachia, she asserts right from the start that the Gigantomachia is an argument ‘about what there is and about how one should approach the question what there is’ and that the theories under consideration are ‘theories about what there is, what sorts of things exist’.⁸³ At the same time, she also thinks that the Giants and the Friends of the Forms address the question ‘what are the beings like?’ at 246c6.⁸⁴ As for the question ‘what is

79. Cornford (1935), n. 3 p. 238.

80. See for instance Cornford (1935); Bluck (1973); Brown (1998). The systematic distinction between *logos* and *horos* is a disputed point which I discuss in detail in the second section of the present chapter.

81. Cornford (1935), p. 239; Brown (1998), p. 186.

82. Crivelli (2012) notes p. 72: ‘As counting the fish in a net where dolphins have been caught requires getting clear about what it is to be a fish, so counting beings requires getting clear about what being is. And establishing what beings are like is obviously a reasonable starting point in the search for what being is.’

83. Brown (1998), pp. 182, 185.

84. Brown (1998), p. 185.

being?’, although she grants that this is the ultimate question and that this is precisely the limitation of Plato’s predecessors, not to have ‘paused to ask the vital question: what is being?’, she declares that this question is not addressed in the *Gigantomachia*.⁸⁵ As a result, she argues that all that is to be found in this passage is a criterion of being, not a *logos*. First, she rejects the view that the *dunamis* proposal is a definition of being and argues that it is only a criterion of being: the *dunamis* proposal is ‘the attempt to say what all things that we say are have in common’, and thus not to define being, but simply to ‘give a formula which delimits everything that is’.⁸⁶ Second, she interprets the conclusion of the passage as being only about what there is. To show that ‘theories which exclude a certain category from being are denying something they have reason, within the spirit of their own theory, to accept’ is the ‘second aim’ of ‘the section on views about being’, and ‘this upshot is an all-inclusive ontology’.⁸⁷ Along these lines, the conclusion of the *Gigantomachia* is only about adding changeless beings and changing beings to the Friends of the Forms and to the Giant’s initial ontological theories. In other words, the conclusion is only about the new criterion of being, which includes beings that were formerly excluded by both parties, but not about the definition of being.

The purpose of this chapter is to cast doubt on the criterion reading, and to show that there is significant evidence in favour of the definitional view. In the first part of this chapter, I shall argue that the question addressed in the *Gigantomachia* is also the question *ti esti to on*, against the claim that the only questions addressed in this passage are ‘what is there?’ and ‘what are beings like?’. In the second part of this chapter, I shall show, on the basis of the requirements for answering the *ti esti* question set by Socrates in the early dialogues, that *Kinêsis* and *Stasis* contribute to the definition of being.

2.1. To what question or questions is the *Gigantomachia* addressed?

The purpose of this section is to make room for the claim that *Kinêsis* and *Stasis* are part of the *logos* of being. To begin with, I shall argue against the view that the passage from 242 to 249, which deals with the examination of the view of the predecessors, is mapped onto

85. Brown (1998), p. 186.

86. A few pages later, she adds: ‘it is a formula often invoked in the search for a definition, it can be read as asking for that in virtue of which various things can be classed as *onta*, not for what it is to be a being’.
Brown (1998), p. 189, 193.

87. Brown (1998), p. 204.

the division between the questions ‘how many beings are there?’ and ‘what is there?’, on the one hand, and the question ‘what are beings like?’, on the other. In the second half of this chapter, I shall give evidence for the claim that the *ti esti* question is also addressed, by arguing that many of the passages which have been read as giving a criterion or a description of being can also naturally be read as attempts to answer the question ‘what is being?’. In particular, I shall deny that the use of *horos* is a conclusive argument in favour of the criterion reading as opposed to the definitional reading.

To clarify, I am not here implying that it is Plato himself who is confused about the distinction between a criterion and a definition.⁸⁸ On the contrary, as we will see in detail in the second part of this chapter, the requirements set by Plato for answering the *ti esti* question show that he is well aware of the distinction between a *logos* and a criterion. The point I want to make, rather, is that the passages, which have so far been interpreted as a search for a criterion, can actually be naturally read as a search for the definition of being, and that, taken together, the evidence for the definitional reading is strong whereas the main support of the criterion reading, namely the use of *horos*, is weak.

2.1.1. Do the questions *posa te kai poia* set the agenda for the Gigantomachia?

Textually, there are three potential candidates: the question ‘how many beings are there?’, the question ‘what are beings like?’ and the question ‘what is being?’.⁸⁹ The questions ‘what is there?’ and ‘what are beings like?’ are together raised at 242c5-6. When the Stranger introduces the necessity to examine being and decides to start with the examination of the theories of his predecessors, he describes the project of Parmenides and others as consisting in determining, about the beings (*ta onta*), ‘how many’ (*posa*) and ‘which’, ‘of what sort’, they are (*poia*).⁹⁰ The third candidate for the question that Plato

88. Against Bordt (1991) and Brown (1998): ‘Diese beiden Formulierungen der materialistischen These sind insofern problematisch, als die erste Formulierung ein *Kriterium* angibt, von welchen Entitäten sich das Sein aussagen läßt. Die zweite Formulierung scheint dagegen eine *Definition* des Seinsbegriffs zu sein (ταῦτόν, ὀρίζόμενοι). Die These der Idealisten, daß unsichtbare und körperlose Ideen das wahre Sein sind, ist ebenso ambig wie die der Materialisten.’ (Bordt 1991, pp. 513-514); ‘We should expect Plato to be especially alive to the difference between criteria for being an *on*, and what it is to be an *on*, and it is a pity that he does not make the status of the *dunamis* proposal clearer.’ (Brown (1998), p. 193).

89. I take this list to be exhaustive, for, textually, there is no other question raised before the Gigantomachia begins. Of course, there are other questions raised in the course of the debate between the Giants and the Friends of the Forms. In particular, there is the question of what is common to the incorporeal and corporeal beings which precedes the *dunamis* proposal at 247d2, but this is a question introduced by the Stranger himself, not a question the Giants have initially addressed.

takes himself to be addressing in the Gigantomachia is, precisely, the question ‘what is being?’, and it is found at 246a1-2. In the transition passage from the first group of thinkers to the second, the Stranger declares that the purpose of the coming examination is to see that ‘it is not easier to say of being (*to on*) what it is (*hoti pot’ esti*) than of not-being’. Here, the driving question is thus the usual Socratic demand for definition, that is the question ‘what is being?’ (*ti pot’ esti to on*). In the literature, most critics have assumed that the Gigantomachia is addressed only to the first two questions, and not also to the *ti esti* question. According to these critics, what Plato is doing at 246a1-2 is simply reminding the reader about the more general, far-reaching, question ‘what is being?’, but the Gigantomachia is only a first step towards answering that more demanding question, and this first step consists in finding out what beings are like — and hence, about what there is — in accordance with the programme announced at 242c5-6.⁹¹ In what follows, I shall, however, cast some doubt on the claim that the passage at 242c5-6 sets the agenda for the Gigantomachia.

Before we go into the text, let us start by reflecting on the relation among the three questions. Behind the view I am arguing against, namely the view that the Gigantomachia is addressed only to the questions ‘what is there?’ and ‘what are beings like?’, and not also to the question ‘what is being?’, is the assumption that the first two questions can be addressed without, at the same time, addressing the question ‘what is being?’. In other words, these critics take the questions ‘what is there?’ and ‘what are beings like?’ as prior, in the order of enquiry, to the question ‘what is being’. Crivelli, in particular, offers a clear formulation of this issue. On the one hand, he declares that one cannot answer the question ‘what is there?’ if one is not clear about what being is. Here, he acknowledges that the question ‘what is being?’ is prior, in the order of knowledge, to the question ‘what is there?’. On the other hand, he adds that one can reasonably think that the question ‘what are beings like?’ is, in turn, prior, in the order of enquiry, to the question ‘what is being?’.⁹²

90. *Soph.* 242c5-6: ἐπὶ κρίσιν ὄρησε τοῦ τὰ ὄντα διορίσασθαι πόσα τε καὶ ποῖά ἐστιν.

91. For the view that the Gigantomachia is only a first step in the ontological enquiry, see Brown (1998), p. 182: ‘In this section, in which the Stranger takes on each party in turn and aims at a *rapprochement* between them, Plato takes what may be thought of as first steps in ontology, in reflective discussion and argument about what there is and about how one should approach the question of what there is.’

92. Crivelli (2012), p. 72: ‘Ontological theories of both types [theories about how many beings there are and theories about what beings are like] are connected with the issue of determining what being is. As counting the fish in a net where dolphins have been caught requires getting clear about what it is to be a fish, so counting beings requires getting clear about what being is. And establishing what beings are like is obviously a reasonable starting point in the search for what being is.’

This raises a deeper concern, which we might refer to as the priority, in the order of knowledge, of the *ti esti* question over the *poion esti* question. As Politis convincingly argues about the early dialogues, the *ti esti* question is raised precisely when the participants in the dialogue are at a loss concerning the things that are Φ , when they are unable to agree on which they are.⁹³ As a result, according to the pattern of the early dialogues, not only is the question ‘what is being?’ different from the question ‘what are the beings?’, but the question ‘what is being?’ has priority, in the order of knowledge, over the question ‘what are beings like?’, because it is not possible to answer the latter without having primarily answered the former. Admittedly, we should be cautious about importing the method from the early dialogues into the later ones, especially in such a late dialogue like the *Sophist*, about which many critics have argued that it calls into question the most fundamental features of Plato’s philosophy like the theory of Forms or the division between true being and becoming. Nevertheless, the question of the articulation, in the *Sophist*, of the questions *posa te kai poia* with the *ti esti* question, deserves some attention and it cannot be taken for granted that the former two can be addressed independently of the latter one, all the more so as these critics themselves have been ready to recognise some Socratic features to this passage.⁹⁴

Let us now turn to the textual evidence against the view that the *Gigantomachia* is addressed to the questions ‘what is there?’ and ‘what are beings like?’ only, and not also to the question ‘what is being’. This claim is based on the view that the programme of the entire so-called doxographical passage is introduced at 242c5-6: the idea is that the distinction between the *posa* question and the *poia* question corresponds broadly to the division of the passage between two groups of thinkers, the Pluralists and the Monists who address the *posa* question, and the Materialists and the Friends of the Forms who address the *poia* question.⁹⁵ This view is, I believe, questionable. First, it is not correct to say that the first thinkers have addressed the question (*posa*) only. Admittedly, in his attack against

93. Politis (2015).

94. Cornford (1935), p. 252; Brown (1998), p. 189; Crivelli (2012), p. 71.

95. See for instance Brown (1998), p. 185: ‘After dealing with the dualist and monist theories, the *Gigantomachia* is introduced by a contrast between those who make precise reckonings of being and not-being and those who speak in a different way. This reminds us of 242c6, where the Stranger promised to discuss “attempts to determine how many and of what kind (*posa kai poia*) are the things that are”. It is now clear that the dualist and monist theories were those which say how many, which make precise reckonings; while the theories which now follow [i.e., that of the Materialists and the Friends of the Forms] speak “in a different way” about being—that is, say of what kind it is, what it is like.’

them, the Stranger concentrates on them having ventured to say how many beings there are. For example, the debate with the Pluralists deals with the problem whether what they mean by being is either the couple, or one of the members of the couple, or a third thing, but nothing is said about the Hot and the Cold as such. Still, the supporters of the Hot and the Cold have a view about *poia*, and so do all thinkers mentioned between 242c8 (that is, just after the *posa te kai poia* sentence) and 243b7. Indeed, the Pluralists do not only assert that there are two beings, they also say what they are, namely the Hot and the Cold. Even the Eleatics do not simply express how many beings there are, for by answering that the totality (*to pan*) is one (*hen*), not only do they give an answer to the question of the number of beings, but they also maintain that this being is the One itself.

Second, on the reading we are discussing, the *poia* question has been restricted to the Gigantomachia passage because it has been read as a question concerning the features of the beings, what they are like, of what sort they are. In this respect, the Friends of the Forms and the Giants seem to be the ones who properly answer that question, by saying, first, that beings are ‘incorporeal’ or ‘corporeal’, and then ‘unchangeable’ or ‘changing’. But reading the *poia* question as a question about the features of the beings is not the only possible reading of the question. The question *poia* or *poia estin* is very often used to urge someone to point to or to name something which he has previously announced. A very common example that we find in Plato is when someone declares that there are two (or more) kinds of X, and that his interlocutor asks him ‘which are they?’.⁹⁶ At 222d4 for instance, when the Stranger declares that there are two kinds (*genê*) of persuasion, Theaetetus asks ‘*poia?*’, and the Stranger’s answer is that the one is ‘private’ whereas the other is ‘public’. In this case, the question is a natural request to clarify what has just been announced, and in this context, it is a perfectly suitable answer to point to or to name those things which have just been introduced.⁹⁷ At 242c6, the question *poia* can be read in just that way. Just like when the Stranger says that there are two kinds of persuasion, it is natural to ask which are these two kinds, and the answer ‘there is the private kind and the public kind’ is perfectly acceptable ; in the same way, when the Pluralists say that there are exactly two beings, it is natural to ask which they are and accordingly, the answer ‘the one

96. It is very much used in the first part of the *Sophist* in which the Stranger proceeds to a series of divisions. See for instance *Soph.* 222d4, or 226e7.

97. See also *Soph.* 217a2, 222d4, 226e7, 254c4; *Crat.* 395d6; *Men.* 87e6; *Phd.* 81e4; *Tht.* 154b9.

is the Hot and the other is the Cold' is perfectly acceptable.⁹⁸

By translating *poia estin* as 'of what kind are the beings?' or even as 'what are the beings like?', commentators have obscured the fact that pointing at beings is a perfectly suitable way to answer that question, and that consequently, the Monists and the Pluralists are perfect candidates for being critics who address that question. By contrast, neither the position of the Giants nor the position of the Friends of the Forms, even before they undergo revision, consists in pointing to particular beings. The Giants do not point to particular bodies, like 'the Hot' or 'the Cold', they assert that to be is to be bodily. As for the Friends of the Forms, one might be tempted to say that they point to 'some intelligible and incorporeal Forms', but again, unlike the supporters of the Hot and the Cold, they do not point to any Form in particular; to say that to be is to be intelligible and incorporeal is much closer to addressing the kind of question that the Giants, clearly, address, than that of the Pluralists or Monists. What this shows is that it is not at all clear that the two questions raised at 242c5-6 set up the agenda for the Monists/Pluralists debate and for the Gigantomachia, and we have seen reasons to think that it is inaccurate to say that the division between the two groups of thinkers is mapped onto the division between the *posa* question and the *poia* question.

2.1.2. Criterion (*horos*) or definition (*logos*) of being?

Having seen reasons to doubt that the questions *posa te kai poia* at 242c5-6 set the agenda for the Gigantomachia, and having reminded ourselves that the question 'what is being?' is raised at 246a1-2, let us turn to the evidence that the Gigantomachia is also addressed to the latter question. A major objection put forward against this is the use of the word *horos* instead of the word *logos* in one of the most disputed passage of the Gigantomachia, namely the *dunamis* proposal. In what follows, I shall argue that one cannot conclude, on textual grounds, that *horos* is used for criterion as opposed to definition. Instead, we shall see that the passages which have been interpreted by critics as giving a criterion of being can be also naturally read as attempts to give a definition of being.

98. There are two main ways of reading the Hot and Cold passage: either these thinkers hold that there are exactly two beings, and these beings are the Hot and the Cold, or what they mean is that all the beings are hot and cold. I side with the former reading. On this point, see also Crivelli (2012), p. 73.

In the passage, there are at least four positions about being which could be interpreted either as criteria of being or as definitions: (i) the initial position of the Giants, according to which ‘this only is that which offers contact and touch; they define (*horizein*) *ousia* and body as the same’ (246a10-b1);⁹⁹ (ii) the initial position of the Friends of the Forms, for whom ‘some intelligible and incorporeal forms [...] are the true *ousia*’ (246b7-8);¹⁰⁰ (iii) the *dunamis* proposal, according to which ‘beings are nothing but *dunamis*’ (247d8-247e4);¹⁰¹ (iv) the conclusion of the Gigantomachia, which asserts that ‘we should say that being and the totality are both together everything that is changeless and everything that is changing’. Of the four, the *dunamis* proposal (iii) is the one which has received most attention, and it is used as the chief evidence for the criterion reading. As already explained in the introduction, and setting aside the choice of the question which we have addressed in the previous section, the criterion reading is based on two main claims: first, that there is a systematic distinction between *horos* and *logos*, such that *horos* is consistently used for criterion and never for definition; second, that a criterion does not deal with the nature of being, its function being only to distinguish between the beings and the non-beings. Cornford is a good example of this view: ‘The word *ôros* is used at 247e8 and again at 248c, not *λόγος*. It is a mark, not a definition’.¹⁰² He then adds that even in cases where *horos* ‘comes to mean a definition’, we should nonetheless see a difference between these two definitions, for *logos* ‘is the definition giving the explicit statement of a complex content or meaning.’¹⁰³ In what follows, I shall not endeavour to show that each of the four passages mentioned (i)-(iv) is in fact a definition, and not a criterion. Rather, I will first remind the reader that there is no support for a systematic use of *horos* as

99. *Soph.* 246a10-b1: τοῦτο εἶναι μόνον ὃ παρέχει προσβολὴν καὶ ἐπαφὴν τινα, ταῦτὸν σῶμα καὶ οὐσίαν ὀρίζομενοι.

100. *Soph.* 246b7-8: νοητὰ ἅττα καὶ ἀσώματα εἶδη βιαζόμενοι τὴν ἀληθινὴν οὐσίαν εἶναι.

101. *Soph.* 247d8-247e4: Λέγω δὴ τὸ καὶ ὅποιανοῦν [τινα] κεκτημένον δύναμιν εἶτ' εἰς τὸ ποιεῖν ἕτερον ὅτιοῦν πεφουκὸς εἶτ' εἰς τὸ παθεῖν καὶ συμκρότατον ὑπὸ τοῦ φαυλοτάτου, κἂν εἰ μόνον εἰς ἅπαξ, πᾶν τοῦτο ὄντως εἶναι· τίθεμαι γὰρ ὄρον [ὀρίζειν] τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν οὐκ ἄλλο τι πλὴν δύναμις.

102. Cornford (1935), n. 3 p. 238. The distinction between *horos* and *logos* is actually not the only argument that Cornford (1935) puts forward in favour of the criterion view. At the end of the very short paragraph dedicated to this question, he adds that it is clear that the *dunamis* proposal is not ‘the definition of “real”’, because ‘in a later section (249d ff.) the question, what does reality (Being, Existence) mean? is put by the Stranger to himself and Theaetetus as still unanswered’ (p. 239). Of course, this is not a good argument at all, for unless one argues that the *dunamis* proposal is accepted by the Stranger and the Friends of the Forms, and thus carried forward in the dialogue, the question whether it is a criterion or a definition does not depend on its ultimate acceptance as ‘the’ definition of being, just like in the *Theaetetus*, the first attempt to define *epistêmê* is said to be a *logos*, though it is ultimately rejected.

103. Cornford (1935), n. 3 p. 238.

‘criterion’ in dialogues other than the *Sophist*, though we might acknowledge tendencies to use *horos* more in that sense than in the sense of definition. I shall then focus on (i) and (iii), which are the two statements about which the term *horos* is clearly used, and show that in these two cases, there is reasonable evidence for the claim that Plato is not simply giving a criterion of being there, but also a proper account of what being is. Finally, I will point out that, although a majority of critics have denied that (iv) is a definition of being, the term *logos* is, in fact, used about (iv) and that this supports a definitional reading of this conclusion.

Let us begin with the first point, namely the use of *horos*. To begin with, as many opponents of the criterion view have already pointed out, and as even some supporters of the criterion view have also acknowledged, Plato does not systematically distinguish *horos* from *logos* in other dialogues.¹⁰⁴ It seems, rather, that there is a certain flexibility in the use of these terms. Of course, there are, in the corpus, some passages where *horos* is clearly and only used in the sense of limits, and hence, where *logos* cannot be used interchangeably. For instance, *horos* is used in the sense of delimiting the city at *Rep.* 423b4.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, it is even likely that *horos* is more often used in contexts where Plato is not yet dealing with a proper *logos*. In a survey of the early dialogues, Dancy carefully observes that of all the occurrences of *horos* or *horizesthai* in those dialogues, the majority cannot be suitably translated as ‘definition’.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, as he acknowledges, there are some notable exceptions to this tendency, which makes him conclude that ‘the vocabulary by itself tells us nothing about how the distinguishing [definition or boundary, mark] is to be done’.¹⁰⁷ According to Dancy, one reason for this is that ‘the notion of definition is here in the process of construction’.¹⁰⁸ However, there also are examples of uses of *horos* as definition in late dialogues. For instance, at *Tht.* 187c5, Socrates asks Theaetetus ‘You define (*horizê(i)*) *epistêmê* as true opinion?’.¹⁰⁹ Here, there is no doubt that we are in the context of a search for the proper definition of science and the translation of the verb by

104. For instance Owen (1971). Brown (1998), pp. 192-193, also acknowledges this fact, which makes her come to the conclusion that ‘we cannot decide the matter by looking at Plato’s terminology’. For the evidence of the use of *horos* as definition, Owen quotes: *Phdr.* 237d1 (cf. c2-3); *Plt.* 266e1, 293e3, and for *horoi* esp. 414d.

105. See for instance *Rep.* 423b4, in relation to the size of the city.

106. In fact, Dancy (2004), p. 24, goes so far as to say that ‘in almost all cases, “definition” is plainly wrong’.

107. Dancy (2004), pp. 23-24, mentions *Charm.* 173a9; *Lach.* 194c8; *Rep.* I 331d2-3.

108. Dancy (2004), p. 25.

109. *Tht.* 187c5: τὴν ἀληθῆ δόξαν ἐπιστήμην ὀρίζῃ;

‘define’ is natural.¹¹⁰ As a result, the flexible use of *horos* for definition is not a characteristic of the early dialogues only but can be found in the whole corpus. It is, thus, possible that the use of *horos* in the Gigantomachia is one of these examples.

There are two main uses of *horos* in the Gigantomachia. The first occurrence is at 246b1. Introducing the Giants, the Stranger declares that, to them, ‘this only is that which offers contact and touch; they define (*horizein*) *ousia* and body as the same’.¹¹¹ Many scholars have interpreted the Giants’ position as being that tangibility is the criterion for being and have denied that they offer an answer to the question *ti esti to on*. For instance, Brown stresses the necessity of translating *horizein* in the Giants passage as ‘marking off’: ‘The giants [...] mark off body and being as the same’.¹¹² There are several reasons to doubt this reading. First, the sentence seems to be one of these cases where *horizein* can naturally be translated as ‘to define’. On that note, Owen has already pinpointed that even Cornford, who otherwise defends the criterion reading, translates *horizein* as ‘define’ in this passage.¹¹³ The translation as ‘define’ is all the more natural as formulating definitions using *tauton* is common in Plato. In the *Theatetus*, Theaetetus’s attempt to define *epistêmê* as sensation, which is explicitly recognised as a *logos* at 151e8, is later reformulated by Socrates as saying that ‘*epistêmê* and sensation are the same’ (163a7-8; 164a6-7), without there being any doubt that the Theaetetus’ proposal is considered as a definition, even if it ultimately turns out that this is not the right definition of *epistêmê*.¹¹⁴ Second, just after the Giants and the Friends of the Forms have been introduced for the first time, the Stranger declares that, from both parties, they now want to ‘receive an account’ (*logon lambanein*) about what they posit as *ousia*.¹¹⁵ Admittedly, *logon lambanein* is a fixed expression, and we should not put too much weight on the use of *logos* here. Nevertheless, the expression is worth noticing, because the ability to give an account is, indeed, something that Socrates usually emphasises against his interlocutors.¹¹⁶ Again, this suggests that what they are

110. Owen (1971), n. 14 p. 330, also gives the example of *Plt.* 266e1.

111. *Soph.* 246a10-b1: τοῦτο εἶναι μόνον ὃ παρέχει προσβολὴν καὶ ἐπαφὴν τινα, ταῦτὸν σῶμα καὶ οὐσίαν ὀριζόμενοι.

112. Brown (1998), p. 186 and n. 5 p. 186.

113. Owen (1971), n. 14 p. 330. Cornford’s translation of 246b1 is ‘They define reality and body as the same’ (Cornford (1935), p. 230). Owen uses this phrase against Cornford’s claim that the *dunamis* proposal is a ‘mark of being’ and not a definition.

114. *Tht.* 163a7-8: εἰ ἄρα ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη τε καὶ αἴσθησις ταῦτὸν ἢ ἕτερον.; 164a6-7: ὄψις γὰρ καὶ αἴσθησις καὶ ἐπιστήμη ταῦτὸν ὠμολόγηται.

115. *Soph.* 246c5-6: λάβωμεν λόγον ὑπὲρ ἧς τίθενται τῆς οὐσίας.

116. On this point, see Cornford (1935), p. 184.

searching for is a *logos* of being. Finally, is there any reason to think that the Giants fail to give ‘the explicit statement of a complex content or meaning’ here, as Cornford puts it? None of the supporters of the criterion reading has given any argument for this.

The second and main example of the use of *horos* in the Gigantomachia is the *dunamis* proposal, and it is the central case for the criterion reading. Just like in the previous case, I shall first show that the translation as ‘definition’ is a natural one, both on the basis of the context and the formulation of the *dunamis* proposal itself, and then examine the philosophical reasons put forward by the supporters of the criterion reading. First, as Brown herself acknowledges, the question that prompts the *dunamis* proposal is ‘a formula often invoked in the search for a definition’, her sole defence against that is that ‘it *can* be read as asking only for what in virtue of which various things can be classed as *onta*, not for what it is to be a being’.¹¹⁷ Indeed, by asking about what is common to both bodily and non-bodily beings ‘by nature’ (*sumphues*, 247d3), ‘intrinsically’, the Stranger is asking for a general formula concerning something which belongs to the very nature of those things. Second, the answer to this question is expected by the Stranger to give something ‘towards which they are looking (*eis ho blepontes*) in order to say that both are’.¹¹⁸ This sentence is a clear example of a requirement for a standard in comparison by which one can determine whether or not x is Φ . As we will see in detail in the next section, this is a usual Socratic requirement for answering the *ti esti* question. Of course, a criterion is also something which can be appealed to in order to determine whether or not x is Φ . However, the difference between a criterion and a standard is that the criterion for Φ is not itself Φ , as opposed to the standard. A standard — the word often used by Plato is *paradeigma* — is itself an instance of Φ , albeit a perfect one, it is a model for Φ . Admittedly, the word *paradeigma* does not appear in the passage, but the key is provided by the verb *blepein*, that is, ‘to look’. If it does make sense to use the verb ‘to look’ in the case of a standard, it can only be understood metaphorically for a criterion. It is not impossible that *blepein* is used metaphorically, but taken together, these points make the case for the definitional reading stronger. I will come back to the relation between the *ti esti* question and the search for a standard, and the difference between a standard and a criterion, in the next section. Finally, the definitional reading finds support at 247d6, where

117. Brown (1998), p. 193, my emphasis.

118. *Soph.* 247d3: εἰς ὃ βλέποντες ἀμφοτέρωθεν εἶναι λέγουσι.

the Stranger announces that they are going to see whether they would agree that ‘this is what being is’ (*toiond’ einai to on*, 247d6).

Turning to the *dunamis* proposal itself, the proposal is split into two parts: a first formula, starting with Λέγω δὴ (247d8), says that whatever has any *dunamis* to act or to be affected really is; a second formula, starting with τίθεμαι γὰρ (247e3), continues by saying that the beings (*ta onta*) are nothing but *dunamis*. The second formula raises problems for the criterion reading. To begin with, οὐκ ἄλλο τί is a common formulation for a *logos* in Plato. At *Theaetetus* 151e2, when Theaetetus formulates the first *logos* of *epistēmē* which is going to be examined in the dialogue, he declares that ‘*epistēmē* is nothing but (*allo ti estin*) sensation’. Most importantly, even Cornford admits that the formulation is not proper to that of a criterion, but is more naturally read as a definition. In a footnote, he writes that the construction of the sentence is ‘difficult’ because ‘I think the sentence ought to mean that the mark of real things (not the real things themselves) is nothing but power’.¹¹⁹ But this is not what the Greek says, for the text is explicit that it is the *onta* themselves which are ‘nothing else but *dunamis*’. Cornford acknowledges this, and accordingly translates the sentence as ‘they [*ta onta*] are nothing but power’.¹²⁰ As a result, we should resist the reduction of the *dunamis* proposal to the first formulation, which obscures the fact that the *dunamis* proposal is presented as saying directly what the beings are.¹²¹ In addition, the γὰρ also goes against the reduction of the *dunamis* proposal to the former, for it assigns the explanatory role to the latter. Finally, note that the order in which the two formulae are introduced is actually the same as in the description of the initial position of the Giants, where tangibility is introduced before the Stranger asserts that bodies and *ousia* are the same. In the case of the Giants, I have already argued that the latter formula indicates a definition.

119. Cornford (1935), n. 1 p. 234.

120. Cornford (1935), p. 234. Brown (1998), p. 190, also remains faithful to the Greek by translating the sentence such that it is the beings — though she translates *ta onta* as ‘that what is’ — which are nothing but *dunamis*. Nevertheless, in n. 11 p. 191, she adds that it is possible to construe the sentence such that it is the *horos* and not the beings which are *dunamis*. But she gives no support for this. On the contrary, Cornford (1935), n. 1 p. 234, while suggesting two other ways to render the sentence, such that *dunamis* is related to *horos* and not to the beings, nevertheless admits that none of the renderings he proposes are ‘defensible’. In spite of this acknowledgement, he continues to defend the criterion reading in the rest of the book.

121. The reduction to the first formula has been adopted by Brown (1998), p. 190. Brown defends the criterion reading, and she declares that since the two formulae are ‘no doubt intended to be equivalent’, she can focus on the first one only, which she takes to be no more than ‘a more accurate formulation’ than the second one. However, if she was right, the γὰρ would certainly have to apply to the more accurate formula, not to the less accurate one, as in fact it does.

The philosophical argument put forward against the definitional reading is that a *dunamis* can only be something that a being has, it cannot be what it is to be a being. Consequently, the *dunamis* proposal can be at best a criterion of being, but not the *logos* of being. This point has been made most clearly by Brown, ‘things have powers in virtue of what they are’, but it is also found in Cornford who, relying on the conclusions of the work of Souilhé, declares that the *dunamis* is for Plato ‘the property or quality which reveals the nature of a thing’, thereby implying that it is not the *dunamis* itself which is the nature of the thing.¹²² This is, however, a disputed point, even among the supporters of the criterion reading, and it is a pity that Brown does not argue for this claim, nor does she give any indication on what her view is based on.¹²³ Bluck, who otherwise sides with the criterion reading, accepts Cornford’s point that the *dunamis* ‘reveals in its action the nature of a thing’, but unlike Cornford, what he concludes from this is that the *dunamis* ‘might easily be identified with the thing itself. The “being” of a thing is simply the function that it performs’.¹²⁴ Rijk goes in the same direction as Bluck: ‘To view a thing’s true nature in its true function [...] is truly Platonic thinking, indeed.’¹²⁵ If the issue itself would require more work to be settled, it suffices to say, for present purposes, that, as it stands, this argument is not conclusive against the definitional reading.

Last, but not least, among the four positions about being to be found in the Gigantomachia, one is clearly identified as a *logos*, namely, (iv) the conclusion of the

122. Cornford (1935), p. 236; Brown (1998), p. 193. Cornford repeats this position on the next page, describing the *dunamis* as what ‘unveils the inmost and hidden nature of things’. Note that Cornford’s way of writing is sometimes ambiguous. On p. 238, for instance, paraphrasing the *dunamis* proposal, he writes that ‘The “real things” they recognised are essentially *dynameis*’, which suggests that he recognises the *dunamis* proposal as the definition of being. One should however not be mistaken, for he again describes the *dunamis* proposal as ‘the general mark of what they call “real” in the previous line. As for Brown’s position, it is worth quoting in its entirety. This is her last point about the *dunamis* proposal being a criterion and not a definition, and the one that she presents as the most solid: ‘But this at least seems clear: if Plato does endorse the *dunamis* proposal (in one interpretation or another), then he can endorse it as a criterion of being, not as the *logos* of what it is to be. What it is to be can scarcely be cashed in terms of having this or that power, for (Plato would have insisted, I think) things have power in virtue of what they are.’

123. Note that Leigh (2010), p. 83, makes the same point as Brown, but she does not argue for it either. As for Cornford, he gives an overview of the different uses of *dunamis* in Plato, distinguishing between the passive *dunamis* and the active *dunamis*, but the point is more general and he does not give any precise argument.

124. Bluck (1975), n. 1 p. 93. Bluck’s position is an example of a criterion reading which relies solely on the use of *horos* instead of *logos* (p. 93). For the rest, not only does he think that being a *dunamis* can be for Plato what it is for something to be, as we have just seen, but also, he recognises that the second group of thinkers wants ‘an explanation (*λόγος*) of what they regard as real, an account of what is involved in being real’ (p. 93).

125. Rijk (1986), p. 101. Rijk supports the definitional reading of the *dunamis* proposal.

Gigantomachia. At 249d6-7, just after having concluded that ‘being and the totality are both together everything that is changeless and everything that is changing’, the Stranger asks Theaetetus to confirm that they have now grasped ‘*to on*’ in a ‘*logos*’, to which Theaetetus gives his assent.¹²⁶ It is particularly interesting that precisely this sentence is clearly labelled ‘*logos*’, for in the literature, almost all scholars, with the notable exception of Lentz, have disregarded the conclusion of the Gigantomachia as being a statement about what being is.¹²⁷ One could object, as Cornford does, that Theaetetus’s assent is just too hasty and that the point of the argument at 250a-251a is to show him that they have not found the *logos* of being.¹²⁸ However, this objection has little weight for not only is the subsequent argument a complex one, and it must be put as a question whether the outcome is the rejection of the conclusion of the Gigantomachia, but also, as mentioned earlier, all that matters is that it is recognised as a *logos*, even if it is later abandoned or revised.¹²⁹ We must now turn to (iv) in order to understand how this statement, which has not been acknowledged by modern critics as a potential candidate for the *logos* of being, despite being explicitly characterised by the Stranger as a *logos*, can be understood as dealing with what being is.

2.2. The conclusion of the Gigantomachia as a *logos* of being

The aim of this section is to examine closely the conclusion of the Gigantomachia (iv) in order to see how it is addressed to the question ‘what is being?’. For that purpose, I will use the requirements that, according to Socrates in the early dialogues, any answer to the *ti esti* question must meet, and show how Kinêsis and Stasis, as they are described in the Gigantomachia, contribute to providing an answer to the question ‘what is being?’ that meets these requirements. For the record, we know from the early dialogues that a proper answer to the *ti esti* question must be (a) a standard that is (b) general, (c) unitary and co-

126. *Soph.* 249d6-7: Τί οὖν; ἄρ’ οὐκ ἐπιεικῶς ἤδη φαινόμεθα περιειληφέναι τῷ λόγῳ τὸ ὄν;

127. See Lentz (1997), p. 99 as opposed to Cornford (1935), pp. 239, 241; Moravcsik (1962), p. 41; Brown (1998), p. 204; Politis (2006), p.p. 70-71; Crivelli (2012), p. 95. Rosen (1983), n. 6 p. 224, also reports that Klein (1977) ‘claims that this new definition replaces the definition of being as power’. However, Klein (1977), p. 47, is far less explicit than what Rosen suggests, for he only says that the conclusion is a ‘description’ of being.

128. This is Cornford’s view for instance, and he uses it as an argument against the claim that there is a definition of being in the Gigantomachia. Cornford (1935), p. 239.

129. In Chapter III, I shall analyse this passage in detail and argue that the outcome of this argument is actually compatible with the conclusion of the Gigantomachia.

extensive, and (d) explanatory.¹³⁰ As Politis explains, these requirements are logically ordered, from the weakest (being a standard) to the strongest (being explanatory).¹³¹ As a result, an answer to the *ti esti* question must satisfy not merely one or some of these requirements taken in isolation, but an answer, if it is to be adequate, must satisfy them all.

The latter point makes a crucial difference when it comes to the question whether the conclusion of the *Gigantomachia* is only a criterion of being or also an account of what being is. Indeed, it is the case that a criterion of being and a *logos* of being overlap in a number of respects. In particular, the primary function of a criterion is to distinguish the things that are Φ from those that are not, and this is a function that a criterion shares with a *logos* of Φ . It is thus not possible to distinguish a criterion from a *logos* on this basis alone. However, a criterion and a *logos* differ in two important respects: first, unlike a criterion, a *logos* of being gives a general standard of being, that is, the standard is not an example of Φ but the model as opposed to its application, and it is by looking to the model that one is then able to determine whether or not something x is Φ ; second, unlike a criterion, a *logos* is also explanatory, that is, it not only establishes that a certain thing x is Φ , but it also provides an answer to the question of why this very thing x is Φ . If *Kinêsis* and *Stasis* are part of the *logos* of being, as opposed to being mere criteria of being, we should thus expect that *Kinêsis* and *Stasis* do not simply allow one to determine whether or not something x is a being, but that they do so by serving as standards, models by reference to which one can determine whether or not x is a being. Moreover, we should expect that they do not simply contribute to establishing that x is a being, or that x is the being that it is, but also, that they contribute to explaining why x is a being, or why x is the being that it is.

One could worry about the relevance of importing into the *Sophist* elements which are emblematic of a certain group of dialogues, to which the *Sophist* does not belong.¹³² Besides, Plato, in the *Sophist*, develops a different method of enquiry, the method of collection and division, and one might wonder whether this method is not precisely meant to replace the Socratic method of enquiry. These worries are not unjustified and need to be preliminarily addressed. For one thing, as already mentioned, there are, in this part of the

130. The classification here is that developed by Politis (2015). The co-extensivity requirement is put together with the unity requirement, because it follows from it (p. 45). For another classification, see Dancy (2004).

131. Politis (2015), p. 56ff.

132. On that point, see Brown's 'new dialectic', (1998) p. 182 ff. By distinguishing the so-called 'Socratic dialogues' from others, like the *Sophist*, I do not commit myself to a developmentalist reading of Plato.

Sophist, ‘Socratic elements’ which have been acknowledged by several critics, and these elements relate precisely to the method of enquiry in place. For instance, critics have noticed that the Stranger is here calling into question, in a way that is reminiscent of the early dialogues, views about being which both the supporters of these views and the Stranger himself thought they understood well, and, moreover, this leads to the final statement, at 250e1-2, that they find themselves in a state of *aporia* about being.¹³³ All that this means is that we need not take Socrates’ method in the early dialogues and the method used in the so-called late dialogues as being incompatible. As for the method of collection and division, some critics think that it is operative in the Gigantomachia. For instance, Menn says that the mistake of the Giants and the Friends of the Forms is to have collected Being too hastily, which results in their having confused Being with Motion and Rest.¹³⁴ Now, even if we acknowledge that collection is taking place in the Gigantomachia, and that certainly, division is happening after that passage, it does not follow that the question ‘what is being?’ is not addressed. In the first part of this chapter, we have seen the point at which this question is raised, and we have also seen that the conclusion of the Gigantomachia at 249d3-4 is described as a *logos* of being. For the moment, it is of no importance whether this *logos* is accepted or ultimately rejected, and whether its acceptance or rejection marks the triumph of one method or the other. All that matters is that a *logos* has been given, which must now be analysed. The question of its survival in the rest of the dialogue will be addressed in the next chapter.

For the time being, let us take these requirements for a *logos* one by one, and see how Kinêsis and Stasis contribute to that.

2.2.1. Kinêsis and Stasis as general standards (a+b) of being

The primary requirement for an answer to the question *ti esti Φ* is to give a standard for a thing’s being Φ. A standard is ‘something by reference to which one can determine whether it is such as to be Φ’. Additionally, the standard must be ‘general’, which means that an example of a thing that is Φ cannot be a standard. For instance, Hippias’ beautiful

133. See Cornford (1935), p. 252; Crivelli (2012), p. 71. That the enquiry is conducted in the absence of the contenders of those theories about being is, however, a feature of Plato’s ‘new dialectic’ according to Brown (1998), p. 182. But Brown also finds some Socratic elements, for instance in the question that prompts the *dunamis* proposal. See n. 8 p. 189.

134. Menn (1998), p. 304.

girl in the *Hippias Major* cannot be a standard for Beauty according to Socrates, for it is only an example of a thing that is beautiful. Note also that a standard cannot be obtained by induction, or the like, from several examples of things that are Φ .¹³⁵ As Politis puts it, ‘the *ti esti* question is the request for the standard *itself*’, i.e. the standard itself ‘as opposed to its application’.¹³⁶ Turning to Kinêsis and Stasis, this means that we should find evidence that (i) Kinêsis and Stasis are something by reference to which one can determine whether something is a being or not, and (ii) they are the standards of being as opposed to their application, that is, that they are not simply examples of things that are, but are the standards by reference to which other beings are. Point (ii) is crucial for it makes a significant difference between the reading I am defending and the criterion reading. Supporters of the criterion reading have argued that Kinêsis and Stasis perform the function described by (i), that is, the role of Kinêsis and Stasis is to distinguish beings from non-beings. However, according to them, Kinêsis and Stasis are just features shared by beings.¹³⁷ As a result, if Kinêsis and Stasis are to be standards, they are to be standards of these features, that is of change and rest, but not of being. Consequently, the difficulty here is to show that it is well and truly of being that Kinêsis and Stasis are standards, and not of change and rest. I will now address (i) and (ii) in turn.

Starting with (i), let us show how Kinêsis and Stasis are that by reference to which one can determine whether or not something is a being, both for the revised Friends of the Forms and for the revised Giants. To begin with the Friends of the Forms, the unreformed Friends of the Forms hold the view that only that which is unchangeable belongs to true being, whereas that which is changing belongs to becoming. To them, thus, only Stasis is that which determines whether something is a being. As we have seen in the first chapter, the Friends of the Forms are not persuaded to change their view about Stasis, in the sense that they still hold, up to the very end, that Stasis is something by reference to which one can determine whether or not something is a being. Rather, they are led to accept that this role is fulfilled not only by Stasis, but also by Kinêsis. This move is made when the Stranger persuades them to accept that the soul is a being, although it is a changing being. As a result, to the reformed Friends of the Forms, Stasis is no longer the sole determinant of whether or not something is a being, but Kinêsis also has that function. As for the

135. Politis (2015), pp. 44-45; 48-50.

136. Politis (2015), n. 11 p. 46.

137. Frank (1986), p. 15: ‘the *change*, whatever it is, which $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ possesses is a “real” predicate of $\text{o}\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$ ’.

Giants, we saw earlier that the unreformed Giants hold the view that what determines whether or not something is a being is whether something is corporeal or not, but as explained in Chapter I, this position actually amounts to the view that there are only changing beings.¹³⁸ To the unreformed Giants, Kinêsis is thus that by reference to which one can determine whether something is a being. Now, just like in the case of the Friends of the Forms, their position undergoes revision. They are first persuaded to include incorporeal beings, and then to accept that these incorporeal beings are unchangeable. In this way, Stasis also becomes, for them, that by reference to which they can determine whether-or-not something is a being. In the end, both the reformed Giants and the reformed Friends of the Forms recognise that Kinêsis and Stasis are that by reference to which one can determine whether a thing is such as to be a being.

So far, there is no difference between the claim that Kinêsis and Stasis are standards of being and the claim that they are criteria of being. Let us now turn to (ii), that is, to the claim that Kinêsis and Stasis are standards in the sense of being models of being as opposed to being examples of being. There are two questions here. The first question is whether Kinêsis and Stasis are models of being as opposed to models of change or rest. The second question is how Kinêsis and Stasis are models of being and not just examples. Starting with the former question, it is indeed remarkable that it is not Being itself which plays this role, the role of being the model of something that is. As we shall see in the next chapter, this raises a question as to the relation between Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. Nevertheless, we can see that if Kinêsis and Stasis are models, they are models of being as opposed to models of change and rest, from the following considerations. First, among the questions that are raised from 242c, that is, from the debate with the Eleatics, we have seen in the first part of this chapter that the question ‘what is being?’ is raised, but not the question ‘what is change?’, nor the question ‘what is rest?’. If Kinêsis and Stasis were supposed to be models for change and rest, then we would expect the debate to be addressed also to these two questions. Second, if Kinêsis and Stasis were standing for change and rest, as such, then we would expect that Kinêsis and Stasis are coreferential, for there are indeed at least some beings, e.g. physical beings, which are both changing and resting in different respects or at different times. However, as I have argued as length in Chapter I, this is not the way Kinêsis and Stasis are used. To recall, Kinêsis and Stasis are

138. See Chapter I, section 1.2.1.

not used as properties that things may or may not have, but for groups of beings, and we have seen that these groups never overlap; they are non-coreferential.

Turning to the question of whether Kinêsis and Stasis are models of being as opposed to examples of beings, we must first admit that the word *paradeigma*, which is the word one would expect to find if Kinêsis and Stasis are models, does not appear in the passage, so we cannot rely on this. Note, nonetheless, that in the *dunamis* proposal, as we saw in the first part of this chapter, the Stranger is searching for something he can look at (*eis ho blepontes*) and say that things are.¹³⁹ More decisive however is a distinction that the Stranger draws at 249b2-3 and at 249b12-c1. At 249b2-3, he makes a distinction between what is changing (*to kinoumenon*) and change (*kinêsis*). Likewise at 249b12-c1, he distinguishes between ‘what remains the same in the same way and about the same’ (*to kata tauta kai hōsautōs kai peri to auto*) and rest (*stasis*). This distinction shows that the Stranger does not take Kinêsis and Stasis to be simply one of the many changing beings, or one of the many unchangeable beings. Rather, they are related, in a specific way, to the changing beings and to the unchangeable beings, as we shall see when we turn to the explanatory requirement. Finally, although Kinêsis and Stasis are not mere examples of a changing being or of an unchangeable being, they nonetheless both ‘are’. The Stranger spells this out at 249b3 for Kinêsis, and it is then repeated several times throughout the dialogue, for instance at 250a11-12. What this shows is that although Kinêsis and Stasis are not Being itself, they are related to Being in a certain way that we shall clarify in the next chapter.

2.2.2. Unity and co-extensivity

The unity requirement is the requirement that the answer to the *ti esti* question must be ‘a single thing or property by reference to which it is possible, *in each and every case* [...] to determine whether a thing is such as to be Φ ’.¹⁴⁰ The co-extensivity requirement follows from the unity requirement: it is the requirement that the standard ‘must be true of all and only those things that are Φ ’.¹⁴¹ A first, immediate problem concerns Kinêsis. Indeed, Kinêsis is a standard for things that have, apparently, little to do with one another:

139. *Soph.* 247d3.

140. Politis (2015), p. 45.

141. Politis (2015), p. 45.

the Giants' corporeal beings on the one side, and the soul on the other side, the latter being incorporeal, according to the Friends of the Forms, and corporeal, according to the Giants. On the other hand, the case of Stasis seems more straightforward, for Stasis stands for things which are relatively similar, like the Friends of the Forms' intelligible incorporeal Forms and the Giants' incorporeal virtues. A second difficulty concerns the fact that we seem to have not one standard for a thing's being a being, but two: a standard for the changing beings and a standard for the unchangeable beings. We may ask, therefore, whether this is due to the enquiry having gone awry or whether this is a genuine result of the enquiry about being. Furthermore, we may ask how Kinêsis and Stasis stand in relation to one another, both being standards of Being, and how they stand in relation to Being itself.

Let us start with the former problem. In Chapter I, we saw that the move from 'some changing beings and some unchangeable beings are' to 'all changing beings and all unchangeable beings are' is not only unproblematic but also meaningful if the Friends of the Forms and the Giants agree not on what there is — we saw that they do not agree on this point — but on what it is for an unchangeable being to be and on what it is for a changing being to be. With regard to Stasis, both the Giants and the Friends of the Forms agree at 249b12 that what is unchangeable is what is the same in the same respect and about the same.¹⁴² This applies not only to Forms, but also to the Giants' virtues. Unfortunately, no comparable formulation is to be found for Kinêsis, and actually, the Stranger seems to introduce a division in Kinêsis when he distinguishes at 249b8 between things that are moving (*pheromena*), presumably bodies, and things that are changing (*kinoumena*), presumably the soul. Now, it seems that what the Friends of the Forms and the Giants take to be common to all changing beings is that these things are essentially changing: it is part of their being what they are to be changing. That it is in this sense that bodies and souls are regarded as *kinoumena*, that is, in the sense of being essentially changing, is confirmed in three places. The first place is the introduction of the Friends of the Forms' initial position. Acting as their spokesperson, the Stranger declares that, to them, bodies are not *ousia* but *genesis* (246c1), which is then later characterised as being 'now and then otherwise' (*allote allôs*, 248a12-13). The second place is the conclusion of

142. For the claim that this passage is addressed both to the Friends of the Forms and to the Giants, see Chapter I, section 1.2.2.

the Gigantomachia, where the Giants' position is described as 'being moving in every way' (*πανταχῆ τὸ ὄν κινούντων*, 249d2), *to on* being for them the body.¹⁴³ As for the soul, the passage is the argument against the Friends of the Forms at 249a9-10, in which the Stranger argues that if *to pantelôs on* has *nous*, then it has *nous* in a soul, and, being ensouled, it cannot be unchangeable.

As a result, the two standards of being are: Stasis is the standard for what is 'always the same in the same respect and in the same way'; and Kinêsis is the standard for what is essentially changing, namely bodies and souls. Taken together, Kinêsis and Stasis are thus co-extensive with the beings, for they encompass the whole of reality. For the Giants, the unchangeable beings are, or certainly include, virtues, while the changing beings are the corporeal beings, including the soul, and this is, for them, what reality consists in. As for the Friends of the Forms, the unchangeable beings are intelligible incorporeal Forms while changing beings are souls. As to the question whether the Friends of the Forms also count bodies as changing beings, we do not need to worry about this question. Indeed, whether they do or do not makes no difference to Kinêsis being a single standard for all changing beings, since the Friends of the Forms also take bodies to be essentially changing beings.

All of this helps us to answer the first point, namely the question of whether there being two irreducible standards of being can be a genuine result of the enquiry carried out in the Gigantomachia. We have seen that the changing beings and the unchangeable beings are fundamentally different kinds of beings, which must be accounted for in altogether different, and indeed opposite, terms. In this respect, having two standards of being is just the recognition of this fundamental division of reality, a division which is acknowledged both by the reformed Friends of the Forms and by the reformed Giants. Now, this does not imply that a unitary definition of Being, over and above the conjunction of Kinêsis and Stasis, cannot be found. Indeed, there is still a sense in which both changing beings and unchangeable beings are recognised as 'beings'. In the Gigantomachia, we saw that Plato does indeed try to find out what is common to both. This is the example of the *dunamis* proposal, which is an attempt to find what is intrinsically common to the fundamentally different kinds of beings that the reformed Giants accept, the corporeal beings and the incorporeal beings. Likewise, we may expect that in the remainder of the dialogue, Plato will address how Kinêsis and Stasis are related to Being itself. This point will be properly

143. *Soph.* 249d1-2: τῶν τε αὖ πανταχῆ τὸ ὄν κινούντων μηδὲ τὸ παράπαν ἀκούειν.

addressed in Chapter III.

2.2.3. Explanatoriness

Finally, the explanatoriness requirement is the most demanding, but also the least obvious one. By ‘explanatory’, what is meant is that a proper account of Φ must not only describe the application of the defined term, but also give an explanation for it, that is, give the ‘because’, the ‘that on account of which’ something is Φ . Here, what we are looking for is an explanation for the claim that to be is either to be an *akinêton* or a *kinoumenon*. From considering the general standard requirement, we already know that Kinêsis and Stasis are the cause of there being *akinêta* and *kinouména*. What we do not know, however, is why this is so, i.e. why it is the case that to be is to be an *akinêton* or a *kinoumenon* and not something else. For instance, why does the Stranger not instead claim that to be is either to be corporeal or to be incorporeal, since this option was available to him? I will argue that the answer to the ‘why’ question is to be found at 249b5-c9. The passage is the very last point made by the Stranger before the conclusion. It consists in the Stranger making the counterfactual point that if the beings are all unchangeable, it entails that there is no *nous* about anything, and conversely, if everything is moving and changing, there is no *nous* either. Critics have usually downplayed the importance of the passage, and with the notable exception of Frank, they have not given much attention to the explanatory force of the passage.¹⁴⁴ I shall argue that the passage is not a mere summary, but that it brings a new element to the discussion, namely the *raison d’être* of what precedes, why it is so that there must be beings that are *akinêta* and others that are *kekinêména*. In this respect, we will see that this argument differs from the previous one against the Friends of the Forms, which also involves *nous*, but in a different way.

Let us take a closer look at the argument itself to see the role it plays in the wider context. It is important to recognise that this argument is not on the same level as what precedes. So far, the Stranger’s efforts have been directed at forcing each party to revise their account of being. The pattern, which leads to successful revision, is the same in both cases: the Giants or the Friends of the Forms are first forced to modify their views about what there is — the Giants are forced to accept that there are virtues like justice and also

144. Frank (1986), p. 18: ‘in order for knowledge and intelligence to be possible, and again, let me stress that *this* is the explanandum, the FFs must accept [...]’.

phronêsis whereas the Friends of the the Forms are confronted with *nous*, soul, life — and it is on this basis that they are then led to revise their accounts of being.¹⁴⁵ At 249b5-c9, however, the point is neither of these. Indeed, the argument adds no being that each party has not already recognised. This marks a major departure from the preceding lines. The only modification is for the Giants, who are now told that the incorporeal beings that they have been persuaded to include in their ontology are unchangeable.¹⁴⁶ This is certainly a significant modification. Nevertheless, it does not further modify their view about what there is. Rather, the new point which is made in this passage is that Kinêsis and Stasis are necessary conditions for *nous*. This is new to both parties: it is new to the Giants, who initially admitted no *akinêton*, but it is also new to the Friends of the Forms. Indeed, the Friends of the Forms initially did not recognise it, since they excluded Kinêsis from being, and although *nous* already played a role in the revision of the Friends of the Forms, this was a different one. Back then, the point was that if *to pantelôs on* has *nous*, then it has *nous* in a soul, and being ensouled, it cannot be unchangeable.¹⁴⁷ To conclude, this argument is not, as such, introducing anything new that would have modified the conclusion that ‘all that is changing’ and ‘all that is changeless’ are included in being, but it provides an answer to why this is so, that is for the sake of knowledge. Kinêsis and Stasis are, thus, explanatory: to be is either to be an *akinêton* or a *kinoumenon* because this is what guaranties the possibility of knowledge.

Now, while this may sound like we have not yet found how Kinêsis and Stasis are explanatory in a unified way, and that it still looks like the account of Being in terms of Kinêsis and Stasis is merely disjunctive, we cannot rule out that there is something that unites them. We will address this issue in Chapter III.

2.3. Conclusion

To conclude, I have argued in this chapter in favour of the definitional reading, by showing that it cannot be ruled out that Kinêsis and Stasis are part of the *logos* of Being. In the first part, I have argued against the view that only the questions ‘what is there?’ and

145. I set aside the passage in which the Friends of the Forms are confronted with the *dunamis* proposal, for this passage does not directly lead to successful revisions.

146. The qualification depends on whether they initially count the soul as corporeal or not.

147. *Soph.* 249a9-10.

‘what are beings like’ are addressed in the Gigantomachia to the exclusion of the question ‘what is being?’. I have given evidence that the latter question is not only raised, but also addressed in that passage. In the second part, I have shown how Kinêsis and Stasis may contribute to the *logos* of being, by looking at how they fulfil the requirements set by Socrates in the early dialogues for answering the *ti esti* question. It now remains to be seen how they are united in Being, which will be the focus of Chapter III.

CHAPTER III: The structural relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis: Being as a whole over and above its parts Kinêsis and Stasis

3.0. Introduction

The purpose of the present chapter is to answer the following question: what is the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis?¹⁴⁸ Based on what has emerged from the examination of the Gigantomachia in the two previous chapters, I will defend the claim that the relation among the three *megista genê* is that of a whole (Being) to its parts (Kinêsis and Stasis). The conception of the part/whole relation with which I will work is based on that put forward by V. Harte in her book *Plato on Parts and Whole*—namely, a whole that is over and above its parts, as opposed to the mere sum of its parts.

The question of the structure of the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis is prompted by two puzzles. The first emerges from the outcome of Chapters I and II, where it has emerged that the three great kinds are related in a specific way. As we have seen in Chapter II, there is both an extensional and an essential relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. On the one hand, there is an extensional relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, such that, taken together, the *akinêta* and the *kinoumena* constitute the totality of the *onta*. This has been established by the unity and coextensivity requirements in Chapter II: Kinêsis and Stasis are part of that by reference to which it is determined, in each and every case, whether a thing is a being. Kinêsis is the standard for the one group of beings, namely changing beings, while Stasis is the standard for the other group of beings, namely the unchangeable beings, and together, the changing beings and the unchangeable beings exhaust all that there is. On the other hand, there is an essential relation among the three, such that Kinêsis and Stasis are part of the *logos* of being. In other words, both Kinêsis and Stasis are part of an account of what it is for something to be, such that what it is for something to be is either to be a changing being or to be an unchangeable being. Finally, we have seen in Chapter I that Kinêsis and Stasis are non-coreferential, that is, that they do not apply to the same beings. As a result, the totality of the beings consists of two classes,

148. The relation between Kinêsis and Stasis and the last two *megista genê*, Sameness and Otherness, will be examined in the next chapter.

or two groups of beings, which never overlap.

The most striking feature of the relation among the three *genê* is the essential relation. First, instead of having a single Form F which stands for what it is to be F, as seems to be the case in other dialogues, we are confronted with three great kinds, all of them accounting for a single thing, namely, what it is for something to be. Second, this is all the more perplexing as Being is precisely one of the three great kinds. Again, in other dialogues, Being alone would have stood for what it is for something to be. As a result, there must be some specific relation among the three, such that when someone asks ‘what is it for something to be?’, one cannot answer that question by simply pointing to Being, but one must give an answer which includes Kinêsis and Stasis as well. The non-coreferentiality relation between Kinêsis and Stasis adds another difficulty to this problem. Indeed, what the non-coreferentiality thesis implies is that the changing beings and the unchangeable beings form two groups of beings which never overlap. Later in the dialogue, the Stranger characterises Kinêsis and Stasis as being ‘most opposed to one another’.¹⁴⁹ The difficulty is, thus, to understand how Kinêsis and Stasis can both exclude each other and nonetheless both be part of the *logos* of Being. The immediate worry that emerges is that this might threaten the unity of Being. It is legitimate to ask on what basis the Stranger can be certain that we are talking about the same phenomenon, namely being a being, given that there seems to be no connection between what is changing and what is unchangeable.

Another source of puzzlement concerning the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis comes from the passage which immediately follows the Gigantomachia. At 249d6-251a4, the Stranger describes Being as ‘a third thing’ (*triton ti*) which encompasses Kinêsis and Stasis but which, by its own nature, neither changes nor rests. The first difficulty here, which has been extensively discussed by scholars, is that it seems that the Stranger is saying something that is not correct. Indeed, there seems to be good reasons for thinking that Being, being one of the five great kinds, that is, an intelligible entity of some sort, is at rest by its own nature. Moreover, as I have just noted, it seems that to be changing and to be unchangeable form an exclusive and exhaustive disjunction: everything is either the one or the other but not both. By claiming that Being, by its own nature, neither changes nor rests, the Stranger seems to be excluding Being from the beings. The

149. *Soph.* 250a8.

least one can say is that this is a paradoxical result. For my reading, the Stranger's claim is even more problematic, in that it seems to be denying what I have precisely argued for in Chapter II, namely that Kinêsis and Stasis are parts of the *logos* of Being. Finally, the consequence of the Stranger's claim about the nature of Being is what prompts Theaetetus and the Stranger to confess that they are now at a loss concerning Being, not knowing at all towards what they should now turn their mind. The passage then ends with the Stranger famously declaring that since Being and Not-Being have turned out to be equally puzzling — the word for 'puzzle' is *aporia* — there is hope that shedding light on the one also sheds light on the other.¹⁵⁰ Here, the question is how the Stranger can possibly assert that we are clueless about Being despite the fact that the enquiry carried out in the Gigantomachia has just revealed how Kinêsis and Stasis were part of the *logos* of Being. Behind this passage is, thus, the question of the role of the conclusion of the Gigantomachia in the rest of the dialogue, whether it survives further examination and can be carried through or whether it has to be abandoned.

The answer that I will support in this chapter is that the solution to these two puzzles lies in understanding the structural relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis as, precisely, a part-whole relation. I shall defend this answer against the two other structural models which have been supported by critics, namely the participation among Forms model and the genus-species model.¹⁵¹ The participation of Forms in one another is a widely accepted model for the structural relation among Forms, or *genê*, in the *Sophist*. It consists in saying that the realm of Forms is now structured around relations of participation that Forms have, or do not have, with one another. Particularly important for this account is that there are some Forms in which all other Forms participate and some Forms that do not participate in one another, but that are linked together through these other Forms that pervade everything. The genus-species model has been chiefly defended by Cornford.¹⁵² Like the answer I shall defend, this model also presents itself as a part-

150. What Owen (1971), p. 422, labelled 'the parity assumption'.

151. What follows is just a sketch of the main features of these different models. For a detailed account, see the first section of the present chapter.

152. See also Stenzel (1961). My analysis of Cornford is based on the section entitled 'The Structure of the World of Forms' (Cornford (1935), pp. 268-273). In his two papers related to this topic, Moravcsik provides a criticism of Cornford's position, which he labels 'The Crude Model' (Moravcsik (1973a), pp. 168-169; (1973b), pp. 333-334). However, Moravcsik's criticism is based on the examination, in Cornford, of the section entitled 'The Method of Collection and Division' only (Moravcsik (1973a), n. 8 p. 168; Moravcsik (1973b), n. 8 p. 333; Cornford (1935), pp. 184-187). Now, this section is Cornford's interpretation of the method of collection and division in relation to the beginning of the *Sophist*, that is

whole relation of some sort, but one that is mapped on to the relation between a genus and its species. As a result, I shall refer to this model as the genus-species model. On this account, the realm of Forms is divided between generic Form and specific Forms, the two being related through specific differences. Finally, the part-whole model, which is the model I shall defend in this chapter, differs from the genus-species model in that it identifies only two types of Forms, the Forms that are wholes and the Forms that are parts, without positing any further entity to account for the relation between the two. As a result, I shall refer to this account as the part-whole model. The first to have defended this model is Moravcsik, but the most comprehensive account of Plato's treatment of the part and whole relation has been provided by Harte.¹⁵³ Central to this model is the view that the whole is not the mere sum of its parts, but something over and above its parts.¹⁵⁴

The way I shall define and analyse the part-whole model in this chapter is very much indebted to Harte's book on parts and wholes in Plato.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the main claim defended here constitutes, I believe, an addition to her work. At the level of the *Sophist*, this chapter adds to her work because she had not recognised that the *megista genê*, and in particular Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, precisely fit the pattern she is describing. Instead, she asserts in several places that outside the debate with the Monists, the discussion of parts and wholes is not central to this dialogue.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, as we shall see in more detail in this chapter, but as has already been introduced in Chapter II, the specificity of the part-whole relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis is that it involves an essential relation between the whole and the parts, such that the parts are parts of the *logos* of the whole. In her book, she addresses the topic of 'property-parts' or 'instance-parts', especially in relation to the *Parmenides*, but what is at issue in those passages is not an essential relation between the parts and the whole.¹⁵⁷ It should be clear, however, that this chapter does not pretend to contribute to the understanding of how the part-whole relation

226a-231b, but not in relation to the passages following the Gigantomachia. In this respect, the later passage in Cornford is more relevant to the topic of this chapter, and I shall focus on this one.

153. Moravcsik (1973(a) and (b)); Harte (2002).

154. I shall come back to this difficult expression in the first section of this chapter.

155. Her analysis includes: the discussion of the Monists, the Late Learners, the Vowel Analogy and the example of the *logos* at 261d1-262e1.

156. See for instance Harte (2002), pp. 157, 177.

157. See in particular Harte (2002), pp. 69-72. A 'property part', she maintains, is when the participant's share in a Form is a part of that participant, while she calls a case in which a participant's share is a part of the relevant form an 'instance part'.

applies to Forms in general.¹⁵⁸ Although Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are abstract entities, and although they are related to Forms, what I will claim here is not meant to apply to all Forms. Indeed, as we shall see, it seems that these three play a specific role in Plato, which is made distinctive in particular by the use of a specific vocabulary which is not generalised to every Form.

One of the difficulties that will have to be overcome in this chapter is that Plato nowhere explicitly says that Being is a whole and that Kinêsis and Stasis are its parts.¹⁵⁹ This is, by the way, something Harte also draws attention to: she explains that, apart from the *Parmenides* and passages in which Plato discusses Eleatic theories, such developments in Plato do not mention parts and wholes directly but relations of mixing, combining, or paradoxes involving the knowledge of elements.¹⁶⁰ We will see, however, that the claim that Being is a whole is explicitly made in the *Sophist*; unsurprisingly, it is made precisely in the debate with the Eleatics. To begin with, I shall examine closely the three different models of structure outlined above. Their relevance will be first assessed on the basis of their ability to account for the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis as it has emerged from Chapter I and II, that is, the extensional as well as the essential relation among the three, and the non-coreferentiality of Kinêsis and Stasis. Admittedly, none of the critics discussed has tried to address these problems in particular. Instead, their view focuses on the relation among all Forms or *genê*, but for precisely this reason, their view is also meant to apply to Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. Then, I will turn to textual evidence in support of the idea that the way Plato treats of Being, Kinêsis and Stasis in the *Sophist* actually fits the part-whole model. In the second part of this chapter, I will argue that Plato prepares for the claim that Being is a whole over and above its parts in the debate with the Monists. Finally, I will defend an interpretation of the 249d-251a passage along the lines of parts and whole reading. Note that the majority of critics cited in this chapter address the problem of the structural relation among Forms in the context of the method of Division and Collection. I shall, however, keep clear of this issue and limit myself to the more narrow purpose of understanding the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. As a result, I intend to stay neutral on the issue of Collection and Division, even in those passages that have been

158. This is a point about which she herself admits to have no idea in the final chapter of her book. Harte (2002), p. 270.

159. The closest we come is the passage 258a11ff., in which the Stranger opposes a 'part' (*morion*) of the nature of Otherness (*hê tês thaterou...phuseôs*) to a part of the nature of Being.

160. Harte (2002), pp. 3-4.

heavily discussed in that context.

3.1. Three different models of the structural relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis

The purpose of the following section is to examine the participation among Forms model, the genus-species model and the part-whole model, so as to determine which is most appropriate to account for the specificity of the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, as established in Chapter I and II, namely: the extensional and essential relation among the three as well as the non-coreferentiality of Kinêsis and Stasis. Ultimately, it will emerge that the part-whole model, understood as Harte defends it, provides the most adequate account.

3.1.1. The participation among Forms model¹⁶¹

By participation among Forms, I mean the view that the structural relation among Forms in the *Sophist* can be explained in terms of participation of Forms in one another. This model has for its starting point the claim made by the Stranger at 252e that some Forms combine with one another while others do not, which has been interpreted by critics as the claim that some Forms have a share in other Forms whereas other Forms do not. I shall thus here use ‘combine’ and ‘participate’ interchangeably, as those critics have, although it will appear in Chapter IV that there might be more to the communion of Forms than a simple relation of participation among Forms. This model establishes a distinction between at least three types of Forms: the ‘widest’ Forms, in which all or most of the Forms participate; the average Forms, in which some Forms participate but not all, and which also participate in many Forms; and the isolated Forms, in which no other Form participates and which, in turn, participate in no other Form. Participation, thus, introduces some structure into the realm of Forms, because if we were to represent this model by drawing arrows, there would be a question as to where to put the arrows, and it would emerge that some particular Forms are connected with all other Forms. Although critics who can be associated with this view have mainly ignored the essential and extensional relation among

161. This interpretation will be examined again in section 3.3.1 of the present chapter, in relation to the interpretation of Being as a *triton ti* in the context of the 249d-251a passage.

Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, and the essential relation, in particular, and although they may not have recognised that Kinêsis and Stasis are non-coreferential, in what follows, I shall nonetheless try to give an account of these three relations in terms of participation among Forms.

On this model, Kinêsis and Stasis are examples of Forms which cannot participate in one another, but which both participate in Being, for the latter is one of those Forms in which all other Forms participate. The consequence of Kinêsis and Stasis participating in Being is that each and both of them 'are'. By contrast, the Stranger never says explicitly that Being, in turn, participates in Kinêsis and Stasis. The only passage which comes close to saying this is at 254d10, where the Stranger says that Being mixes with both Kinêsis and Stasis, but he immediately clarifies that what he means by this is that Kinêsis and Stasis are.¹⁶² Consequently, I shall take it here that participation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis is a one-way or uni-directional relation, that is, that it is Kinêsis and Stasis that participate in Being, and not the other way round. Taking the example of arrows again, the arrows go from Kinêsis to Being and from Stasis to Being, but there is no arrow from Being to Kinêsis or Stasis, and no arrow between Kinêsis and Stasis. As a result, the extensional and essential relation among the three must be contained in that phrase, namely that Kinêsis and Stasis 'are'. To put it differently, it is because Kinêsis and Stasis participate in Being that they are part of the *logos* of Being, and likewise, it is because Kinêsis and Stasis participate in Being that all the things that are are changing or unchangeable.

The advantage of this explanation is that it is parsimonious: all we need is a relation of participation among Forms. However, it is also insufficient. The biggest problem that this account faces is that if this is all that there is to account for the fact that Kinêsis and Stasis are part of the *logos* of Being, then one must infer from this that each time a Form is participated in by other Forms, or *genê*, the latter are part of its essence and they have the same extension.¹⁶³ Indeed, there is nothing which singles out the participation of Kinêsis and Stasis in Being from the participation of the other *genê* in Being, and more generally, from the participation of any Form in another. For instance, compare the way Kinêsis is said to participate in Being at 256a1 'It [Kinêsis] is thus because of participating

162. *Soph.* 254d10: Τὸ δὲ γε ὄν μεικτὸν ἀμφοῖν· ἐστὸν γὰρ ἄμφω ποῦ.

163. The hypothesis that the participation relation is like a parthood relation is explored by Plato in particular in *Parm.* 131a-d. However, the crucial difference with our passage is that we are here concerned with parts of the essence of the Form.

(*metechein*) in Being (*tou ontos*)' with the way Kinêsis is said to participate in Sameness at 256a7-8 'But it [Kinêsis] is the same because of all things participating (*metechein*) in it [Sameness]'.¹⁶⁴ If the participation of Kinêsis in Being was what accounted for the fact that Kinêsis is part of the *logos* of Being, then the same conclusion should be drawn of the participation of Kinêsis in Sameness, namely that Kinêsis, and even more 'everything', would be part of the *logos* of Sameness, which is very unlikely. Likewise, it would imply that Being, Kinêsis, Stasis and Sameness are all part of the *logos* of Otherness, since it is asserted at 255e3-6 that all of them participate in it. But nothing in the text supports this reading. It is, thus, much more likely that participation also happens between Forms that are also essentially related, but that it is not the participation relation, as such, that necessitates the conclusion that to participate in a Form is to be part of its essence.

3.1.2. The genus-species model

As already mentioned in the introduction, the genus-species model is a version of the part-whole model, one that maps the part-whole relation onto the relation between a genus and its species. This account has been chiefly defended by Cornford. On this model, Forms are wholes in the sense of being complexes which can be further analysed into their parts, or constituents. Cornford identifies fundamentally two sorts of Forms: there are the generic Forms and the specific Forms. A generic Form contains, as its parts, or constituents, all the specific Forms which are subsumed under the genus. As for the specific Forms, they contain, as their parts, or constituents, the generic Form and the relevant specific differences. For instance, the Form Man is a specific Form which is subsumed under the generic Form Animal. The Form Man is definable in terms of the genus Animal and the specific differences Biped and Rational. In turn, the specific Form, Man, is a part, or constituent, of the generic Form, Animal. However, the specific differences Biped and Rational are not parts of the generic Form, Animal, they are only parts of the specific Form, Man. For if Biped and Rational were parts of the generic Form, Animal, it would imply that all and every animal is bipedal and rational, which is not the case. Along these lines, there is an extensional as well as an essential relation between the generic and the specific Forms. The generic Form has the same extension as all the specific Forms taken

164. Respectively *Soph.* 256a1: Ἔστι δέ γε διὰ τὸ μετέχειν τοῦ ὄντος. and 256a7-8: Ἀλλὰ μὴν αὕτη γ' ἦν ταῦτόν διὰ τὸ μετέχειν αὐτὸ πάντ' αὐτοῦ.

together. Furthermore, there is an essential relation between the generic and the specific Form. The generic Form ‘pervades’ and ‘embraces’ all the specific Forms and is part of their definition.¹⁶⁵ Conversely, the generic Form has the specific Forms as its parts. Moreover, the relation between a generic Form and its species is hierarchical in the following way: first, in the process of division, the generic Form stands at the top, and is further divided into specific Forms through the specific differences; second, the generic Form is the richest in content, for it contains all the species that are subsumed under it.

In this account, there are, thus, three roles to be fulfilled: that of a generic Form, that of differences, and that of specific Forms. Cornford says explicitly that Being plays the role of the generic Form. However, he never spells out whether Kinêsis and Stasis are specific Forms or specific differences, nor does he give examples of specific Forms that are subsumed under the generic Form Being. He gives some examples of specific Forms for the generic Form Animal, like Man or Ox, but not for Being.¹⁶⁶ The reason behind this gap seems to be that he does not consider Kinêsis and Stasis as being genuine differences within the genus Being, but as mere examples.¹⁶⁷ In any case, that he treats Kinêsis and Stasis as specific differences and not as specific Forms can be inferred from the following elements. First, he asserts that Kinêsis and Stasis are not parts of the definition of Being, just like, he says, neither ‘biped’ nor ‘rational’ are parts of the generic Form Animal. Now, there is no doubt that ‘biped’ or ‘rational’ are not specific Forms but specific differences.¹⁶⁸ Second, the only examples of specific Forms that he gives are ‘Man’, ‘Lion’, and ‘Ox’. This suggests that a specific Form of Being would be rather something like ‘Soul’, if there is such a thing as the Form Soul. As a result, Kinêsis and Stasis are that which is responsible for the species of Being, they are that which makes the beings not only beings but either unchangeable beings or changing beings.

The genus-species model is attractive, because it provides an answer to many of the puzzles listed above. To begin with, the genus-species model provides an answer for the non-coreferentiality of Kinêsis and Stasis: if the changeless beings and the changing beings are species of Being, then it follows that they do not overlap. Likewise, if the changeless beings and the changing beings are the only two species of Being, then Being is

165. Cornford (1935), p. 269.

166. Cornford (1935), p. 269.

167. Cornford (1935), pp. 277-278.

168. Cornford (1935), p. 273.

coextensive with the unchangeable beings and the changing beings taken together. The main problem, however, is the essential relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. If Kinêsis and Stasis are the specific differences of Being, then it implies that Kinêsis and Stasis are part of the definition of the specific Forms subsumed under the genus Being, but they are not part of the definition of the genus Being itself. What the genus encompasses and pervades are the species only, but the specific differences are not part of its definition. Now, what we have seen in Chapter II is precisely that Kinêsis and Stasis are part of the definition of Being. On this point, Cornford introduces a remarkable distinction: on the one hand, he denies that Kinêsis and Stasis are part of the definition of Being, any more than rational or bipedal is part of the definition of animal. But on the other hand, he asserts that Kinêsis and Stasis are nonetheless part of Being in some sense, namely, as being part of 'the Real', 'the Real' being, for Cornford, the sum of the beings as opposed to the Form Being itself.¹⁶⁹ Now, the problem is that what is defined here is not what Cornford calls 'the Real', that is, the sum of the things that are, but the Form Being itself, which Cornford labels 'realness'. As a result, the genus-species model fails to account for the essential relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. One could suggest that Cornford is simply wrong in thinking that Kinêsis and Stasis are specific differences, rather they are in fact the species themselves. Unfortunately, this suggestion generates another problem, that of finding the corresponding specific differences for Kinêsis and Stasis. If Being is the generic Form, and Kinêsis and Stasis the specific Forms obtained by division of the genus Being, what can be added to the genus Being so that it is further divided into Kinêsis and Stasis? There is nothing in the text which could correspond to the specific difference of Kinêsis and Stasis, and it is even difficult to imagine what it could be. Consequently, we have to rule out the genus-species model.

3.1.3. The part-whole model

The part-whole model was first defended by Moravcsik, but the most comprehensive account of Plato's treatment of the part-whole relation, as such, has been provided by Harte.¹⁷⁰ Harte does not directly address the question whether Forms are wholes of parts

169. Cornford (1935), pp. 272-273.

170. Harte (2002). Before Harte, Moravcsik (1973a+b) and Anscombe (1966) have also supported the view that in Plato's late theory of Forms, like in the *Sophist*, Forms are wholes. What Anscombe means by this

for Plato; what she does is to provide an account of Plato's theory of parts and wholes as such. What I shall be describing here is, thus, an application of her account of the part-whole relation to the structural relation among Forms. Moravcsik and Harte agree on the fundamental principle of the part-whole model, namely, that for Plato, a whole is not the mere sum of its parts, but something over and above its parts.¹⁷¹ As we shall see throughout this chapter, this claim plays a central role in understanding the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. However, there is also an important difference between their respective accounts of the part-whole relation, namely that for Moravcsik all Forms are wholes, including Forms which have no parts. There are, thus, three types of Forms for Moravcsik: Forms that are wholes, and have parts, but are not themselves parts; Forms that are wholes, and have parts, and are themselves parts of some other whole; and Forms that are wholes, and do not have parts but are themselves parts of some other wholes.¹⁷² For Moravcsik, the process of division starts with the first type of Form and continues until one reaches the latter type of Form, that is, a Form, which cannot be further divided into parts, but which is, nonetheless, a whole. These Forms he calls 'minimal' or 'indivisible Form', by which he means that these Forms have no parts, and, hence, that they put an end to the division

is that the One-Being is a whole of parts and that each Form is a part of this whole and also a whole itself composed of the Form that it is and its being (1966, p. 416). This is not helpful for understanding how Kinêsis and Stasis are part of the essence of Being, for it does not conform to their relation as it emerges from the Gigantomachia. As for Moravcsik (1973b), he defends the view that along with the method of division, Plato also develops the view that Forms are intensional wholes. He argues against supporters of the claim that the method of division is based on the Forms being arranged in a genus-species relation ('the crude model') and also against those who conceive the division of Forms as a division of classes ('the clean model'). Contrary to them, Moravcsik treats Forms as intensions only, and divides them accordingly, that is, without referring to inclusion or membership (p. 339). According to him, there are three groups of Forms: the Forms that are wholes, which have parts but are not themselves parts; the Forms that are wholes, which have parts and are themselves parts of the previous ones; the Forms that are wholes, but do not have parts which are wholes and are themselves parts — Moravcsik identifies a fourth group, but members of this group are precisely not Forms. Moravcsik does not explain exactly what is the nature of the intensional division between a whole and its parts at the level of the highest generic Forms. The only examples of a definition of a Form concern the last two groups of Forms, and these definitions are based on the wholes, including the generic Form, to which the Form to be defined belongs (pp. 340-341; 344). In turn, it is plausible that generic Forms are defined according to their parts, i.e. to the series of wholes which form their parts and are themselves wholes with parts, until we reach the third group of Forms. It is all the more plausible that he stresses the necessity that the wholes are 'genuine, or 'natural' intensions, which suggests that they have a strong link with the generic Form (p. 339). However, the examples he uses, mainly based on the first part of the dialogue like the relation between the Form of Art and the Form of acquisitive Art, and the fact that his analysis of the part and whole relation is limited to the — nonetheless crucial — claim that wholes are not the mere sum of their parts, while ignoring the question of the internal structure of the whole, suggests that his view is, again, too much influenced by the downward model of division, as opposed to a proper part and whole model, which is more horizontal.

171. In what follows, I shall explain in detail what these two views consist in.

172. Moravcsik (1973b), p. 340.

process.¹⁷³ Although he does not specify it, we can infer from this that what Moravcsik means by ‘whole’ here is something similar to what the supporters of the genus-species model mean by ‘whole’, namely being a complex entity which can be further analysed into its constituents, as opposed to being a strict unity which is not composite. In this respect, even an ‘indivisible’ Form is a whole, since its definition contains the series of wholes to which this Form, and only this Form, belongs. By contrast, I take it that Harte would not agree that, for Plato, there can be wholes that have no parts. As I understand her, parts and wholes are correlative terms for Plato: a whole must be the whole of some parts, and conversely, a part must be the part of some whole.¹⁷⁴

As has already been introduced, and as I shall be considering at length in this chapter, the central claim is the claim that a whole is not the mere sum of its parts, but something over and above its parts. In this respect, it is crucial that Harte and Moravcsik agree on it. Nevertheless, the issue of whether a Form which has no parts can nonetheless be a whole makes a significant difference to the two accounts. First, it matters when it comes to one of the major consequences of Plato’s view about composition, namely that the whole has to be counted as a third entity on top of the parts. In other words, if the whole is something over and above its parts, it entails that the whole cannot just count as one entity, but there is one thing, which is the whole, and in addition to the whole, there are as many things as there are parts. This view is what Harte refers to when she says that composition is ontologically creative as opposed to ontologically innocent, by which she means that composition, that is the formation of a whole of parts, actually adds something to the sum of existing things. By contrast, on the view of composition as ontologically innocent, composition adds nothing to the sum of existing things. Now, if some Forms are wholes but do not have parts, we lose this consequence, which, as we will see in this chapter, plays a major role in Plato’s argument in the *Sophist*. Second, and this will be the focus of Chapter IV, this point matters when it comes to examining how the whole is internally structured, that is, how the parts themselves are structured. This involves considerations of the relation between parts, and also the question of whether parts can be independent of the whole to which they belong. Again, this is something we lose track of if we think that having parts is not essential to what a whole is. For these reasons, I shall

173. Moravcsik (1973b), p. 340-341.

174. See for instance Harte (2002), p. 124.

focus on Harte's account of the part-whole relation, and leave Moravcsik's account aside.

According to Harte, Plato's view on parts and wholes is characterised by two fundamental claims: (A) the claim that a whole is something over and above its parts and (B) the claim that parts are structure-laden. In this chapter, I shall mainly be concerned with (A), (B) being addressed in Chapter IV. Coming back to (A), Harte draws a basic division between those who think that (Ai) a whole is the mere sum of its parts, and those who, in opposition, think that (Aii) a whole is a unity over and above its parts. In (Ai), composition is ontologically innocent, that is, the fusion or sum of the parts into a whole does not add anything to the list of already existing things. Indeed, the relation between a whole and its parts is that of identity, or is like identity. A whole is not something distinct from its already existent parts; it can be reduced to them. For Harte, this is the view defended by the Eleatics, 'the most ontologically commitment-shy philosophers there have ever been',¹⁷⁵ and which gives rise to the one-many problem; that is, the problem of how the same whole can be both a unity, in respect of being a whole, and a multiplicity, in respect of being its many parts. According to Harte, Plato develops his own view on parts and wholes in response to the problems raised by the Eleatic account, and central to Plato's competing account is the view that composition is ontologically creative. In other words, the whole cannot be reduced to its parts but is something distinct from them, which must then be counted as an entity in its own right. In this respect, the whole is composed of its parts, but is not merely its parts.

Let us pause for a moment and consider the formulation 'over and above its parts'. One might be worried that this is no more than a formulation, and that it cannot provide a rigorous account of the mereological structure behind this view. The first thing to note is that this formulation is actually very close to Plato's own wording of the problem in the *Sophist*. At 250b7, the Stranger asserts that Being is a '*triton ti para tauta* [Kinêsis and Stasis]', that is, 'a third thing above these'. As we shall see in detail in this chapter, this passage has been extensively discussed by critics. My point here is just to highlight the similarity between the formulation 'over and above its parts' and 'a third thing above Kinêsis and Stasis'. This similarity is the reason why I shall stick to this formulation throughout this chapter. Nevertheless, there remains the following, justified, worry: is there really something to understand behind this formulation, or is it merely a convenient way of

175. Harte (2002), p. 25.

distinguishing another sort of composition, even though the structure that underlies it is unclear? This is a problem which is addressed at length by Harte in her book, and I am now going to summarise the main elements in her response to that problem. Harte's response consists in pointing out that if the 'over and above all' analysis seems to suffer from some unclarity, so does the other view. For the record, the other view asserts that the whole is the mere sum of its parts. In particular, she points out that what 'sum' means is at least as unclear as what 'over and above' means. Moreover, she explains that those who support the view that the whole is the mere sum of its parts are forced to admit a kind of identity between the parts and the whole, although it cannot be a strict identity: they say that the relation between the parts and the whole is 'like identity', or that the whole is identical to its parts 'so to speak'.¹⁷⁶ As a result, it would be unfair to say that the burden of proof is only on the side of the 'over and above view', for this 'like identity' relation also needs clarification. The criticism can also be extended to the genus-species view. Going back to Cornford, he asserts that each Form that is a whole, be it a generic Form or a specific Form, is 'a One that is also many'.¹⁷⁷ But Cornford never spells out what he means by this and what the structure is that stands behind this characterisation. In particular, it is not clear whether the generic and the specific Forms are one and many in the same sense. At first sight, the fact that Cornford posits a generic Form and a specific Form suggests that both are entities in their own right. But at the same time, Cornford holds that the generic Form consists of all the specific Forms, and it is not clear whether what he means by this is that the generic Form is just that, namely the specific Forms taken together, or there is more to the generic Form.

For my present purpose, the most important thing to bear in mind, and what plays a crucial role in the argument of the *Sophist*, is the consequence that Plato attaches to this view, namely that the whole is an entity in its own right, that it must be counted as a further entity in addition to the parts. This, as we shall see in this chapter, is pivotal to the argument against the supporters of the Hot and the Cold, as well as to the debate with the Monists and finally, it is the key to the puzzle of the passage that follows the Gigantomachia.

To come back to our original question, let us now see whether the parts and whole

176. Harte (2002), p. 23.

177. Cornford (1935), p. 270.

model, as we have just described it, can account for the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. For that purpose, we shall assume that Being is the whole whose parts are Kinêsis and Stasis.¹⁷⁸ Starting with the extensional relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, the extension of a whole is, indeed, its parts. In this respect, the non-coreferentiality of Kinêsis and Stasis simply implies that the totality of the being is constituted by the addition of the parts, not by their fusion, since Kinêsis and Stasis cannot apply to the same things. As for the essential relation, there is also an essential relation between a whole and its parts. Again, there are two versions of it, depending on the view about composition that one follows: on the one hand, if the whole is the mere sum of its parts, then the whole is nothing more than the parts, which means that its essence is nothing more than that of its parts; on the other hand, if the whole is something over and above its parts, which, we argued, is the view that Plato endorses, then the whole is made of its parts but is not reducible to them. In other words, the essence of Being is partly constituted by its parts, but this is not all that Being is.

On this point, it seems that the non-coreferentiality of Kinêsis and Stasis brings another element in support of the claim that Plato endorses the view that a whole is something over and above its parts. If he were not endorsing this view, and if he were instead endorsing the view that a whole is the mere sum of its parts, it seems that the non-coreferentiality of Kinêsis and Stasis would then raise a problem. Indeed, if Being were just that, namely two incompatible parts, but nothing more than that, then it seems that the possibility of there being something called Being, which is common to the unchangeable beings and the changing beings, would be threatened. Being, then, would not be more than the unchanging beings and the unchangeable beings taken together, not something that binds them together or encompasses them or delimits them. Now, one might of course wonder whether this is actually Plato's view, namely that Being is merely a name for the unchangeable beings and the changing beings taken together. However, this is not the view that I am defending here, and as we shall see in this chapter, there is textual evidence that Plato does think that Being is something on its own. On the other view, namely on the view that a whole is something over and above its parts, this problem does not arise, for Being is something distinct from its parts. Admittedly, it is still unclear what exactly Being is, and by which process a third thing comes out of the two, but it remains that this view allows

178. Textual evidence will be provided in the two subsequent sections of this chapter.

for the claim that Kinêsis and Stasis are parts of the *logos* of Being. Along these lines, the part-whole relation offers an explanation of why, unlike for other Forms, to be a being does not simply consist in participating in the Form Being, but Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are essentially related in the way they are; it is because, as we shall see, Being is a whole whose parts are Kinêsis and Stasis. As a result, to be a being implies being related to one or the other part of Being.

The part-whole relation, as described by Harte, thus seems to give a more promising account of the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. It now remains to be seen whether there is any evidence to support such a view in the text.

3.2. The preparation for the claim that Being is a whole over and above its parts: the dilemma with the Monists at 244e2-245d6

The purpose of this section is to show that the claim that Being is a whole over and above its parts is introduced before the *megista genê* passage. In what follows, I shall argue that the claim is made in the debate with the Monists, in the passage referred to as the ‘dilemma’. As Harte notes in her book, discussions of Eleatic theories are in Plato the occasion for abstract discussions about parts and wholes.¹⁷⁹ She claims that in this passage, Plato is challenging the Eleatics’ view about composition by arguing that a whole is not the mere sum of its parts, but a unity over and above its parts.¹⁸⁰ Following her reading, I shall argue that in this passage, Plato prepares for the claim that Being is a whole over and above its parts. The difficulty, however, will be to show that the claim is not rejected together with the Monists’ view. I shall begin by arguing that the claim is made in the first Horn of the dilemma, and that at this stage of the dilemma, it escapes criticism. I shall then show that the new view about composition is reiterated at the start of Horn B. Finally, I shall show that in the last part of the argument (B2), the Stranger reiterates the claim that Being is a whole, but this time, by considering Being itself and not the One-Being of the Monists.¹⁸¹

Before we begin, let us first take an overview of the passage. The debate with the

179. See, for instance, Harte (2002), pp. 3-4.

180. Harte (2002), pp. 100-116.

181. Note that I shall not address the question of the historic Parmenides. For the relation between this passage in the *Sophist* and Plato’s *Parmenides*, see Palmer (1999), pp. 173-181.

Monists immediately follows the discussion with the Dualists, and closes the first round of the examination of theories about Being; the second round will be dedicated to the Gigantomachia. The outcome of the passage is not the refutation of their theories strictly speaking, but their rejection on the ground that it leads to myriad *aporiai*.¹⁸² Two sorts of puzzles are considered within the debate: the first sort, which are introduced at 244b9, are puzzles concerning naming, while the second sort, which are introduced at 244d13, involve discussions about composition in relation to the One-Being. In what follows, I shall be concerned with the latter exclusively. The discussion about composition revolves around the question of whether the Monists' candidate for Being, which is the One-Being, is a whole or not. The Stranger and Theaetetus consider three hypotheses, which all lead to an unacceptable conclusion for the Monists: the One-Being is a whole; the One-Being is not a whole, but there is such a thing as the Whole; the One-Being is not a whole and there is no such thing as the Whole. We have, thus, two horns of the dilemma, the second horn being further divided into two.¹⁸³

A: The One-Being is a whole: *Εἰ τοίνυν ὅλον ἐστίν...*(244e2-245b10)

B: The One-Being is not a whole: *Καὶ μὴν ἐάν γε τὸ ὄν ἢ μὴ ὅλον...* (245c1-d6)

B1: ...but there is such a thing as wholeness

...ἢ δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον (245c1-10)

B2: ...and there is no such thing as wholeness

Μὴ ὄντος δέ γε τὸ παράπαν τοῦ ὅλου (245c11-d6)

3.2.1. The introduction of the claim that a whole is a unity over and above its parts at 245a1-4

As anticipated in the introduction, I shall argue that the view which says that the One-Being is a whole over and above its parts is introduced in Horn A. My reconstruction of the passage goes as follows:

(P1) the One-Being is a whole of parts (244e2-8)

(P2) a whole of parts has unity over its parts (245a1-4)

thus: if the One-Being is a whole of parts, then the One-Being is a unity over its parts

182. *Soph.* 245d12-e5.

183. This, so far, is uncontroversial, and corresponds to the way most commentators divide the dialogue. See for instance Cornford (1935), p. 223, and Harte (2002), pp. 102-103. The only difference is that I do not include the argument about quantity.

(P3) the true One is entirely without parts (245a8-9)

(C1) the One-Being, being a whole, is not the true One (245b1-3)

(C2) the totality of things (*ta panta*) is superior to one (245b7-10)

The challenge here is to show that (P2) is distinct from (P1), and is made as an independent assertion, which has a chance of surviving the rejection of (P1). Let us now go through the argument step by step.

The claim that Being is a whole (P1) is the starting point of the argument. It is asserted at 244d14-e1 and explicitly attributed to Parmenides himself.¹⁸⁴ To begin with, the Stranger examines the significance of (P1) by emphasising that the One-Being-Whole has parts. Although this precision is given by introducing a direct quotation from Parmenides himself, it is not a further premise but a direct consequence of the claim that the One-Being is a whole, since wholes and parts are correlative terms.¹⁸⁵ (P1) can nonetheless be reformulated in the following way: (P1) the One-Being is a whole of parts. As Harte explains, there are, however, two views about the One-Being which can follow from (P1): either the One-Being is the mere sum of its parts or the One-Being is over and above its parts.¹⁸⁶ Once more, these two views about the One-Being reveal two different views about composition. On the former view, which is the view traditionally attributed to the Eleatics, composition is ontologically innocent, because composition is identity. This means that by saying that the One-Being is a whole of parts, one does not add any further entity to the sum of the already existing things. All there is is the One-Being. However, this may bring in the one-many problem, that is, the problem that the One-Being is one, by being a whole, and many, by being the same as its many parts. On the latter view however, composition is not ontologically innocent but ontologically creative. This means that the whole cannot be reduced to its parts, it is an entity in its own right, distinct from them. On this view, the One-Being, by being a whole of parts, is nonetheless one, because it is not the same as its many parts, but something distinct from them. On the other hand, on this view, there are altogether at least two things: the whole and its parts.

Now, the task is to find out which of these two views the Stranger is working with

184.244e2: Εἰ τοῖνον ὅλον ἐστίν, ὥσπερ καὶ Παρμενίδης λέγει [...]. A passage from Parmenides' poem is even quoted.

185. Although Harte (2002), p. 105, seems to read it as a first move.

186. On this passage, see Harte (2002), pp. 105-109.

when he asserts at 245a that although the One-Being has parts, it is nonetheless one (P2). That the passage stages a debate with the Eleatics could lead one to think that the former view is at issue, but several elements speak in favour of the latter view and against the former. First, the vocabulary used in (P2) is characteristic of the view that composition is ontologically creative. The Stranger declares not only that the One-Being is one, but that it has unity ‘over its parts’ (*epi tois meresi*, 245a2). Likewise, at 245b1, the Stranger describes this wholes as being ‘made out of several parts’ (*ek pollôn merôn*) as opposed to being merely its many parts. Second, the argument developed by the Stranger is more adequate in the case where the One-Being is over and above its parts than in the case where the One-Being is the mere sum of its parts. As Harte notes, if the view examined in Horn A was that the One-Being is the mere sum of its parts, then there would have been a shorter way to attack Horn A, namely to use the well-known one-and-many problem by pointing out that such a whole is, in fact, a plurality, because it is the same as its many parts, and hence cannot be the One. But this, as she explains, is not what happens, and this argument is never used in the passage. On the contrary, the Stranger repeats several times that the One-Being, so conceived, is just one.¹⁸⁷ In general, emphasis is not put on the fact that the One-Being is one but also many, but on two ways of conceiving the One: as a unity over its parts, or as a pure unity.¹⁸⁸ One could object that there are at least two places where the Stranger seems to point to the plurality of the One-Being: at 245b1, where the Stranger declares that the One-Being does not fit with the definition of the true One, because it is made ‘of several parts’ (*ek pollôn merôn*); at 245b8, where Being is said to be ‘somehow’ (*pôs*) one, as opposed to the One; the use of ‘somehow’ here suggesting that it is also many in some sense. To these objections, it can be answered that: first, the focus of the *logos* of the true One is on the fact that the true One does not have parts (it is *ameres*), to which the *pollôn merôn* is a direct reply; second, the point of the qualified unity of Being is only made to distinguish the true One from this other one, and this is what leads to the conclusion that the One-Being is different from the true One, the totality is superior to one. To conclude, the point made by (P2) is, thus, that the One-Being is a whole over and above its parts although the Stranger gives no reason here for preferring this view to the

187. *Soph.* 245b1, b5, b7-8. See also Harte (2002), p. 108: ‘If composition is identity, a whole is as many as much as one. In the *Sophist*, by contrast, the Stranger describes a whole as just one.’

188. As Harte (2002), pp. 109, 111-112, notes the Stranger distinguishes between two ways of being one: ‘being a unified whole of parts or being a mereological atom’. A mereological atom has no proper parts, it is just one.

competing one.

The question is now whether (P2) has any chance of escaping the criticism and of being carried through the rest of the dialogue by the Stranger or not. The first thing to examine is whether or not (P2) is attacked in Horn A. There are two conclusions that follow from Horn A: the first one is that (C1) the One-Being and the true One must be distinct and the second one, which directly follows from (C1), is that (C2) the totality of things is thus more than one. This conclusion is drawn from (P1) and (P3): the One-Being, being a whole of parts (P1), cannot be the same as ‘the true One’ (*to alēthōs hen*),¹⁸⁹ because the true One must be entirely without parts (*ameres pantelōs*) (P3).¹⁹⁰ It is important here to see that (P2) plays no direct role in (C1). Indeed, as already mentioned, parts and wholes are correlative terms, such that no matter how composition is understood, it necessarily follows that if something is a whole, it has parts. As a result, no matter whether (P2) stands for the view that the whole is something over and above its parts, as is the case, or for the competing view (P2)’ that the whole is the mere sum of its parts, (C1) remains unchanged.

Furthermore, if we take a closer look at the passage in which (P2) is asserted, we can see that it is divided into two parts: a general claim about composition, which remains in force, and the application of this claim to the One-Being, which is criticised. The first part corresponds to the general assertion that nothing prevents what is divided into parts (*to memerismenon*) from being ‘one’ over all its parts.¹⁹¹ Here, *to memerismenon* is meant to apply to the One-Being previously described, which has just been described as a whole of parts, but it does not need to be restricted to it and can equally apply to anything which is divided into parts. As a confirmation that (P2) is meant to be general, the Stranger then spells out what exactly this means for the One-Being. This is the second part of the passage, which says that understood in this way, that is, understood as having unity over its parts, Being is, thus total, (*pan*), whole (*holon*) and one (*hen*).¹⁹² Here, like Harte and

189. *Soph.* 245a4.

190. I take the phrase ‘the right definition’ (*κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον*) to indicate that the definition of the true One as partless is not an Eleatic definition, but that it is really what it is to be essentially one. Imagine, for instance, that the true One was not partless, then the true One would be superfluous, since the One and the Whole would then amount to the same. On that point, I disagree with Harte who takes the ‘right definition’ of the true One to be an Eleatic premiss, though I agree that the way the Stranger addresses the problem is Eleatic.

191. *Soph.* 245a1-2: Ἀλλὰ μὴν τό γε μεμερισμένον πάθος μὲν τοῦ ἐνὸς ἔχειν ἐπὶ τοῖς μέρεσι πᾶσιν οὐδὲν ἀποκωλύει [...].

192. *Soph.* 245a2-3: ...καὶ ταύτη δὴ πᾶν τε ὄν καὶ ὅλον ἐν εἶναι.

against Cornford and Bluck, I do not read the *kai* between *pan* and *holon* as epexegetic.¹⁹³ As a result, I take the One-Being to be both *pan* and *whole*, and not *pan* or *whole*, for they are not the same thing. That Being is total refers to the Monists' claim that there is just one thing; as a result, their candidate for Being must exhaust the totality of what there is, which will turn out to be the fatal blow against Horn A. By contrast, that Being is *whole* refers to how Being can gather all things while remaining one, namely by being a whole of parts which has unity over them. Coming back to the characterisation of Being as *total*, *whole* and *one*, the Stranger then first qualifies its oneness, by making clear that it is not one in the sense of the true One, and this ultimately entails the denial that Being, so conceived, is *total*, since the true One and Being have to be distinguished. All in all, it is the second part of the passage which undergoes revision, that is, when it comes to saying that the One-Being, so conceived, is one but not the One. However, the general claim that what is divided into parts has unity over its parts, which is made in the first part of the passage, remains true. The only qualification being that the true One cannot be a *memerismenon*, but that does not affect the view about composition as such. In conclusion, (P2) survives Horn A.

Finally, note that the move from 'the One-Being is a whole over and above its parts' to 'Being (*simpliciter*) is a whole over and above its parts' is a very small one, and is, in fact, almost ready to hand at the end of Horn A. Indeed, consider that the One-Being of (P1), which is a whole over and above its parts according to (P2), is not the true One, but is just one. As a result, it is not the One-Being which is the subject of (P1), as they initially and mistakenly thought, but simply Being, which is a whole over and above its parts, by (P2), and is one accordingly. Admittedly though, the Stranger does not make that move, since the view under consideration is still the Monists' view. We shall now examine the rest of the dilemma.

3.2.2. The new view about composition reasserted at the beginning of Horn B (245c1-2)

Let us now consider how (P2) is addressed in the rest of the dilemma. In this section, I shall show that it is reasserted at the beginning of Horn B. Note that this line is governing

193. Cornford (1935), p. 224; Bluck (1975), p. 74; Harte (2002), n. 95 p. 106. Against Moravcsik (1962), see Bluck (1975), pp. 83-84.

the whole of Horn B, both (B1) and (B2), which will turn out to be crucial. The passage is at 245c1-2:

{ΞΕ.} Καὶ μὴν εἰάν γε τὸ ὄν ἢ μὴ ὅλον διὰ τὸ πεπονθέναι τὸ ὑπ' ἐκείνου 245c1
πάθος, ἢ δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον [...].

STR: Now, if Being is not whole through having being affected by the latter affection, but the whole itself is [...]

The interest, and the difficulty, of the passage lies in the understanding of the *dia* clause. There are different ways of understanding that sentence, depending on whether one takes the antecedent of *ekeinou* to be the One or to be the Whole.¹⁹⁴ Note that the outcome is the same, namely, that what is under examination is the hypothesis that the One-Being is not a whole, in contrast to the view presented in Horn A. Nevertheless, these two readings differ in their account of what makes something a whole, which is of major importance as far as (P2) is concerned. If the antecedent of *ekeinou* is Wholeness, then it means that what makes something a whole is its being affected by Wholeness. On that matter, Moravcsik, who supports this reading, is very explicit: ‘An entity is not a whole in virtue of its participation of the One, but in virtue of its participation of the Whole’.¹⁹⁵ On the other hand, if the antecedent of *ekeinou* is the One, then being a whole has something to do with standing in a certain relation to the One. Moravcsik’s reading has already been criticised by Bluck.¹⁹⁶ A major point against Moravcsik’s reading is that it is textually unlikely that *ekeinou* refers to Wholeness. Indeed, each time the word *pathos* or like is used in the passage, including in the immediately preceding sentence, it refers to the way the whole is one, that is, as being a unity over and above its parts, as opposed to being the true One, the latter being without parts.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, Moravcsik’s remark that ‘an entity is not a whole in virtue of its participation of the One’ misses the whole point of the problem of composition as established by Harte, and as I have here restated. Moravcsik ignores that understanding composition amounts to finding a way out of the one-many problem, and that the relation to the One plays a crucial role here, to distinguish a whole from a mere plurality or from what is non-composite. Since τὸ ὑπ' ἐκείνου πάθος refers to the way Being is one in the sense of being a whole which has unity over and above its parts, and not as Being the same as the true One, it follows that the natural way to understand the hypothesis governing

194. For an overview of the different positions, see Crivelli (2012), n. 26 p. 83.

195. Moravcsik (1962), n. 1 p. 33.

196. Moravcsik’s reading has already been criticised by Bluck (1975), pp. 75-78, 83.

197. *Soph.* 245a1, 245a5, 245b4, 245b7-8.

Horn (B) is as saying that Being is not a whole because it is not affected by the unity specific to the whole.¹⁹⁸ The importance of (P2) in the comprehension of what it is to be a whole is thus here reasserted: if Being is not one in this way, that is, if Being is not a unity over and above its parts, then Being cannot be a whole, and conversely, what it is to be a whole is to be a unity over and above its parts.¹⁹⁹

3.2.3. Towards the claim that Being *simpliciter* is a whole over and above its parts (245c11-d6)

So far, we have seen that the claim that Being is a whole over and above its parts is asserted within the Monist framework, that is about the One-Being, although the view about composition (P2) is asserted independently and that it is then reasserted at the beginning of Horn B. There remains to be established that this view about composition is not challenged in the end, and whether it can survive the rejection of the Monists' views. To this purpose, let us now turn to the last passage under consideration, namely the conclusion of (B2) at 245d4-6:

{ΞΕ.} [...] ὥστε οὔτε οὐσίαν 245d4

οὔτε γένεσιν ὡς οὔσαν δεῖ προσαγορεύειν [τὸ ἐν ἧ] τὸ ὅλον

ἐν τοῖς οὔσι μὴ τιθέντα. 245d6

STR: [...] so to whom does not place the one and the whole among the things that are, it is not allowed to speak of *ousia* nor of *genesis* as being.

To start by summarising the argument, the point of (B2) is that if the Whole does not exist, then the same things hold of Being. The Stranger then details what this means: not only

198. Cornford (1935), p. 224: 'The other possibility (B) is that the real has not such unity as belongs to a whole — is not one whole.' See also Bluck (1975), pp. 74-75.

199. Scholars have usually dedicated little attention to this passage. Indeed, the reading of this passage depends a lot on how (P2) has been understood in the first place. If (P2) is interpreted in a loose sense, that is, as simply making the point that a whole is one as opposed to merely many, the unity of the whole is nothing specific to it but is shared with many other things. By contrast, the reading of (P2) that has been defended here, following Harte, makes the unity, which affects the whole, not only specific to it, but also central to what it is to be a whole, as we have just seen. This may be the source of the hesitation we find in Cornford (1935) who on the one hand seems to acknowledge that there is something special to this unity — he talks of a 'unity belonging to a whole' p. 226 —, but on the other hand fails to see its importance and often speaks loosely of the whole as having 'the property of unity' (p. 223). This hesitation is even more clear in Bluck (1975), who writes p. 84: 'It may be that being in some way a unity is regarded as essential to being a whole, and that all the EV means to say now is, "If 'what is' is not 'one' and therefore not a whole...'. [...] As has been suggested above, the final sentence of the passage (245d8-10) may be taken to mean that what is not a whole cannot be "one" [...], from which it follows that being "one" entails being a whole; it is possible that this idea is already implicit in the present sentence.'

Being is not (*einai*), but it cannot ever become (*genesthai*) being (*on*) (245d1-2). To Theaetetus' question 'why?', the Stranger answers that what becomes (*to genomenon*) always becomes as a whole. He then concludes that whoever does not posit the One (*to hen*) and the Whole among the things that are must not speak of *ousia* and *genesis* as being. There are a few things to mention before we go into the problematic part of the argument. The first thing to note is that Being is here understood as covering both *ousia* and *genesis*.²⁰⁰ This is all the more interesting as the passage is part of the debate with the Eleatics, that is, philosophers who sharply contrast Being and *genesis*. To them, *genesis*, or becoming, is nothing but an illusion of the mortals, and the only possible way is that of Being. The second thing to note is the mention of *to hen* in the conclusion. Following Bekker's edition of the text where it is bracketed as being out of place (*seclusit*), a number of critics have also decided to ignore it. The third thing to note is the general tone of the very last sentence, where the participle *tithenta* has no subject.

Turning to the argument itself, the bone of contention is how to understand the phrase 'the same things hold of Being'.²⁰¹ There are two main readings. According to the first reading (Reading 1), this phrase means that if the Whole does not exist, then Being lacks itself. Consequently, the outcome for Being in (B2) is the same as (B1). The governing hypothesis of (B1) is that the One-Being is not a whole, but the Whole is, which entails that Being lacks itself and, thus, is not. There are, in turn, three different interpretations of the assertion in (B1) that Being lacks itself: it means either that Being lacks itself, because there is a being, namely the Whole, that it is not;²⁰² or it means that Being lacks itself because there is something that it 'is not', namely, whole;²⁰³ or it means that Being lacks itself because not being a whole, it lacks its very nature, which is precisely to be a whole.²⁰⁴ All these readings have in common that 'Being lacks its own nature' does not entail that 'Being is not at all' or 'does not exist'. As a result, their reading of (B2) is that if the Whole is not at all, then Being lacks itself, but is, nonetheless. By contrast, according to the second reading of (B2) (Reading 2), 'the Whole does not exist' entails

200. This will be important when we will turn to the examination of 249d-251a.

201. *Soph.* 245c11-12. Note that critics unanimously agree that Μὴ ὄντος δέ γε τὸ παράπαν τοῦ ὅλου (245c11) means that the Whole does not exist.

202. See for instance Cornford (1935), p. 225. For a review of the different positions, see Crivelli (2012), pp. 83-84.

203. Bluck (1975), p. 85-86.

204. Crivelli (2012), pp. 83-84.

‘Being does not exist’.²⁰⁵ The difference between the two readings of (B2) is that Reading 2 makes it clear that to be is to be a whole, whereas Reading 1 does not.²⁰⁶ The choice between Reading 1 and Reading 2 depends on the way in which one interprets ταῦτά ... ταῦτα in the phrase ‘the same things hold of being’: Reading 1 takes it as a reference to (B1) — Reading 1: if the Whole does not exist, then the same consequences as in B1 apply to Being, namely that Being lacks itself — whereas Reading 2 takes ‘the same things’ as referring to the immediately preceding phrase — Reading 2: if the Whole does not exist, then the same consequences hold of Being as of the Whole, namely that it does not exist. I shall now turn to this problem, and argue in favour of Reading 2.

There are three main reasons to reject the view that ‘the same things hold of Being’ should be understood as saying ‘Being lacks itself’ and not as ‘Being is not at all’.²⁰⁷ The first one is textual. Critics who see it as a reference to the consequences of (B1) have been confronted with the problem that (B1) has two consequences — that Being is lacking itself and that the totality is again superior to one — and that only the first one is relevant for (B2). Now, nothing in the text indicates that ταῦτά...ταῦτα should refer to the first consequence only, whereas such precision would be expected since the first consequence is not the one that immediately precedes (B2) in the order of the text.²⁰⁸ As a result, the most natural reading is that ταῦτά...ταῦτα refers to the immediately preceding phrase, that is to the hypothesis that the Whole does not exist. Second, Reading 1 implies that ‘the One-Being is not a whole but the Whole is’ (B1) and ‘the One-Being is not a whole and the Whole does not exist’ (B2) have the same consequence for Being, namely that it lacks itself. To begin with, there is something strange in thinking that two mutually exclusive hypotheses entail the same consequence, and we would at least expect that the Stranger gives an explanation for it.²⁰⁹ But more problematic, it is hard to see how it can be a

205. Bluck (1975), pp. 75, 86-88. I am not concerned here with the question whether this amounts to an existential use of *einai*. Here, the rendering by ‘does not exist’ is warranted by the addition of τὸ παράπαν at 245c11.

206. This should be qualified as far as the third reading of (B1), that proposed by Crivelli, is concerned. For Crivelli’s reading does rely on the assumption that to be is to be a whole. As I shall argue in a moment, I share Crivelli’s interpretation of (B1), but I do not agree with him that (B2) entails, again, that Being lacks itself (B1), and I shall now explain why. In any case, it remains that Reading 2 of (B2) makes a stronger case for the claim that to be is to be a whole than Crivelli’s reading does.

207. That ταῦτά...ταῦτα does not refer to (B1) but to what immediately precedes and means that Being does not exist has been defended by Bluck (1975), p. 75.

208. Crivelli (2012), p. 85, justifies that ταῦτά...ταῦτα refers to the first consequence only by pointing that strictly speaking, the second one is not a characteristic of being. But the text is not precise enough to support it.

209. Cornford (1935), p. 226, at least recognises that this question has to be answered.

plausible reading in the case of the first two readings of (B1). Indeed, if the Whole does not exist, there is nothing that Being can lack. The only way out is to suppose that Being lacks itself because to be is to be a whole, which was made clear in the third of the three readings of (B1). However, if one agrees that to be is to be a whole, it seems that what follows from the suppression of the Whole is not that Being lacks itself, but that Being, in turn, cannot be at all. Third, by arguing that ταῦτά...ταῦτα refers to the first consequence of (B1), critics break the parallel between Being and becoming which is displayed in (B2). Indeed, (B1) makes no mention of becoming, which means that the hypothesis that the Whole does not exist does not have the same consequences regarding Being and regarding becoming. Now, this is not what we get from the text. As we have seen already, Being is what gathers *ousia* and *genesis*, and the Stranger systematically brings them together, both at 245d1-2 and 245d4-5.

Having now argued against Reading 1 and in favour of Reading 2, it remains to be seen what is the rationale given by the Stranger to account for the move from ‘the Whole does not exist’ to ‘Being does not exist’. Interestingly enough, the rationale for Being is missing, whereas the rationale for becoming is explicitly given. The rationale for becoming is found at 245d4: it is that what has come into being (*to genomenon*) has always come into being as a whole.²¹⁰ In other words, if the Whole does not exist, then there is no *genesis* because becoming comes to be as a whole. As many commentators have noticed, this claim is surprising in that it is not Parmenidean.²¹¹ Coming back to the rationale for Being, it is, thus, likely that it is on the same line, that is that Being does not exist because to be is to be a whole. This would provide a satisfactory explanation of the passage, and in particular of the last sentence quoted above, in which it is said that neither *ousia* nor *genesis* can be spoken of as being as there is no such a thing as the Whole. The difficulty lies in elucidating where this rationale comes from. The first option is that it is simply the repetition of (P1), that is, the repetition of the Parmenidean premise of the beginning of the dilemma, according to which the One-Being is a whole of parts.²¹² The problem with this suggestion is that because Horn A has proved problematic, the Parmenidean version of that claim is not available any more. What remains, however, is the non-Parmenidean claim that Being *simpliciter*, that is, not the One-Being, is a whole. As already mentioned, the

210. *Soph.* 245d4: Τὸ γινόμενον ἀεὶ γέγονεν ὅλον.

211. See for instance Cornford (1935), p. 227.

212. This is Crivelli's (2012) option, p. 84.

claim that Being *simpliciter* is a whole over and above its parts is already within reach at the end of Horn A. But alone, this is too weak. We shall, thus, look for other support that this claim is used elsewhere in the dilemma.

Now, as already mentioned, there is one reading of (B1) according to which the claim that ‘to be is to be a whole’ is already at issue, namely the third reading defended by Crivelli. If this is right, then it makes a better case for the claim that this is what is at issue in (B2). Let us now have a closer look at Crivelli’s reconstruction of (B1). Crivelli starts by making the same remark I have made about (B2): that the rationale for why ‘the One-Being is not a whole’ entails ‘Being lacks itself’ is missing. The rationale, he proposes, is that ‘the argument is still governed by the Parmenidean view that to be is to be a whole’.²¹³ The force of his interpretation is threefold. First, it provides a much stronger reading for the expression ‘lacking itself’, ‘being deprived of itself’. If to be is to be a whole, then it follows that if Being is not a whole, it lacks the very thing that it is. In comparison, the other two interpretations of (B1) are weaker, for they mainly show that Being is lacking something, but there a further step is needed to say that it is lacking itself. Second, that by not Being a whole, Being is lacking something which is essential to it, which belongs to its very nature, echoes the formulation used in the second argument of (B1) at 245c9. There the Stranger points out that it follows from (B1) that Being and the Whole each have their own nature in a separate way, thus confirming that their natures were so far taken as essentially linked.²¹⁴ Third, and most importantly, Crivelli’s reading provides an explanation for why it does not follow from (B1) that Being does not exist, unlike in (B2), that is: in (B1), there is still something like the Whole to which Being can be related in some way so as to be a whole, whereas such a possibility is not available in (B2). The only issue that I have with Crivelli’s reading is his view that this claim is Parmenidean. Certainly reading (P1) into (B1) has the advantage of offering an explanation for the origin of this claim, but it raises the problem that the original claim was that it is the One-Being, understood as the true One, which is a whole, not Being *simpliciter*. But that the One-Being cannot be a whole of parts has been shown in Horn A and is the ground for moving to Horn B. As a result, when the Stranger says that Being will be lacking itself if it is not a whole, by which he means that it will be lacking its own nature, the Stranger cannot be

213. Crivelli (2012), p. 84.

214. *Soph.* 245c9-10: τοῦ τε ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ὅλου χωρὶς ἰδίαν ἑκατέρου φύσιν εἰληφότος.

referring to the One-Being of the Eleatics but must be speaking of Being *simpliciter*. Consequently, we may conclude that the claim that Being *simpliciter* is a whole is a claim made by the Stranger in his own voice, and that this is the rationale for the conclusion at 245d4-6.

Finally, let us now come back to the problem of the insertion of *to hen* in the conclusion of (B2) at 245d4-6, and read it in the light of the preceding conclusion. We have just seen that a rationale for 245d4-6 is the claim that Being *simpliciter* is a whole, and that this is a claim that the Stranger makes in his own voice, independently of the monistic metaphysical framework. Now, in the whole dilemma, the claim that something is a whole is always associated with the corresponding view about composition, namely that the whole is a unity over and above its parts, the latter also being a non-Eleatic view. Later in the dilemma, this claim has been referred to under the expression ‘Being is affected by the One’ or like, and each time that Being is said to be affected by the One, Being is taken to be a whole. Last, that the one claim does not go without the other has been reasserted at the beginning of Horn B, where, I have argued, it means that what it is to be a whole is to be a unity over and above its parts. Along these lines, it is not surprising that when the Stranger asserts that *ousia* and *genesis* can only be spoken of as being if one recognises the Whole among the things that are, he immediately includes the One, for his view of composition is that a whole is a unity over and above its parts.

Let us summarise this long argument for the claim that the view that Being is a whole over and above is introduced in the debate with the Monists. This is a two-step process: this view about composition is first introduced in the debate in Horn A, but it is only in Horn B that it is positively asserted that Being is such a whole. In Horn A, this view about composition is introduced with the Stranger’s suggestion that the One-Being, being a whole of parts, can nonetheless be one, precisely by being a unity above its parts. As we have seen, this view does not undergo revision, it is only its application to the One-Being of the Monists which is problematic, not the view about composition as such. Note, however, that at that stage of the debate, what is under consideration is the One-Being of the Monists, and not Being *simpliciter*. This next step is taken in Horn B. Horn B starts by reasserting the view about composition that is at issue in Horn A, namely, that a whole is a unity over and above its parts. This is reasserted when the Stranger introduces the hypothesis that governs Horn B, which, as I have argued, should be read in the following way: the One-Being is not a whole because it is not affected by the unity specific to the

whole. The move to Being itself is in the second argument of Horn B. There, the Stranger says that if the Whole does not exist, then the same holds of Being, and I have argued that the correct way to read this sentence is as saying that if the Whole does not exist, then Being does not exist either. Finally, we have seen that the rationale for this move is that Being *simpliciter* is a whole. But this claim is not part of the Eleatic position: we may infer, then, that it is made by the Stranger in his own voice. Now, given that, as I have shown, the view of composition which is at issue in the whole dilemma, and more directly in Horn B, is that a whole is a unity over and above its parts, and that this view has not undergone revision, we may conclude from this that the claim that Being is a whole over and above its parts is made by the Stranger in his own voice, and that it is available at the end of the dilemma. Let us now see how this claim is handled in the rest of the dialogue, in particular, when it comes to Being as one of the five great kinds.

3.3. The claim that Being is a whole over and above its parts (249d-251a)

In the previous section, it has been shown where and how the claim that Being is a whole over and above its parts is introduced in the dialogue. Now, the aim is to establish where it is made about the *megiston genos* Being. In this section, I shall argue that the claim that Being is a whole over and above its parts is to be found in the characterisation of Being as a *triton ti* at 250b7. The difficulty is that unlike in the Monist passage, Plato does not directly speak of parts and wholes in this passage. As a result, the explicit claim that Being is a whole is not to be found there, or in the rest of the dialogue, the closest we come to it is when the Stranger, at 258a11-b1, declares that a part (*morion*) of the nature of Otherness and a part of the nature of Being oppose one another. As Harte explains, it is a peculiarity of Plato's treatment of parts and wholes in late dialogues that, outside passages where Eleatic theses are discussed, the vocabulary of parts and wholes is, paradoxically, missing.²¹⁵ In spite of the absence of any reference to parts and wholes, we can, nonetheless, recognise that Being is a whole over and above its parts, if there is evidence that: (i) Being is a complex thing, which is made up of other things; and (ii) it is nevertheless an entity in its own right, by which is meant that it is not reducible to its parts. Chapter II has already made an important step towards (i), by showing that Kinêsis and

215. Harte (2002), pp. 3-4, 117.

Stasis are parts of the *logos* of Being. At that point, the question of the structure that enables such a relation was left open. It thus remains to be shown how the part-whole structure fits this adequately. In what follows, we will see that the description of what it is to be a *triton ti* satisfies both (i) and (ii).

This interpretation is set against the widely held view according to which all there is to understand by *triton ti* is that Being must be distinguished from Kinêsis and Stasis. In order to defend the part-whole reading of the *triton ti* against the common reading, I shall not only show that the *triton ti* passage satisfies (i) and (ii), but also, that it provides a better answer to the main difficulties of the passage. For the record, the passage, which directly follows from the Gigantomachia, presents two main issues, which are directly linked to the use of this expression: first, that Being is external to the Kinêsis-Stasis dichotomy, though the dichotomy divides all the beings; second, that notwithstanding the results reached in the Gigantomachia, we remain ignorant about Being. First, I shall explain why the common reading of the phrase *triton ti* as merely implying that Being is a third *genos*, distinct from Kinêsis and Stasis, is inadequate. Second, I shall turn to the Hot and Cold passage, to which the Stranger refers at the beginning of 249d-251a, and defend an interpretation of this passage as a problem of composition. Third, I shall turn to 249d-251a, and explain how the claim that Being is a *triton ti* amounts to the claim that Being is a whole over and above its parts. Finally, I shall show how this reading offers an adequate answer to the puzzles raised by the passage.

Let us first remind ourselves of the conclusion of the Gigantomachia at 249d3-4: that Being (*to on*) and the totality (*to pan*) should be said to be both together (*sunamphotera*) all (*hosa*) that is unchangeable (*akinêta*) and all that is changing (*kekinêmena*). As we have seen in Chapter II, that Being is both unchangeable and changing is a not mere *façon de parler*, nor just a problem of language, but is rooted in the nature of Being: it corresponds to Kinêsis and Stasis being both part of the *logos* of Being, that is, what it is for something to be is to be either an *akinêton* or a *kinoumenon*, the term 'being' being applied to both. The problem arises when we try to say what Being itself is, what is this thing that the *akinêta* and the *kekinêmena* have in common. Indeed, as the Stranger reminds us, it can be neither Stasis that they have in common, for Stasis does not apply to what is changing, nor can it be Kinêsis that they have in common, for Kinêsis does not apply to what is unchanging. Nor can it be both Kinêsis and Stasis taken together that they have in common, for as we have seen, everything is either the one or the other. It

remains to be said that what they have in common, that is Being, is something different from both Kinêsis and Stasis, it is a ‘third thing’ (*triton ti*). Now, the central question that this chapter is going to address is whether this should be understood as saying that Being is a different *genos* from Kinêsis and Stasis, or if there is more than that, that is, whether this means that not only Being is a different *genos* from Kinêsis and Stasis, but it stands in a specific relation to them, that of a whole over and above its parts.

3.3.1. An inadequate reading: Being is a different *genos* from both Kinêsis and Stasis

Let us start by examining the dominant reading of the phrase *triton ti*, according to which all there is to understand here is that Being is a different *genos* from Kinêsis and Stasis. This reading is motivated by the idea that the puzzles about Being, which are raised from 242b to the end of the Gigantomachia, originate in the confusion surrounding the *genos* Being.²¹⁶ In this way, the mistake of the Giants is to have confused Being with Kinêsis, to have thought that they were a single Form, while the mistake of the Friends of the Forms is to have confused Being with Stasis. By the end of the Gigantomachia, both sides having been forced to acknowledge as being what they formerly excluded, the former identification of Being with Kinêsis or Stasis cannot hold any more. Along these lines, the passage that follows from the Gigantomachia is read as enforcing this point: not only are Kinêsis and Stasis not Being themselves, but Being must be counted as a further *genos* in addition to the two.

In support of this reading, critics have pointed to the similarity with the passage which establishes Sameness and Otherness as fourth and fifth *megista genê*.²¹⁷ First, the passage starts at 254d7-d12 with what looks like a summary of the *triton ti* passage, and which makes just that point, namely that taken together, Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are three distinct *genê*. The passage goes as follows: Kinêsis and Stasis do not mix with one another (254d7), but Being does mix with both, for both Kinêsis and Stasis ‘are’ (254d10), hence Kinêsis, Stasis and Being are three, i.e. three *genê* (254d12). Here there is, indeed, nothing but the claim that taken together, Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are three *genê*. Second, the structure of the argument for the claim that Sameness and Otherness cannot be reduced to

216. According to Menn, this is the point of the introduction of the method of *diarexis*, namely to avoid taking one Form for another. Menn (1998), p. 304.

217. See Crivelli (2012), n. 76 p. 97.

Kinêsis and Stasis, and must, therefore, be counted as further *genê* (254d14-255b7), mirrors the structure of the argument which leads to the claim that Being is a *triton ti*: the Stranger starts by using the words ‘same’ and ‘other’ about Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, by saying that each is ‘other’ than the other two and ‘same’ as itself (254d14-15); then he goes on asking whether what they have just said can be reduced to one of the three *genê* that they already have acknowledged, or whether they have said something new (254e2-255a2); the next point consists in showing that ‘same’ and ‘other’ cannot be either Kinêsis, or Stasis, or Kinêsis and Stasis taken together, without implying that Kinêsis rests or that Stasis moves, which is impossible (255a4-b1); consequently, ‘same’ and ‘other’ cannot be reduced to Kinêsis and Stasis, but one must agree that Kinêsis and Stasis participate in them (255b3-7). For the record, compare now with the argument at 250a8b-10: Kinêsis and Stasis are most opposed to one another, but they both, nonetheless, ‘are’; that they ‘are’ does not mean that they both ‘change’ or both ‘rest’, which would be impossible; consequently Being is a *triton ti* besides Kinêsis and Stasis. The two passages seem to share the same structure, and, hence, the same goal: that of showing that one or more *genê* are distinct from both and each of them, and must, therefore, be added to the other *genê*.

However, the similarity between the two passages stops at a crucial point: that of the consequences which follow from the conclusion that Being is a *triton ti* and of the consequences which follow from the conclusion that Sameness and Otherness have to be counted as the fourth and fifth *megiston genon* respectively. In the first passage, as we know, what follows is the problematic conclusion that Being, by its own nature, neither rests nor changes, which seems to exclude that Being participates in Kinêsis and Stasis. As critics have rightly observed, this does not follow from the mere conclusion that Being is a third *genos*, distinct from Kinêsis and Stasis.²¹⁸ The impression that there is a problem with the argument is reinforced by the comparison with the passage about Sameness and Otherness, following which the Stranger both asserts that Being participates in Otherness, and is, therefore, other,²¹⁹ and that Otherness participates in Being, and, therefore, is.²²⁰

218. See for instance Crivelli (2012), p. 98: ‘The result of the argument's first step is that “being is not both change and stability together, but surely something different from these’ (250c3-4). This is true. The result of the third step is that being is “outside of both of these [*sc.* stability and change]’ (250d2), i.e. that being instantiates neither stability nor change. This is false. Where do things go wrong?’

219. For instance *Soph.* 255e3-6; 257a1-2; 259b1.

220. *Soph.* 259a6-7.

Several interpretations have been developed to interpret the puzzle of the *triton ti* passage, but all have in common that: (i) the puzzle does not emerge from the claim that Being is a *triton ti*, but from another distinction that Plato introduces here but does not spell out; (ii) ultimately, it should not be taken at face value that Being neither rests nor changes, but in the light of the distinction introduced; (iii) it remains that all that is at issue between the three *genê* is a relation of participation.²²¹ As we have already said, in the first section of this chapter, the problem is that the participation relation alone cannot account for the essential relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. Besides, most of the solutions defended entail the opposite conclusion, namely that Being neither rests nor changes because Kinêsis and Stasis are not part of its nature.²²² This suffices to start looking for an alternative to the dominant reading.

3.3.2. **The Hot and the Cold passage: a rehearsal for the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis**

Before we turn to the 249d-251a passage itself, let us start by examining the Hot and Cold passage, at 244d8-244b5. The reason for doing this is the Stranger's own remark that the enquiry that follows will be guided by the questions they earlier addressed to the supporters of the Hot and the Cold at 249d7-250a2. As we shall see, the Hot and Cold passage is, indeed, a rehearsal for the *triton ti* passage, and the part-whole structure at issue will appear even more clearly in the light of this first encounter with the problem.

To begin with, let us see how this passage can be read as a problem of composition. The supporters of the Hot and the Cold belong to the thinkers who say about the beings (*ta onta*) 'how many they are' (*posa*) and 'of what sort' (*poia*).²²³ In their case, there are two beings, and they are the Hot and the Cold. Later in the text, their position is reformulated as saying that 'all things (*ta panta*) are hot and cold' or 'the totality (*to pan*) is hot and cold'.²²⁴ As the Stranger makes clear, they apply 'being' to each and both of them, that is,

221. Some of the main interpretations: (i) the confusion at issue is that between statements of identity and statements of predication (Moravcsik (1962), Frede (1967) and (1992), Owen (1971)); (ii) the confusion is that between what something is essentially, that is, by its own nature, and what it has as a mere attribute (Bluck (1975), Crivelli (2012)); (iii) the confusion is that between Being itself and the beings (Cornford (1935)). For a different summary of the different interpretation, see Crivelli (2012), pp. 98-99.

222. See for instance Crivelli (2012), p. 99: 'neither stability nor change constitute the nature of the kind being'.

223. For the justification for applying both 'how many' and 'of what kind' to the first group of thinkers, see Chapter II.

to the Hot, to the Cold, and also to the Hot and the Cold taken together.²²⁵ This precision seems to be what prompts the question: what is it that they understand by ‘being’ then? There are two main ways of understanding the problem at issue. According to the first one, the supporters of the Hot and the Cold are guilty of having confused instances of Being with Being itself, which is a recurrent problem in Plato’s dialogues.²²⁶ What they really mean, and what they should have said, is that the Hot and the Cold are beings, that they instantiate Being, but they are not Being itself. Here, the solution is to teach them to distinguish between Being itself and the beings. But this is not the only way to understand the problem. According to a second reading, what these thinkers mean is not that the Hot and the Cold instantiate Being, but that they are Being itself. They really mean it, and are not simply mistaken. In other words, for them, the Hot and the Cold are not that according to which all the other things are said to be hot or cold, but that according to which all the other things are said to be, for the Hot and the Cold are what it is for something to be.²²⁷ The problem which arises from this view is thus: how is it possible to maintain both that what it is for something to be is to be hot and that what it is for something to be is to be cold? What is it that is called Being in both cases? Understood in this way, the problem calls for a solution involving composition.

Unsurprisingly, the division between the two ways of understanding the problem just described is the same as that which we find in the two ways of understanding the *triton ti* passage. Those who think that the aim of the phrase *triton ti* is to distinguish the *genos* Being from Kinêsis and Stasis likewise think that the aim of the Hot and Cold passage is to distinguish Being from the Hot and the Cold.²²⁸ In what follows, I shall defend the other reading, that is, I shall argue that the problem arises because these thinkers really support the view that to be is to be hot or cold, and hence, that what is needed is to find an appropriate relation among Being, the Hot and the Cold which makes this possible. Before moving to the analysis of the solutions put forward by the Stranger, we can already observe that without prejudging the reading of the *triton ti* passage, but bearing in mind the connection between the Hot and Cold and the *triton ti* passage, it is more likely that the

224. Respectively *Soph.* 243d8-9 and 250a2.

225. *Soph.* 243e1-2.

226. For instance Cornford (1935), p. 219; Bordt (1991), p. 502; Frede (1996), pp. 186-187; Crivelli (2012), p. 75. See for instance Crivelli (2012), pp. 99-101.

227. For the opposite view, see Frede (1996), p. 187.

228. Cornford (1935), pp. 219-220, is a very clear example of the correspondence between the two views.

problem arises because these thinkers hold that to be is to be hot or to be cold, rather than because they have mistaken beings for Being itself. Indeed, on the former understanding of the problem, the problem of the Hot and the Cold passage directly echoes the conclusion of the Gigantomachia. To recall Chapter I and II, the conclusion of the Gigantomachia is that Kinêsis and Stasis are part of an account of what it is for something to be.

Three options offered by the Stranger to answer the question ‘what is it that you understand by being?’: (i) Being is a third thing beside the Hot and the Cold (243e2-4),²²⁹ (ii) Being is either the one or the other, i.e. either the Hot or the Cold (243e4-6);²³⁰ (iii) Being is the Hot and the Cold taken together (243e2-4).²³¹ On the first reading of the problem, only option (i) properly answers the problem, for it is the only one which distinguishes Being from the beings by positing it as a third thing, distinct from the Hot and the Cold, that is distinct from the beings. On the contrary, options (ii) and (iii) just repeat the problem, for they respectively consist in confusing one of the beings with Being (ii) or in confusing the two beings taken together with Being (iii). By contrast, on the second reading of the problem, what the Stranger offers is really three different ways of understanding composition: (i) is the view that a whole is something over and above its parts; (ii) amounts to the denial of composition; (iii) is the view that a whole is the mere sum of its parts.

Let us start with view (ii), which denies composition. It consists in identifying Being with either the Hot or the Cold, from which it follows that Being is just one.²³² This amounts to denying composition, for this hypothesis is unable to consider Being as more than one thing, hence the urge to choose between the one or the other, between the Hot or the Cold.²³³ As οὐ γάρ...λέγετε indicates, (ii) is immediately presented as something to be rejected; this solution is, thus, not taken seriously. We are left with the two main options

229. *Soph.* 243e2-4: πότερον τρίτον παρὰ τὰ δύο ἐκεῖνα, καὶ τρία τὸ πᾶν ἀλλὰ μὴ δύο ἔτι καθ' ὑμᾶς τιθώμεν;

230. *Soph.* 243e4-6: οὐ γάρ που τοῖν γε δυοῖν καλοῦντες θάτερον ὄν ἀμφοτέρα ὁμοίως εἶναι λέγετε· σχεδὸν γὰρ ἂν ἀμφοτέρως ἓν, ἀλλ' οὐ δύο εἶτην. For a different reading of (ii), see Crivelli (2012), p. 74.

231. *Soph.* 243e8: Ἀλλ' ἄρα γε τὰ ἄμφω βούλεσθε καλεῖν ὄν;

232. There are two ways of understanding option (ii): either it entails that Being is one because if either the Hot or the Cold is, then it entails that the other is not, and therefore, does not count as being, or it entails that Being is one because if Being is to be hot, then it entails that to be for the Cold is to be hot, and thus the Hot and the Cold are one and the same thing (and conversely in the case where Being is to be cold). Both understandings are compatible with my reading of (ii) as a denial of composition, for even in the second case, Being is not a complex thing made of Being, the Hot and the Cold but is just the Hot or the Cold. For an account of both readings, see Crivelli (2012), p. 74. Now, it will emerge from the comparison with the argument at 250a-251a that the second interpretation is the correct one. I shall argue for this in Chapter IV, section 4.3.2.

233. As we shall see in Chapter IV, (ii) is the option chosen by the Late Learners.

that composition offers: either (i) the whole is something over and above its parts or (iii) the whole is the mere sum of its parts. (i) is recognisable in that it states that Being is a third (*triton*) besides (*para*) the Hot and the Cold. Because composition is not ontologically innocent but ontologically creative, the totality has to be increased by one, namely Being, such that there are three things in total: Being, which is the whole, and the Hot and the Cold which are its parts. In (iii) however, since composition is ontologically innocent, Being is not a third thing added to the Hot and the Cold, but the same as them: it is, thus, at the same time one by being Being, but it is also two since it is identical to its parts, namely the Hot and the Cold. Here, the one-many problem threatens. Compare, in that respect, the formulation of (i) with that of (iii): in (i), what is said is that Being is a third (*triton*) besides (*para*) the two, whereas in (iii), it is the two (*ta duo*) which are directly said to be one (*hen*). The supporters of the Hot and the Cold, because they are committed to the claim that there are only two things, cannot accept any of the suggested solutions. As a result, they are unable to say clearly what they mean when they utter 'being'.²³⁴ However, unlike on the first reading of the problem, it is not the case that only option (i) offers a proper answer to the problem. The other two options are views about composition which can be defended on their own. Here though, we can see which is Plato's favourite view about composition.

3.3.3. An adequate reading of *triton ti*: Being is a whole over and above its parts

Let us now turn to 249d-251a and read it in the light of the Hot and Cold passage. For the record, the conclusion inherited from the Gigantomachia is that Being should be said to be both together (*sunamphotera*) all that is unchangeable and all that is changing. As we have seen in Chapter II, this does not merely amount to saying that beings are changing or changeless like they are other things, but that what it is for something to be is either to be changing or to be changeless, that is, that Kinêsis and Stasis are part of the *logos* of Being. The problem can thus be formulated in the same way as the problem of the Hot and the Cold: how is it possible to maintain both that what it is for something to be is to be changing and that what it is for something to be is to be changeless? What is it that is called Being in both cases? The similarity with the Hot and the Cold passage is not only

234. *Soph.* 244a4-6.

explicitly mentioned, but also underscored by the formulation: just like in the previous passage, the question turns on the affirmation that Kinêsis and Stasis both (*amphotera*) and each (*hekateron*) in the same way (*homoiôs*).²³⁵ However, the Stranger adds an extra premiss at 250a7-8, namely that Kinêsis and Stasis are most opposed (*enantiôtata*) to one another.

The Stranger then goes on to examine the options on the table. We find the same three options as in the Hot and Cold passage, albeit presented in a different order. The first option in the order of the text corresponds to option (ii) in the Hot and Cold passage: Being is either the same as Kinêsis or the same as Stasis.²³⁶ The second option is the same as (i) in the Hot and Cold passage: Being is a third thing (*triton ti*) beside (*para*) the other two.²³⁷ The third option, which is also (iii) in the Hot and Cold passage, is introduced after Theaetetus has already given his assent to (i): Being is both Kinêsis and Stasis together.²³⁸ Let us review them one by one, starting with (ii). For the record, (ii) is the view that there is no composition, namely, Being is either just Kinêsis or just Stasis. Unsurprisingly, (ii) is again rejected: if Being is either the same as Kinêsis or the same as Stasis, it entails that Stasis is changing or that Kinêsis is changeless, which is impossible.²³⁹ However, unlike in the Hot and Cold passage, (ii) is not merely dismissed as being obviously inappropriate. Rather, as we shall see, it is (iii) which is introduced in that way. Here, the Stranger takes the time to spell out why (ii) is not a suitable option. We can only conjecture why (ii) is taken more seriously here, but it could be due to the fact that the Giants and the Friends of the Forms have initially held a version of (ii), the ones by identifying Being with Kinêsis, the others by identifying Being with Rest. Turning to (iii), that is, the view that the whole is the mere sum of its parts, it is here not even considered as a possible option. It is mentioned after Theaetetus has already agreed on (i), which suggests that it is only introduced in order to differentiate (i) from (iii), that is to differentiate the view that the whole is over and above its parts from the view that it is the sum of its parts. In (i), Being

235. *Soph.* 250a11-12: Καὶ μὴν εἶναι γε ὁμοίως φῆς ἀμφοτέρα αὐτὰ καὶ ἐκάτερον; Compare with 'λέγοντες ἄμφω καὶ ἐκάτερον εἶναι' at 243e1-2.

236. Respectively *Soph.* 250a8-9: Εἶεν δὴ, κίνησιν καὶ στάσιν ἄρ' οὐκ ἐναντιώτατα λέγεις ἀλλήλοις; and 250b10-11: Καὶ μὴν εἶναι γε ὁμοίως φῆς ἀμφοτέρα αὐτὰ καὶ ἐκάτερον;.

237. *Soph.* 250b7: Τρίτον ἄρα τι παρὰ ταῦτα τὸ ὄν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τιθεῖς.

238. *Soph.* 250c3-4: Οὐκ ἄρα κίνησις καὶ στάσις ἐστὶ συναμφοτέρον τὸ ὄν ἀλλ' ἕτερον δὴ τι τούτων.

239. This passage, and especially the claim that it is impossible that Kinêsis rests, has been highly discussed among critics. I shall examine this move in detail in Chapter IV. For present purposes, all that matters is that this view amounts to denying composition, and that it is rejected.

is a *triton ti* beside (*para*) the Hot and the Cold, which means that the whole is not the same as its parts; in (iii), Being is just Kinêsis and Stasis together (*sunamphoteron*). Why is (iii) not an option in this case? It seems that the explanation is to be found in the extra premise, namely that Kinêsis and Stasis are most opposed to one another. Indeed, what this entails is that Being cannot be the sum, or the fusion, of Kinêsis and Stasis, for it is simply not possible to have a fusion of two things which exclude each other.²⁴⁰

Let us now turn to (i), that is the view that the whole is over and above its parts, and examine it closely. The description of (i) is indeed much more detailed than the one given in the Hot and Cold passage, probably because this option is available to Theaetetus and the Stranger, since unlike their predecessors, they have not committed themselves with anything that pertains to how many beings there are. The passage is the following:

{ΞΕ.} Τρίτον ἄρα τι παρὰ ταῦτα τὸ ὄν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τιθεῖς, 250b7
ὡς ὑπ' ἐκείνου τήν τε στάσιν καὶ τὴν κίνησιν περιεχομένην,
συλλαβῶν καὶ ἀπιδῶν αὐτῶν πρὸς τὴν τῆς οὐσίας κοινωνίαν,
οὕτως εἶναι προσεῖπας ἀμφοτέρα; 250b10

STR.: So, you posit Being in your soul as a third thing alongside these, as if it encompassed Stasis and Kinêsis under it, and gathering them together and observing from above the communion of them with *ousia*, in this way you speak of both of them as ‘being’?

Although neither the term ‘whole’ (*to holon*) nor the term ‘parts’ (*ta merê*) appears in this passage, this passage is characteristic of the way Plato describes the part-whole relation in the case of a whole over and above its parts. The vocabulary used here is indeed striking, and singles out this passage from previously examined passages in which the *genê* are distinguished from one another.²⁴¹ The first remark is that the rejection of the claim that composition is identity — the Eleatic view of composition — is expressed in spatial terms. The whole is not the same as the parts, for the whole encompasses (*periechein*) the parts from the outside, it comprises the parts (*sullabein*).²⁴² The whole thus acts as a container that holds the parts. The second remark is that the encompassing vocabulary suggests that the relation between the whole and the parts is not only derivative, that is, it is not only that the parts are derived from the whole, but that the parts and the whole always come

240. This, in turn, confirms that the Hot and the Cold are not opposites but that they can combine so as to make the other things, which fits the description of the Hot and the Cold as mixing with one another (*συγκεραννόμενον, ἄλλοθί*) at 243b5.

241. Another similar passage is at 253d-e. I shall examine this passage in Chapter IV, section 4.1.4.

242. On *periechein* as suggesting that what contains is outside of what it contains, see Harte (2002), n. 72 p. 95.

together.

Theaetetus immediately recognises that (i) is the appropriate solution, but the use of the verb *kinduneuein* (Κινδυνεύομεν, 250c1), which can mean ‘being probable’ or ‘likely’ but also ‘running the risk’, indicates that this view is not without problems. We shall now turn to them.

3.3.4. Two riddles resolved: the claim that Being neither rests nor changes and the claim that we are in the dark about Being

After it has been agreed that Being is a *triton ti*, the Stranger makes three assertions about Being: that by its own nature, Being neither rests nor changes (250c6-7); that Being is beside Kinêsis and Stasis (250d2-3); that we are in aporia about Being (250e1-2). In the Introduction to the present chapter, I had set up as a criterion for a successful explanation the ability to give an account of these statements. Let us now see how the part-whole relation can explain them. On the whole, critics have identified the problem as stemming either from the move from ‘Being is a *triton ti*’ to ‘Being, by its own nature, neither rests nor changes’, or from the move from ‘Being, by its own nature, neither rests nor changes’ to ‘Being is beside Kinêsis and Stasis’.²⁴³ On the contrary, I shall argue that the three aforementioned assertions simply unfold what ‘Being is a *triton ti*’ means.

Starting with the first one, we have seen that it is characteristic of Plato’s view on composition that the whole is over and above its parts. This view is set against the Eleatics’ position, according to which the whole is the sum of its parts. On the Eleatic view, the relation between the parts and the whole is that of identity: the whole is the same as its parts, such that the nature of the whole is the sum of, or the fusion of, the nature of its parts. In the case of Being, this would amount to saying that the nature of Being is the nature of Kinêsis and the nature of Stasis taken together. This is precisely the relation that is denied at 250c6-7. By saying that Being, by its own nature, neither rests nor changes, the Stranger is denying that Being is the mere sum of its parts. However, this does not imply that Kinêsis and Stasis contribute nothing to the nature of Being, but only that Being is made of its parts but is not its parts. Take the example of a cake. There is a sense in which a cake is not the mere sum of its parts, for it does not suffice to make a fusion of all the

243. See again Crivelli (2012), pp. 97-98, for an overview of the literature on this passage.

ingredients to have a cake. Indeed, the ingredients are related to one another according to certain proportions, a certain order in which they are mixed with one another, and a certain process that the ingredients undergo. As a result, the nature of the cake is not just that of the ingredients taken together, but a different nature to which the ingredients contribute, without the cake being reducible to any one, or to all, of them.

Turning to the second assertion, critics have found it problematic on the grounds that Being, *qua genos*, that is *qua* intelligible entity, must be at rest. Furthermore, as already mentioned in the introduction, the assertion is puzzling because it implies that Being is not one of the beings, for what has been established in the Gigantomachia is that to be is either to be an *akinêton* or to be a *kinoumenon*. The disjunction is not only exclusive, it is also exhaustive, for each and every being is either the one or the other. This is reasserted in our passage, for the Stranger asks how it is possible that Being is not at rest if it is not changing, and conversely, how it is possible that Being is not changing if it is not resting at all.²⁴⁴ The conclusion, which seems to follow from that, and that Theaetetus's answer, 'this is most impossible', seems to capture, is that Being is not itself a being. Hence, is it a not-being?²⁴⁵ Again, the part-whole relation gives us an explanation of this assertion, namely: a whole is not a proper part of itself. Being a whole, Being is not itself a proper part of what it is the whole of, that is, it is not itself one of the beings.²⁴⁶ However, this does not imply that Being is nothing at all. The spatial vocabulary developed at 250b7-10 is helpful here. As a whole, Being encompasses Kinêsis and Stasis from outside. In this way, Being delimits the beings. It is thus not outside in the sense of having nothing to do with the beings, but outside in the sense of being the border, the limit of the beings. As a result, it is not a being in the sense of the other beings, but it is not a not-being either.

Finally, we shall address the epistemological paradox with which the passage ends. Following the assertion that Being neither rests nor changes but is outside of Kinêsis and Stasis, the Stranger admits that they now find themselves in a state of *aporia* which is comparable to that which they found themselves in about Not-Being. The *aporiai* about Not-Being are developed from 237 onwards, following the series of divisions whose goal is to catch the sophist. They have for a starting point, of which the Stranger now reminds

244. *Soph.* 250c12-d2.

245. *Soph.* 250d4: Πάντων μὲν οὖν ἀδυνατώτατον.

246. That Being is not itself one of the beings has already been defended by Frede (1996), pp. 194-195. However, Frede's claim is not based on an understanding of Being as a whole over and above its parts, but on his analysis of the Third Man argument.

Theaetetus, that it is hard to grasp what Not-Being is the name of without being trapped in *aporiai*.²⁴⁷ From what we have just said, there is, indeed, a good reason to be puzzled by what Being itself is the name of, for Being itself is the whole that contains the beings, but again, it is not itself another being. In this way, Being is not the same as a being, but it is not not-being either, for as we have seen, Being is what contains the beings. Furthermore, recall the view of composition that is at issue: the whole is something over and above its parts, such that the relation between the parts and the whole is not that of identity. As a result, knowledge of the whole does not follow from knowledge of the parts. To take the example of the cake again, you might have already tasted all the ingredients of the cake separately, it does not follow that you will know how the cake will taste. For this reason, notwithstanding the fact that we know things about Being, and in particular its parts, it remains that we do not know yet what Being is.

3. 4. Conclusion:

The opening question of this chapter was that of the structure of the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, so as to account for the extensional and essential relation among the three *genê*, as well as the puzzling 249d-251a passage. The answer, which has been defended throughout this chapter, is that the relation is that of a whole to its parts, in the case where the whole is not the mere sum of its parts but something over and above its parts. We have seen, first, that this relation is introduced early in the dialogue, briefly in the Hot and Cold passage and in a much more developed way in the debate with the Monists. There, it has emerged that although the Monist theory, on the whole, is rejected, the view about composition according to which a whole is a unity over and above its parts is not criticised. Instead, it is reasserted in the very last bit of the argument (B2), which deals with Being itself and not any more with the One-Being of the Monists. Second, I have argued that the claim is made about the *megiston genos* Being itself in the *triton ti* passage. In this passage, we find the two elements which we had identified, at the beginning of the third part, as being characteristic of a whole over and above its parts, namely: (i) the claim that Being is a complex thing, which emerges from the description of Being as

247. The formulation is also very close. Compare ποῖ χρη τοῦνομι' ἐπιφέρειν τοῦτο, τὸ μὴ ὄν at 237c1-2 with Ὅτι τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἐρωτηθέντες τοῦνομα ἐφ' ὅτι ποτὲ δεῖ φέρειν at 250d7-8.

CHAPTER III: The structural relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis: Being as a whole over and above its parts Kinêsis and Stasis

‘encompassing’, ‘containing’ Kinêsis and Stasis, and (ii) that Being is nevertheless not reducible to them but something distinct, which has turned out to be the key to solving the different puzzles of the passage.

CHAPTER IV: The communion of kinds reconsidered: Sameness and Otherness as necessary conditions for composition

4.0. Introduction

The preceding chapter was dedicated to two related claims: that Plato describes the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis as a part-whole relation and that he breaks from his predecessors by defending the view that the whole is a unity over and above its parts, as opposed to the mere sum of its parts. As we have seen in the previous chapter, central to Plato's view about composition is his rejection of the claim that composition is identity, that is, Plato denies that a whole is the same as its parts and asserts, instead, that the whole is something distinct from its part. This last sentence can be paraphrased as saying that for Plato, a whole is not the *same* as its parts but is *different* from them. In this way, this brief summary of the results of Chapter III offers an easy transition to the topic of the present chapter; for, in what follows, we shall consider the role of Sameness and Otherness in relation to the whole of parts formed by Being, Kinêsis and Stasis.

In the list of the great kinds, Sameness and Otherness are the last to be introduced, coming, as they do, after Being, Kinêsis and Stasis.²⁴⁸ This immediately prompts the question: why are they introduced? What purpose do they serve? A common answer to this question is that they, especially Otherness, allow us to answer the problem of Not-Being. This is certainly one reason, but this cannot be the only reason. Sameness and Otherness must also reveal something about the problem of Being. Indeed, at 250e-251a, when the prospect of the joint illumination of Being and Not-Being is expressed by the Stranger, we are not only in aporia concerning Not-Being, but also concerning Being. Let us remind ourselves briefly of the problem about Being which emerges at 251a. Departing from the Eleatic view about composition, the Stranger has argued that Being is a whole over and above its parts, Kinêsis and Stasis, as opposed to the mere sum of them. From this, it follows that Being neither rests nor changes. How is this possible?²⁴⁹ What explains such a

248. Admittedly, it is only at 254d4-5 that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are referred to as 'great kinds' (*megista genê*), but as we have seen in Chapter I and II, they are introduced as early as the Gigantomachia passage.

249. Actually, at 250d4, Theaetetus' first reaction is to say that 'this is utterly impossible'. The claim that Being neither rests nor changes, however, is never contested in the rest of the dialogue. This thus allows

result? This is the problem about Being that the introduction of Sameness and Otherness will contribute to answering. In this chapter, I shall argue that Sameness and Otherness are introduced in order to support this new view about composition; they are the elements that make this kind of composition possible. As we shall see, Sameness and Otherness are necessary but not sufficient conditions for composition. They are necessary because, on the view of composition just mentioned, all kinds involved in a part-whole relation are the same as themselves and different from the other kinds with which they combine to form a whole of parts; they are, however, not sufficient because not every kind which is the same as itself and different from other kinds forms a whole of parts with those other kinds with which it combines.

This claim takes us from the Late Learners passage, which starts at 251a, to the end of the argument for the establishment of Sameness and Otherness as the fourth and fifth great kinds at 256c. Through the course of this chapter, we shall consider a number of passages, many of which have been highly disputed in the literature. The amount of secondary literature available is, thus, considerable. Here, I must be clear that my aim is not to engage with and to respond to all the available readings and issues raised by these passages, but rather to use them to pursue the line of interpretation already developed in the previous chapters. In particular, the reading I shall defend in this chapter relies on the following three findings reached of the preceding chapters: (i) that there is an essential relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis (Chapter II); (ii) that the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis is a part-whole relation (Chapter III); (iii) that this part-whole relation is of a particular sort, namely that the whole is not identical to its parts but something over and above the parts (Chapter III). Starting from these three crucial premisses, it is only natural that some parts of the secondary literature will not be addressed here. In particular, I shall dedicate little space to interpretations which have mainly addressed these passages from the point of view of Plato's contribution to philosophy of language; these readings are addressed to the problems related to predication and the different uses of the verb to 'be'. This does not mean, however, they are incompatible with the interpretation I shall defend here, and I shall simply keep clear of these issues.

One of the major aims of this chapter is to reconsider the communion of kinds. The communion of kinds is the claim, defended by the Stranger, that some kinds have the

us to ask how this is possible.

capacity to combine with one another, whereas some do not. What is distinctive about the reading I shall defend here is that it understands the communion of kinds not as a simple case of participation, as it is commonly read, but as a case of composition. What I mean by the composition relation is the relation that unites a part with its whole or a whole with its parts.²⁵⁰ In other words, there is communion between two kinds, A and B, when either A is a part of the whole B, or when A is a whole of which B is a part. Note that my argument does not rely on the use of the word *koinônein* itself. Actually, we have already encountered the verb *koinônein* in Chapter I, when the Friends of the Forms explain that we ‘have communion’ (*koinônein*) with becoming by the body through sensation and with real being by the soul through reasoning.²⁵¹ By claiming that communion amounts to a composition relation, I am not thereby implying that each time that the words *koinônein* and *koinônia* are used in the dialogue, they refer to a composition relation. My claim is restricted to the communion of kinds, and the example of the relation Being, Kinêsis and Stasis that the Stranger develops. Although this in no way implies that the communion of kinds is restricted to these three kinds, it nevertheless does imply that it belongs at least to these three. Now, as we have just recalled, Being is related in a specific way to Kinêsis and Stasis, namely as a whole to its parts. Hence, we have the following alternative: either the communion of kinds is just that, namely the composition relation among the three kinds, or the communion of kinds refers to another, distinct, relation among the three kinds.

In what follows, I shall defend the first option. As we shall see, this interpretation has two main strengths. First, it solves many of the problems that are generated by the second option. In particular, it provides a straightforward explanation for one of the claims that Plato makes several times in the *Sophist*, but which has most puzzled critics, namely: the claim that Kinêsis does not combine with Stasis. Second, seen in the light of the composition relation, the role of Sameness and Otherness takes an altogether different turn. Indeed, as we have already seen in Chapter III, it is a central question in mereology, and a question which is still disputed today, whether composition is an identity relation or not. As we have seen, Plato rejects the view that composition is an identity relation. It is thus all the more striking that he nonetheless needs to introduce Sameness and Otherness as the fourth and fifth kinds. In this respect, there is a passage in the *Parmenides*, which is worth

250. The relation that unites the different parts of a whole does not count as a composition relation. This is important to bear in mind when it comes to the claim that Kinêsis and Stasis do not combine.

251. *Soph.* 248a10-13.

mentioning. The passage is at 146b2-5:

Πᾶν που πρὸς 146b2

ἅπαν ὧδε ἔχει, ἢ ταυτόν ἐστὶν ἢ ἕτερον· ἢ ἐὰν μὴ ταυτόν

ἢ μὴδ' ἕτερον, μέρος ἂν εἴη τούτου πρὸς ὃ οὕτως ἔχει, ἢ ὡς

πρὸς μέρος ὅλον ἂν εἴη. 146b5

Everything is towards everything as follows: it is either the same or other, and if it is neither the same nor other, it is either a part of what it is so related or as a whole to a part.

There are several things to take away from this passage. First, the part-whole relation is here regarded as a fundamental relation. This can be seen from the fact that the passage is about the relation of everything, or the totality of things (*pan*), to everything (*pros hapan*), and that what it is compared to is a relation as basic as the sameness-otherness relation. Second, and most importantly, it looks here as if the sameness-otherness relation and the part-whole relation are mutually exclusive. The passage seems to exclude the possibility that things might be related to each other in both ways, that is, both as a parts to wholes — or as wholes to parts — and as same or other. There are, thus, four basic relations that something *a* can have with another thing *b*, and these four basic relations exclude one another. This immediately raises a question. Having rejected the view that composition is identity, it seems reasonable to deny that if *a* is the same as *b*, then *a* can be a part of *b* or a whole of which *b* is a part. But what about the opposite case, where *a* is other than *b*? There does not seem to be any straightforward reason to say that if *a* is other than *b*, then *a* cannot be a part of *b* or a whole of which *b* is a part. As we shall see, this is precisely one of the outcomes of the passages of the *Sophist* we are going to examine here, namely, that they clarify how the part-whole relation stands towards the sameness-otherness relation. It will gradually emerge that Plato's view in the *Sophist* is that the part-whole relation is distinct from, and cannot be reduced to, the sameness-otherness relation, but that it nonetheless involves some sameness-otherness relation between the parts and the whole.

This chapter consists of two main sections. In the first section, we shall see how a new problem about composition emerges, and how Plato addresses it. We will be dealing here with passages that precede the proper introduction of Sameness and Otherness as the fourth and fifth kinds. In this part, I shall show how Plato gradually emphasises the necessity that kinds be related in a certain way in order for composition to be possible. In the second section, we shall turn to the arguments for the establishment of Sameness and Otherness. The main task will consist in showing that these arguments have as their

starting point the claim that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis form a whole of parts, and that it is from the composition relation among the three that they are derived.

4.1. A new problem of composition and its solution

The aim of this section is to understand what motivates the introduction of Sameness and Otherness as the fourth and fifth great kinds. In what follows, I shall argue that the introduction of the last two remaining kinds is motivated by a new problem of composition which emerges from the Stranger's claim that Being is a unity over and above its parts, Kinêsis and Stasis. We shall see that this problem makes clear that it is not enough to claim that a whole is a unity over and above its parts, as opposed to the mere sum of its parts, but that for this view to hold, one needs to recognise that the composition relation involves another type of relation between the parts and the whole.

4.1.1. The Late Learners and the new 'one and many' problem

The Late Learners passage is the passage that starts at 251a5. As we have seen in Chapter III, at this point in the dialogue the Stranger has arrived at the claim that Being is as mysterious as Not-Being, but that there is hope that if the one appears more clearly to us, so will the other. The passage that immediately follows is puzzling. Without further introduction, the Stranger raises the following question: How can one explain that we call one and the same thing by many names?²⁵² This problem apparently arises because some people, the so-called Late Learners, reject the common use of calling the same thing by many names — for instance, a man is said to be good, tall and so on — and declare instead that a man is not to be called by any other name than 'man', and good by 'good'. Several interpretations have been given to explain what their problem consists in.²⁵³ In what follows, I shall follow Harte once again, and argue with her that what underlies the Late Learners' objection about naming is a problem about composition.²⁵⁴

252. *Soph.* 251a5-6: Λέγωμεν δὴ καθ' ὄντινά ποτε τρόπον πολλοῖς ὀνόμασι ταῦτὸν τοῦτο ἐκάστοτε προσαγορεύομεν.

253. For an overview of the different interpretations, see Crivelli (2012), pp. 105-108.

254. Harte (2002), pp. 139-144. Harte, however, does not focus on the problem itself, but quickly moves to the first part of the Stranger's answer that follows, that is, the argument for the claim that some kinds have the capacity to combine with one another whereas some do not.

When pressed by the Stranger, the rationale that the Late Learners give for their attitude is that it is impossible for the many to be one and for the one to be many.²⁵⁵ As Harte immediately observes, the problem is a familiar one; it is a problem that is usually associated with the Eleatics, and which we have encountered in Chapter III.²⁵⁶ For the record, the Eleatics hold the view that parts pluralise, that is, that what has parts is not only one, in virtue of being the whole that it is, but also many, in virtue of having many parts, hence the puzzle that the same thing is both one and many. As we have seen in the previous chapter, this is due to the Eleatics' view that composition is identity. As a result, it is not simply that the whole 'has' many parts, but to them, the whole 'is' its many parts, hence the consequence that the same thing is both one and many. However, we know that at 250a-251a, the Stranger precisely breaks with the Eleatics' view by denying that the whole is the mere sum of its parts, and by asserting instead that the whole is a thing over and above its parts. How is it, then, that this one-and-many problem comes again through the back door?²⁵⁷

Perhaps a more fruitful way of setting out the issue is to ask: What, in what has been established by the Stranger at 250a-251a concerning the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, is liable to the one-and-many problem?²⁵⁸ The Stranger, as we have seen, denies that Being is the same as either Kinêsis or Stasis, or that Being is the same as Kinêsis and Stasis taken together, but he has asserted instead that Being is a third kind on top of the other two.²⁵⁹ He has spent quite a lot of energy showing that none of the three kinds is reducible to the other, and that they must be counted as three in total. Consequently, the problem cannot come from there. But, at the same time, while stressing the separation between the three kinds, and especially, the separation of Being from Kinêsis and Stasis, the Stranger has also underlined the strong connection among them. In particular, despite the fact that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are three distinct kinds, it is also the case that Kinêsis and Stasis 'are', they have being. Furthermore, as we have seen,

255. *Soph.* 251b6-8: εὐθὺς γὰρ ἀντιλαβέσθαι [...] ἀδύνατον τὰ τε πολλὰ ἓν καὶ τὸ ἓν πολλὰ εἶναι [...].

256. Harte (2002), p. 141.

257. About the transition between the previous passage and the Late Learners' passage, Rowe's translation is here very helpful, for he translates ταὐτὸν τοῦτο by 'this very same thing', which, he says, is precisely "'what is" (or being), which is still the main topic'. Rowe (2015), n. 84 p. 150.

258. Note that from this point, my interpretation of the Late Learners departs from Harte's; for Harte does not think that the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis is the relation of a whole that stands over and above its parts.

259. *Soph.* 250c1-4.

Kinêsis and Stasis are part of the definition of Being. This sounds like a more promising start for the Late Learners' one-and-many problem. Indeed, despite each of the three kinds being distinct from the others, they nevertheless form a single nature. First, Kinêsis is not only 'kinêsis' but also 'is', in virtue of being a part of Being, and likewise, Stasis is not only 'stasis' but also 'is'.²⁶⁰ Second, we have seen in Chapter II that Kinêsis and Stasis are part of the *logos* of Being, in the sense that each being is either an *akineton* or a *kinoumenon*. Seen in that way, this now sounds very similar to the Late Learners' problem: talking about Being, we are talking about a single nature which is made of many.²⁶¹

On Plato's view about composition, then, the one-and-many problem takes a new form, which is different from that which we encountered in relation to the Eleatics. It is no longer the case that the one-many problem arises because one tries to identify a unity with a multiplicity, but because one positively asserts that there are such things as manyfold natures, that is, things which are one but consist of many. On this point, observe that in the Late Learners passage, the Stranger stresses that the problem is about attributing many names to something which is one.²⁶² This means that their motive for rejecting that a man is called by any name other than 'man' is not that they take 'a man is good' to entail that 'man' is identical to 'good'. This reading would imply that the view that composition is identity is still on the table, but I have just argued that it is not.²⁶³ Rather, their problem is that by saying that 'a man is good', one is attributing to the same thing several natures: the nature of man and that of the nature of good. Hence 'man' is not just one, but also many. This interpretation of the Late Learners' problem actually meets the essential predication interpretation.²⁶⁴ According to this interpretation, the Late Learners believe that a name

260. Kinêsis and Stasis are said 'to be' as early as 250a11-12.

261. There is a question, in the literature, as to whether the Late Learners would only accept utterances of the form 'man man', in which case they could not even form statements, or whether they would also accept formulations like 'a man is a man', that is, with the copula. As critics have rightly observed, the Greek is not very helpful on this point, for it is hard to guess whether at 251b8-c2 the verb *einai* is voluntarily avoided or whether it is simply omitted, as is allowed in Greek. Given that, in the *Sophist*, Plato has identified Being as a distinct, further kind, then it is likely that sentences like 'a man is a man' involves two Forms, not just one. However, this is another question whether the Late Learners themselves have realised that, which I shall keep clear of. For a defence of the view that the Late Learners do accept statements, see Brown (2008) p. 442 ff. For a defence of the opposite view, see Moravcsik (1962), pp. 58-59.

262. *Soph.* 251b2.

263. On the basis of the analysis of the problem in terms of composition, I am thus denying that the Late Learners' problem is to have confused identity with predication.

264. See Crivelli (2012), pp. 107-108. The 'essentialist predication' interpretation is the interpretation that Crivelli himself supports.

reflects the things' own nature. As a result, if something is called 'man', it is because its nature is that of a man. On this view, a problem arises each time one and the same thing is called by many names, because this amounts to attributing more than one nature to one and the same thing.

Consequently, the Late Learners' problem is also a problem about composition, but a different one, a problem that arises from the claim that a whole is a unity over and above its parts. Their reaction to this problem is radical: they simply forbid that 'man' is called by any other name than 'man'. In other words, they bypass the problem by denying that there is anything like a composite object. Of course, as the Stranger is quick to point out, their position raises even more problematic consequences. In response to them, the Stranger undertakes to show not only that there are composite objects, but also that this view of composition is not problematic. Let us now turn to that response.

4.1.2. The argument for the claim that composition is restricted

The next passage is the first of a series of arguments which take us up to the end of 259. It is here that the Stranger first introduces the 'communion of kinds', that is, the claim that some kinds combine with one another whereas some do not. This conclusion is reached after having examined three options: (i) nothing has the power to combine with anything; (ii) everything is capable of combining with everything; (iii) some things have the capacity to combine with other things whereas some do not. Although the outcome of the argument is clear — there is no doubt that the Stranger adopts (iii) — it is not clear how, and how successfully, this conclusion is reached. In particular, many critics have found the argument against (ii) problematic.²⁶⁵ In what follows, I shall argue that this passage is no longer problematic as soon as one understands that the three options on the table are three options dealing with composition, thereby confirming our analysis of the Late Learners' problem as a problem about composition.²⁶⁶ In this way, I am once more following Harte's reading.²⁶⁷ According to Harte, (i) corresponds to the denial of composition; (ii) to the view that composition is unrestricted, that is, to the view that given any two things, there exists a

265. See for instance Crivelli (2012), p. 115.

266. Note that Moravcsik (1992) has anticipated this solution. P. 180, he writes: 'If we interpret the two kinds blending as the claim that the Forms Motion and Rest partake of each other, then the conclusion is a non sequitur. But if we interpret it mereologically then the conclusion follows.'

267. Harte (2002), p. 144.

composite of those things; (iii) to the view that composition is restricted, that is, that only some things are related to one another as wholes and parts.²⁶⁸ Harte does not, however, explain how the argument works. I shall consider this presently.

The crux of the passage is to understand that behind (i)-(iii) there are actually the three views about composition encountered earlier, namely: what leads to (i) is the denial of composition; what leads to (ii) is the view that composition is identity, that is, the view that the whole is the mere sum of its parts; and finally, what leads to (iii) is the view that the whole is a unity over and above its parts, that is, the view that denies that composition is identity. With this in mind, let us start with (i). (i) corresponds to the second option about composition in the Hot and Cold passage, and to the first option at 250a-251a. In both cases, the Stranger wants to know what is meant by Being. Since we are considering the view that there is no such thing as composition, only two options remain: either Being is one and the same thing as the Hot/Cold—Kinêsis/Stasis, or it is something distinct and unrelated. As is clear from these passages, the view that Being is the same as the Hot/Cold—Kinêsis/Stasis is rejected: the supporters of the Hot and the Cold reject it because it is incompatible with dualism; later, the Stranger and Theaetetus reject it because Kinêsis and Stasis are opposites. Now, what if the second solution were chosen, namely, what if Being and the Hot/Cold or Kinêsis/Stasis were not the same, but distinct? Then we would have precisely what is described in the first hypothesis of the communion of kinds, namely: nothing would have a share in Being, for, again, there is no composite object, everything is either the same or is utterly distinct and unrelated.²⁶⁹ The Stranger vigorously attacks the absurd consequences of this view, and points out that none of the thinkers previously mentioned, be they the Giants, the Friends of the Forms or even the thinkers examined at 242, could endorse it.

Turning to (ii), let us see how this is related to the view that composition is identity, and how this helps to understand this passage. In brief, the argument runs as follows:

P1: everything has the capacity (*dunamis*) to combine with everything

P2: if (P1), it follows that Kinêsis rests and Stasis changes

P3: it is impossible for Kinêsis to rest and for Stasis to change

C1: P1 is false.

268. I shall come back to what options (i)-(iii) mean in what follows.

269. See *Soph.* 251e9.

The argument raises two problems: a major one, which has troubled most critics, and a second one which has been noticed by some scholars only.²⁷⁰ The major problem concerns (P3): there seems to be at least one respect in which Kinêsis does rest, namely, *qua* being an intelligible entity. Hence, (P3) should be qualified. But if (P3) does not hold, then (C1) does not follow. The second problem is about the move from (P1) to (P2). As it is articulated, (P1) is a modal claim: it establishes the *capacity (dunamis)* of everything to combine with everything. From (P1), the Stranger derives (P2), namely: if everything has the capacity to combine with everything, then it follows that Kinêsis and Stasis combine with one another, and hence, it follows that Kinêsis rests and Stasis changes. However, this move is not obvious, for it does not directly follow from the claim that everything *can* combine with everything that everything actually *does* combine with everything. As a result, it seems that the Stranger could perfectly well hold that, on the one hand, everything has the capacity to combine with everything, including Kinêsis and Stasis, and on the other hand, maintain that despite Kinêsis and Stasis having this capacity, they are, nevertheless, among the things that do not exercise this capacity in relation to one another and do not combine. On this reading, (P2) and the rest of the argument do not necessarily follow from (P1). From the text however, it is clear that the Stranger does not consider this possibility, and that he assumes that anything having the capacity to combine also does combine.

The interpretation I shall now suggest offers a solution to both problems. Let us first rephrase (P1) in the following way, so that it captures the relation of composition: that everything has the power to combine with everything means that everything can be related to everything as a part to a whole or as a whole to a part. In other words, (P1) amounts to the view that composition is unrestricted, that is, it amounts to the view that anything can be related to anything as a part to a whole or as a whole to a part. That composition is unrestricted is linked to the view that composition is identity in the following way: if composition is identity, then composition is unrestricted.²⁷¹ Let us explain that. Within the context of the dialogue, the view that composition is identity corresponds to the third option examined both in the Hot and Cold passage and at 250a-251a. It is introduced along with the question whether Being is the same as the couple Hot/Cold or as the couple Kinêsis/Stasis. The view that composition is identity has two consequences. First, it entails

270. For the second problem, see Harte (2002), n. 42. p. 143.

271. See Harte (2002), p. 138 ff.

that composition is ontologically innocent, that is, that the whole is nothing over and above its parts but is entirely reducible to them. Consequently, regardless of whether composition takes place between some *x*s or not, it does not affect the number of existing entities in the world, for it makes no difference whether there exists a fusion of those *x*s or not, there will only be *x*s, and not *x*s+the whole. But this view has a second consequence, which directly follows from the first one. If composition is identity, then there can be a composite object formed from anything, for the commitment to the whole involves no further commitment than the already accepted commitment to the existence of the parts.²⁷² This is a consequence that is well-known in contemporary mereology. To quote Cotnoir, for instance: ‘whenever there are some things, there exist a fusion of them’. Even the most improbable fusion, like a trout-turkey, exists, for under the view that composition is identity, nothing further than a commitment to the existence of the parts is needed to grant the existence of a whole composed of them. This is because the whole is nothing over and above the parts, but is just the parts.²⁷³ To put it differently, under the view that composition is identity, if *x* and *y* exist, it is redundant to say that there exists a fusion of *x* and *y*.²⁷⁴

Consequently, on the view that composition is identity, once it is granted that there are such things as Kinêsis and Stasis, then it follows that there exists a whole whose parts are Kinêsis and Stasis, for this does not require any further commitment than the initial commitment to the existence of Kinêsis and Stasis. As a result, by acknowledging that Kinêsis and Stasis are, we thereby commit ourselves to there being a whole formed of Kinêsis and Stasis. We thus have here the answer to the second problem we mentioned earlier, namely: on the view that composition is identity, the move from ‘everything has the capacity to combine’ to ‘everything does actually combine’ is licensed, and hence the move from ‘Kinêsis and Stasis can combine with everything’ to ‘necessarily Kinêsis and Stasis combine with one another’ is licensed. Now, we must consider why it is not possible that Kinêsis and Stasis combine with one another. The reason is the same as the one given at 250c4-5, discussed in Chapter III. Here the Stranger denies that Being is a whole that is identical to its parts, Kinêsis and Stasis, because there cannot be a whole composed of

272. See also Lewis (1986), p. 34: ‘when we believe in the parts it is no extra burden to believe in the whole’.

273. The trout-turkey is one of Harte's (2002) favourite examples.

274. Cotnoir, in Cotnoir&Baxter (2014), p. 7: ‘whenever there are some things, there is a whole composed of them’.

opposites, like Kinêsis and Stasis. Indeed, consider what would happen, under the view that composition is identity, if there were a whole that was the same as its parts, Kinêsis and Stasis. Since they are opposites, nothing can be the same as both Kinêsis and Stasis, it is either the one or the other. In other words, such a whole would be either the same as Kinêsis or the same as Stasis, but it could not be the sum of the two. In one case, where Being is the same as Kinêsis, it would thus entail that Kinêsis is related to Stasis as a whole to its parts, and in the other case, where Being is the same as Stasis, it would entail that Stasis is related to Kinêsis as a whole to its parts. But remember that the whole is identical to its parts. As a result, if Kinêsis was the whole and Stasis a part of it, it would entail that Kinêsis is the same as Stasis, and thus that Kinêsis rests, and in the other case, it would entail that Stasis is the same as Kinêsis, and hence changes. Neither of these consequences is acceptable, and the hypothesis is dismissed. We thereby have our solution to the first problem.

The last two options remain to be considered: composition is not identity and composition is restricted. We have an example of two kinds which are not related as parts and whole, namely Kinêsis and Stasis. But we also have examples of kinds which are so related: Being is related to Kinêsis and Stasis as a whole to its parts.

4.1.3. Vowel-kinds and *dunamis koinônias*

As we have just seen, the first step in the Stranger's reply to the Late Learners consists in reasserting that there is composition, but with the following qualifier: composition is restricted, that is, only certain kinds are related as a whole to a part, or as a part to a whole. This conclusion goes with the reassertion of the view about composition defended by the Stranger since the beginning, that is, the view that the whole is a unity over and above its parts, as opposed to the view that composition is identity. Now, as such, this is not enough to answer the Late Learners' point, and we still need to see how one and the same thing can consist of many. The Stranger then takes a further step, and introduces the claim that just like in the case of letters, there are among kinds some vowel-kinds which run through everything and make it possible for the other kinds to combine — this is the famous vowel analogy. Viewed from the point of view of composition, these vowel-kinds make it possible that some kinds are related to others as parts to a whole or as a whole to its

parts.²⁷⁵ Let us start by quoting the passage (*Soph.* 253a3-6):

{ΞΕ.} Τὰ δέ γε φωνήεντα διαφερόντως τῶν ἄλλων οἶον 253a3

δεσμὸς διὰ πάντων κεχώρηκεν, ὥστε ἄνευ τινὸς αὐτῶν

ἀδύνατον ἀρμόττειν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἕτερον ἐτέρῳ. 253a6

STR: But the vowels differ from the other <letters> in that <it is> like a bond <that> they circulate through all <letters>, such that without one of them it is impossible for the other <letters> to fit together with one another.

The interpretation of this passage is, again, disputed. The vowel analogy raises, at least, three issues. The first problem is to identify which of the great kinds plays the role of vowels, for Plato never spells it out. Most critics have agreed that the vowels are to be found among the kinds Being, Sameness and Otherness, but it remains to be established which of them are vowels. The second issue is to understand how vowels make it possible for other letters to combine. As Harte summarises, there are two main ways to understand their role: either vowels make it possible for other letters to combine because they are what actually does the combining, or they are not what does the combining but what makes it possible for the combining to take place.²⁷⁶ On the first view, which has been chiefly defended by Moravcsik, vowels, he says, are like the cement between bricks. In the case of bricks, that which accounts for their communion is actually the cement, for bricks, by themselves, do not combine, they are just things which can be bound together, provided the addition of a third thing which does the binding.²⁷⁷ On the second view, vowels play a role comparable to that of melting chocolate to mix it with nuts. If you wish to mix chocolate with nuts so as to have a piece of chocolate with nuts inside, you will have to melt the chocolate so that they can combine. In this example, the melting of the chocolate is what creates the conditions such that the chocolate can be mixed with the nuts, but ‘melting’ is not something added between the nuts and the chocolate. Third, the difficulty in understanding the sense in which vowels make communion possible is increased by the variation in the descriptions of their role throughout the dialogue. In some places, like in the passage just quoted, vowels are described as factors of union, that is, as that which

275. Admittedly, the expression ‘vowel kind’, which is commonly used in the literature, is not to be found anywhere in the dialogue. I shall nonetheless use it in this chapter.

276. Harte (2002), pp. 151-155. Trevaskis (1966), p. 112 also distinguishes between two ways vowels act like a bond: either vowels are centrally positioned links between consonants, or they are a binding agents. It seems, however, that Trevaskis’ point is mainly concerned with the idea that vowels need not necessarily be ‘in between’.

277. Moravcsik (1962), pp. 48-55; (1992), p. 207. See also Gómez-Lobo (1977), p. 45.

makes combination possible, but in other places, like at 253b8-c3, they are also described as causes of division (*tês diaireseôs aitia*). Finally, there are other passages, like at 254b7-c1 where they are just described as kinds which combine with all other kinds.

Here, I must confess that I have not managed to come to an entirely satisfying reconstruction of the vowel analogy. Of the three issues mentioned above, I take the second issue to be the most important one. Just like Harte, I think that vowel-kinds are not what does the combining, but what makes the combining possible, and I shall argue for this in what follows. From this, it follows that I take Sameness and Otherness to be the proper vowel-kinds, but not Being.²⁷⁸ Being, as we have seen, is the whole whose parts are Kinêsis and Stasis. As a result, if Being were to be counted as a vowel-kind, Being would be what makes composition possible precisely by being a case of composition. This does not seem likely. More generally, once one admits that Being is the whole that encompasses Kinêsis and Stasis as its parts, it can only be in a very loose sense that Being, Sameness and Otherness are all vowel-kinds. There are two further reasons for rejecting the claim that Being is a vowel-kind. Textually, the vowel analogy is not linked to the introduction of Being, whereas it just precedes the introduction of Sameness and Otherness. Furthermore, one of the motivations for counting Being as a vowel-kind is that both Being and Otherness are said to run through all kinds (*dia pantôn*). If, however, vowel-kinds are necessary conditions for composition, as I shall argue, then running through everything is not a sufficient criterion for being a vowel-kind.

Let me now give some reasons to think that Sameness and Otherness are good candidates for the role of vowel-kinds; in what follows I will spell out the sense in which Sameness and Otherness make composition possible. Like other critics, I take it that the joint work of Sameness and Otherness is to make kinds distinct from one another.²⁷⁹ Indeed, that a kind *x* is distinct from another kind *y* can be paraphrased as ‘the kind *x* is the same as itself and different from *y*’. Now, in the case of composition, the claim that a certain kind is distinct from another is not at all trivial. In fact, it is the divided line between the two views about composition we are now familiar with, namely the view that composition is identity and its denial. On the view that composition is identity, the whole is

278. On this point, my interpretation departs from that of Harte. For her, Being is also one of the vowel-kinds because, she says, the kind Change, or any other kind, must first ‘be’ if it is to combine with other kinds. Harte (2002), p. 154.

279. See again Harte (2002), p. 154, but also Moravcsik (1992), pp. 182-183.

not distinct from the parts but is identical to them; on the view that the whole is a unity over and above the parts, however, the whole is by necessity distinct from its parts. Thus, on the latter view, the possibility of composition among some kinds, depends on the distinctness of the kinds in question, that is, it depends on each one being the same as itself and different from the others. Understood in this way, Sameness and Otherness are necessary conditions for composition. They are not, of course, sufficient conditions, for not all kinds that are distinct from one another are related as parts and whole. But on this view about composition, all kinds that are related as parts and wholes are distinct from one another. In this respect, I disagree with Harte that the vowel analogy is a ‘red herring’ and that it has ‘little to offer by way of elaboration of the view of composition at work’.²⁸⁰ On the contrary, the vowel analogy introduces the important claim that composition is not identity but involves a sameness-otherness relation.

Evidence for this reading can be found in the passage at 253d-e, which, as I shall defend shortly, provides a description of the part-whole relation as involving a single kind spread over many, and many kinds gathered into one, all of them remaining distinct.²⁸¹ The problem with my reading, however, is that it fails to explain what the Stranger is referring to at 253c2-3, when he says that some kinds are what make other kinds capable of combining, while other kinds are the causes of division. Let us quote this passage:

{ΞΕ.} [...] καὶ δὴ καὶ διὰ πάντων εἰ συνέχοντ' ἅττ' αὖτ' 253c1

ἐστίν, ὥστε συμμειγνυσθαι δυνατὰ εἶναι, καὶ πάλιν ἐν ταῖς
διαίρεσεσιν, εἰ δι' ὅλων ἕτερα τῆς διαίρεσεως αἴτια; 253c3

STR: [...] and especially, whether there are some that hold them together, running through all of them in such a way as to make them capable of mixing and conversely, among the divisions, whether there are others running through the wholes, that are the causes of division?²⁸²

On my reading, it is most reasonable to assume that the kinds which are the causes of division are the same as the kinds which are responsible for making other kinds combine. Indeed, it fits nicely with the task I have attributed to Sameness and Otherness, namely to be what makes it possible that kinds remain distinct while combining. I would thus be happy to interpret 253c2-3 as simply spelling out what it is that makes it possible for kinds to combine. Unfortunately, the sentence at 253c2-3 cannot be construed in this way. It is

280. Harte (2002), p. 154.

281. I analyse this passage in the next sub-section, at 4.1.4.

282. Rowe (2015), modified.

clear from the Greek that the Stranger takes the kinds which make communion possible to be different from those which are the causes of divisions.²⁸³ By contrast, those who take Being to be one of the vowel-kinds do not have this problem: to them, the first half of the sentence refers to Being while the second half refers to Sameness and Otherness.²⁸⁴ In the light of these interpretive issues, the easiest and the best solution for me is simply to ignore 253c2-3, and to take ‘allowing other kinds to combine’ as the only proper definition of vowel-kinds. I shall thus have nothing to say about 253c2-3. In the next paragraphs, I shall concentrate on the claim that vowel-kinds are introduced as necessary conditions for composition. I shall reserve the analysis of 253d-e for the next sub-section.

That vowel-kinds are necessary conditions for composition echoes the way the communion of kinds itself is spelled out. Recall the previous passage for the claim that composition is restricted. There, the three options are formulated as ‘being *capable* of combining’: the first option is whether things are incapable (*adunata metalambanein*) of combining with anything; the second option is whether all things should be regarded as capable of combining with one another (*dunata epikoinônein allélois*). As for the third option, the one that the Stranger argues for, the previous formula is simply omitted and should be supplied: ‘some things should be regarded as capable of combining with one another whereas other things should not be regarded as capable of combining with one another’. The communion of kinds is, thus, a ‘*dunamis* to combine’ with one another. Here, it is important to note that it is the kinds themselves that are described as having such a *dunamis*. This supports the claim that vowel-kinds are what makes communion possible as opposed to what does the communion: kinds are not like bricks, they have in themselves the capacity to combine with one thing with another. But this capacity needs some conditions to be fulfilled to be activated.

Let us now take a closer look at what we have decided are the two proper formulations of what it is to be a vowel-kind:

283. It is particularly the *hetera* at 253c3 which is problematic for me.

284. Note however that they do not all choose this solution. Harte, for instance, denies that being a cause of division is a description of vowel-kinds. See Harte (2002), p. 152.

CHAPTER IV: The communion of kinds reconsidered: Sameness and Otherness as necessary conditions for composition

[...] οἷον 253a3

δεσμὸς διὰ πάντων κεχώρηκεν, ὥστε ἄνευ τινὸς αὐτῶν

ἀδύνατον ἀρμόττειν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἕτερον ἐτέρῳ. 253a6

[...] <it is> like a bond <that> they circulate through all <letters>, such that without one of them it is impossible for the other <letters> to fit together with one another.

[...] διὰ πάντων εἰ συνέχοντ' ἅττ' αὐτ' 253c1

ἔστιν, ὥστε συμμείγνυσθαι δυνατὰ εἶναι [...]

[...] there are some that establish a connection between them all so as to make them capable of mixing [...] ²⁸⁵

Here, it is crucial to clarify what is meant by the word *desmos* in the first sentence and the corresponding verb *sunechein* in the second sentence. In itself, *desmos* is not that helpful in explaining how the vowel-kinds act on the other kinds. Indeed, there are many different ways something can bind or tie things together, but since the word is only used once in the dialogue, we cannot compare with other passages to see in what sense it is used elsewhere. *Sunechein*, by contrast, is used several times in the dialogue. One passage which is particularly interesting for us is 261e1, for it starts with a direct reference to the vowel analogy. The Stranger declares that they are now going to inquire about names just like they had previously inquired about letters and kinds.²⁸⁶ Once again the Stranger starts by raising the question we encountered earlier: whether, talking about names, all combine with one another or none of them does, or whether some do whereas others do not. Unsurprisingly, it appears that the latter answer is the one Theaetetus and the Stranger opt for. Immediately after that, *sunechein* is used to characterise names that do not fit together (*sunarmodzein*, *harmodzein*). The reason why these words do not fit together is because the sequence (*sunecheia*) they form does not signify (*sêmeinein*) anything. As it becomes clear in the next lines, what is thereby meant is that it is not enough to merely juxtapose words, to establish a continuous chain of words, without any order or without an idea of what goes with what. Such sequence of words does not make any sense, and in those cases, one cannot say that those words ‘fit together’. But words which fit together do nevertheless form a sequence. In other words, it is a necessary condition for words to fit together that they form a sequence, but it is not a sufficient one.

Coming back to the case of the communion of kinds, if ‘binding’ means something

285. I here follow Diès’ construction of the sentence.

286. *Soph.* 261d1-3.

like juxtaposing or making chains of kinds as one can make chains of words, we can understand how Sameness and Otherness ‘bind’ or ‘establish a connection’ between the other kinds. For instance, by establishing that Being is different from Kinêsis, one thereby establishes a connection between them; we know, at the very least, that Being and Kinêsis are related by their distinctness. This, as we have seen, is a necessary step for composition to happen, but again, it is not sufficient that two kinds are related in this way for them to stand in a composition relation. In this way, vowel-kinds are kinds that establish a connection between the other kinds, but they do not make them fit together, that is, they do not determine which kinds enter in a composition relation with one another.

4.1.4. An attempt at interpreting 253d-e

We have now seen that vowel-kinds are necessary but not sufficient for composition. Earlier, I claimed that only Sameness and Otherness are vowel-kinds in the *Sophist*, and that Being plays a different role. The main textual evidence for this is the passage at 253d-2. Let us now turn to it.

An intense debate surrounding the meaning of this passage has arisen in the critical literature. An influential interpretation, starting with Stenzel, reads this passage as a description of the dialectical method known as the method of collection and division.²⁸⁷ A competing view, defended by Gomez-Lobo, construes this passage as a description of the vowel and consonant kinds previously introduced.²⁸⁸ Here, I shall follow Gomez-Lobo and argue that the passage provides the description of vowel-kinds. Furthermore, I shall, again, following Gomez-Lobo, read the preceding lines at (253d1-3) as a prologue to the main paragraph, instead of reading it as the conclusion of the previous point. However, I shall depart from Gomez-Lobo on the following points. First, I shall argue that the role of vowel-kinds is described in the context of Forms that are related as parts and whole. Second, I shall show that the two vowel Forms referred to here are Sameness and Otherness, and not Being.

287. Stenzel (1961).

288. Gomez-Lobo (1977) as well as (1981).

{ΞΕ.} Τὸ κατὰ γένη διαιρεῖσθαι καὶ μήτε ταῦτὸν εἶδος 253d1
ἕτερον ἠγγήσασθαι μήτε ἕτερον ὄν ταῦτὸν μῶν οὐ τῆς διαλεκ-
τικῆς φήσομεν ἐπιστήμης εἶναι;

{ΘΕΑΙ.} Ναί, φήσομεν.

{ΞΕ.} Οὐκοῦν ὃ γε τοῦτο δυνατὸς δρᾶν (T1a) μίαν ιδέαν (b) διὰ 253d5
πολλῶν, (c) ἐνὸς ἐκάστου κειμένου χωρὶς, (d) πάντη διατεταμένην

(T) ἰκανῶς διαισθάνεται, (T2a) καὶ πολλὰς (b) ἐτέρας ἀλλήλων (c) ὑπὸ μιᾶς
ἔξωθεν περιεχομένης, (T3a) καὶ μίαν αὖ (b) δι' ὅλων πολλῶν (c) ἐν ἐνὶ

συνημμένην, (T4a) καὶ πολλὰς (b) χωρὶς (c) πάντη διωρισμένης· (E1) τοῦτο
δ'ἔστιν, (2) ἧ τε κοινωνεῖν ἕκαστα δύναται καὶ ὅπη μή, (3) διακρίνειν

κατὰ γένος ἐπίστασθαι. 253e1

STR: To divide by kinds and not to take the same Form for a different one nor a different Form for the same one, shall we not say that this is the dialectical science?

THT: Yes, that's what we shall say.

STR: The person who can do this is then surely well enough equipped to see when one single Form is spread all through many <Forms>, each of them standing separately, or when many Forms that are different from one another are embraced from the outside by one single <Form>; or again when one single <Form> is connected as one through many Forms, themselves wholes, or when many Forms are completely divided off and separate. This is all a matter of knowing how to determine, kind by kind, how things can or cannot combine.²⁸⁹

The passage consists of two parts: a shorter section (253d1-3), and a longer one (253d5-e2). There is a question as to how these two passages relate to one another. At first sight, it is far from obvious that they must be read together. For one thing, at 253d1-3 the emphasis is placed on not taking the 'same' Form for a 'different' Form and vice versa, whereas at 253d5-e2 the dominant vocabulary is that of the contrast between the one and the many. Consequently, some critics have read 253d1-3 as the conclusion of the preceding point, and hence as being independent from 253d5-e2, while others, like Gómez-Lobo, who has judiciously labelled these lines 'the prologue', have argued that 253d1-3 prepares for 253d5-e2.²⁹⁰ In what follows, I shall argue, in keeping with those who support the latter view, that 253d1-3 is a summary, formulated in terms of Sameness and Otherness, of the difficulty which is exposed at 253d5-e2 as a one-and-many problem. However, because I want to emphasise the continuity with the Late Learners' problem first, I shall postpone examination of the Prologue to the end of this section, and I shall start with the main part

289. Rowe (2015), modified.

290. Gómez-Lobo (1977), p. 29.

of the passage instead.

My main contention about 253d5-e2 is that this passage describes the relation between the whole and its parts, showing how the whole achieves a unity over its many parts, and conversely, how there emerges a unitary whole from the many parts. As I have just noted, and as critics have generally observed, the one-and-many vocabulary is omnipresent in these lines.²⁹¹ Now, we have seen the one-and-many vocabulary employed on two occasions: (1) in the debate with the Monists, about the unity of the whole (244e2-245d6), and (2) much later in the text, in the passage with the Late Learners (251a5-251c7). In both of these cases, as I have argued, there is a problem of composition. Here again, and in keeping with my overall argument, I shall show that the passage in question is also about composition.

To begin with, let us first examine the similarities between this passage and the passage at 250b7-b10, which we previously examined in Chapter III. To recall, I have argued that this is precisely the passage in which Being is described as a whole over and above its parts, Kinêsis and Stasis. The first similarity between these two passages is the use, at 253d7-8, of the expression ‘encompassed from the outside by one <Form>’ (ὕπο μιᾶς ἔξωθεν περιεχομένας). Here we recognise the verb *periechein* (‘to encompass’, ‘to embrace’), which we also spotted at 250b8, and which is employed in the same way in both passages. In this respect, it is interesting to compare the following lines:

καὶ πολλὰς ἑτέρας ἀλλήλων ὑπο μιᾶς 253d7

ἔξωθεν περιεχομένας

or when many Forms that are different from one another are embraced from the outside by one single <Form>

ὕπ' ἐκείνου τὴν τε στάσιν καὶ τὴν κίνησιν περιεχομένην 250b8

as if it [Being] encompassed Stasis and Kinêsis under it

Both passages refer to the encompassing of several Forms by a single one. The word ἔξωθεν (from the outside) is missing from the line at 250b8, but Being is described as being ‘outside of’ (ἐκτὸς) Kinêsis and Stasis at 250d2. In Chapter III, I explained that the encompassing vocabulary and the spatial metaphor that it conveys is typical of Plato’s treatment of the part-whole relation. The second similarity is the use of *koinônia* and

291. We can mention here the original interpretation of Dixsaut (2001), who argues that the passage is a description of multiplicity itself. Though stimulating, her interpretation fails to see the structure behind the description of the one-many tension, that is, the part-whole structure. Moreover, the problem of multiplicity itself finds no echo in the immediate context of the dialogue.

koinônein in the two passages. At 250b9, *koinônia* is used to describe the connection between Kinêsis and Stasis, which have just been described as the parts of Being, and Being.²⁹² Since then, we have also seen that the communion of kinds is indeed introduced in the context of composition. It is, thus, a further point in favour of the part-whole reading that *koinônein* is again used at 253e1, in a line that is supposed to summarise the description of the relation among Forms just described. This supports the claim that what has just been described is, indeed, a part-whole relation among Forms.

Also characteristic of the vocabulary Plato uses when addressing parts and whole is the phrase μία ιδέα. This is one of the phrases identified by Harte as being part of Plato's own language of wholeness, although the word 'whole' itself does not appear.²⁹³ She explains that it marks Plato's departure from the Eleatic view of composition. The Eleatics draw a distinction between the true unity of what is not a whole but is partless, that is, a mereological atom, and the problematic case of wholes which are both one and many. By contrast, this expression emphasises the unity of the whole over its many parts. At 253d5-9, the phrase is used three times, and each time, it emphasises the contrast between a single and unitary Form and a multiplicity: (a) μίαν ιδέαν is contrasted with διὰ πολλῶν; then (b) πολλὰς ἑτέρας ἀλλήλων with ὑπὸ μιᾶς ἔξωθεν περιεχομένας; and finally (c) μίαν...ἐν ἐνὶ συνημμένῃ with δι' ὄλων πολλῶν.

Let us now turn to the interpretation of the passage. As I read it, the main opposition of the passage is between Forms that are in a part-whole relation and Forms that are not —the latter being mereological atoms.²⁹⁴ The former group of Forms is the subject of T1-3, while the latter is dealt with in T4. The first group is divided between Forms that play the role of the whole which is over and above its parts and Forms that play the role of the parts. In T1-3, I take μία ιδέα to refer to one and the same Form, that is, the Form that

292. *Soph.* 250b9-10: συλλαβῶν καὶ ἀπιδῶν αὐτῶν πρὸς τὴν τῆς οὐσίας κοινωνίαν, οὕτως εἶναι προσεῖπας ἀμφοτέρω;

293. Harte (2002), pp. 131-132.

294. By contrast, most critics take the tuning point of the passage to be at (T3), where αὖ would be in opposition with the Form described at (T1)-(T2). They identify (T1) and (T2) as dealing with the Form responsible for communion — often Being — and associate instead (T3) and (T4) with the Form responsible for division, which they take to be Otherness. This reading is based on the comparison with 253c1-3, where the Stranger seems to introduce a distinction among vowel-kinds that are responsible for the communion of other kinds and vowel-kind that are responsible for their division. As I shall argue in the next section, I think that this distinction is misleading. For the time being, let us simply point that at (T3), the emphasis is not on the Form which goes through many wholes to cause divisions, but rather, on it remaining a unity (ἐν ἐνὶ συνημμένῃ) while running through many wholes.

is a whole of parts, understood as a unity over and above its parts. Thus, (T1a) = (T2c) = (T3a). Conversely, I take (T1b), (T2a) and (T3b) to refer to the many parts. The main oddity with the reading I am defending is that the only time the term *holon* is used in the passage, at (T3b), it refers, I take it, to parts of the whole, which may rightly seem counter-intuitive.²⁹⁵ However, as explained above, I take μία ιδέα to be Plato's proper term for wholes. By contrast, I take *holon* here to stand for the composite nature of the Forms involved in a part-whole relation. The general structure of the passage is, thus, as follows:

- T1: provides the general description of the part-whole relation
T2-T3: unfold the content of T1
—T2 starts from the parts and moves to the whole
—T3 starts from the whole and moves to the parts
T4: deals with mereological atoms

Within the context of the dialogue, the example that we have encountered is Being, so let us take Being as the example, though nothing in the text indicates that only Being is at issue.²⁹⁶ Starting with (T1), it is the description of the kind Being (μίαν ιδέαν), which, as a whole, is spread through Kinêsis and Stasis (διὰ πολλῶν).²⁹⁷ The whole has the same extension as its parts, and I take πάντη διατεταμένην to refer to this. But we have also seen that parts and whole are essentially related, such that Kinêsis and Stasis are essential parts of Being, and in turn, Kinêsis and Stasis only exist in the context of the whole that is Being. Thus, that Being is spread in every way may also be a reference to the essential inclusion between parts and whole. Nevertheless, despite this very intimate connection, each of the three Forms remains one and distinct (ἐνὸς ἐκάστου κειμένου χωρίς). This, as we have already seen several times, is what distinguishes Plato's view on composition from that of the Eleatics. On the Eleatics' view on composition, since composition amounts to an identity relation, the parts cannot be distinguished from the whole, for they are one and the same. Along these lines, 'he distinguishes sufficiently' (ικανῶς διαισθάνεται) almost sounds like an answer to the principle of identity of indiscernibles: since they can

295. Note that, as very often in Plato, the terms for 'parts' are not used in that passage, and *holon* appears just once. I have already addressed this feature of Plato's discussion of composition in Chapter III.

296. Actually, that (a) starts with a single Form spread 'through many <Forms>' (διὰ πολλῶν) as opposed to 'through all <Forms>' (διὰ πάντων) suggests that the Stranger is here not only referring to Being, but to any Form that is a whole encompassing other Forms. Indeed, Being is a kind that runs through all other Forms, and not only through many, as has emerged from the Gigantomachia and as is explicitly stated at 259a5.

297. I take εἶδος at 253d1 to be the antecedent of διὰ πολλῶν ἐνὸς ἐκάστου κειμένου χωρίς, hence the masculine genitive.

be distinguished reasonably enough, it follows that they are not identical.

After this general characterisation of the part-whole relation as a one-many relation, the Stranger then decomposes it into its constituents. (T2) starts by describing how a unity emerges from the many parts. The parts are all different from one another (πολλὰς ἐτέρας ἀλλήλων). Kinêsis and Stasis are an interesting example, for they are not only different from one another, but they are ‘most opposed’ to each other. In spite of them being opposites, Being encompasses them from outside (ὑπὸ μιᾶς...περιεχομένης). This is where the many Forms become one. Turning to (T3), αὖ marks the shift of emphasis: having seen how a unity emerges from the many parts, we are now going to see how the whole keeps its unity over the many parts. As I have already said, I take διὰ πολλῶν and δι’ ὄλων πολλῶν to be referring to the same Forms, that is, to the parts of the whole. The phrase ἐν ἐνὶ συνημμένην stresses the fact that the whole remains a unity, despite running through many wholes. Finally, (T4) stands for Forms, or kinds, which are not in a relation of composition with other Forms, for they are ‘completely separate’ (χωρὶς πάντη). Such Forms are mereological atoms, and we have seen in the debate with the Eleatics that the One is an example of such non-composite Forms.

We are now in a position to come back to the Prologue. In the main part, we have seen that the point is to show that a whole is a unity out of a multiplicity. Important in this description is that a whole is not an indefinite mixture, where nothing can be distinguished from anything, but rather, an articulated structure, in which the one who is properly skilled can discern and separate the whole from the parts. In a part-whole relation, Forms remain one and distinct: the Form that is a whole remains one and distinct from its many parts, and in turn, each and every part remains distinct from the other parts and from the whole. This brings us to the Prologue. What is addressed there is the danger of taking the very same Form as a different Form, and conversely, of thinking that two different Forms are the same. In the dialogue, we have encountered at least two groups of thinkers who have proved guilty of the second mistake: the Giants, who have mistakenly thought that Kinêsis and Being are one and the same Form, and the Friends of the Forms, who have equated Being with Stasis. The enquiry has revealed that both groups were confused, and that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are actually three distinct kinds. But the enquiry has also made clear that their confusion was not unfounded, for they have not been confusing Being with two unrelated kinds, but with one of its parts, and indeed essential parts. Seen in this way, the problem of not taking a Form for another Form becomes a non-trivial problem. First,

parts and wholes actually share a nature, and they do overlap, such that it is indeed difficult to distinguish between them. Second, as we have seen several times, there is a proper metaphysical question as to whether the whole is actually the same as its parts, or not. Plato, because he rejects the view that composition is identity, stresses the distinction between the parts and the whole.

To conclude, the passage at 253d-e provides an answer to two questions that we had raised earlier. First, it provides an answer to the Late Learners' objection that cases of composition simply fall into the one-and-many problem. By contrast, Plato has here described how a whole is indeed a unity out of a multiplicity, but one that has a particular structure. It is not that the same Form is both one and many, but that a whole is made of a single Form that encompasses a plurality of other Forms. On this understanding, the different constituents of the whole do not disappear in the composition process, but remain distinct, at least in so far as they can be distinguished as parts and whole. Hence, there is no longer a one-and-many problem, there are just Forms arranged in a precise way. So understood, the passage also answers the question of the need for vowel-kinds. What is in the background of 253d-e is the introduction of Sameness and Otherness as the two kinds which make it possible to distinguish between Forms, even in the case of composition. Thus, on the interpretation I have defended, it is not the case that 253d-e provides a direct description of vowel-kinds. Indeed, the Forms that are directly described are the Forms that play the role of the whole and the Forms that play the role of the parts. However, the function of the vowel-kinds is here described as what makes it possible to distinguish between Forms.

4.2. The deduction of Sameness and Otherness from the whole of parts formed by Being, Kinêsis and Stasis

In this section, we move to the second part of the claim that Sameness and Otherness are introduced primarily as necessary conditions for composition. After having seen how their introduction is prepared for with the emergence of a new problem of composition, we are now going to take a closer look at the arguments which properly establish them as fourth and fifth kinds. The purpose of the following section is to show that Sameness and Otherness are derived from the claim that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis form a whole of parts. By 'derived from', I mean that Sameness and Otherness are not

added to, but are found in the composition relation which unites Being, Kinêsis and Stasis.

One of the main difficulties with the passage is how, precisely, to make sense of the series of arguments that the Stranger gives for the establishment of Sameness and Otherness as the fourth and fifth kinds. The Stranger's overall argument consists in showing that Sameness and Otherness cannot be reduced to any of the already established kinds, and hence should be counted as the fourth and fifth kinds. He begins by establishing that each of the three previously established kinds can be said to be 'the same as itself' and 'different from the other kinds'; then, he goes on to argue that Sameness and Otherness cannot be reduced to any of the already established kinds — first, Sameness and Otherness cannot be reduced to Kinêsis and Stasis; second, Sameness cannot be reduced to Being; third, Otherness cannot be reduced to Being; finally, he concludes that Sameness and Otherness must count as the fourth and fifth great kinds. For each of these arguments, with the notable exception of the argument for the distinction between Being and Otherness, the crux is the claim, spelled out at 255a7-b1, that whatever is attributed to both Kinêsis and Stasis cannot be reduced to any of them, for otherwise, it entails that Kinêsis rests and that Stasis changes, which is impossible. Thus, at every step, the Stranger's strategy consists in showing that the reduction of Sameness and Otherness to any of the already established kinds leads to such unhappy consequences.

In the literature, most critics have found these arguments problematic. They point out that the Stranger's strategy is successful only if we agree that it is not possible that Kinêsis rests and that Stasis changes. If most of them happily concede that one should not accept that Stasis changes, since Stasis is an intelligible kind and hence, is unchangeable, then precisely for this reason, they do not see any reason to reject straightforwardly the claim that Kinêsis rests.²⁹⁸ Indeed, there is a sense in which Kinêsis is at rest, namely *qua* being an intelligible kind. Now, if they are right, then these arguments are indeed problematic, for then the conclusion that Sameness and Otherness are distinct from Being, Kinêsis and Stasis does not follow. Different solutions have been put forward by critics to explain why Plato denies that Kinêsis rests. All of the attempts to rescue Plato's argument try to preserve the claim, which they think Plato should not reject, that Kinêsis instantiates rest. In their effort to save Plato, each of these readings introduces into the argument a

298. Note that to the critics who support the view that Forms change in the *Sophist*, the passage is even more problematic, for on their reading, it is both correct to say that Change rests and that Stasis changes.

specification to the effect that Plato's denial is addressed to another, improper, way of conceiving the relation between Kinêsis and Stasis. The sort of specification that I have in mind is, for instance, the distinction between what a kind is *qua* being an intelligible kind and what it is *qua* being the intelligible kind that it is (Frede), or the distinction between the ordinary and the definitional reading, according to which Plato is right to deny that Kinêsis rests on a definitional reading but not on an ordinary one (Crivelli).²⁹⁹ Note also Vlastos' famous interpretation according to which Plato is simply not aware of the problem.³⁰⁰

In what follows, I shall defend a different reading of this argument, which brings a distinctive solution to the problem of the denial that Kinêsis rests. Like many critics, I share the view that what Plato is denying is not that Kinêsis instantiates rest in the sense mentioned above. I differ from them, however, in that I do not locate the solution to the problem in a distinction that Plato supposedly draws somewhere in the dialogue, but, again, in the claim that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis form a whole of parts, as explained in Chapter III. My main contention in this section is, thus, that the argument for the establishment of Sameness and Otherness as the fourth and fifth kinds rests on the claim that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis form a whole of parts. In the first instance, I shall show how the latter claim is indeed reasserted at the very beginning of our passage, at 254d4-15. Next, I shall move to the heart of the problem, namely what Plato means when he denies that Kinêsis rests. This will take us back to the Hot and Cold passage, and also to 250a8-b6. Then, I shall turn to the argument for the distinction between Sameness and Otherness on the one hand, and Kinêsis and Stasis on the other hand. Next, I shall examine the argument for the distinction between Sameness and Being.

Finally, I shall turn to the argument for the distinction between Being and Otherness. Although, as I shall argue, this argument is also based on the claim that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis form a whole of parts, its pattern is different from that of the other arguments. This argument has generated a huge interest in the literature. Some critics have seen in the *kath hauto/pros alla* distinction the proof that Plato distinguishes between two uses, or senses of Being, while others have read this passage as the long sought after definition for Being. By contrast, I shall defend the view that the *kath hauto/pros alla*

299. Frede (1967), p. 34; Crivelli (2012), p. 119 ff.

300. Vlastos (1970), in Vlastos (1973).

distinction is mapped onto the division of Being into the unchangeable beings and the changing beings which has been established in the Gigantomachia. In this way, it shows that the argument for the distinction between Being and Otherness is based on the idea that Being is a whole of parts.

4.2.1. The setting of the problem at 254d4-255a3

To begin with, it is important to look at precisely how the topic of Sameness and Otherness as the fourth and fifth kinds emerges. In the previous section, we saw how their introduction is prepared for by the description of the dialectician at 253d-e. In the difficult case where different Forms are intimately related as parts and wholes, the dialectician is described as the one who is, nonetheless, able to tell Forms apart. He is able to discern how and why what appears to be a single Form is, in fact, a whole consisting of many other Forms as its parts, and conversely, to recognise how several distinct Forms nevertheless gather to Form a whole. This is paraphrased by the Stranger as the ability ‘not to take the same Form for a different one, nor a different Form for the same one’. Along these lines, we shall now see how the question of whether Sameness and Otherness should be established as fourth and fifth kinds is also raised on the basis of the distinction between the whole of Being and its parts Kinêsis and Stasis.

The passage starts with a restatement of the relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. The Stranger declares that Kinêsis and Stasis do not mix with one another, but that Being mixes with both of them, for they both ‘are’. Then, the Stranger adds that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are, thus, three kinds. In the light of the discussion in Chapter III, we know that what is at issue here, when the Stranger says that Kinêsis and Stasis do not mix with one another but that Being mixes with both of them, is not the participation of Kinêsis and Stasis in Being, but the composition relation among the three. Indeed, we know that it does not directly follow from the assertion that Kinêsis and Stasis both participate in Being that Being is a third kind, distinct from them. The Stranger is, thus, reminding his interlocutor here of the conclusion that they had reached earlier — namely that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis form a whole of parts in which the whole is a unity over and above its parts, and hence, must be counted as a third kind. On this point, it is significant that the Stranger here uses the vocabulary of the communion of kinds (*meiktos*, *ameiktos*), for we have seen that the communion of kinds is precisely a case of composition. The last point

the Stranger makes is that it follows from what he has just recalled that each of them is other than the other two but the same as itself.³⁰¹ Again, this claim is not trivial; it is the conclusion of the argument at 250a-251a. Indeed, that passage was addressed precisely to the question of whether Being is the same as Kinêsis or Stasis taken separately, or the same as Kinêsis and Stasis taken together, or rather, whether Being is a third kind, different from the other two. It is, thus, on the basis that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis form a whole of parts that the Stranger can now make such a claim.

The Stranger has now introduced Sameness and Otherness in relation to the whole of parts formed by Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. He then goes on to ask what is meant by 'same' and 'different'. The possible answers on offer are as follows: either Sameness and Otherness are different kinds from those already established, namely Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, or they are just another way of referring to them. Again, this way of setting the problem is reminiscent of 250a-251a, and even of the Hot and Cold passage. At 250a-b, the question from the status of the kind Being arises as the Stranger observes that although Kinêsis and Stasis are most opposed to one another, we nonetheless say that each of them 'is' and both of them 'are'. The Stranger then goes on asking what is meant by 'being', the first option considered being to be just another name for Kinêsis or for Stasis. Likewise, we find a similar question at 243d9-e2, where the Stranger, talking to the supporters of the Hot and the Cold, asks them what they are saying when they say about the Hot and the Cold that each of them is and both of them are. Again, the possibility that 'being' is just another name for either the Hot or the Cold is one of the three options discussed.

However, at 254e4, the Stranger employs a precision which is not found at 250a-251a, nor in the Hot and Cold passage. Spelling out the first option, that is, that Sameness and Otherness have to be established as fourth and fifth kinds, the Stranger adds that if they are two distinct kinds, they are nonetheless 'always by necessity (*ex anankês*) mingling with them'.³⁰² This precision is fundamental for the following reasons. First, it supports the idea, introduced earlier, that Sameness and Otherness are introduced as vowel-kinds, that is, as kinds that make communion among other kinds possible. Indeed, 'always by necessity' suggests that Sameness and Otherness are not exogenous kinds, but that they are already there in the composition relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. Again, 'by

301. *Soph.* 254d14-15: Οὐκοῦν αὐτῶν ἕκαστον τοῖν μὲν δυοῖν ἕτερόν ἐστιν, αὐτὸ δ' ἐαυτῷ ταῦτόν.

302. *Soph.* 254e4: [...] συμμειγνυμένω μὴν ἐκείνοις ἐξ ἀνάγκης αἰεί.

necessity' goes well with the claim that they are necessary conditions for composition. Second, the present participle 'mingling' is given in the dual, which indicates that the precision is supposed to apply to both Sameness and Otherness. This is a point in favour of the claim that both Sameness and Otherness are introduced as vowel-kinds, and that they jointly make composition possible. Finally, this precision explains why the similarity between the present passage and the passage at 250a-251a, as well as the Hot and the Cold passage, is limited. In the previous paragraph, I noted how these passages start with a similar question, and how the same option is examined. But the similarity between these passages stops here, for unlike in the Hot and Cold passage and 250a-251a, the Stranger does not explore the two remaining options, namely that Sameness and Otherness are either wholes identical to Kinêsis and Stasis or wholes that are unities over and above their parts. Indeed, this precision makes it clear straightaway that they are meant for another purpose.

4.2.2. That Kinêsis does not rest, nor does Stasis change

Having seen that Sameness and Otherness are introduced on the basis of the whole of parts formed by Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, and, most importantly, that they are introduced as being already implied by the composition relation among the three, let us now turn to the arguments for the establishment of Sameness and Otherness as the fourth and fifth kinds. These arguments are divided into three steps: first, the Stranger shows that Sameness and Otherness cannot be reduced to either Kinêsis or Stasis; second, he shows that Sameness cannot be reduced to Being; and third, that Otherness cannot be reduced to Being. Central to all these arguments, with the notable exception of the argument for the distinction between Otherness and Being, is the claim that Kinêsis does not rest. As I said earlier, there is a sense in which this claim is problematic, if what it is denying is that Kinêsis instantiates rest, for Kinêsis, after all, is an intelligible entity, just like the other kinds. In what follows, I shall argue that this claim should not be understood as the denial that Kinêsis instantiates rest — this consideration, as we shall see, plays no role at all in these passages — but rather as the denial that Kinêsis is identical to Stasis.

To understand what is intended by the denial that Kinêsis rests, let us compare the

different passages where the claim is made.³⁰³ The point of proceeding in this way is that in each case, the Stranger formulates the problem in a slightly different way. The hope is that comparing the different formulations and placing them side by side will give us a better idea of what the problem consists in. Starting with 255a7-b2, the Stranger explains that ‘Kinêsis rests’ amounts to saying that Kinêsis has changed its nature into the opposite nature, namely to that of Stasis. This is a pretty strong statement, and we may already doubt that what is involved here is the claim that Kinêsis instantiates rest, for this does not seem to imply a change of nature. This precision, namely that ‘Kinêsis rests’ implies that Kinêsis has now changed its nature into that of Stasis, is not given at 250a8-b6. There, the Stranger only spells out the consequences of the hypothesis according to which Being is nothing but another name for Kinêsis or Stasis: on the one side, it entails that ‘Kinêsis is’ in fact means ‘Kinêsis rests’, and likewise, ‘Stasis is’ means ‘Stasis rests’; on the other side, it entails that ‘Stasis is’ actually means ‘Stasis changes’, and likewise, ‘Kinêsis is’ means ‘Kinêsis changes’.

But this passage brings to light another important piece of information. Recall that in Chapter III, I argued that the passage at 250a-251a runs parallel to the Hot and Cold passage at 243d-244a, in the sense that both passages discuss the same three options about composition. The argument we are currently discussing corresponds to the denial that there is composition among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis, and the assertion, instead, that Being is just another name for either Kinêsis or Stasis.³⁰⁴ At 250a8-b6, this option is rejected for the reason that we have just mentioned, namely that it entails that Kinêsis rests and that Stasis changes. In the Hot and Cold passage, however, the Stranger provides another reason for the exclusion of this option, namely, if Being is just another name for either the Hot or the Cold, then it follows that there is just one thing. Now, as I mentioned in Chapter III, there are two ways to understand how the claim that Being is a mere name for either the Hot and the Cold entails that there is just one thing.³⁰⁵ Suppose for a moment that Being is just another name for the Hot. Instead of three things — Being, the Hot and the Cold — we have just two — the Hot and the Cold. It would, I think, be misleading to call the Hot ‘the

303. The different passages involved are: the Hot and the Cold passage (243d-244a); the *triton ti* passage (250a8-b6); the argument for the distinction between Sameness and Otherness on the one hand, and Kinêsis and Stasis on the other hand (255a7-b2); the argument for the distinction between Being and Sameness (255b11-c1).

304. It corresponds to the second option in the Hot and Cold passage, labelled (ii) in Chapter III.

305. See n. 84 in Chapter III.

Hot-Being', for we are not saying that Being and the Hot mix to form just one thing — this would amount to recognising composition, and would correspond, in fact, to the second of the three options mentioned above; we are rather saying that Being is strictly identical to the Hot. According to the first way of understanding this argument, if Being is just another name for the Hot, it entails that there is just one thing because the Cold, in turn, is not. On this reading, the argument stops here, and the initial assertion that the Cold 'is' just as much as the Hot, and that they both 'are', is simply set aside. However, on the second way of reading the passage, the argument continues. Since we have granted that Being is actually just another name for the Hot, 'the Cold is' actually amounts to 'the Cold is hot'.³⁰⁶ Now, remember that the starting hypothesis is that there is no composition. If there is no composition, then either two things are completely distinct, or they are identical. As we have just seen, 'the Hot is' entails the Hot and Being are just one and the same thing. By the same token, we are now forced to conclude that 'the Cold is hot' entails that the Hot and the Cold are just one and the same thing. Thus, the successive identifications of Being with the Hot, and of the Hot with the Cold leads to the conclusion that there is just one thing.

The latter reading of the Hot and Cold passage finds supports in the third of the three passages where the denial that Kinêsis rests is used, namely in the passage for the distinction between Being and Sameness. There, the Stranger says that if Being and Sameness are just one thing, then it will entail again (*palin*) that Kinêsis and Stasis are the same.³⁰⁷ Now, coming back to the Hot and Cold passage again, only the second reading entails that the Hot and the Cold are the same, not the first one. Note also the distinctive formulation that the Stranger uses at 255c1: he declares that Kinêsis and Stasis are the same 'as beings' (*hos onta*), which reinforces the claim that Kinêsis and Stasis are then just one and the same kind.

A last remark before we turn to the next point. At 256b6, the Stranger makes a comment which has most intrigued critics. There, the Stranger declares, using a counterfactual construction, that if Kinêsis were to share in Stasis, then there would be

306. There is no verb corresponding to the Hot, hence the use of being, but the exact correspondence would be the Hot 'hots'. Note that we recognise here the same consequence as for Kinêsis and Stasis, but applied to the Hot and the Cold: just like it entails that Kinêsis rests and that Stasis changes, it entails that the Hot is cold and the Cold is hot.

307. *Soph.* 255b11-c1: Ἀλλ' εἰ τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ ταῦτόν μηδὲν διάφορον σημαίνετον, κίνησιν αὖ πάλιν καὶ στάσιν ἀμφοτέρα εἶναι λέγοντες ἀμφοτέρα οὕτως αὐτὰ ταῦτόν ὡς ὄντα προσεροῦμεν.

nothing strange (*atopos*) in calling it ‘at rest’ (*stasimos*).³⁰⁸ Critics eager to see Plato acknowledging that there is a sense in which it is correct to say that Kinêsis rests, namely *qua* being an intelligible entity, have interpreted this passage as the sign that Plato is aware of this ambiguity.³⁰⁹ By making this comment, he would thereby acknowledge this distinction. This reading, however, suffers from two difficulties. A first, major one, is that the sentence is an unfulfilled conditional. In the Greek, we can see it from the combination of *ei* followed by the imperfect of *metalambanein* in the protasis, with *an* followed by a present infinitive in the apodosis.³¹⁰ As a result, from a grammatical point of view, the ‘if’ clause is never meant to be actualised, that is, it is never going to be the case that Kinêsis participates in rest in this sense. This is, therefore, a very odd formulation to choose if what Plato wants to say is that another understanding of ‘Kinêsis rests’ is possible. The second difficulty is that this reading relies on the assumption that both in this passage and in the preceding ones, ‘Kinêsis rests’ constantly means ‘Kinêsis participates in Stasis’. But I have just argued that this is not the case and that, on the contrary, ‘Kinêsis rests’ in the previous arguments is in fact short for ‘Kinêsis is the same as Stasis’.

On my reading, however, this passage takes on a different meaning. The Stranger is here considering the case in which there is communion between Kinêsis and Stasis, that is, not the case in which Kinêsis participates in Rest, but the case in which Kinêsis and Stasis are related as parts and whole. The Stranger’s thought is that if Kinêsis and Stasis were so related, that is, if they were related as part and whole, then Kinêsis would indeed be at rest. Here, note that although the formulation is the same, the latter conclusion is not to be confused with that of the preceding arguments, namely that Kinêsis and Stasis are identical. For the record, that Kinêsis is the same as Stasis is not a case of composition between Kinêsis and Stasis, but rather the opposite. An objection that my reading faces is precisely that there is no way of distinguishing, from the language, between cases where two kinds combine as part and whole and cases where two kinds are just identical, for both are cases in which ‘Kinêsis rests’. To this I reply that this is precisely part of the problem of composition, as described at 253d-e: it is very difficult to tell whether two Forms are the same or whether they are related as part and whole. In favour of my reading, we can say,

308.256b6-7: Οὐκοῦν κὰν εἴ πη μετελάμβανεν αὐτὴ κίνησις στάσεως, οὐδὲν ἂν ἄτοπον ἦν στάσιμον αὐτὴν προσαγορεύειν.

309. For instance Buckels (2015), p. 325.

310. In the apodosis, ἂν + present infinitive is equivalent to imperfect + ἄν.

first, that it makes better sense of the unfulfilled conditional. Indeed, the Stranger is right that it will never happen that Kinêsis and Stasis are related as part and whole, since they are opposites, and opposites cannot be so related. Second, it helps us to understand why Theaetetus immediately agrees, and even endorses the Stranger's point, without giving the impression that he is contradicting himself. Indeed, on my reading, 'Kinêsis rests' has a different meaning from 'Kinêsis rests' in the previous arguments. Third, my reading finds support in the Stranger's and Theaetetus' gloss around this point. Both make clear that the 'if' clause is also subject to the claim that there is composition among kinds, and the Stranger explicitly refers to the argument for this claim. Again, this shows that 'Kinêsis rests' is here understood differently from the way it is understood in the previous arguments.

We are now in a position to come back to our original question: What is meant by 'Kinêsis rests and Stasis changes'? From the comparison of different passages, we can conclude that this means that Kinêsis becomes identical with Stasis, and that, conversely, Stasis becomes identical with Kinêsis. Hence the change of nature: if Kinêsis becomes the same as Stasis and vice versa, then, indeed, Kinêsis changes its nature into that of its opposite, and vice versa. Now, it remains to be seen how the argument works. We have seen how it works for the Hot and Cold passage, and this also applies to 250a8-b6. However, this cannot be an appropriate reconstruction of the arguments for the establishment of Sameness and Otherness as the fourth and fifth kinds, for, as we have seen at the beginning of this section, the starting point is precisely the acknowledgement that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis form a whole of parts. I shall now address these arguments in turn.

4.2.3. The argument for the distinction between Sameness and Otherness on the one hand, and Kinêsis and Stasis on the other hand (255a4-b7), and the argument for the distinction between Sameness and Being (255b8-c4)

The start of the argument for Sameness and Otherness being distinct from Kinêsis and Stasis is familiar. As usual, the Stranger begins by observing that it is said of Kinêsis and Stasis that they are the same as themselves, and other than the other kinds. He then goes on to ask whether Sameness and Otherness are two distinct kinds, or whether they are the same as any of the already established kinds. The first option he considers is that Sameness and Otherness are the same as Kinêsis and Stasis. We know what the conclusion of the

passage is: Sameness and Otherness cannot be reduced to either Kinêsis or Stasis, for otherwise, it would entail that Kinêsis rests or that Stasis changes, which we cannot accept. The question, however, is how this conclusion is reached. In the Hot and Cold passage, the conclusion is reached because the argument is based on the assumption that there is no composition relation among Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. As a result, when, after having first identified Being with the Hot — let us take the same example again — the question arises as to what is to be understood by ‘the Cold is’ or ‘the Cold is the hot’, there are only two possibilities: either they are the same or they are distinct. In the case of Kinêsis and Stasis, the matter is different, for the Stranger has just recalled that they form a whole of parts. The same problem arises for the distinction between Being and Sameness. How can these arguments hold, then?

In the case of Kinêsis and Stasis, the solution is, in fact, very similar to that of the Hot and the Cold. Remember the setting of the problem at 254d4-255a3. The point that the Stranger is making there can be summarised as follows:

P1: Kinêsis and Stasis do not mix with one another (they are *ameiktô*)

P2: But Being mixes with both of them, for both of them ‘are’

C1: Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are three kinds

C2: Each of the three kinds is the same as itself and other than the other two.³¹¹

It is P1 that is of interest for us. Kinêsis and Stasis are *ameiktô*, that is, they are not themselves related as whole and part. Of course, they both are parts of the whole that is Being, but they themselves are not related as part and whole. Quite the opposite, since they exclude one another. Now, suppose that Sameness is just another name for Kinêsis. It remains to be explained how we should understand ‘Stasis is the same as itself’. As a rule, there are three options: Stasis and Sameness(Kinêsis) are unrelated, Stasis and Sameness(Kinêsis) are the same, or Stasis and Sameness(Kinêsis) are linked as wholes and parts.³¹² But we know from P1 that the third option is not available. Moreover, since we are

311. The argument is very similar to that at 250a8-b6. The first premisses, however, are differently formulated. At 250a8-b6, (P1)’ is that Kinêsis and Stasis are most opposed to one another (*enantiôtata pros allêlois*). The two premisses are not equivalent. (P1)’ entails that Kinêsis and Stasis cannot be the same, for opposites cannot be identical, and also, that they cannot be related as part and whole, because of them being opposites. In other words, (P1)’ entails (P1). The converse, however, is not true, for it does not follow from the claim that Kinêsis and Stasis are not related as part and whole that they are opposites. Not all kinds that do not combine are opposites, although no opposite combine. For the argument, it makes no difference though, for all that matters is that Kinêsis and Stasis do not combine.

312. I indicate in brackets the fact that we have already made the assumption that Sameness is actually just an other name for Kinêsis.

precisely considering the fact that we say about Stasis that it is ‘the same as itself’, the first option is ruled out as well. Hence we arrive at the problematic consequence again: if Sameness is just another name for Kinêsis, then it follows that Kinêsis and Stasis are the same, which is impossible.³¹³

Since the argument works exactly in the same way with Otherness, I shall turn directly to the argument for the distinction between Being and Sameness. This time, it is slightly different from the previous ones. Let us start as usual: suppose that Sameness is just another name for Being. We know from (P2) that Being combines with Kinêsis and Stasis, and we know in what way: Being is a whole over and above its parts, Kinêsis and Stasis. Consequently, Kinêsis and Stasis are now parts. Now, if Being and Sameness are one and the same, there is no difference between saying that Kinêsis and Stasis are parts of the whole that is Being and saying that they are parts of the whole that is Sameness. But the parts of Sameness are necessarily identical. Hence, once again, Kinêsis and Stasis turn out to be the same, which is impossible. This brings us to the following remark: that Sameness, by itself, cannot be a whole, for Sameness can have no part which is distinct from itself. By contrast, the argument does not work with Otherness. If Otherness is just another name for Being, then given (P2), there is no difference between saying that Kinêsis and Stasis are parts of the whole that is Being and saying that they are parts of the whole that is Otherness. But unlike with Sameness, this does not entail that Kinêsis and Stasis are the same, and there is nothing wrong with Kinêsis and Stasis being parts of Otherness. Consequently, the Stranger needs a different argument to show that Otherness cannot be reduced to Being.

To conclude, we have now seen that the arguments for the distinction among Sameness, Otherness, Kinêsis and Stasis, and for the distinction between Being and Sameness, all rely on the claim that Being is a whole over and above its parts, Kinêsis and Stasis. This confirms that Sameness and Otherness are deduced from the first three kinds, which, in turn, supports the claim that Sameness and Otherness are necessary conditions for composition. Let us now turn to the last of these arguments, namely the argument for the distinction between Being and Otherness.

4.2.4. The argument for the distinction between Being and Otherness (255c12-13)

313. Note that this argument is similar in many respects to the argument at 250a8-b6, and actually, it would also work to show that Being is not the same as either Kinêsis or Stasis.

The argument for the distinction between Being and Otherness is one of the passages of the *Sophist* which has generated considerable interest, to say the least, in the secondary literature. Particularly disputed are the lines at 255c12-13, in which the Stranger introduces a distinction between things that are ‘themselves by themselves’ (*hauta kath hauta*) and things that are ‘in reference to something else’ (*pros alla*). This distinction is the crux of the passage, and provides the grounds for the distinction between the two kinds. Let us quote it:³¹⁴

{EE.} Ἀλλ' οἶμαί σε συγχωρεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτά, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἄλλα ἀεὶ λέγεσθαι. 255c12
{ΘEAI.} Τί δ' οὔ;
{EE.} Τὸ δέ γ' ἕτερον ἀεὶ πρὸς ἕτερον· ἧ γάρ; 255d1
{ΘEAI.} Οὕτως.

STR: But I think you agree that of the things that are, some are spoken of in and by themselves, while others are always spoken of in relation to others.

THT: Why should I not?

STR: And that difference is one of the latter — right?

THT: Just so.³¹⁵

There is no doubt about the purpose of the passage: the point is to give an argument to the effect that Being and Otherness are different kinds. In the literature however, there is no agreement on how this conclusion is reached, for there is no agreement on how to understand the distinction between *auto kath hauta* and *pros alla* at 255c12-13. The different interpretations of these two lines can be divided into two main groups: (1) those who think that the argument is based on a distinction in language; (2) those who think that what is at issue is a metaphysical distinction between two groups of beings.³¹⁶ The first group of critics can be further divided into two. According to the one group, at 255c12-13 Plato distinguishes between two uses or two senses of ‘is’: an existential or complete use, which corresponds to the *auto kath hauta* description, and a predicative or incomplete use, which corresponds to the *pros alla* description.³¹⁷ On this reading, *auto kath hauta* and *pros alla* thus characterise the way ‘is’ is used: itself by itself, that is, with no complement —

314. For the numbering of lines, I follow Diès (1925).

315. Rowe (2015).

316. For an account of the different interpretations of this passage, see Crivelli (2012), pp. 142-149.

317. Critics who think that the argument is about distinguishing uses of the verb ‘to be’ include, among others Owen (1971) and Brown (1994).

‘X is’ — or in relation to something else, that is, with a complement — ‘X is Y’. According to the other group, the distinction is between absolute and relative predicates or properties.³¹⁸ For instance, ‘man’ is an absolute predicate, or property, in the sense that we can say of Socrates that he is a man with reference to nothing other than Socrates, whereas ‘taller than’ is a relative predicate, or property, because when we say about Socrates that he is taller, it is necessarily in relation to something distinct from Socrates, in comparison to which Socrates is said to be taller. On this reading, *auto kath hauto* and *pros alla* refer to predicates, or properties, which are attributed to the beings, and which can be of two sorts.

By contrast, on the metaphysical reading, the Stranger is making a distinction between two groups of beings. The metaphysical reading is far less represented than the alternative reading, and its main defender is Frede.³¹⁹ For Frede, 255c12-13 is the place where the Stranger provides an answer to the question ‘what is being?’, ‘what is it for something to be?’. In what follows, I shall side with the metaphysical reading, although I shall defend a different interpretation from that of Frede. As I shall explain in a moment, the main difference between Frede’s reading and my reading is that Frede reads this passage as implementing the tiered-ontology of the Friends of the Forms, whereas I take this passage to be based on the distinction between the changing beings and the unchangeable beings established in the *Gigantomachia*, which, as we have seen in Chapter I, is tier-insensitive and is accepted both by the Giants and by the Friends of the Forms.

In what follows, I shall not attempt to provide a criticism of the other readings. Not only has this already been done several times by several critics, but also, it would take us too far from the point of this sub-section.³²⁰ Instead, I shall focus on what is distinctive about the metaphysical reading. The main criticism that has been raised against the metaphysical reading is that nowhere else in the *Sophist* is a comparable division between two groups of beings to be found. Critics have found this problematic, because not only does Theaetetus’ reaction suggest that he is already familiar with this division, but also, because it contradicts a common view about the *Sophist*, according to which Plato’s point in this dialogue is precisely not to distinguish between beings.³²¹ However, I have already

318. Critics who think that the distinction is about absolute versus relative terms or properties include, among others: Cornford (1935); Bluck (1975); Dancy (1999); Malcolm (2006); Duncombe (2012); Leigh (2012a); Buckels (2015).

319. Frede, mainly (1967) and (1996), and (1992) to a lesser extent.

320. See Frede (1967), pp. 12-29, and also Crivelli (2012), pp. 145-149.

321. See for instance Brown (1998), n.47 p. 204. This is, according to Brown, one of the main lessons of the

argued against this view in Chapters I and II, in which I have shown that Plato divides the beings into two mutually exclusive groups, the unchangeable beings (*akinêta*) and the changing beings (*kekinêmena*, *kinoumena*). I shall now argue that the *auto kath hauto/pros alla* distinction is precisely mapped onto this distinction, that is, that the *auta kath hauta* beings are the same as the unchangeable beings and that the *pros alla* beings are the same as the changing beings. If my reading proves to be convincing, then it has a considerable advantage not only over Frede's reading, but against other approaches in general, which all struggle to provide compelling evidence that the distinction that they advocate is made earlier in the dialogue. About the distinction between two uses or senses of 'is', it is very difficult to spot a single passage in the *Sophist*, outside of this one, in which Plato explicitly draws attention to two senses or uses of *einai*. As for the predicate or property reading, critics have tried to account for Theaetetus' reaction by referring to other dialogues in which a similar distinction is to be found. Those who employ this strategy typically refer back to the *Theaetetus*, which not only dramatically precedes the *Sophist*, but also features Theaetetus as the main interlocutor, as evidence for his familiarity with the distinction.³²² It would, however, be much better if the division was found in the dialogue itself.

The interpretation that I shall defend owes much to that defended by Frede. For this reason, I shall start by reconstructing his reading, before turning to the problems that it raises, and how my reading can solve them. This preliminary step seems to me all the more warranted because many critics who have criticised Frede's reading have relied primarily on his 1992 article and sometimes also on his 1967 monograph.³²³ There is, however, a further and later article published in German in 1996, which sheds much light on his interpretation, but which has been overlooked by critics. All three of these pieces are in agreement on the general interpretation, but they emphasise different aspects of the passage's outcome. In particular, the 1967 monograph and the 1996 article complement each other, in that the latter clearly spells out the ontological outcome of his interpretation

Gigantomachia. For a criticism of this view, see Politis (2006).

322. Leigh (2012a), p. 14.

323. Leigh (2012a) also refers to Frede's 1967 monograph, but she is not aware of the 1996 article. Moreover, there are several places where I do not recognise Frede's reading in her reconstruction of him. See in particular the reconstruction of Frede's point concerning the role of *aei* in the passage, n. 13 p. 6. Now, I do agree with Leigh (n. 11 p. 5) that Frede's monograph is not at all crystal clear and often hard to follow.

of the passage while the 1967 monograph provides the textually-based argumentation for it.

Let us begin with how Frede understands what *auto kath hauto* and *pros alla* mean. According to Frede, what is at issue is how something *a* is X. Let us take, as a starting point, the following formulation: *a* is X in relation to *b*. In the *pros alla* case, *pros alla* is understood strictly: *a* is X in relation to *b*, and *a* is different from *b*. In other words, there is an entity *b*, distinct from *a*, and in relation to which *a* is said to be X. In this way, Frede reads *pros alla* as equivalent to *pros heteron*, that is, as implying distinctness.³²⁴ His reading relies on the sense of the argument as a whole. Recall that the purpose of the argument is to distinguish the kind Being from the kind Otherness. The point is that whereas Being participates in the two forms *auto kath hauto* and *pros alla*, Otherness is only spoken of *pros heteron*. Consequently, Being and Otherness have something in common, in that they are both spoken of *pros alla*, that is, *pros heteron*, but they differ in that only Being is spoken of *auto kath hauto*. Now, by contrast to the *pros alla* case, the *auto kath hauto* case is formulated as follows: *a* is X in relation to *b*, and *a* and *b* are one and the same. In other words, *a* is said to be X in relation to itself.³²⁵ Frede recognises in this the model of the Platonic theory of participation of the sensible in the intelligible. The example he gives is that of the Form Justice and of Socrates.³²⁶ In this example, Socrates plays the role of *a*, and X stands for being just. Socrates, he says, is just, not in virtue of being Justice itself, but in virtue of participating in the Form of Justice. Hence, to use the formulation introduced above: Socrates is just in relation to the Form Justice. In other words, there is something like the Form Justice, or Justice itself, which is different from Socrates, and in relation to which Socrates is said to be just. This is a case of *pros alla* predication. By contrast, the Form Justice is just itself by itself. This is, thus, a case of *auto kath hauto* predication.

Now, what is X in our passage? At 255c12-13, Frede takes X to be ‘being’. He thus renders the sentence in the following way:

[...] τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτά, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἄλλα ἀεὶ λέγεσθαι.

[...] of the beings, the ones are called ‘being’ with reference to themselves, the others with reference to another.³²⁷

324. Frede (1967), p. 17. For a different view, see Crivelli (2012), pp. 145-146.

325. Frede (1967), pp. 12-29.

326. Frede (1996), p. 197. A similar example is to be found in Frede (1992), pp 400-401.

327. Frede (1967), p. 28: ‘Von dem Seienden wird das eine mit Bezug auf sich selbst, das andere mit Bezug

Textually, Frede takes ‘*tôn ontôn*’ in the sentence to refer not only to the things which are spoken of, but also to what is said of these things: we are talking ‘of the beings’, and of the beings, we say that the ones are called ‘being’ *auta kath hauta* while the others are called ‘being’ *pros alla*. The repetition of ‘being’ is supported by the comparison with the line at 255d5 where, talking about the things that are other (*tôn heterôn*), the Stranger imagines that those things would be ‘other’ (*heteron*) but not with reference to something other (*ou pros heteron*).

There are, thus, beings which are called ‘being’ with reference to themselves, and beings which are called ‘being’ with reference to something else, distinct from them. Now, what can this mean? Here, Frede makes a further step. He raises the question whether Socrates, to be a being, must fulfil two distinct conditions: whether he must both (i) participate in the Form Being, that is, participate in Being itself and (ii) participate in a particular Form, like the Form Justice, which is itself a being.³²⁸ His answer is that (ii) is not a further requirement, for being a being, but is actually one way of fulfilling (i), that is, (ii) amounts to one way of participating in the Form Being. This is the *pros alla* way of participating in the Form Being. For instance, Socrates participates in the Form Being, and hence is a being, in that Socrates participates in the Form of Justice, and hence is just. The *auto kath hauta* way of participating in the Form Being is, by contrast, that of the Forms themselves. For instance, we have seen that the Form Justice, in contrast to Socrates, is ‘just’ not by participating in something *b*, which is distinct from it, but itself by itself. By the same token, the Form of Justice participates in the Form Being itself by itself, that is, merely by being the Form that it is, namely Justice. Consequently, there is a direct way and a mediated way of participating in Being. The direct way is the *auto kath hauta* way, whereas the mediated way is the *pros alla* way. The relation between the two ways is that the second way is precisely mediated through the first way: in the participation *pros alla*, *alla* actually refers to the things that participate in Being directly.

In Frede’s reconstruction, the division among the beings is both exhaustive and exclusive: ‘of the beings’, gathers all the beings (A) and is then divided into two sub-groups, the group of beings which participate in Being directly (A1) and the group of beings which participate in Being mediately (A2); (A2) being dependent on (A1) in that it

auf etwas anderes seiend genannt.’

328. Frede (1996), pp. 196-197.

is with regard to (A1) that they are called 'being'. Note that the distinction between (A1) and (A2) does not rely on the place of *aei*, and actually, Frede does not translate it.³²⁹ Along these lines, we can reformulate the sentence at 255c12-13:

Of the beings (A), that is, of the things that are *x*, the ones (A1) are called 'being', namely 'being *x*', with reference to themselves, that is, by being themselves what it is for something to be *x*; the others (A2) are called 'being', namely 'being *x*', with reference to another, that is, by participating in (A1).

The main consequence of Frede's reading is that the outcome of the *auto kath hauto/pros alla* distinction is a tiered-ontology which relies on the Platonic notion of participation.³³⁰ At the top stands the kind Being, which is, in itself, not an additional existing thing.³³¹ The level below Being is that of the intelligible Forms, including the other great kinds, like Kinêsis, Stasis, Sameness and Otherness, which participate in Being in a direct way, that is, as being the Form that they are themselves by themselves. Finally comes the level of the sensible beings, which are dependent on Forms in that they participate in Being only through them, that is, by participating in a Form which itself participates in Being directly.

In my view, the major problem with Frede's interpretation is that it means that the division at 255c12-13 is only addressed to convinced Platonists. Indeed, it presupposes the Platonic division between intelligible Forms and sensible particulars which participate in Forms. Frede himself admits that this is a problem, although he thinks that this is a problem for Plato himself, not for his interpretation of Plato.³³² However, as we have said in Chapter I, and as is regularly emphasised by the Stranger throughout the dialogue, the enquiry is not addressed to Platonists only, but to a larger audience which includes, among others, thinkers like the reformed Giants.³³³ Now, it is hard to believe that the reformed Giants would be ready to accept the whole theory of participation, and I have argued in Chapter I that they do not accept Forms. The problem, I believe, lies in Frede's claim that the passage is not only about what something is *qua* being the being that it is, but that it is also, and simultaneously, about being a being *simpliciter*. This goes back to the connection

329. See above quotation.

330. Frede (1996), pp. 197-198.

331. This is one of the main claims that Frede defends in (1996). Frede also preserves the possibility that there are also Forms, like the One, which are above Being. This however plays no role for our present concern.

332. Frede (1996), p. 198. He says that Plato's answer to the question 'what is being?' in the *Sophist* relies on certain assumptions which explain why it has been rejected later.

333. See for instance *Soph.* 251c8-d2.

he makes between participating in a Form and participating in Being, which ultimately relies on a major claim that he defends, namely that being something is a necessary and sufficient condition for being a being.³³⁴ If there is something definite (*etwas Bestimmtes*), that one is, then one exists or is a being.³³⁵ For instance, it is a necessary and sufficient condition that Socrates is just for Socrates to be a being.

In what follows, I shall follow, and depart from, Frede's reading in the following way. On the one hand, I shall stick to Frede's understanding of the *auto kath hauto/pros alla* distinction as standing for the distinction between what is X with reference to itself and what is X with reference to another, distinct from it. On the other hand, I shall first reject Frede's view that X in this passage stands for 'being a being', that is, for how things come to be a being in the first place as opposed to a not-being. In view of that, I shall not attempt to attack Frede's major claim that being something is a necessary and sufficient condition for being a being. Rather, I shall simply show that it is not necessary to suppose that what is at issue here is what makes a being a being in the first place, as opposed to simply supposing that what is at issue is what makes a being the being that it is, e.g., just, and so on. Second, I shall argue that, understood in that way, that is, as being about what the beings are *qua* being the beings that they are and not *qua* being *simpliciter*, there is a reading of the *auto kath hauto/pros alla* distinction available in the dialogue which does not imply the Platonic theory of participation, and which can thus be accepted not only by the Friends of the Forms, but also by thinkers like the reformed Giants. As we shall see, the outcome of my reading is that the 255c12-13 passage is in line with the distinction between the changing beings and the unchangeable beings in the conclusion of the *Gigantomachia*.

As explained above, Frede's reading is textually based on 'being' being supplied in the sentence, such that 'being' refers both to what is spoken of and what is said of these things. I agree with Frede that 'being' must be supplied, but I disagree on the interpretation

334. See for instance Frede (1996), p. 196; (1967), pp. 29, 37. Now, this claim has a long story, which goes back to the discussion about the meaning of the verb 'to be' in Ancient Greek. In Brown (1986), she argues that in Greek, 'to be' is to be something. Her claim is a response to Ackrill's (1975) division between the complete (or existential) and incomplete (or predicative) use of the verb 'to be', and to Owen's claim that Plato is concerned only with the latter use in the *Sophist*. By contrast, Brown's point is that we cannot separate the two. We shall not go into the details of this debate here. For our present purpose, it suffices to note that if to be is to be something, then to be something, and even more, to be precisely X, as Frede puts it, is a prerogative of the Forms. Indeed, for Plato, Forms are what it is to be just, beautiful, and so on. As a result, this interpretation weakens the need to posit a kind Being, separated from the other Forms.

335. Frede (1996), p. 196.

of it. Frede thinks that this repetition suggests that what is at issue is how these beings are beings — in Frede’s words, how they participate in Being. But this need not be the case. There is another reading of this sentence available according to which what the Stranger is considering is not beings ‘as being beings’ but ‘as being the beings that they are’. This reading is supported by the comparison with 255d7 where the Stranger, still talking about things that are other, says that they are ‘what they are’ (*touto hoper estin*), that is, different, in relation to something else.³³⁶ What this suggests is that what is in question, about the things that are other, is not that they are other, but the sort of other thing they are, namely other than X or other than Y or whatever. By the same token, what is at issue concerning the things that are is not *that* they are but *what* they are. This reading is actually the one supported by Cornford, who translates the sentence in the following way, precisely on the basis of the comparison with 255d7:

STR.: But I suppose you admit that, among things that exist, some are always spoken of as being what they are just in themselves, others as being what they are with reference to other things.

Having looked at the textual grounds on which my interpretation relies, let us turn to where this distinction comes from. We are now saying that what the sentence means is that of the beings, some are the beings that they are themselves by themselves, whereas other are the beings that they are in relation to something distinct from them.³³⁷ The purpose is, in contrast to Frede, to find a way of understanding this sentence such that both the reformed Friends of the Forms and the reformed Giants can understand it. Let us start with the latter thinkers. In Chapter I, we actually came across something very similar.³³⁸ We have seen that the way the Giants are persuaded to include incorporeal beings like justice and *phronêsis* is by pointing out that the soul, and more generally the ensouled body, is just, is wise (*phronimos*), not in virtue of itself, but in virtue of having justice and *phronêsis* present in it.³³⁹ Justice and *phronêsis* are said to be able to come to be present (*paragignesthai*) and to cease to be present (*apogignesthai*) in another thing, from which the Stranger concludes that justice and *phronêsis* are beings (*einai ti*). Here, the relation between the soul on the one side and justice and *phronêsis* on the other side can be

336. Cornford (1935), n. 1 p. 281.

337. Alternatively: of the beings, some are what they are themselves by themselves while others are what they are always in relation to something distinct from them.

338. See Chapter I, 1.3.1.

339. This goes back to the passage from 247a onwards.

paraphrased using the *auto kath hauto/pros alla* distinction: the soul is what it is, namely just, in relation to something distinct from it, namely in relation to justice which comes to be present and ceases to be present in it, while justice is what it is, namely just, in relation to itself, as opposed to in relation to something else that comes to be present or ceases to be present in it. Now, having said that, this does not commit the Giants to saying that justice and *phronêsis* are Forms, nor does it commit them to participation.

Having seen what the *auto kath hauto/pros alla* distinction stands for on the Giants' side, let us turn to the Friends of the Forms. As we have seen in Chapter I, the Friends of the Forms actually accept something very similar to what we have just examined in the debate with the Giants, in the passage dealing with the relation between the soul and *nous*. Indeed, in the second step of the debate with them, that is, after the *dunamis* proposal, the Stranger asks whether they would be ready to accept that *nous*, life and *phronêsis* are not present (*pareinai*) in being, and hence that *to pantelôs on* does not think, to which the answer is negative. Recall that what is at issue is not the question whether the Friends of the Forms think that there is such a thing as *nous simpliciter*, but the question whether *to pantelôs on* has *nous*, that is, thinks. The point is that if being is to have *nous* and life, then being must be ensouled, because only what is ensouled can have *nous* and life. As a result, we find the same distinction that we found above: what has *nous* does not have *nous* by itself but in relation to something distinct, namely in relation to *nous*, while *nous* is *nous* itself by itself.³⁴⁰ What this shows is that the reformed Friends of the Forms do not only understand the *auto kath hauto/pros alla* distinction as applying only to the relation between intelligible Forms and sensible things which participate in the Forms, which is what Frede argues and which is part of their initial position, but as applying also to these new beings that they have been persuaded to include, namely the thinking soul.

Now, for the Giants, justice and *phronêsis* are incorporeal beings, which are later characterised as unchangeable beings, while the soul and the ensouled body are corporeal beings, later characterised as changing beings. Likewise for the Friends of the Forms, *nous* is an unchangeable being, and so are the Forms, while the soul is a changing being, and so are the sensible things. Consequently, we can see that the *auto kath hauto/pros alla* distinction is mapped onto the distinction between unchangeable and changing beings, and it can be both accepted by the Friends of the Forms and by the Giants. One could wonder

340. For a similar formulation, see Menn (1995), p. 22.

why the Stranger thinks that beings which are what they are themselves by themselves are properly characterised as unchangeable beings, while beings which are what they are in relation to something distinct from them are properly characterised as changing beings. We do not have to worry about this question though, for it is Plato himself who makes this link, by saying that these beings, like justice, are not only incorporeal but are also unchangeable, and conversely, by saying that these beings, like the soul and the ensouled body, are changing beings. Finally, read in this way, the *auto kath hauto/pros alla* distinction does not involve a tiered-ontology, though just like the conclusion of the Gigantomachia, it is compatible with it.

4.3. Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter, I had identified the main claim to be that Sameness and Otherness are introduced as necessary conditions for composition. By this I mean that all kinds involved in a part-whole relation are related to one another as being the same as themselves and other than the other kinds, although being related to other kinds in this way is not a sufficient condition for composition. In the first part of this chapter, we have seen that Plato's new view about composition implies that the kinds must be related to one another in a certain way for composition to be possible, namely, they must be distinct from one another. This, we have seen, is the joint role played by Sameness and Otherness: to be distinct from another is to be the same as itself and other than the others. In the second part, we have seen that this role is confirmed by the way Sameness and Otherness are established as the fourth and fifth kinds. Indeed, all these arguments have, as a starting point, the claim that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis form a whole of parts, and it is from the composition relation among the latter three that they are derived. Thus, we may conclude that for Plato, composition is not itself a sameness-otherness relation, but that it involves sameness and otherness among the parts and the whole.

CHAPTER V: Plotinus' theory of the five great kinds in *Enn. VI 2* [43]

5.0. Introduction

Any attempt to understand *Enn. VI 2* is influenced, in the first place, by one's understanding of Plato's *Sophist*. The interpretation that I shall defend here is no exception, and it is with the conclusions about the *Sophist*, that we have reached in the preceding chapters in mind, that I propose a reading of Plotinus' theory of the five great kinds which differs significantly from other interpretations of this treatise. Let us begin by briefly introducing *Enn. VI 2*. Plotinus wrote a number of treatises, which were later organised by his student Porphyry in six enneads. The classification of the enneads thus follows the order given to the treatises by Porphyry, while the classification of treatises refers to the order in which these treatises have been written. In this way, *Enn. VI 1-3* corresponds to treatises 42-44. They are, thus, late treatises, written toward the end of Plotinus' life.³⁴¹ The three treatises that comprise *Enn. VI 1-3* form a coherent trilogy that bears the title: 'about the kinds of being'.³⁴² Broadly construed, VI 1 is the critical part of the project, whereas VI 2 and VI 3 form the constructive parts. In VI 1, Plotinus addresses, and attacks, the Aristotelian and Stoic positions on the problem of being, or as he puts it, the theories of those who divide being into ten and, set against these, the theories of those who gather everything under a single kind. In VI 2, he lays down the first part of his own response, that is, the kinds of the intelligible realm, which correspond to the five kinds of the *Sophist*, namely: Being, Kinêsis, Stasis, Sameness and Otherness. In turn, VI 3 is dedicated to the kinds of the sensible realm, which are: what is 'like' *ousia*, Kinêsis, Quantity and Quality.³⁴³ In what follows, I shall focus mainly on VI 2, for it is there that Plotinus develops what he takes to be a defence of Plato's theory of the five great kinds. In this

341. For more about the context of the three treatises, see the introduction by Brisson in the French translation directed by Brisson and Pradeau (2008), pp. 15ff.

342. ΠΕΡΙ ΤΩΝ ΓΕΝΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΟΝΤΟΣ. The title is from Porphyry. Some critics use the Aristotelian word 'categories' instead of 'kind', but this is misleading. For a brief overview of the story of the title, see Parente (1994), n. 1 p. 1. For the difference between kinds and categories for Plotinus, see Chiaradonna (2014), p. 222.

343. The sensible realm is called *ousia* only *homônymôs* (*Enn. VI 3*, 2.1-4). The argument for the necessity of two distinct enquiries about the kinds of being and the kinds of becoming is to be found in *Enn. VI 2*, 1.21-33.

respect, the strategy that Plotinus develops is remarkable. The five kinds of the *Sophist* are not expounded dogmatically, rather, they are found again by Plotinus through an extended investigation into the intelligible realm. That his enquiry leads to the same result as that of Plato — that is, that there are five kinds of the intelligible realm and that they are Being, Kinêsis, Stasis, Sameness and Otherness — constitutes Plotinus' proof that Plato's view is correct.

There is no doubt that Plotinus sees his views as being consistent with Plato's. He spells this out at the beginning of VI 2 and it is repeated at the beginning of VI 3, when he summarises the results of the previous treatise.³⁴⁴ Critics, however, do not see it that way. As opposed to Plotinus himself, most of them think that Plotinus' interpretation is not at all faithful to Plato's dialogue.³⁴⁵ On this point, let us quote Brisson:

Between Plato's *Sophist* and Plotinus' interpretation of it in VI 2.8, six centuries of exegesis have passed, like a distorting mirror. Plotinus' originality thus lies in his being unfaithful to Plato's text, an unfaithful attitude which must be acknowledged and appreciated by anyone who, today, reads both Plato and Plotinus.³⁴⁶

We can list here some of the main criticisms addressed to Plotinus. A first, general perceived discrepancy between the *Sophist* and VI 2 lies in Plotinus' treatment of the theory of the five great kinds as being primarily a metaphysical theory about being. By contrast, critics point out that in the *Sophist*, Plato is also, if not primarily, preoccupied with the problem of not-being and with the possibility of falsehood. In this respect, Plotinus also stands out from the vast majority of modern interpretations of the *Sophist* in that Plotinus thinks that Plato is addressing the problem of the essence of being, whereas most critics think that the problem is that of the meaning of the verb 'to be', and/or a problem about the question 'what is there?'. A second, related, criticism is that Plotinus limits the five kinds to the intelligible realm. As a result, critics say, Plotinus' kinds of

344. VI 2, 1.5; VI 3, 1.1-2. References are given to the *editio minor* of Henry & Schwyzer.

345. See for instance Nebel (1929), pp. 49-54; Cornford (1935), pp. 274-277, n.1. p. 282; Charrue (1978), pp. 223-224; Mojsisch (1988), pp. 29-30; Brisson (1991), pp. 469-473; Montet (1996), pp. 5-15; Santa-Cruz (1997), pp. 105-118. Cornford is particularly severe with Plotinus. He holds him responsible for having misled critics into thinking of the five great kinds as five metaphysical 'principles', and for initiating the comparison with Aristotle's ten categories. For a more nuanced description of the relation between VI 2 and the *Sophist*, see Horn (1995), p. 133. About Kinêsis and Stasis in Plato and in Plotinus, see Lavaud (2008), p. 171.

346. Brisson (1991), p. 473: 'Entre le *Sophiste* de Platon et la lecture qu'en propose Plotin en *enn. VI 2.8*, six siècles d'exégèse se sont interposés, qui forment un écran déformant. L'originalité de Plotin réside donc dans son infidélité au texte de Platon, infidélité qui impose d'être reconnue et appréciée par celui qui aujourd'hui lit et Platon et Plotin.' Admittedly, Brisson's article bears on VI 2.8 only, but VI 2.8 is taken here as being representative of VI 2.

being are more properly understood as the categories of the intelligible cosmos, and of *nous*. A third problem is that Plotinus takes the five great kinds to form a coherent and exhaustive theory, there being no more kinds of being than the five mentioned in the *Sophist*. Against Plotinus, critics object that the passage at 254c4 suggests that Plato has just picked up some of the greatest kinds, but that he never intended this selection to be exhaustive. A further, and most important issue is that Plotinus asserts in VI 2 that the kinds of being are not only 'kinds' (*genê*), but also principles (*archai*) of being.³⁴⁷ On the other hand, Plato does not spell out what he means by *genê* in the *Sophist*, and a majority of critics take *genê* and *eidê* to be used interchangeably. Finally, many critics are puzzled by Plotinus' claim that all kinds are equally important, and by the central role Plotinus attributed to Kinêsis and Stasis. This goes against the widespread view that Kinêsis and Stasis are mere examples of opposites.

In light of what has been established in the previous chapters, however, these criticisms strike us differently. Indeed, the characterisation of the theory of the five great kinds that emerges is, in many respects, close to the one I have defended in the four preceding chapters. Through the course of the foregoing discussion, it has emerged that Plato's five great kinds are primarily a metaphysical theory about being, which has, for its starting point, the view that being is a complex phenomenon, complex in the sense that it cannot be traced back to a single principle, but involves a plurality of principles, related to one another by a particular structure. As we have seen, Plato's solution is that they are related as parts and whole, which has entailed a fundamental re-thinking of composition, and the introduction of Sameness and Otherness as necessary conditions for composition. The aim of this complex structure is, then, not to provide an account of what there is, though such an account is also part of the enquiry, but to give a unified account of what it is for something, anything, to be. In this chapter, I shall argue that Plotinus fundamentally shares Plato's understanding of being. Again, we shall see that, for Plotinus, just like for Plato, the five kinds are not mere characteristics of being, they are an attempt to grasp the 'what it is to be' of what there is.

To show properly what the Plotinian project of the five great kinds consists in, one would have to go back to VI 1, and to examine closely the nature of his criticism of

347. The hypothesis is raised at *Enn. VI 2*, 2.10-11 and adopted at *Enn. VI 2*, 2. 27-28. In the rest of the text, Plotinus often uses 'genos' only, but we should also supply 'and principle'.

Aristotle's ten categories, as well as his criticism of the Stoics.³⁴⁸ Not only would this take us too far from our topic, and would certainly require at least another dissertation, but also, this work has, for the most part, already been carried out by Chiaradonna.³⁴⁹ In *Sostanza Movimento Analogia*, which bears the subtitle 'Plotinus' critique of Aristotle', Chiaradonna argues that, contrary to what has often been assumed, Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's ten categories does not merely lie in the superficial reproach that Aristotle has not included the intelligible realm in his categories, but in the more fundamental philosophical criticism that Aristotle's categories do not allow one to grasp the *ti esti* of being.³⁵⁰ Thus, in what follows, I shall not attempt to reconstruct the whole of Plotinus' enquiry into the essence of being. Rather, I shall focus on VI 2, and concentrate on showing how, and for what reasons, Plotinus thinks that we need a plurality of principles to account for being, and why he thinks these principles must be related to one another by a certain structure, and what this structure is. This will involve, first, examining Plotinus' claim that being is one-and-many, and second, taking a closer look at the role of Sameness and Otherness as two of the *megista genê*.

5.1. Being is one-and-many

The purpose of this section is to understand why Plotinus thinks he needs a plurality of principles to account for being, or, in other words, why being cannot simply be reduced to one single principle. As the beginning of the treatise shows, Plotinus is perfectly aware of the alternative, and his choice is philosophically motivated.³⁵¹ In what follows, I shall show that the basis for Plotinus' *megista genê* theory is to be found in the claim that Being is one-and-many. This claim, as I shall argue, is ultimately grounded in the irreducibility of Kinêsis and Stasis to one another.

Before we go into it, it might be useful to clarify what Plotinus means by 'being' in

348. Note that I am not thereby implying that the nature of the criticism addressed to both is the same.

349. Chiaradonna (2002). One of the main passages Chiaradonna uses to support his claim is VI 2.15 (see pp. 87, 104-105, 116-117). Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's ten categories is part of a wider neoplatonic debate over the relation between Plato and Aristotle, which Chiaradonna reconstructs in the book. Let us just mention here, as an example, Simplicius and Dexippus' reply to Plotinus that this criticism is ill-founded because, they think, it is simply not possible to define being. For a more recent contribution to this topic, see Chiaradonna (2014), where he, again, exposes the main theses defended in the book, with some revisions.

350. For an example of this opposite view, see for instance Stranger (1987).

351. See esp. VI 2, 1-2.

VI 2.³⁵² Plotinus has two words for being: *ousia* and *to on*. Most of the time, it seems that *ousia* and *to on* are used interchangeably, but there are also passages which cast doubt on this general observation.³⁵³ In what follows, I shall thus lay no particular emphasis on the term that Plotinus uses. 'Being' can refer to two things in VI 2, which are, fortunately, closely connected. First, 'being' is generally the intelligible realm.³⁵⁴ As such, 'being' has the sense of primary being, and it must be distinguished from the sensible realm, which is 'being' only homonymously. In this way, 'being' is also used, often in the plural, to refer to what there is in the intelligible realm, like the soul. Second, 'being' can refer to one of the five kinds.³⁵⁵ But the second use is continuous with the first, for we shall see that the kind Being stands in relation to the other kinds as a whole that encompasses them all, and all together, they form the intelligible nature. Finally, there is a use of 'being' which is more like the the nature of something, the what it is, but this use is not specific to Plotinus.³⁵⁶

5.1.1. Being cannot be reduced to a single kind

The claim that being is one-and-many is one of the very first claims Plotinus makes in VI 2. It is asserted right from the start, on the basis of the denial that being is the One.³⁵⁷ Plotinus does not argue for it, he simply refers to 'Plato and others' who have explained why this is the case.³⁵⁸ Crucial is that this claim is immediately linked to questions about the structure of the kinds of being, that is: whether being can be reduced to a single kind or whether it necessarily involves a plurality of kinds. At the beginning of VI 2, 2, Plotinus gives a general characterisation of what is meant by 'one-and-many', and correspondingly outlines three possible ways of conceiving the structure of the kinds of being. Let us quote

352. For a general account of *ousia* in Plotinus, see Chiaradonna (2014), esp. pp. 220-225.

353. Passages that suggest that *ousia* and *to on* are used interchangeably are for instance VI 2, 17.23-24 where Plotinus, in a reference to the famous passage of *Rep.* 509b9, says about the Good that it is *ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ὄντος* as opposed to *ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας*, as in Plato's text. We can also quote VI 2, 5.24-25, where *ti on* becomes *tis ousia* in the following line. Passages, however, which suggest that *ousia* and *to on* are not used interchangeably are passages in which the two words are juxtaposed like at VI 2, 10.29, where it is hard to see in the juxtaposition of *to on* and *ousia* a mere effect of insistence

354. VI 2, 2.9. I quote the passage later.

355. VI 2, 8.25.

356. VI 2, 5.23.

357. VI 2, 1.6.

358. VI 2, 1.14. As we have seen in Chapter III, Plato does, indeed, examine, in the debates with the Eleatics, the claim that Being and the One are one and the same. Plotinus nonetheless dedicates several sections to the question whether the One-Being is a kind of Being or not, and to the question of the relation between Being and the One. See VI 2, 9-11.

the passage:

Ἦ ἓν ἅμα καὶ πολλὰ λέγομεν, καὶ	2
τι ποικίλον ἓν τὰ πολλὰ εἰς ἓν ἔχον.	3

Now we say that it is at the same time one and many, and that it is a richly variegated one keeping its many together in one.³⁵⁹

From there, Plotinus distinguishes three possibilities, which all reflect a different way being can be said to be one-and-many: either (i) being is one through the kind and multiple through the species, that is, there is just one kind Being and multiple species of being subsumed under it; or (ii) there are several kinds, but they are all subordinated to one primary kind, namely Being itself; or (iii) there are several kinds, all on the same level, that is, none of them is subordinated to any other kind, nor does any have primacy over the other kinds, and all together they form a unity, namely Being. These three options present three different ways Being can be said to be one. Option (i) simply consists in saying that Being is one, but that there are many species of Being. There is just one single kind and its many species. Options (ii) and (iii) differ from (i) in that, according to them, there is plurality among the kinds. A crucial difference between (ii) and (iii) is, however, that in (ii) the multiple kinds are, ultimately, reducible to one single kind, namely Being, whereas on (iii), this option is ruled out and the plurality of principles is maintained; they are not reducible to one kind.³⁶⁰

Plotinus himself defends option (iii). I shall not go into his criticism of the other two options here. For present purposes, it suffices to say that according to Plotinus, the hypothesis that there is a single kind (*genos hen*) of Being leads to the consequence that there is no plurality under this kind, no species or individuals which can come out of it.³⁶¹ Let us now take a closer look at what Plotinus says about (iii):

359. VI 2, 2.2-3. Armstrong's translation.

360. See Plotinus' criticism of (ii) at VI 2, 2.32-44.

361. VI 2, 2. 32ff.

ἢ πλείω μὲν γένη, μηδὲν δὲ ἄλλο ὑπ' ἄλλο, ἀλλ' ἕκαστον 6
 περιεκτικὸν τῶν ὑπ' αὐτό, εἴτε καὶ αὐτῶν γενῶν ἐλαττόνων
 ὄντων ἢ εἰδῶν καὶ ὑπὸ τούτοις ἀτόμων, συντελεῖν ἅπαντα
 εἰς μίαν φύσιν καὶ ἐκ πάντων τῶ νοητῶ κόσμῳ, ὃν δὴ
 λέγομεν τὸ ὄν, τὴν σύστασιν εἶναι. Εἰ δὴ τοῦτο, οὐ μόνον 10
 γένη ταῦτα εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀρχὰς τοῦ ὄντος ἅμα ὑπάρχειν·
 γένη μὲν, ὅτι ὑπ' αὐτὰ ἄλλα γένη ἐλάττω καὶ εἶδη μετὰ
 τοῦτο καὶ ἄτομα· ἀρχὰς δέ, εἰ τὸ ὄν οὕτως ἐκ πολλῶν καὶ
 ἐκ τούτων τὸ ὅλον ὑπάρχει. 14

or that there should be more kinds, but none of them subordinated to any other, but each including those below it (whether they themselves are lesser kinds or species with individuals [grouped] under them) and all contributing to a single nature; the intelligible universe, which is certainly what we call being, would be constructed from all of them. If this is so, these must certainly not only be kinds but at the same time also principles of being: kinds, because there are other lesser kinds under them and subsequently species and individuals; principles, if being is thus composed of many and the whole derives its existence from these.³⁶²

The point of this passage is to connect the claim about the structure of the kinds, namely that they are not hierarchically ordered and that they all contribute to form a single nature, with the claim that they are not only kinds but also principles. This confirms that the structure has implications for how closely related the kinds are with one another.

In the next passage, Plotinus explains what he means by 'kinds' and 'principles'.³⁶³ By 'kinds', he means that the kinds of being have species, and particulars, subsumed under them. This does not only mean that there are species of Being, and also particular beings, but that each and every kind of being also produces its own species and particulars. For instance, there are species of Kinêsis, and species of Stasis.³⁶⁴ As we shall see more clearly in the second part of this chapter, Plotinus takes this criterion very seriously, and it is not abandoned later on, although it raises a problem related to the issue of how the kinds produce species, and, in particular, where the specific differences that produce species come from. By 'principle', Plotinus means that Being consists of them (*ek pollôn*) and that the whole exists from them (*ek toutôn ton holon huparchein*).³⁶⁵ Here, 'principle' is used in the sense of 'element' (*stoicheion*), as can be seen from the comparison with the four

362. VI 2, 2.6-14. Armstrong's translation, slightly modified.

363. VI 2, 2. 12-14.

364. VI 2, 19.11-12.

365. VI 2, 2.13-14.

elements (fire, water, earth, air) that Plotinus makes immediately afterwards.³⁶⁶ In other words, the kinds of Being are the constituents of Being, what Being is made of. By contrast, the kinds of Being are not what is common (*to koinon*) to all beings, and Plotinus twice rejects that 'what is common' to many or to all beings is a kind of Being.³⁶⁷

This shows that when Plotinus says that Being is one-and-many, it means that Being is a single nature that is made of several constituents. In this respect, the expression *mia phusis* is highly reminiscent of the *Sophist*. Now, we have argued that Plato uses this expression to characterise a particular form of unity, namely that which unites a whole to its parts in cases where the whole is over and above its parts. There are in Plotinus' text other elements that suggest that this kind of part-whole relation might be what he has in mind here. First, the word for 'whole' (*holon*) is used in the last sentence of the passage, and most importantly, it is used in relation to the claim that the kinds of Being are also the principles of Being. Indeed, the parts compose the whole, such that the whole consists of the parts, but is nonetheless not reducible to them. Second, it goes well with the claim that none of the kinds is subordinated to any of the others, but can have sub-kinds and individuals under it. Indeed, there is no hierarchy among the parts, but none of the parts is empty, they all have an extension. Third, it also provides a suitable structure to support the claim that all kinds are on the same level, for in a part-whole relation, not only are the parts not subordinated to one another, but neither are the parts subordinated to the whole, without thereby implying that they all play the same role. Rather, parts and whole are mutually interdependent, for the parts are what they are only in the context of the whole to which they belong, and the whole depends on its parts, for the whole consists of the parts. In this way, neither the parts nor the whole are reducible to one another.

If Plotinus is here thinking of something like part-whole structure, then he cannot conceive of the whole as being identical to its parts, but must follow Plato in taking the whole as a unity over and above its parts; and that he does so is confirmed in the next passage.³⁶⁸ There, Plotinus examines how the kinds are related within the whole. The question is whether in the whole, all the kinds are mixed together or whether they remain one and distinct. Plotinus' response is that 'they [the kinds] will be by themselves and pure

366. That 'principles' are 'elements' can also be seen from the passage at VI 2, 3. 21-22.

367. See for instance VI 2.10.32ff about the One-Being, and VI 2.17.11ff about the Good.

368. VI 2, 2. 19-27.

and their mixed-up members will not abolish them'.³⁶⁹ Plotinus postpones the explanation of how this is possible, but what is clear is that he does not take the whole to be simply a mixture of everything, but rather, to be something which has a structure such that all kinds remain distinct while combining.

5.1.2. Being is not just 'being' (τὸ εἶναι) but 'being such' (τὸ τοιόνδε εἶναι)

We have now seen that the claim that Being is one-and-many is immediately related to the claim that Being cannot be reduced to a single principle, but involves a plurality of principles which are not only the kinds, but also the principles and the elements of Being. Now, we need to know what these principles are supposed to explain. In the next couple of passages, the Stranger moves the discussion from the general level of Being itself to the level of particular beings, like a stone or a soul. We are now going to see, at the level of these particular beings, what we anticipated at the level of being itself. The central question of these three treatises is the following: how is the soul a one that is many, and a many that is one, not in the way in which a composite (*suntheton*) is one out of many (*ek pollôn*), but like a single nature (*mia phusis*) is many (*polla*)?³⁷⁰ Again, the vocabulary of one-many and of part-whole is omnipresent in these passages. We shall see here that what is to be explained is the nature of the soul, the nature of particular intellects and finally the nature of the Intellect itself. The analysis of all these beings arrives at the same result, it is only their degree of unity that varies: from the lowest to the highest.

The answer to this question is prepared by first looking at the case of the body, and, in particular, by considering the example of a stone. The point of this method is to start with easier cases, taken from the sensible realm, before moving to the hard cases of the intelligible realm, for not only is the sensible immediately within reach, but also, it is less unified and is, thus, easier to analyse into its constituents. The question that is raised is: what is the nature (*phusis*) of body?³⁷¹ What we learn from this example taken from the sensible world is that the question 'what is the nature of body?' and 'what is the nature of a stone?' have the same answer, namely: the nature of all bodies consists in what is like

369. Translation from Armstrong.

370. VI 2, 4.30-32: πῶς τὸ ἐν τοῦτο πολλά ἐστι, καὶ πῶς τὰ πολλά ἐν ἐστιν, οὐ σύνθετον ἐν ἐκ πολλῶν, ἀλλὰ μία φύσις πολλά·

371. VI 2, 4.1-2.

ousia (*oion ousia*), quantity (*to poson*), quality (*to poion*), and movement (*kinêsis*). These four are what will be identified in VI 3 as the four kinds of the sensible realm. In other words, when one is asking about the nature of a stone, one is not asking about what makes a stone a stone, as opposed to a tree, or about what makes a stone white as opposed to brown. Rather, one is asking about something deeper: the nature of a stone is to be a corporeal entity, it is its being corporeal which makes its being distinctive from other beings — namely intelligible beings — and this is what the kinds are supposed to account for. If there is plurality among the kinds, it is, thus, at this deeper level of what bodies are.

Turning to the soul, the question of how the soul can be one and many is more difficult, for in comparison to the stone, which is extended and hence composite, the soul is absolutely simple. From VI 2, 5.18 to VI 2, 6.8, Plotinus gives an argument for the claim that even in the case of the soul, what its being consists in cannot be reduced to a single principle, Being. The argument works like a *reductio*. The starting point of the argument is that the being of the soul is not the same as the being of the stone. The question is whether the very being of the stone (*to einai tô(i) lithô(i)*) is 'being' (*to einai*) or 'stone-being' (*to lithô(i) einai*), and likewise, whether the very being of the soul consists in just 'being' or in 'soul-being'. 'Soul-being' or 'stone-being' is what Plotinus then calls 'being-such' (*to toionde einai*). The point of the argument is that if we suppose that in the case of the soul and in the case of the stone, there is 'being' (*to einai*) on the one hand, and 'being such' (*to toionde einai*) on the other hand, then it implies that what the soul is 'such as this' (*to toionde*) comes from outside of it, that it is added to its being. Consequently, the very being of the soul, its *ousia*, is not the whole (*holon*) of the soul, but only a part (*meros*) of it. But, in this way, there is no difference between the *ousia* of the soul and the *ousia* of a stone, for they are both cut-off from what make them 'such'. This is precisely the consequence that was to be avoided, namely that there is no difference between what it is to be for a soul and what it is to be for a stone. The outcome of the argument is, thus, that we must reject the division between 'being' (*to einai*) and 'being such' (*to toionde einai*). When we are enquiring about the very nature of the soul, what it is, we are not enquiring into its being, independently from what it is, namely soul, rather, we are enquiring into 'soul-being'. Hence, we are enquiring into the whole of the soul, and not into a part of it, and what it has, it has it in virtue of itself, and not from outside.

It seems that Plotinus has in mind here, as what he is setting himself against, the

genus-diaphora model.³⁷² On this model, Being is the genus and 'soul' a species of being. What makes the soul what it is, namely a soul, and what makes it different from other beings, such as, for example, a stone, is the addition of a difference (*diaphora*) to its being. In this way, all species of being share 'Being' as the genus, such that if both a stone and the soul are species of being, then they do not differ in respect of their genus, but in respect of their specific difference. Another consequence of this model is that the specific difference is, indeed, added to the genus, and hence that what it is for a soul to be involves a lesser degree of unity than other models. For instance, on this model, the specific difference is part of the definition of the species, but is not part of the definition of the genus. The *ti esti* of the genus is, thus, not the same as the *ti esti* of the species. On the part-whole model however, the degree of inclusion is higher, for the whole cannot be defined independently from the parts, and conversely, the parts cannot be defined independently from the whole to which they belong.

5.1.3. Kinêsis and Stasis as the foundation of the multiplicity of Being

To find out what the kinds of Being are, Plotinus first pursues his analysis of the soul, before turning to the Intellect itself. Of the five kinds, Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are introduced first, and Sameness and Otherness are introduced later. In the *Sophist*, as we have argued, Kinêsis and Stasis play a structural role. Kinêsis and Stasis do not stand for properties that things that are may or may not have, but for groups of beings: the unchangeable beings on the one hand, and the changing beings on the other hand. This division among the beings is fixed: being an *akinêton* or a *kinoumênon* is part of a thing's own nature, and neither can Kinêsis and Stasis apply to the same beings — they are not-coreferential — nor can something that is be an *akinêton* at one stage of its life and a *kinoumênon* at another. In the *Sophist*, Kinêsis and Stasis, thus, ground the multiplicity of Being, and it is, then, the structure of the whole that gives this multiplicity the form of a unity. Do they play a similar role in Plotinus? In what follows, I shall argue that Kinêsis and Stasis are introduced first, together with Being, because they are the crux of the idea that Being is a nature that is one-and-many. In particular, I shall argue that Kinêsis and Stasis stand for the insoluble dichotomy between the object of knowledge and what does

372. Note that the word 'diaphora' is used at VI 2, 5.23-24, instead of *to toinde einai*, as what makes the soul what it is.

the knowing.

Just like in the case of body, Plotinus 'looks' into the soul to find them. Kinêsis is found first, together with Being.³⁷³ Kinêsis, however, is not found immediately. What Plotinus first 'sees' in the soul is life (*zôê*) and *ousia*, which, he says, are common to all souls, and also to *Nous* itself. It is only then that he asserts that Kinêsis is the single kind common to all lives.³⁷⁴ Plotinus moves quickly from Life to Kinêsis, without explaining why Kinêsis is the kind and not Life. Nevertheless, this shows two things. First, it shows that the kinds are found through a gradual process of reduction, and that they are the most basic kinds. A kind of being is established when it is not possible to pursue the analysis further. In this respect, Plotinus says that the kinds of being are 'primary' (*prôta*), because they constitute being, as such, and not 'qualified being' (*poia ousia*) nor a particular being (*ousia tina*).³⁷⁵ Second, it also shows that by 'kinêsis', Plotinus does not mean a particular sort of change or motion, nor the sum of all the particular sorts of motions. The reference to life suggests that it is something more fundamental, that somehow animates the soul. Since we are concerned here with the intelligible realm only, that is, a realm in which the soul is separated from the body, it is likely that Kinêsis refers to the life of the soul in the intelligible, which is pure intellectual activity. This finds support when we examine how Plotinus describes the relation between Kinêsis and Being, or between Kinêsis and *Nous*. At VI 2, 7.18, Plotinus says that Kinêsis is the *energeia* of Being (*to on*). Later in VI 2, 8.12, he says that the *energeia* and the movement of the Intellect are its thinking (*to noein*).

As for Stasis, it is presented as if it is obvious that it is one of the kinds of Being. Here, we can think of the Gigantomachia of the *Sophist*, where it is indeed natural for the Friends of the Forms to include Stasis in the intelligible realm, the difficulty being rather to convince them that there is Kinêsis in Being. In this respect, it is interesting that Plotinus uses the same expression that is found in the *Sophist* to characterise Stasis: it is 'what is the same in the same way' (*to kata tauta kai hôsautôs*) and what has 'one *logos*' (*hena logon echon*).³⁷⁶ Accordingly, for Plotinus, too, Stasis does not correspond to a state of privation of motion for things which are normally changing, or which are in motion in other respects. Rather, Stasis positively characterises intelligible entities only. What Plotinus

373. VI 2, 7. 6-7.

374. VI 2, 7.5.

375. VI 2, 15.1-2.

376. VI 2, 7.30-31.

means by *stasis* is developed more clearly in a later passage at VI 3, 27.10. There, Plotinus carefully distinguishes between *stasis*, which he defines as 'what is absolutely unmoved' (to *akinêton pantelôs*), and 'stillness' (*êremia*), which is the mere negation of motion for things which are naturally in movement but for which movement has come to a pause, or at least, for which movement is pausing in one respect at least. On these grounds, Plotinus concludes that Stasis is not a kind of the sensible, for there is no *stasis* in the sensible world, only *êremia*, *stasis* being distinctive of the intelligible.³⁷⁷ As a Platonic reader might have already guessed, Stasis, thus, stands for the object of the Intellect, that is, the Forms. This is confirmed at VI 2, 8.23-24, where Plotinus declares that the Form (*idea*) at rest (*en stasei*) is the limit (*peras*) of the Intellect, and the Intellect is the movement of the Form.

Kinêsis and Stasis are described as being intrinsically related to Being. At 2, 7.19-20, Plotinus asserts that Being and Kinêsis are two *phuseis* which form a single (*mia*) one. He adds that even if one takes them separately (*chôris*), Kinêsis appears in Being (*en tô(i) onti*) and Being in Kinêsis (*en tê(i) kinêsei*). Likewise, at VI 2, 8.19-20, Plotinus states that Stasis is in Being not as imported from outside, but it is 'from' (*ex*) Being and 'in' Being. Here, it must be clear that Kinêsis and Stasis are not mere attributes of Being: it is not the case that there is Being, and that Being can be in movement or at rest. Rather, Kinêsis and Stasis respectively constitute Being. In this respect, a passage at VI 2, 15.11-12 is helpful:

Οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ὄν, εἶτα
κεκίνηται, οὐδὲ ἔστιν ὄν, εἶτα ἔστι· οὐδὲ πάθος ἢ στάσις·

For being is not first being and then moves, nor is it first being and then rests; nor is rest a passive affection of it.³⁷⁸

Nevertheless, although Kinêsis forms a single nature with Being, and likewise for Being and Stasis, Plotinus denies that Kinêsis or Stasis should simply be identified with Being.³⁷⁹

377. By contrast, note that Kinêsis is also a kind in the sensible realm, as is clear from VI 3. The relation between the two is, however, a difficult topic. See, for instance, Chiaradonna (2002), especially the last part of the book.

378. Armstrong's translation, modified.

379. On this point, I think the conclusion of Chiaradonna (2014) about the relation between Being and Kinêsis is misleading. Chiaradonna argues that the distinction between constituent and accidental predicates is irrelevant to VI 2, for Plotinus' *megista genê* are neither essential nor accidental predicates of being. Rather, he says, Kinêsis is 'substance itself' (Chiaradonna translates *ousia* as substance). I concur with the diagnosis, but the solution is ambiguous, for Kinêsis is no more Being itself than Stasis is, and, as a result, none of the great kinds is actually the same as Being. What is to be found is the structure that both allows Being to form a single nature with the other kinds and to maintain the distinctness of each of the kinds.

The point is made clearly at VI 2, 7.32-45, in an argument that is highly reminiscent of *Sophist* 250a-251a. There, Plotinus starts by saying that Stasis seems to be the opposite (*enantion*) of Kinêsis. The question is then whether Stasis, being so closely related to Being, should be identified with Being or whether it is nonetheless different from Being. The argument for the claim that Stasis is different from Being is the following. If Being were to be identical with Stasis, then nothing would prevent Being from being identical with Kinêsis as well, for Being and Kinêsis also form a single nature. But then, Kinêsis and Stasis would be identical to one another through the medium of Being, which is not possible. As a result, Being cannot be identified with either Kinêsis or Stasis, they must be three different kinds.

Now, why is it that Kinêsis and Stasis cannot be identified with one another? It seems that the ground for this is the insoluble dichotomy between what does the knowing and what is the object of knowledge. That thinking is what brings multiplicity within Being can first be seen at the end of VI 2, 6. There, Plotinus says that it is its movement that makes the soul many. Now, one should not be mistaken and think that it is Kinêsis that, by itself, brings multiplicity. Rather, Kinêsis brings multiplicity not because it is Kinêsis, but because it is thinking. The movement of the soul is its thinking, or its contemplating, and what it thinks or contemplates is itself, and it is this dichotomy between the activity of the soul thinking and what it thinks, namely itself, which makes the soul one and many. This can be seen from the very last sentence of this passage, in which Plotinus says that if the soul were to appear as one, it would not be thinking, but it would already be what it thinks.³⁸⁰ In other words, if the soul is not thinking but is only the object of knowledge, then it is one. Thus, the soul is many because it is, at the same time, that which does the thinking and the object of knowledge. Another passage at VI 2, 8.20, links the dichotomy between what does the thinking and the object of thinking with the division between Kinêsis and Stasis. The passage is about the Intellect itself — as opposed to the particular intellects — that is, what presents the highest degree of unity is thus harder to analyse into its constituents. In the Intellect, Stasis is described both as the end point and the starting point of thinking. Plotinus then adds what we already quoted earlier, namely that the Form in *stasis* is the limit of *nous*, and that *nous* is the *kinêsis* of the Form. We can, thus, see how Kinêsis and Stasis exclude each other, while, at the same time, being both within the

380. VI 2, 6.19-20: ἐὰν γὰρ ἓν φανῆ, οὐκ ἐνόησεν, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἤδη ἐκεῖνο.

Intellect. It is this relation between the two that reproduces the activity of thinking, and that grounds the claim that Being cannot be a strict unity, but is one-and-many.

5.2. The structure of the kinds of Being

In the previous section, we saw that the claim that Being is one-and-many plays a central role in *VI 2*, and we have seen that the claim is related to a claim concerning the nature of the kinds of Being — namely, that they are not only kinds but also principles — and to a claim concerning their structure — namely, that they all are on the same level, in the sense that no kind is subsumed under another kind. Moreover, we have seen that among the kinds of Being, *Kinêsis* and *Stasis* are what grounds the multiplicity of Being, in that it is because *Kinêsis* and *Stasis* cannot be identified with one another that they cannot be identified with Being but there must be three distinct kinds.

Now, this raises a question about the relation between the kinds. On the one hand, what emerges from the previous section is that Being occupies a specific place among the kinds, that the relation between the other kinds and Being is different from the relation among the other kinds themselves. On the other hand, there is the question of how they can form a unity at all, if *Kinêsis* and *Stasis* cannot be identified with one another. The question of the relation between the kinds was raised in a particularly acute way by Horn.³⁸¹ Horn is worried by Plotinus' claim that all the kinds are on the same level (*gleichrangig*), none of them being subordinated to any other kind.³⁸² For Horn, this is not compatible with the actual description given by Plotinus, which seems to attribute to Being a particular role. For instance, according to Horn, if the kinds are really on the same level in relation to Being, then their use would simply be 'tautological', in the sense that, for example, nothing determines that beings should be called 'beings' rather than being called '*kinoumena*', or '*akinêta*'.³⁸³ In the same vein, if the kinds of Being are really of equal importance, then nothing would prevent one from equating *Kinêsis* with *Stasis*, just like *Stasis* is equated with Being and *Kinêsis* is equated with Being.³⁸⁴ Here, it seems that Horn has a point, namely: if we are to take Plotinus at his word, then we need to find in *VI 2*

381. Horn (1995).

382. See for instance Horn (1995), p. 129.

383. Horn (1995), pp. 124-125.

384. Horn (1995), p. 120.

something that explains how these different assertions about the *megista genê* can form a coherent theory.

A radical solution to this problem has been suggested by Lavaud.³⁸⁵ Lavaud recognises that there is a tension between Plotinus' assertion that the kinds form a unity and his claim that there is a plurality of kinds. Lavaud thinks, further, that VI 2 generally is filled with contradictory statements, for example, that something is 'the same' and 'not the same', or the co-presence of opposites, Kinêsis and Stasis, in Being.³⁸⁶ To Lavaud, however, the unity claim is the most important one, and he eventually locates the origin of these contradictions in the dialectical process itself. Lavaud's interpretation comes at a high cost, which he says he is ready to pay: we have to accept that dialectic breaks with the principle of non-contradiction.³⁸⁷ According to him, Plotinus has come to a point where logic is transcended.

It does not seem, however, that it is necessary to propose such an extreme solution. Plotinus, himself, seems to be aware of these tensions, and of the need to find the adequate structure to solve them. For instance, at VI 2.2.31, Plotinus warns of the danger of simply bringing all the kinds under one kind, just like if it was 'by chance' (*ex tuchês*) that they form a single nature, thereby suggesting that their union is, on the contrary, governed by certain rules. In what follows, we shall see that, indeed, the search for an adequate structure is one of the fundamental questions that Plotinus pursues in VI 2. Another red herring is to think that the problem simply lies in the ambiguity of the use of the word 'being' by Plotinus. As I said at the beginning of this chapter, Plotinus does not distinguish between 'being' used to refer the kind Being and 'being' to refer to the intelligible realm. As a result, one could be tempted to think that the confusion is simply due to Plotinus not specifying that when he says that the kinds are principles of being, he is referring to 'being' as standing for the intelligible realm and not to 'being' as standing for the kind. This, however, would not solve the problem, for the issue of the different role played by the kind Being also arises in passages in which it is clear that Plotinus has in mind the kind Being, for instance in VI 2,7. Rather, what we shall see is that the distinction between the kind Being and the intelligible plays little role, for the structure of the *megista genê* theory is simply the structure of the intelligible.

385. Lavaud (2008).

386. Lavaud (2008), p. 169.

387. Lavaud (2008), p. 171. In n.2, Lavaud defends his position by comparing Plotinus with Hegel.

I now turn to an important question. It seems that there is an implicit premiss in Horn's criticism, namely that the *Gleichrangigkeit* of the kinds of Being implies that every kind plays the same role. There is a sense in which this is correct; for as we saw, at the beginning of the first section, Plotinus explicitly asserts that all kinds have species subsumed under them and that they are also principles. As a result, the reconstruction defended must be able to account for these two characteristics. Nevertheless, I shall argue that the idea that the kinds are all on the same level, that is, that none of them has any primacy over the other kinds, is compatible with the kinds having different roles or functions, provided that none of them can be what it is independently of the other kinds. In other words, I shall argue that a more promising way of understanding the equality among the kinds of Being is to take them as being mutually interdependent rather than as having the same function strictly speaking.

Different solutions have been put forward by scholars, which we shall examine in what follows. Behind these solutions is also the question of the Aristotelian influence on VI 2. I shall not address this question here, but we can say that, on the whole, the first two solutions examined here give more importance to the Aristotelian influence, whereas the one I shall defend emphasises the break from Aristotle. To begin with, we shall examine the solution put forward by Horn, according to which the kinds of being are structured around the more fundamental *dunamis-energeia* dichotomy. Although the *dunamis-energeia* dichotomy is, indeed, significantly present in VI 2, I shall reject Horn's solution, partly on textual grounds. Next, I shall turn to another solution, which consists in saying that Plotinus takes over the Aristotelian genus-diaphora structure, with some modifications, in particular, in that the kinds are differences that are internal to the kind Being, as Plotinus seems to suggest in VI 2, 19.³⁸⁸ This solution, however, raises some problems, which are identified by Plotinus himself, and it is on this basis that I shall suggest another solution, based on the role of the last two kinds of Being, namely, Sameness and Otherness.

5.2.1. The *dunamis-energeia* dichotomy

According to Horn, the kinds of Being are articulated around the *dunamis-energeia* dichotomy.³⁸⁹ According to Horn, *dunamis* and *energeia* are: 'not characteristics of all

388. See for instance Strange (1981).

389. Horn (1995).

kinds in relation to one another, rather, they produce a division of the kinds into two and are thereby at the same time the intelligible categories of a higher rank. If we replace them with ὄν and νοῦς, then, as it will appear, they even correspond to what Plotinus says explicitly'.³⁹⁰ Horn's starting point is the claim, seen earlier, that Kinêsis is the *energeia* of Being, which he then extends to the other kinds. The idea is that just like the *dunamis-energeia* dichotomy explains the unity of Being and Kinêsis, it also explains the unity of the other kinds with Being. The problem, however, is that Horn's thesis suffers from a lack of textual support. To start with, Horn takes the relation between Being and Kinêsis in Plotinus to be a *dunamis-energeia* relation, it is far from clear that this is, indeed, how Plotinus understands the relation. Certainly, Kinêsis is unmistakably characterised as the *energeia* of Being. But it is not at all plain that Being, in turn, is a *dunamis*. Actually, it seems that Plotinus means just the opposite, for he asserts that Being is *energeia* at two places, at VI 2, 7.20 and at VI 2, 8.16-17.³⁹¹ In the latter passage, he even spells out that it is as *energeia* that Being gathers the two — presumably Kinêsis and Being — in itself. Next, evidence is missing for Horn's claim is that the *energeia* relation between Kinêsis and Stasis serves as the model for the relation between Being and the other kinds. Horn's main textual evidence for this is a passage at VI 2, 15. 6-8, in which Plotinus says that Kinêsis is *energeia*, and so are Being and the other primary kinds.³⁹² It is then precisely on the basis that Kinêsis is the *energeia* of an *energeia* that Plotinus concludes that Kinêsis is neither an accident of Being nor what completes Being, but is Being itself. I thus do not see in this passage any sign that the unity of the great kinds relies on the *dunamis-energeia* dichotomy. Finally, Horn's interpretation entails that *dunamis* and *energeia* are sorts of higher order principles, of which I can see no sign in VI 2. Not that Plotinus takes the *megista genê* theory as the most fundamental principles of everything — he does not, for he thinks that there is something above Being, namely the One — but nothing indicates that *dunamis* and *energeia* are higher order principles.³⁹³

390. Horn (1995), p. 125: 'δύναμις und ἐνέργεια sind nach unserer Einschätzung nicht Charakteristika aller Genera in Bezug auf einander, sondern sie erzeugen eine Zweiteilung der Genera und sind somit gleichsam die intelligiblen Kategorien höherer Ordnung. Setzen wir für sie ὄν und νοῦς ein, dann, so wird sich zeigen, entspricht dies sogar Plotins expliziter Meinung.'

391. VI 2, 7.20: καὶ γὰρ ἐνέργεια τὸ ὄν, οὐ δυνάμει., VI 2, 8.16-18: Ἐνέργεια δὲ ὄν, οὐ δυνάμει [...].

392. Horn (1995), p. 123. The passage is at VI 2, 15.6-10: Εἰ γὰρ ἡ κίνησις ἐνέργειά ἐστιν αὐτῆς, ἐνέργεια δὲ τὸ ὄν καὶ ὅλως τὰ πρῶτα, οὐκ ἂν συμβεβηκὸς εἴη ἡ κίνησις, ἀλλ' ἐνέργεια οὕσα ἐνέργεια ὄντος οὐδ' ἂν συμπληρωτικὸν εἶτι λέγοιτο, ἀλλ' αὐτή·

393. See also VI 2, 7. 16-18.

5.2.2. The genus-diaphora model

Let us now turn to the second model, namely the genus-diaphora model. According to this model, species are the product of a genus and a difference which is outside the genus. For instance, the 'human' is a species of the genus 'animal' which is obtained by the addition of a specific difference which is outside the genus, namely 'rational'. In this way, a human being is a rational animal, by which is indicated both its being subsumed under the genus 'animal' and what makes human beings stand out from other animals, namely that they are rational. To begin with, it is clear that Plotinus denies that Kinêsis and Stasis are species of Being, and he denies it several times in VI 2.³⁹⁴ To demonstrate this, we can consult VI 2, 8.45-48. Having first denied that Being is said of Sameness and Otherness, the last two great kinds, as a kind, he then turns to Being, Kinêsis and Stasis:

Οὐδ' αὖ τῆς κινήσεως	45
οὐδὲ τῆς στάσεως· οὐ γὰρ εἶδη τοῦ ὄντος· ὄντα γὰρ τὰ μὲν	
ὡς εἶδη αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ μετέχοντα αὐτοῦ. Οὐδ' αὖ τὸ ὄν	
μετέχον τούτων ὡς γενῶν αὐτοῦ·	48

Nor [is being the genus] of motion, nor of rest, for they are not species of being; of the beings indeed some are species of being while others participate in being. Nor again does Being participate in them as if they were its genus.³⁹⁵

Now, at VI 2, 19, Plotinus examines another possibility, namely that the kinds of Being are the differences of Being. The starting point of the reflection in VI 2, 19 is indeed the question of how each of the kinds can produce species, which, as we have seen, is one of the two functions assigned to the *megista genê* theory by Plotinus. He rejects the possibility that they can simply produce species on their own, but insists that each kind must mix with something outside of itself in order to produce species. On these grounds, he makes the assumption that the kinds of Being are also its specific differences.³⁹⁶ The

394. For a general argument against the claim that the kinds are species of Being, see VI 2, 2.32.

395. Armstrong, modified.

396. Actually, it seems that, on Horn's assumption, only some of the kinds of Being play this role, for at VI 2, 19.7, he refers to 'the three <kinds> that remain'. Indeed, VI 2, 19 is one of these passages where Plotinus does not consistently refer to the kinds of Being as being five. The treatise starts with four, and then moves to three. I think the three kinds he is thinking about are Kinêsis, Stasis and Sameness, while Otherness is excluded. If this is correct, the reason for excluding Otherness is to be found in the preceding line, in which Plotinus says that the specific differences of Being cannot be taken into not-being. Because of the *Sophist*, it is possible that Plotinus equates Otherness with not-being, and hence does not count Otherness as one of the specific differences of Being.

hypothesis works fine as far as Being is concerned, for it can explain how Being produces species. The problem, however, that Plotinus himself recognises, is that it leaves unexplained how the other kinds can, in turn, produce species. It seems that Plotinus' problem is not so much that the function of specific difference is incompatible with that of a kind, rather, Plotinus' point is that if Being were such a genus, with the other kinds of Being constituting its specific differences, then the outcome of such a combination would be 'the totality of the beings' (*to ek pantōn*). But then, if the species of Being already constitutes the totality of what there is, it is hard to see how the other kinds can have species that are not already among the species of Being. Having raised these problems, Plotinus does not say that the genus-species model should be simply set aside, but that these questions must be pursued further.³⁹⁷ However, there seems to be another model available to him. Let us now turn to that.

5.2.3. The structuring role of Sameness and Otherness

One aspect that has been overlooked in the two other models mentioned above is the role played by Sameness and Otherness. By contrast, I shall now try to show that the role of Sameness and Otherness is not only to separate the different kinds from one another, but also to structure the unity that the kinds form with Being. Just like in the *Sophist*, Sameness and Otherness are introduced after Being, Kinēsis and Stasis. Let me examine the passage that leads to their establishment as fourth and fifth kinds, at VI 2, 8.34-38:

ἄρ' οὐχ ἕτερα ἀλλήλων εἶρηκε καὶ διέστησεν	34
ἐν ἑτερότητι καὶ εἶδε τὴν ἐν τῷ ὄντι ἑτερότητα τρία τιθεῖς	35
καὶ ἐν ἕκαστον, πάλιν δὲ ταῦτα εἰς ἐν καὶ ἐν ἐνὶ καὶ πάντα	
ἔν, εἰς ταὐτὸν αὖ συνάγων καὶ βλέπων ταυτότητα εἶδε γενο- μένην καὶ οὖσαν;	38

Does he not then say that they are different from each other and distinguish them in otherness, and see the otherness in being when he posits three, each of them one? And again, when he brings them back to unity and sees them in a unity all one, does he not collect them into sameness and as he looks at them, see that sameness has come to be and is? ³⁹⁸

This passage is close to the *Sophist*, but, at the same time, marks a departure from it. Just like in the *Sophist*, Plotinus finds Sameness and Otherness in the relation between the three

397. VI 2, 19.17.

398. Armstrong's translation.

other kinds, namely Being, Kinêsis and Stasis. In this respect, this passage is highly reminiscent of *Soph.* 254d14-255a2, where the Stranger for the first time asks whether Sameness and Otherness should be counted as fourth and fifth kinds. But unlike in the *Sophist*, the point is not that Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are the same as themselves and different from the other two kinds. In Plotinus, Sameness and Otherness are connected with the unity that the three kinds form in Being. Otherness is what makes the unity a multiplicity, that is, starting from the three kinds being one, it posits them as three. As for Sameness, it applies in the other direction: starting from the plurality of the *megista genê*, it brings them into one. It is interesting to note that, by contrast, formulations that imply that the three kinds are the same are avoided in the *Sophist*. One reason for this, as we have seen, is to distinguish the part-whole relation as described by Plato from the view that composition is identity. By contrast, Plotinus does not hesitate to say that Kinêsis is both 'the same' (*tauton*) and 'not the same' (*ou tauton*) as Being, and likewise for Stasis.³⁹⁹ Nevertheless, as we know from previous passages, Plotinus is not endorsing the view that Kinêsis and Stasis are simply identical with Being — we have seen that he gives an argument for their distinctness. That he uses Sameness in a qualified sense is shown by a later passage, at VI 2.15.13-15:

[...] καὶ ταὐτὸν δὲ καὶ θάτερον οὐχ ὕστερα, ὅτι μὴ ὕστερον ἐγένε-	13
το πολλά, ἀλλ' ἦν ὅπερ ἦν ἐν πολλά· εἰ δὲ πολλά, καὶ	
ἑτερότης, καὶ εἰ ἐν πολλά, καὶ ταυτότης.	15

[...] and same and other do not come after it, because it did not become many afterwards, but was what it was, one-many; but if it is many, it is also otherness, and if it is one-many, it is also sameness.⁴⁰⁰

This passage confirms what we saw in the previous passage, namely that Sameness and Otherness are linked to the one-many structure of Being. As expected, Otherness is clearly identified here as the principle for multiplicity. But particularly illuminating is that Sameness is associated with being one-and-many, and not with being one *simpliciter*. It thereby shows what we suspected, namely that Sameness here does not stand for a strict identity — otherwise, Being would not be one-and-many, but simply one — but for the specific case of a unity, which is a one-many. If Being, Kinêsis and Stasis were strictly identical, then there would only be Sameness in Being. But we know from the end of VI 2, 7 that Being is actually different from each of them, and hence there is also Otherness. In

399. See for instance VI 2, 7.37.

400. Armstrong's translation.

other words, Plotinus distinguishes two kinds of unity: the unity that characterises the relation between Being and Kinêsis and Stasis, which is a unity that involves some difference, and a unity that does not involve any differentiation, and which, thus, amounts to an identity relation. We actually find a revealing formulation at the end of VI 2, 7: if Being, Kinêsis and Stasis were 'one' (*hen*) without any difference between them (*mêden mêdamê(i) diapherein*), then Being, Kinêsis and Stasis would be 'one' *simpliciter*.⁴⁰¹ Hence the converse: if Being, Kinêsis and Stasis are 'one' with some differences, then they are one-and-many.

The unity between the kinds that is described here sounds, in many respects, close to a part-whole unity in which the whole is a unity over and above its parts.⁴⁰² As we have already seen in the first part of this chapter, the part-whole vocabulary is present in VI, 2.⁴⁰³ In this respect, two more passages are worth mentioning. The first one begins at VI 2, 3.20. In VI, 2.3, Plotinus examines the relation between the One-Being and the kinds.⁴⁰⁴ He first considers the One-Being as the cause of the other kinds, but then suggests that kinds are rather related to the One-Being like parts to a whole: the kinds are 'like parts of it' (*hoion merê autou*), that is 'like elements of it' (*hoion stoicheia autou*), and they form a 'single nature' (*mia phusis*) which is divided into parts by the act of thinking (*epinoia*).⁴⁰⁵ We find in these passages many expressions that are used later to describe the relation between Being and the other kinds; the passage has even been explicitly presented by Plotinus as an anticipation of what he develops in the following sections.⁴⁰⁶ What is interesting for us is that Plotinus' point in bringing in the part-whole model is, precisely, to emphasise the one-and-many relation among the kinds. The second passage is at VI 2, 12.12. Reflecting on the question of how a kind can remain one by itself while being divided into species, the unity of a kind is compared to that of a whole. Again, the part-whole model is once more used to describe how a thing remains one while being also present in many. What these passages show is that one should not be discouraged by Plotinus' terminology, and that the

401. VI 2, 7. 41-45.

402. See also Chiaradonna (2014)'s characterisation of the unity between kinds of being as opposed to the unity of categories, p.222: 'Plotinus' point is that categories are mere factual collection of items bereft of any internal unifying principle [...] A genus, by contrast, should collect the multiple items under it in a properly unified way [...]'.
403. See 5.1.1.

404. It becomes clear in the rest of VI 2 that the One-Being is in fact Being. See esp. VI 2, 10.40-42.

405. VI 2, 3.20-23.

406. See from VI 2, 3.32.

variations observed through *VI 2* testify to his attempt to find the appropriate structure for the kinds of being.

Now, would the part-whole structure, as we have seen in the *Sophist*, be a suitable model for the kinds of Being as described by Plotinus? At the beginning, we identified three conditions. The structure should account for the kinds having species under them; for their being at the same time principles; and for their being on the same level, none of them being prior to the others. Starting with the last condition, the part-whole structure would indeed be suitable, for on this model, the whole is not prior to the parts nor are the parts prior to the whole, although they are playing different roles; rather, on this model, they are mutually dependent. In this sense, the part-whole structure is also compatible with the kinds being at the same time principles, or constituents, for as we have seen in Chapter III, the whole is made of the parts, although it is not identical with them. Finally, the part-whole structure provides a way of understanding how each kind can be a constituent of Being while producing its own species. In this case, the species are actually the extension of each part of the whole, and the species of Being are the extension of the whole.

5.3. Conclusion

Plotinus' *megista genê* theory is, thus, a philosophically motivated attempt to grasp the unity and the diversity of Being. Central to the *megista genê* theory is the view that Being cannot be reduced to a single principle, but involves a plurality of principles related to one another by a particular structure. This view is motivated by the dichotomy between what does the knowing and the object of knowledge within Being. Just like in the *Sophist*, it is Kinêsis and Stasis that, due to their opposition to one another, ground the plurality of Being. The search for a structure, then, corresponds to the dual need to ground the unity of Being while preserving its intrinsic plurality. In this respect, Plotinus has proved innovative, through exploring and confronting different possible ways of conceiving of the structure of the *megista genê* theory. Particularly interesting is his use of Sameness and Otherness to distinguish between a strict unity and a unity over a multiplicity. In this way, the theory of the kinds of Being in Antiquity offers perspectives both in terms of the analysis of structures — like the part-whole structure — and in terms of the search for the ultimate constituents of reality.

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