CHAPTER 2

Pathos *and* Ousia *in Plato's Early Dialogues*

Plato's notion of *pathos*, owing to its highly generic nature, has never been the focus of dedicated scholarly investigation. In fact, within Plato's dialogues, *pathos* encompasses an exceptionally broad range of meanings – virtually covering the entire semantic spectrum of the term and largely mirroring its usage in everyday language. Meanings that would later become standard – such as *pathos* as an affection of the soul or a qualitative modification – represent only some of its possible applications. Moreover, *pathos*, as a concept in its own right, is never explicitly defined or systematically examined by Plato. Even within the collection of Platonic *horoi*, no canonical definition of the term is to be found. This lack of formal treatment, however, does not imply that Plato was uninterested in the concept. On the contrary, alongside the common meanings, more specific – if not outright technical – uses of the term appear in the dialogues. Certain meanings of *pathos*, which emerge for the first time in Plato and are closely tied to his philosophical project, suggest a significant degree of conceptual elaboration. One such case is the ontological understanding of *pathos* – as a predicate that does not express the essence (*ousia*) of a thing, but only an accidental attribute. This ontological sense becomes particularly salient in two dialogues likely belonging to Plato's early period, *Euthyphro* and *Hippias Major*, where *pathos* is presented in contrast to *ousia* within the framework of the Socratic inquiry into the *ti esti*.

A comprehensive account of all the meanings of *pathos* in Plato is beyond the scope of this discussion. It will suffice here to note that *pathos* in Plato's lexicon refers to a remarkably broad spectrum of phenomena, ranging from bodily affections[1] to external

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[1] In *Phd.* 94b–e, for instance, it includes sensations like thirst and burning; in *Cra.* 419c it is associated with pain as dissolution of the body; in *Soph.* 228e it denotes ugliness; and in *Leg.* 1 649d it refers to beauty and strength. In *Phlb.* 33d πάθη include affections that are extinguished in the body before they reach the soul; moreover, emptying and filling, hunger and thirst, painful and pleasant affections

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events,[2] from the cognitive states of the rational soul[3] to the passions that will later be codified in Hellenistic philosophy. It also encompasses all movements of the will, all forms of desire, and the processes or modifications that give rise to these passions.[4] Beyond the specific domain of the soul, *pathos* denotes movement and change in all its forms, both substantial and qualitative.[5] Virtually everything associated with the world of

(35a–36a); mixed affections of the body only (47a–c). Πάθος also designates normal physiological processes, e.g. aging (*Plt.* 270e; *Ti.* 81a), breathing (*Ti.* 79a).

[2] In its more general usage, πάθος designates anything that happens or is undergone. See, for example, *Lach.* 196a; *Phd.* 95b, 96a; *Euthd.* 302d. In most cases, it denotes something unpleasant, but even positive states, such as wealth, are referred to as πάθος (*Leg.* I 649d; cf. *Resp.* II 380e–381a; *Leg.* IV 708b, where external affections like weather are mentioned as influencing both things and people).

[3] The four modes of cognition described in the analogy of the divided line (*Resp.* VI 511d7–8) – νοήσις, διάνοια, πίστις, εἰκασία – that is, ἐπιστήμη and δόξα, are described as παθήματα that occur in the soul. Φρόνησις itself is characterized as a *pathēma* (*Phd.* 79d); self-knowledge is also called a πάθος (*Phlb.* 48d) and πάθη includes λογισμός (*Leg.* II 664c). However, it is relatively rare for ἐπιστήμη to be qualified as a πάθος, especially compared to false opinion or ignorance. Πάθη are predominantly cognitive states with negative connotations, often blending with the notion of illness (e.g., *Ti.* 86b): false δόξα (*Tht.* 187d; *Phdr.* 262b; *Phlb.* 42a; *Resp.* III 413a), ignorance (ἄγνοια, *Soph.* 228e; *Leg.* VIII 819d; not knowing oneself, *Phlb.* 48c), or foolishness (ἀμαθία, *Alc. i* 118b; *Ti.* 86b; *Leg.* I 649c; II 691a).

[4] There are also anticipations of the classification of passions that would later become canonical (cf. Gorgias, *Hel.* 14), though in Plato the groupings remain fluid: pleasure and pain (ἡδονή, λύπη), hope (ἐλπίς), often analyzed as boldness (θάρρος) and fear (φόβος), and desire (ἐπιθυμία). The grouping ἐπιθυμίαι, ἡδοναί, λύπαι, φόβοι appears in *Lach.* 191d (in relation to which καρτερία occurs), *Phd.* 83b (what the philosopher shuns), and *Tht.* 156b (in the theory of κομψότεροι among the αἰσθήσεις). In *Leg.* I 644c, a more systematic classification is offered: the passions are like nerves or cords pulling us toward actions in relation to which virtue is exercised. The primary ones are ἡδονή and λύπη, opposed counselors, followed by ἐλπίς, which encompasses both φόβος and θάρρος, and λογισμός. So ἡδονή, λύπη, and ἐλπιζόμενον (with φόβερον for the painful and θαρραλέον for the pleasant) are grouped accordingly. In *Soph.* 228b, we again find ἐπιθυμίαι, ἡδοναί, λύπαι, contrasted with δόξαι, θυμός (cf. *Leg.* IX 863a), and δόξαι, θυμός. A more explicitly pathological characterization appears in *Leg.* IX 863e–864b, where πάθη are defined as forms of error (ἁμαρτήματα): θυμός, φόβος, ἡδονή, λύπη, φθόνος, ἐπιθυμία. Three main types of error are distinguished: (1) λύπη (θυμός, φόβος); (2) ἡδονή and ἐπιθυμία; (3) desire for hopes and false beliefs concerning the good (ἔφεσις ἐλπίδων καὶ δόξης τῆς ἀληθοῦς περὶ τὸ ἄριστον). In *Phlb.* 47e species of λύπη include ὀργή, φόβος, πόθος, θρῆνος, ἔρως, ζῆλος, φθόνος, and related terms. In *Leg.* X 897a, the motions of the soul are enumerated: βούλεσθαι, σκοπεῖσθαι, βουλεύεσθαι, δοξάζειν, when the soul is χαίρουσα, λυπομένη, θαρροῦσα φοβουμένη, μισοῦσα στέργουσα (states of joy, sorrow, boldness, fear, hatred). See also *Leg.* I 648b–649c, where θυμός, ἔρως, ὕβρις, ἁμαρτία, φιλοκέρδεια, δειλία are listed as affections that can foster courage or recklessness. Sensation (αἴσθησις, *Phlb.* 34a) falls under the genus of πάθος as a shared movement of body and soul in a single affection. It is a specific πάθος that always involves awareness at the level of perception in the one affected. In certain bodily processes, which are still affections, the soul may remain ἀπαθής (*Phlb.* 33e; cf. *Tht.* 166b, 186c; and *Ti.* 64a, which distinguishes between πάθημα αἰσθητόν and ἀναίσθητον, the latter arising gradually and gently: ἠρέμα καὶ κατὰ σμικρόν). Πάθος is also φαντασία, i.e., a representation that appears to the soul not by itself but through sensation (*Soph.* 264a). In an even more foundational sense, πάθη are the modifications and processes that underlie both sensation and the passions of the soul: violent impressions (βιαίαι παθήματα, *Ti.* 42a), consisting primarily of motions of aggregation and separation.

[5] For πάθος as 'coming into being,' see *Prm.* 138e; for 'being itself,' *Prm.* 136b. On perishing – understood as the transition from unity to multiplicity and vice versa, from similarity to dissimilarity, from small to large, and to equality – see *Prm.* 157b and 159a. For motion and rest, see *Prm.* 156c. Additionally, *Leg.* X 894a discusses the πάθος governing generation and the process of growth that

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genesis, with becoming in any form, can be described as *pathos*, since the realm of *genesis* is, for Plato, the domain of *pathos* and *paschein* par excellence.

It thus becomes evident why *pathos* is immediately linked to what, in Plato's metaphysics, possesses a lower degree of ontological value. Given that the opposition between *genesis* and *ousia* constitutes one of the fundamental polarities in his thought, the relationship between *pathos* – which characterizes the sphere of *genesis* – and *ousia* is particularly significant. In what follows, I will examine this relationship as it is developed in the *Euthyphro* and *Hippias Major*, where Plato explicitly sets *pathos* in contrast with *ousia.*

2.1 *Euthyphro*

The second real definition of the *hosion* – the 'holy' – proposed in the *Euthyphro* is that which 'all the gods love' (ὅ ἂν πάντες οἱ θεοὶ φιλῶσιν, 9e1–2). After refuting this definition, Socrates notes that being loved by the gods is a *pathos* of the holy, rather than its *ousia* (11a6–b1). While the logical structure of Socrates' argument has been the subject of extensive analytical scrutiny,[6] it is worthwhile here to consider certain aspects of the passage that shed light specifically on the conception of *pathos*.

At first glance, the logical progression of the argument may not appear crucial for understanding what Socrates means by *pathos*. He explicitly states that the *pathos* of the *hosion* consists in being loved (*phileisthai*) by the gods. This characterization, as noted by scholars focused on the logic of the argument, appears to be simply appended to the preceding discussion.[7] However, the actual development of the passage seems to offer additional insights into the notion of *pathos*, which merit closer attention – especially in light of its complexity. For this reason, it is useful to recall the main stages of the argument.

Socrates first poses the dilemma (10a2–3): Is something holy because it is loved by the gods, or is it loved because it is holy? Euthyphro, however, fails

gives rise to the three dimensions and sensation. πάθος is further characterized as the alternating movement of the cosmos in different directions (*Plt.* 269c; 270b; 270d). Consequently, πάθος also denotes the properties of the elements, tied to the processes defining their nature (cf. *Ti.* 48a; 52d; 56a ff.; 63d). For instance, the πάθος of fire consists in its process of dissolution (διάλυσις), caused by the sharpness of its constituent parts (*Ti.* 61b), as well as the corresponding sensory impression it produces (62a).

[6] See esp. Brown 1964; Geach 1966, 1972: 31–44; Hall 1968; Patzig 1973.

[7] See Brown 1964: 3: "a concluding remark, which I take to lie outside the argument though bearing on its interpretation."

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to grasp the distinction between the two alternatives. Socrates then introduces a contrast between a series of active and corresponding middle-passive participles (φέρον–φερόμενον, ἄγον–ἀγόμενον, ὁρῶν–ὁρώμενον, φιλοῦν–φιλούμενον). Subsequently, he employs an inductive argument, this time contrasting middle-passive participles with third-person present indicative forms. From this comparison, Socrates draws a (not fully explicated) causal relationship, whereby the indicative verb accounts for the participle, but not vice versa (φερόμενον ὅτι φέρεται, 'in the state of being carried because it is carried,' and not φέρεται ὅτι φερόμενον, 'carried because it is in a state of being carried'; cf. Jowett's translation).

Socrates then extends this structure by including *gignesthai* and *paschein* alongside verbs such as 'to see,' 'to move/bring,' and 'to lead,' establishing similar causal relations between *gignetai* and *ginomenon*, *paschei* and *paschon*. By analogy, it follows that the same logic applies to what is loved: something 'is in a state of being loved because it is loved' (φιλούμενον ὅτι φιλεῖται). What the gods love – that is, the *philoumenon* – may then be characterized as *theophiles*, 'dear to the gods.' According to the conclusion of the inductive reasoning, 'something is beloved because it is loved,' but not the other way around (φιλούμενον ὅτι φιλεῖται, and not φιλεῖται ὅτι φιλούμενον). Therefore, we must accept that:

(a) 'Something is dear to the gods because it is loved' (θεοφιλὲς ὅτι φιλεῖται).

Moreover, based on a proposition that Euthyphro had previously accepted rather unproblematically,

(b) 'The holy is loved because it is holy' (τὸ ὅσιον φιλεῖται ὅτι ὅσιον).[8]

Now, if the *hosion* were *identical* (*tauton*, 10e9) with the *theophiles*, it would be possible to substitute one term for the other.[9] This would yield the following reformulation of statement (b): 'What is dear to the gods is loved

[8] The proposition on which the argument's validity depends is not demonstrated, since Euthyphro accepts it without resistance (*Euthphr.* 10d5, 8). In Aristotelian terms, it would be considered an *endoxon*.

[9] Some scholars (e.g., Geach 1972: 38–9) argue that the substitution at the core of the argument rests on a principle analogous to Leibniz's: that two expressions referring to the same entity can be interchanged *salva veritate*, i.e., without altering the truth of the propositions in which they appear. This principle fails in non-extensional contexts, such as causal statements. However, Plato clearly intends an intensional identity (see Brown 1964: 3 n. 4; Allen 1970: 43 n. 1), which remains valid even in causal contexts. Otherwise, he would merely be showing that the class of what is holy and the class of what is loved by the gods have the same extension, without establishing whether they share the same definition.

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because it is dear to the gods' (θεοφιλὲς φιλεῖται ὅτι θεοφιλές), a proposition that is, by the interlocutors' own admission, incompatible with statement (a), which was the result of the *epagōgē*. In (a), substitution would lead to the conclusion that 'something is holy because it is loved' (ὅσιον ὅτι φιλεῖται), a claim that directly contradicts (b), which had been assumed to be true. Therefore, it follows that *hosion* and *theophiles* are not identical.

At this point, Socrates ironically reproaches Euthyphro for having failed to reveal the *ousia* of the holy, offering instead only a *pathos* 'pertaining to it' (περὶ αὐτοῦ, 11a8). This *pathos*, as Socrates immediately clarifies, is what the holy has undergone (πέπονθε): namely, its being loved by the gods.

As previously noted, certain elements of this argument provide valuable indications regarding the notion of *pathos*. Particularly revealing are the examples introduced by Plato during the *epagōgē*. In addition to the verbs initially employed (φέρεσθαι–ἄγεσθαι–ὁράσθαι, and eventually φιλεῖσθαι), Socrates later introduces *gignesthai* and *paschein*. These verbs are not presented merely as further examples but as cases meant to elucidate the meaning of the earlier contrast between participles and middle-passive indicative forms. Indeed, Socrates remarks that the point should now be 'clear' (*katadēlon*).

As frequently occurs in the dialogues, however, Socrates' purported clarifications actually introduce further complexities. The verbs *gignesthai* and *paschein* could not have been included in the initial contrast, since the active vs. middle-passive participial distinction that structured the earlier argument does not apply in their case.[10] Consequently, the supposed clarification merely reiterates the structure of the earlier examples: the indicative form is said to account for the participle (γιγνόμενον because γίγνεται, πάσχον because πάσχει), but not the reverse.[11] The priority of the indicative over the participle is thus simply restated, without resolving the underlying conceptual difficulty.

In fact, rather than clarifying the issue, the argument seems to become more complex. Previously, the discussion centered on transitive verbs, where transitivity played a crucial role in establishing the relationship between agent and patient. Now, however, Socrates introduces intransitive

[10] Regarding γίγνεσθαι, there is no active participle form that corresponds to it. To express the contrast between active and passive, another verb (e.g., ποιεῖν) must be used. Πάσχειν has an active morphological form but retains a passive meaning. Thus, it lacks a passive voice in morphological terms.

[11] In other words, the text does not explain in what way the indicative form clarifies the participle, nor does it specify what kind of causality is at stake.

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verbs.[12] The explanatory function attributed to these new verbs appears to rely on their presumed capacity to generalize the preceding cases – that is, to make explicit the meaning of what has been said by synthesizing and extending it to all possible instances. In other words, they are intended to facilitate the transition from the initial *epagōgē* to a deductive inference, whereby the validity of the rule is extended to the case of the *philoumenon*. Indeed, it is stated immediately afterward that the *philoumenon* will fall under either *paschein* or *gignesthai*.

Yet the introduction of *gignesthai* remains somewhat opaque. It is not entirely clear why this verb is included or in what precise sense it is supposed to function as a generalization of the earlier examples.[13] Admittedly, *gignesthai* can be understood in a passive sense, as 'being generated' or 'being produced,'[14] which would render it analogous to the previous cases. Like *paschein*, it can be opposed to the active verb *poiein*. The situation is more straightforward in the case of *paschein*. The examples given by Socrates are all intended to illustrate instances of *paschein*, and hence of *pathē*: something undergoes a *pathos* when it is affected by the action of another.

From these examples, one may infer that *pathos* does not necessarily entail any alteration or modification of the object's state or nature. Verbs such as *pheresthai* and *agesthai* clearly imply a change in the condition of the object being moved. However, others, like *horasthai* and *phileisthai*, do not, as such, suggest any transformation or alteration in the object itself.[15] In this context, *pathos* assumes a meaning closer to that of the grammatical

[12] As observed by Patzig (1973: 299). Πάσχω can take a complement (πάθη πάσχειν), but unlike typical transitive constructions, an active clause cannot simply be transformed into a passive one.

[13] According to Cohen (1971: 5 n. 9), γίγνεσθαι is introduced because it functions like a modern logical variable: "Socrates is trying, without an adequate logical vocabulary, to generalize from earlier examples; lacking the notion of a variable, he uses the all-purpose verb γίγνεσθαι." Patzig (1973: 299) also notes that γίγνεσθαι can indicate coming into being, being generated or produced, and thus qualifies as a *pathos*, like the other cases previously cited. In this case, Plato could contrast ποιοῦν and γιγνόμενον as agent and patient. None of the previous verbs fall under γίγνεσθαι in this sense. According to Patzig γίγνεσθαι is introduced to generalize the inductive rule to all possible cases – both things that come into being and things that undergo affection. Thus, the disjunction (ἤ, 10c6) must be read as exclusive. Yet, it is unclear what the argument gains by including cases of generation as well.

[14] Γίγνεσθαι clearly has a passive sense in *Hp. mai.* 297a–b, where γιγνόμενον and ποιοῦν are contrasted as effect and cause: the γιγνόμενον is produced by a ποιοῦν (cf. γίγνεσθαι ὑπό τινος, 297b1). Burnet (1924: 128) translates this with 'is done,' which Patzig (1973: 299) supports. Likewise, φέρεσθαι, though it can mean 'to move,' is here clearly passive.

[15] Ὁράσθαι could be interpreted as involving a change in the object perceived, in line with certain ancient theories of perception, according to which the object undergoes modification in being perceived. But this would not apply to φιλεῖσθαι, which is a πάθος that one can undergo without any awareness. Thus, we are far from the later concept of *qualitative change*.

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passive voice,[16] rather than to the later philosophical sense of *pathos* as a 'passion' involving qualitative change (*alloiōsis*). A particularly telling example is found in the *Lysis* (212b), where the *pathos* of the lover is described in terms of being hated (*miseisthai*) or not being loved in return (*mē antiphileisthai*), while the state of being in love – which more properly corresponds to a passion of the soul in the conventional sense – is expressed by a verb in the active diathesis (*philein*).[17]

This observation leads to an important further implication: insofar as something can be the object of an action, the entity whose *ousia*[18] is under investigation is necessarily subject to *paschein* and *pathos*.[19] The *holy* undergoes a *pathos* insofar as it is loved, but this *pathos* cannot entail any modification of its *ousia*. In fact, in the specific case of the *holy*, it is essential – especially from Plato's perspective – that its nature, its *ousia*, remain unaffected by the fact that it is loved by someone.[20] The being of what is affected is thus presupposed by the action of those who love the *hosion*. The crux of Plato's argument, then, is that *pathos*, as it refers to an event or occurrence – something that involves both acting and being acted upon, a *poiēma* and a *pathos*[21] – belongs to the domain of *genesis*, and as such, cannot constitute the *ousia* of a thing. This is because it presupposes the existence (along with its essential predicates) of the object being acted upon.[22] The gods' act of loving the *hosion* presupposes that the *hosion*

[16] This does not imply that Plato is guided by grammatical forms *per se*, but rather that the grammatical passive is the most generic expression of πάθος. This does not exclude an ontological meaning: the grammatical passive always refers to something that exists and is acted upon.

[17] Πάθος, then, also encompasses μὴ ἀντιφιλεῖσθαι – the absence of reciprocated affection – which, in an extended sense, implies the absence of an affection that would induce modification. In such a case, the subject is not the object of an action, even of one that causes no change.

[18] Which will then be the οὐσία itself and therefore the εἶδος, cf., e.g., *Phd.* 76d, 92d.

[19] In this sense πάσχειν also concerns the Form. Even if we do not assume that the theory of Forms is already presupposed in the *Euthyphro*, it seems unlikely that Plato later abandoned this ontological dimension of *pathos* once his theory of Forms was fully developed.

[20] This could explain why γίγνεσθαι is introduced. It may be hypothesized that γίγνεσθαι and πάσχειν together cover the entire domain of being: πάσχειν, as it pertains even to οὐσία – which neither comes into being nor undergoes alteration – has greater extension than γίγνεσθαι. Every γένεσις is a πάθος, but not every πάθος entails γένεσις or alteration. Thus, the inductive rule would apply not only to the world of becoming (γένεσις) but also to the world of οὐσία, insofar as it is subject to πάσχειν.

[21] See *Grg.* 476b, where the mutual implication of πάσχειν and ποιεῖν is emphasized: if someone acts, there must be someone affected by that action – the patient (*patior*) is affected in the way the agent acts.

[22] This does not necessarily apply to the definition of relative predicates, but the *ousia* in question here is not being treated as such. Accordingly, in the Platonic framework, the argument's validity should rest on demonstrating the pre-existence of the ὅσιον (πρότερον ὑπάρχον), its existence *ab aeterno*. This demonstration, however, is unnecessary in the dialogue, since Euthyphro accepts without dispute that φιλεῖται ὅτι ὅσιον.

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already subsists independently; it is something that already exists prior to the action.

In the specific context of the *Euthyphro*, *pathos* takes on yet another possible meaning. It may function as a predicate that satisfies the conditions of truth and universality, or even necessity. Although Plato does not explicitly state – *totidem verbis* – in the dialogues that the gods always and necessarily love what is holy, such a conclusion may be drawn from comparison with numerous other passages. It is often affirmed that the divine, being good and just, necessarily loves that which is akin to itself.[23] Thus, it is always true that the *hosion* is loved by the gods, whereas to suggest that the gods might love the unjust or engage in unjust actions would be, for Plato, impious. This predicate of the *hosion* (*theophiles*) is therefore true, yet it cannot, as we have seen, constitute its *ousia*. It is an accidental predicate – not because it might fail to apply, but because it is not part of the *logos* of the *ousia*.[24] Nevertheless, *pathos* can still represent a significant characteristic of the thing in question, especially insofar as it helps establish that the *hosion* is always loved by the gods.

2.2 *Hippias Major*

An opposition between *pathos* and *ousia* reappears in the *Hippias Major*, in the context of a definition – offered by Socrates himself, though presented as *opinio communis* – according to which the beautiful (*kalon*) is 'that which is pleasant through hearing and sight' (τὸ δι' ἀκοῆς καὶ δι' ὄψεως ἡδύ, 298a6–7), or alternatively, 'that part of the pleasant which occurs for sight and hearing' (τὸ μέρος τοῦ ἡδέος, τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ ὄψει τε καὶ ἀκοῇ γιγνόμενον, 299b3–4). It is worth reviewing the key points of Socrates' refutation of this definition, with particular attention to the notions of *pathos* and *ousia*.

Socrates notes that the definition cannot apply to each of the two pleasures taken individually: neither is, in itself, 'pleasant through hearing and sight' (299c). However, the term *kalon* should apply to each of them separately – what is pleasant for hearing and what is pleasant for sight – as well as to the two taken together. What, then, is the common feature (*koinon*, 300a10) in virtue of which we call both beautiful? It cannot be their occurrence through sight *or* hearing, since this attribute would belong

[23] Cf. *Resp*. II 362c, 379a–382e; X 613a; *Phlb*. 39e; 40b; *Leg*. X 899a–905e and Erler 1987: 158–9.
[24] According to Guthrie 1975: 113, the πάθος in question is analogous to Aristotle's notion of a *proper attribute* (ἴδιον), as defined in *Top*. I 4, 101b.

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to one, but not the other. Nor can the common feature be that they are simply pleasures, since that would entail that beautiful is predicated of all pleasures – a result excluded by the definition as stated. Rather, what is sought must be something both common to the two and 'specific to each' (ἑκατέρᾳ ἰδίᾳ). Thus, it cannot be a *pathēma* (305b5) by which *both* are affected (πεπόνθασιν, 300b4), but not *each* one of them individually. At this point, Hippias expresses skepticism, asserting that he cannot conceive of a situation in which two pleasures are jointly affected by a *pathos* that does not affect each individually. Socrates, however, insists on the logical possibility that two subjects may share an affection that neither experiences separately.

In support of his position, Hippias attempts to demonstrate the impossibility of such a scenario by offering examples of predicates that individuals and pairs share, and vice versa. He himself introduces the pair *pathos–ousia* (301b8), stating that the impossibility in question concerns either *pathos* or *ousia* (ἢ πάθος ἢ οὐσίαν). Socrates then makes an example based on the concepts of 'one' and 'two': each of them – Socrates and Hippias – undergoes the *pathos* (πέπονθε, 302a2) of being 'one,' and therefore 'odd,' but together they constitute 'two,' and thus are 'even.' Taken individually, neither is 'two' or 'even.'

Socrates, however, reminds Hippias that whatever made the pleasures beautiful had to be something that is predicated of both considered jointly and each considered individually, rather than something that is predicated of both but not of each, or of each but not of both. That is, the subject to which the predicate 'beautiful' is to apply must be such in virtue of an *ousia* common to *both* (ἀμφότερα, 302c5). At this point, the earlier argument is repeated and expanded: what is both common to the two and specific to each? The answer would seem to be: being a pleasure. However, this cannot be accepted, for it would imply that all pleasures are beautiful. What was instead shared was the *pathos* of coming into being through sight and hearing (302e3–6). Yet this attribute applies only to the pleasures considered jointly, not to each separately. Taken together, then, they are beautiful; considered individually, they are not. However, the *kalon* must be predicable of both the group and each member of the group. For it would be absurd to maintain that the beautiful can be predicated of two things separately, but not collectively – or vice versa. The proposed definition must therefore be rejected, since it leads to the conclusion that the two are beautiful together, but not each in itself.

The central role played by the notions of *pathos* and *ousia* in this argument is immediately evident, and it raises the question of whether

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their usage here is consistent with Plato's employment of these terms in the *Euthyphro* and elsewhere in the dialogues.

It is noteworthy that the very concepts under scrutiny have historically contributed to scholarly doubts regarding the authenticity of the *Hippias Major*. Max Pohlenz, for example, argued that *ousia* and *pathos* are employed in this dialogue with meanings that appear for the first time only in Aristotle – namely, *ousia* as determinate substance and *pathos* as accidental attribute.[25] On this basis, Pohlenz emphasized the contrast between *phileisthai* understood as *pathos* in the *Euthyphro* and the *pathos* of being 'one' and 'odd' in the *Hippias Major*. In his view, no analogous usage occurs in Plato's authentic works, whereas clear parallels can be found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (see N 2, 1088a17 ff., where 'even' and 'odd' are classified as *pathē* of numbers).

Another proponent of the dialogue's *athetēsis*, Dorothy Tarrant, also considered the argumentation obscure and therefore uncharacteristic of Plato's style and method.[26] As an example of such obscurity, Tarrant cites 302e6, where Socrates, while discussing what belongs to both hearing and sight, substitutes *pathos* for *ousia*, which had been mentioned earlier at 302c5, without any apparent explanation.

Paul Friedländer also observed a similar lack of distinction between *pathos* and *ousia* – for instance, at 301b8.[27] However, unlike Pohlenz and Tarrant, Friedländer did not attribute this indistinction to confusion on Plato's part. Rather, he interpreted it as a reflection of Hippias' conceptual imprecision, which Plato deliberately constructs for dialectical effect. According to Friedländer, Socrates himself is capable of distinguishing *ousia*, as the essence of the beautiful, from *pathos*, understood as the state of 'being-beautiful.'

Other defenders of the dialogue's authenticity, such as Marion Soreth, have argued that the terms *ousia* and *pathos* are not yet employed here in a fully technical Aristotelian sense.[28] Consequently, one should not expect to find in the *Hippias Major* a systematic theory of *pathos* in the later metaphysical sense, but rather a more fluid and context-dependent usage consistent with early Platonic thought.

It is worth directing our attention to a further passage, particularly 300d7–e7, which deserves more careful scrutiny. Here, Hippias reiterates his rejection of Socrates' claim that two things together can undergo an affection that neither of them individually experiences. Socrates prefaces

[25] Cf. Pohlenz 1913: 127; 1931: 306. [26] Cf. Tarrant 1928. [27] Cf. Friedländer 1928: 292 n. 6.
[28] Cf. Soreth 1963: 49–63.

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his reply with his customary assurance that he will now clarify his thought, yet once again, the matter appears to grow more complex rather than simpler. What is the innovation, compared to what was previously said, that is intended to shed light on the argument? It lies in Socrates' introduction of a new formulation for what had earlier been referred to as *paschein* and *pathēma*: now he no longer speaks merely of *paschein*, but of *paschein einai*.

According to this new expression, it is possible that something that neither Socrates 'suffers to be' (πέπονθα εἶναι), nor does Hippias, may nonetheless be something that *both together* (ἀμφότεροι) 'suffer to be'; and that what neither is individually, they may both 'suffer to be' (πεπόνθαμεν εἶναι) collectively. Hippias' remark that this would involve 'even greater wonders' (τέρατα ἔτι μείζω) than those previously discussed suggests that he indeed sensed a new level of complexity or paradox in this formulation. The task, then, is to determine what Hippias understood by this reference to 'even greater wonders.'[29]

An answer may be found in the two types of examples Hippias offers in reply. Earlier (300b), he had referred only to *pathos* and *pathēma*. But now, through the examples he introduces, Hippias reveals that he primarily understands *pathos* in its most literal and immediate sense – namely, undergoing something painful or harmful: being in pain, being wounded, being beaten (cf. κεκμηκώς and τετρωμένος, 301a1–2). In such cases, it is indeed impossible for a pair to suffer something that neither individual suffers separately.

This same impossibility (and here we move to the second type of example) applies to predicative judgments where the verb 'to be' functions as a copula – for example, 'Hippias and Socrates are just, wise, young, old' (301a4–5). The disjunction between *pathos* and *ousia* that Hippias proposes at 301b8 must be understood in reference to these two sets of examples: the impossibility he highlights concerns both types of judgments – those that involve 'being,' where *ousia* refers to what is predicated of the subject, and those that involve affections in the immediate, experiential sense described above. Since this disjunction effectively summarizes the examples previously considered, the expression ἢ πάθος ἢ οὐσίαν need not, in my view, imply any identity or confusion between the two terms. It does not, therefore, indicate a conceptual conflation, as Friedländer and, more

[29] Interpreters of the dialogue have often overlooked this issue. One attempt to address it can be found in Soreth's penetrating analysis (1963: 54–6), which interprets Hippias' expression in light of the expanded scope of being.

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recently, Paul Woodruff have suggested.[30] Rather, if anything, it reflects a restricted understanding of *ousia* and especially of *pathos*, one that does not go beyond the common, non-technical meanings of the terms.[31]

In other words, Hippias continues to understand only the distinction between *paschein* and *einai*, while he evidently has not fully grasped the implications of the notion *paschein einai*. Socrates, however, by introducing this new expression, intends to identify a different type of predication, to which he applies the principle stated earlier – namely, that a pair may undergo an affection that is not predicated of either element individually. These are cases of judgments in which the verb 'to be' typically appears, and which, according to the ordinary usage presupposed by Hippias, would not normally be classified as *pathē*. In such judgments, however, 'being' (that is, *paschein einai*) designates something that does not inherently belong to each item considered individually, insofar as it is predicated of the pair (*amphotera*), but not of each element separately (*ekateron*). The phrase *paschein einai* thus qualifies *einai* in an accidental sense, where *paschein* means 'to happen' or 'to occur,' and may serve as a near synonym of the more common expression *tynchanein einai* ('happen to be').[32] What Hippias considers impossible is precisely this kind of predication. We are thus likely dealing with the first philosophical formulation of a distinction between different meanings of 'being' and the function of the copula.

The 'greater wonders,' then, lie in the fact that the possibility Socrates puts forward – and which Hippias rejects – now concerns not only

[30] According to Woodruff (1982: 86), the phrase πάθος ἢ οὐσία is a redundant rhetorical formulation characteristic of Hippias' style.

[31] Rightly Malcolm 1968: 190 n. 3 underlines that it is legitimate to maintain, wrongly or not, that the impossibility of applying a predicate to two things to which that predicate does not apply individually can concern both substantial and accidental predicates, and that therefore a conceptual confusion need not be attributed to Hippias. However, what is more problematic in Hippias' position is rather his insufficient grasp of the range of meanings of πάθος and οὐσία.

[32] The expression πάσχειν εἶναι appears elsewhere in Plato's dialogues. See *Prm.* 140a2, in the context of the first hypothesis, regarding the affections the One might undergo; 140a3 (ταὐτόν); 140a6 (ἕτερον); 140a7; 147c7; 148a4 (ἕτερον). The only attribute that applies to the One in an absolute sense is unity itself. Any other predicate can only be an affection (πάθος). For the One of the first hypothesis, both ταὐτόν and ἕτερον can only be πάθη, as they are relational predicates, whereas its absolute being excludes that such predicates belong to it *in themselves*. Therefore, when Plato hypothetically attributes such predicates to the One, he uses the expression πάσχειν εἶναι. See also 158e. Another significant occurrence is in *Soph.* 245e ff., in the context of the refutation of the monists, where the problem arises whether the One is a ὅλον (a whole). If it were, the predicate of unity would be merely an affection; that is, the predicate of oneness (πεπονθός τε . . . ἓν εἶναι) would be attributed to the ὄν-ὅλον in the sense that what is divided into parts possesses the affection (πάθος) of oneness as the unity of its parts. However, what is truly one (τὸ ἀληθῶς ὄν) and without parts (ἀμερές) cannot suffer this affection. Thus, the expression serves Plato to signal with greater clarity the accidental meaning of being.

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affections in the conventional sense, but being itself. Since the scope is now broader, the marvel is all the more significant. If Hippias maintains the impossibility of the earlier examples, then he must find it even more troubling when this impossibility is applied to *ousia*, the being of things. A denial of this impossibility would be, for him, even more unsettling.

As we have seen, the example Socrates provides to illustrate the kind of possibility he defends is that of 'one' and 'two,' further specified in terms of 'odd' and 'even.' Being 'one' is a *pathos* of this kind – just as are the later examples of the paradoxical pair 'rational–irrational' (ῥητὰ–ἄρρητα),[33] as well as the very designations 'each–both' (ἑκάτερον–ἀμφότερον). Socrates will even claim that there are 'myriads' of such affections. The corollary that may be drawn from this is the following: if it is possible to attribute a predicate to a pair of entities, but not to either of them individually – or, conversely, to each individually but not to both together – then we are in the presence of a *pathos*.[34] In contrast, if something is the *ousia* – the essential being – shared by multiple subjects, then it cannot be predicated of them collectively without also being predicated of each individually, and vice versa. The distinction lies precisely in this: *pathos* allows for distributive irregularity; *ousia* does not.

In the specific case of the definition under examination, the *pathos* that Socrates identifies is the 'being through sight and hearing' (δι' ὄψεως καὶ ἀκοῆς εἶναι), which constitutes an affection of pleasures (302e) and may be defined as a *pathos* for two distinct reasons.

(1) The expression is synonymous with 'that which comes into being through sight and hearing' (τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ ὄψει τε καὶ ἀκοῇ γιγνόμενον), and as we saw in the *Euthyphro*, *gignesthai* is a *pathos* – in this case, the fact of being perceived through sight or hearing. In this sense, Plato could also reject a definition that referred solely to the pleasures of sight or solely to those of hearing: Is something beautiful because it is perceived by sight, or is being perceived by sight something that merely happens to the beautiful? Plato would evidently favor the second alternative. For being perceived is a *pathos* – it presupposes the prior existence of that which is perceived and its already possessing the predicate 'beautiful.' It is not the mere fact of being perceived that makes something beautiful. However, Plato is here confronting a well-established definition, one that is at least partially correct, and

[33] On this point, see Woodruff 1982: 87, also for earlier interpretations.
[34] It is clear that an accidental predicate does not necessarily follow the same rule.

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thus requires a specific, ad hoc refutation.[35] This necessity leads him to emphasize the definition's accidental character.

(2) The expression 'being through sight and hearing' also qualifies as a *pathos* insofar as, according to the aforementioned corollary, a *pathos* is that which may be predicated of both pleasures taken together (ἀμφότερα), but not of each individually (cf. 299c; 302e6). Yet the precise determination of this *pathos* proves theoretically problematic, since nothing is in fact perceived simultaneously by both sight and hearing. As Socrates observes – with Hippias' full assent – what is pleasant to sight is not pleasant to both sight and hearing; the same applies to what is pleasant to hearing.[36] The expression, then, can only refer to the aggregate of pleasures perceived by sight and by hearing,[37] serving merely to indicate the extension of the concept under consideration.[38]

It is for this reason that Plato resorts to a refutation strategy that is characteristic of his dialectical method. Assuming that the totality of beautiful things coincides with the totality of pleasures derived from

[35] Plato might well subscribe to the thesis that part of what is beautiful is constituted by the pleasures of sight and hearing. See *Phlb.* 51b ff., where these pleasures are accorded a privileged status because of their purity. Even in ordinary language, the use of the adjective 'beautiful' is typically restricted to this type of pleasure.

[36] Cf. *Tht.* 185a.

[37] The πάθος under discussion could be interpreted as the belonging to this set. In that case, however, it would be legitimate to say that membership in this set is predicated of each individual item. Thus, Plato would be wrong in denying this. When he states that this *pathos* belongs to both pleasures together (ἀμφότερα) but not to each individually (ἑκάτερον), he is evidently referring to the falsity of a judgment such as: 'the pleasures of sight are the pleasures of sight and hearing' (*Hi. mai.* 299c4–5). The corresponding true judgment at this point would be: ἀμφότερά ἐστι δι' ἀκοῆς καὶ ὄψεως – 'both, the pleasures of sight and those of hearing, are for sight and hearing,' i.e., they are pleasures of sight and hearing – which is tautological. In this sense, it can be said that this πάθος belongs to both pleasures together. The πάθος in question, then, appears conceptually inconsistent. Nevertheless, the significant outcome of the argument lies in the identification of a specific type of predication – one that refers not to a thing in itself, but to a thing considered in relation to others. See also *Resp.* VII 524a–b; *Soph.* 243c–e; *Tht.* 185a; *Prm.* 143, but especially 158e–159a. In the analogous definition found in Aristotle's *Topics* (see *Top.* VI 7, 146a22: τὸ δι' ὄψεως ἢ τὸ δι' ἀκοῆς ἡδύ), what is most noteworthy is not the substitution of ἤ for καί, but the repetition of τό, which removes any ambiguity and clarifies that the definition refers to a second-order class – the sum of two distinct classes. Basing on this formulation, the argument of the *Hippias Major* can no longer be put forward in the same terms

[38] See a similar argument in *Soph.* 250a–c: from the 'extensional' point of view, what *is* can be exhausted by κίνησις and στάσις (everything that exists is either in motion or at rest). From the 'intensional' point of view, however, the situation is different: both motion and stillness, individually and together, are said 'to be.' This 'being' cannot coincide with either 'moving' or 'standing still,' which are predicated of each separately, but not of both simultaneously. It would therefore be a mistake to define *being* (ὄν) as κίνησις and στάσις taken together (συναμφότερον). The limits of this type of definitions are thus brought to light.

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sight and hearing, it becomes legitimate to ask what justifies calling both – that is, the pleasures of sight and those of hearing – 'beautiful.' This is precisely the question raised at 300a9–b1: What is that common element present in both and in each individually that makes them beautiful? (cf. 302d). According to the account (*logos*) provided, this common element should be 'that which is pleasant for sight and hearing,' which, however, turns out to be a *pathos*. In this sense, we find a first point of convergence with the *Euthyphro*: what the *logos* has yielded is merely a *pathos*. The analogies with the *Euthyphro* could be extended even further, were we to find the *pathos–ousia* opposition formulated in the same terms.

In this regard, it is worth examining 302b6 ff., which contains the only instance in the *Hippias Major* where Socrates uses the term *ousia* in a sense comparable to that found in the *Euthyphro*. Here, Socrates reiterates that what had been sought was that which makes both pleasures – and each individually – beautiful, given that the pleasures of sight and of hearing are beautiful according to both these modalities. He claims, in line with his earlier exposition of the thesis, that they must be beautiful thanks to the *ousia* that belongs to both (*amphotera*), rather than to something 'lacking in one or the other' (κατὰ τὰ ἕτερα ἀπολειπομένῃ).

Of particular interest in this passage is the transition from the feminine forms *amphoterai* and *hekatera* (clearly referring to the *pleasures*, ἡδοναί) to the neuter *amphotera*. As has been noted in prior scholarship,[39] the neuter here must refer not to the pleasures themselves, but to the two feminine terms considered collectively – that is, to the expression 'both and each' (ἀμφότεραι τε καὶ ἑκατέρα). Thus, the *ousia* in question must be something that is predicated both of the pleasures of sight and of hearing taken together, and of each of them individually.

It is also important to observe that the *ousia* to which Socrates refers is said to be lacking in one of the two cases. This detail strongly suggests that in this particular context οὐσία cannot mean 'essence' in the strictest sense. Indeed, Socrates speaks of οὐσία even in reference to that which is predicated of both but not of each, or of each but not both – precisely what he had earlier described as a *pathos*.[40] *Ousia*, therefore, appears here to bear a meaning closer to that of 'mode of being.' When we say that 'they are

[39] Cf. Soreth 1963: 58–9 n. 3; Woodruff 1982: 86.

[40] Similarly, at 302c we read that pleasures must be beautiful not by that by which each of them is affected (πεπονθυῖα) but not both, nor both but not each, but by that by which both *and* each are affected (*sc.* πεπονθυῖαι). Therefore, πάσχειν is referred to what is predicated of each *and* both, where one would expect the use of οὐσία.

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beautiful,' the verb 'to be' in this case denotes 'being both' and 'being each'; in other cases, οὐσία denotes 'being both but not each,' or vice versa.

Nonetheless, this does not entirely preclude the possibility that *ousia* already carries a more specific sense, approaching that of 'essence.' Even in the passage at hand, Socrates, when referring to *ousia*, invokes a point he had made earlier. The passage to which he refers can only be 300a9–b2, where he speaks of 'something identical and common' (τι τὸ αὐτό . . . κοινόν) that 'makes them beautiful' (ὅ ποιεῖ αὐτὰς καλὰς εἶναι) and 'is present in them both collectively and individually' (ἔπεστι κοινῇ καὶ ἑκατέρᾳ ἰδίᾳ). This 'something,' then, could plausibly be designated by the term οὐσία, with a meaning close to 'essence' in the strongest sense: that in which the beautiful consists; that by virtue of which something may be called beautiful; that which exercises the characteristic causality of the Forms. Moreover, Socrates explicitly affirms that he still believes this to be the case (καὶ ἔτι νῦν οἶομαι, 302c7).

We are thus situated in what may be described as the critical gestation phase of the technical meaning of the term *ousia*, which in Plato begins to acquire more specific semantic values, even though it may continue to be used in its more conventional sense.[41] There is, therefore, no inconsistency in the terminology employed, contrary to the claims made by some interpreters (see earlier in this paper). When Socrates refers to *ousia* at 302c, he is alluding to the definition that has not been found – that is, to the *ousia* that ought to have explained why the pleasures in question are beautiful. When he speaks of *pathos* at 302e6, by contrast, he is referring to the definition that was in fact offered, which turns out to be merely an accidental predicate.[42]

The fundamental situation here thus mirrors that of the *Euthyphro*: οὐσία was what was sought, while what was actually supplied by the *logos* was only a *pathos* – in this case, of pleasures, but indirectly also of the beautiful itself.[43] The meaning of *pathos* here is immediately distinct from its usage in the *Euthyphro*, where it denoted 'undergoing' or 'being affected

[41] This also appears in other dialogues concerning the term οὐσία and, more generally, fundamental terms such as εἶδος, ἰδέα, which Plato borrows from ordinary language and resemanticizes in a technical sense. According to Taylor (1926: 239), Socrates' use of οὐσία and πάθος without further explanation suggests that they already belonged to a familiar logical vocabulary. However, Euthyphro immediately understands that 'being loved' is a πάθος because it signifies undergoing something; the additional, more technical meaning of accidental predicate emerges implicitly.

[42] See also Woodruff (1982: 86). The substitution of οὐσία with πάθος is thus legitimate, and not, as argued by Soreth (1963: 58 n. 3) in response to Pohlenz, due to any indeterminacy in meaning. This might apply to Hippias, but not to Socrates.

[43] This is also recognized by Woodruff (1982: 86–87), who defines πάθος as "anything true of a subject," and the οὐσία of something as "what it is to be that something, its Socratic definition." In this view, οὐσίαι are a "proper subset of πάθη." However, this does not appear to be the primary

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by' something. However, in the *Hippias Major*, the particular kind of definition under examination leads to the identification of a still more specific meaning of *pathos*, along with a distinctive kind of predication – namely, something that is not predicated of a thing *in itself*, but only of a thing considered in conjunction with others.[44] What these two uses of *pathos* have in common is their proximity to the notion of *accident*, in the sense of a predicate that does not belong to the *logos* of the *ousia*: for example, being loved by the gods in the case of the *hosion*, or being pleasant to sight and hearing in the case of the beautiful.

The analysis of the *Hippias Major* therefore shows that both *pathos* and *ousia* may be employed in their ordinary, pre-theoretical senses. At the same time, however, the dialogue reveals more specific, philosophically salient uses of these terms – uses of which Plato is fully aware, and which already display a notable level of conceptual precision. Nevertheless, as with many central notions in Plato's philosophy, these uses are not introduced through the imposition of a rigid or prescriptive technical vocabulary.

This Platonic conception of *pathos* ultimately displays a remarkable continuity: the meaning the term initially assumes in the *Euthyphro* reappears in the *Sophist*, where it proves to be rich in implications.[45] The *paschein einai* of the *Hippias Major*, as we have seen, anticipates usages that

characterization of πάθος in the *Hippias Major*, as there is no mention of truth in this regard. Defining οὐσία as a subclass of πάθος – which is correct if one assumes πάθος to be the class of possible true judgments about something – could give the impression that Plato sees οὐσία as a particular kind of πάθος. Nevertheless, the effort to distinguish and contrast these categories is evident, particularly in the *Euthyphro*.

[44] This conceptual acquisition is significant, regardless of the validity of the Platonic argument or its potential applications to the categories used by Socrates and Hippias. See the critique in Woodruff 1982: 83–4: two individually weak subjects may be strong together; two entities that are ugly on their own may be beautiful when considered jointly (e.g., two pieces of a sculpture by Henry Moore). While the first objection is acceptable, with regard to the second it may be noted that the judgment of beauty pertains not to the mere sum of the two pieces, but to the fact that they are combined in a certain way. The unresolved ambiguity concerns the meaning of ἀμφότερα, as already noted by Aristotle (cf. *Pol.* II 3, 1261b20–30; II 5, 1264b17–21).

[45] This is a much-discussed and crucial passage. Here, the Stranger criticizes the position of the εἰδῶν φίλοι (see *Soph.* 248a–249d). The idealists draw a sharp distinction between γένεσις and οὐσία, and would accept the definition of being as δύναμις τοῦ πάσχειν καὶ ποιεῖν. Yet, they also admit the possibility of knowledge, and therefore – on the basis of a hypothetically consistent development of their view – should reject the idea that γιγνώσκεσθαι is a πάθημα. If οὐσία were known, it would be in motion because it would suffer (κινεῖσθαι διὰ τὸ πάσχειν), which is inappropriate for what is at rest (τὸ ἠρεμοῦν). We will limit ourselves here to noting the value of interpreting this passage starting from the conception of πάθος in the *Euthyphro*. In any case, the position of the 'friends of Forms,' who deny that πάθος affects οὐσία due to the resulting implication of motion, contrasts with the *Euthyphro*, which allows for πάθη of οὐσία that do not alter the nature of the subject. This should be considered when attempting to identify the position of the idealists as an earlier stage in Plato's thought. Only if one adopts a meaning of πάθος different from that in the *Euthyphro* can the statement 'he suffers, therefore he moves' (κινεῖσθαι διὰ τὸ πάσχειν) be regarded as valid.

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are found in both the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*. In the dialogues examined here, it is possible to discern the notion of accidental predication at the very moment of its conceptual emergence: *pathos* is understood as something that pertains to the realm of becoming, and therefore does not contribute to the determination of immutable essence, though it may nonetheless constitute a predicate of significant relevance. In Aristotle, however, *pathos* will not become the standard term for expressing accidental predication.

The interest of this opposition between *pathos* and *ousia* lies in the fact that it articulates one of the fundamental polarities of Platonic thought. Yet the extension of *pathos* toward *ousia*, already suggested in the *Euthyphro*, intimates a possible interaction, communication, or mediation between these two domains. In this sense, it anticipates one of the central motifs of later Platonic speculation.

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