Parmenides of Elea

A Verse Translation with Interpretative Essays and Commentary to the Text

Martin J. Henn

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MARTIN J. HENN

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This book
is dedicated to
Professor Stan Lombardo
Classics, University of Kansas,
who once guided me along the path to light:
᾽Εὰν ᾖς φιλομαθής, ἔσει πολυμαθής.

If you are a lover of learning, full treasures of wisdom shall you attain!
—Isocrates' lintel inscription above the doors to his school

I am the hope of my father
B.L. Henn (1932 - 2003), who worked away his life,
so that I could live mine. His devotion will never be spent in vain—
I love you with all my heart and always will.

Contents

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Parmenides and His Predecessors

THE POET AS SHAMAN AND SINGER OF MYSTERIES IN THE HOMERIC STYLE

Parmenides of Elea (born c. 515 BC[1]) was a poet extraordinarily gifted with profound philosophical insight and skillful improvisation. Yet his creative prowess was doubted in the fifth century AD by the philosopher Proclus, who criticized him for exhibiting an "inarticulate" and "obscure" literary style (cf. Diels 28 A17), claiming that "although obligated, because of the poetic form itself, to make use of metaphorical names, figures, and turns of speech, he embraced the *most unadorned, dry,* and *simplistic* form of communication" (cf. Diels 28 A18).[2] Proclus condemns the poet's style with harsh words: ἀκαλλώπιστον, ἰσχνόν, καθαρόν, each suggesting deficiency and dullness. Proclus is saying here that Parmenides' musical phrasing and diction lacked the natural, free-flowing, and organic unity so plainly evident in the Homeric tradition. We know, according to Coxon's research, however, that Parmenides' diction differs only slightly from Homer, and that there are only five words in Parmenides that are not directly related to or compounded from words used by Homer. Parmenidean diction is Homeric through and through. The question is not, then, whether Parmenides succeeded in emulating the Homeric diction, for this he plainly did; the question is whether Parmenides succeeded in emulating the *musical phrasing* of Homer—and this question requires some analysis of Parmenides' word-breaks and rhythmical cola. In order to examine the weight and possible merit of Proclus' criticism, we must first come to terms with the basic structure of the Homeric verse.

A line of Homeric verse is measured according to syllable length (i.e., long or short), but not according to tonal accent or stress (as is English verse). There are six metrical feet in each line of Homer and Parmenides (hence,

each line has "hexameter" form); the sixth foot must always be a spondee (two long syllables: scanned – –), but any one of the first five may be either a dactyl (one long and two short syllables: – ⏑ ⏑) or a spondee. The rhythmical freedom enjoyed by the Homeric bard is thus enormous. And the effects of variations in rhythm can be dramatic. For instance, a line consisting entirely or even mostly of spondees adds weight and gravity to the speaker's words, while a line flowing with five successive dactyls suggests light-heartedness or ease of speech measured at the end with a final spondee. More important than the rhythm of a line, however, is its musical phrasing (i.e., the manner in which various chunks of the line are divided from one another according to pauses in sense—pauses often edited into the text with punctuation marks). These divided chunks of meaning are called "metrical cola." The poet can vary the length of each colon as well as the relation between different cola within a line, thus phrasing his speech with dramatic effect. In standard epic verse, as in Parmenides, one may find a two-colon line, a three-colon line, or even a four-colon line; for instance:

Two-Colon Line (B 1.16)
πεῖσαν ἐπιφραδέως, ὥς σφιν βαλανωτὸν ὀχῆα

Three-Colon Line (B 1.9)
Ἡλιάδες κοῦραι, προλιποῦσαι δώματα Νυκτός

Four-Colon Line (B 1.4)
τῇ φερόμην· τῇ γάρ με πολύφραστοι φέρον ἵπποι

The musical phrasing most predominant in Homer (and therefore of greatest rhetorical significance by standards of classical antiquity) is the tricolon line—a line consisting of three separate chunks of meaning. A tricolon is usually divided according to the placement and use of a principal caesura (i.e., a short pause occurring within the third foot) and a principal bucolic diaeresis (i.e., a short pause occurring between the fourth and fifth foot). Most tricola exhibit bucolic diaeresis, with the caesura being either "masculine" when it occurs after the first long syllable (the ictus) of the third foot, or "feminine" when the pause occurs between two short syllables. In addition, when caesura occurs between two grammatically distinct clauses, the editor of the text will indicate the caesura with punctuation. Where there is punctuation in the third foot, we can be assured of a strong rhetorical pause in sense. For instance, if we scan the three-colon line just mentioned from B 1.9 we find a masculine caesura (‖) with bucolic diaeresis (▲):

– ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – –
Ἡλιάδες κοῦραι, ‖προλιποῦσαι ▲ δώματα Νυκτός

Also significant, but far less common, is the so-called *rising three-folder,* a verse consisting of three progressively lengthening metrical cola, whose caesura is bridged with an important word or epithet. For instance:

Homer, *Iliad* 1.145:

ἢ Αἴας ‖ ἢ Ἰδομενεὺς ‖ ἢ δῖος Ὀδυσσεὺς

Hesiod, *Theogony* 1.1:

Μουσάων Ἑλικωνιάδων ‖ ἀρχώμεθ᾽ ἀείδειν

Parmenides, B 8.32:

οὔνεκεν οὐκ ‖ ἀτελεύτητον ‖ τὸ ἐὸν ἧμις εἶναι[3]

In these examples one should count a long syllable as the equivalent of a half note in music, and each short syllable as a quarter note. Thus the quantity of sound in each line increases colon-by-colon to create a dramatic and swift crescendo. And although rhythm and scansion differ for each of these examples, the total quantity of sound released in each colon is uniform: in each instance the first colon releases 6 units of sound, the second 8 units, and the third a total of 10 units. If we divide each of these quantities by their common denominator 2, we find that all three cola stand in a 3:4:5 proportionality—the lowest whole numbers describing the sides of a right triangle, the square of whose hypotenuse equals the sum of the squares of the other two sides! According to the Pythagorean Theorem: $3^2+4^2=5^2$. We find, in other words, the equivalent of 3 half notes in the first colon, 4 half notes in the second, and 5 in the third. It is no mere coincidence that the rising three-folder possesses the property of mathematical and harmonic perfection; but other, more common three-fold verses (with masculine caesura and bucolic diaeresis) also exhibit a unique proportionality of sound-quality among their parts, but without the crescendo effect. In these more commonly occurring three-folders the succession is usually 5—3—4; the sense of Pythagorean proportionality remains, $5^2=3^2+4^2$—the crescendo does not. But in order to arrive at a reliable estimate of how well Parmenides stacks up against Homer and Hesiod regarding musical phrasing in general we ought to examine a more commonly occurring phenomenon than the rising three-folder, namely those three-fold verses exhibiting both bucolic diaeresis and M or F caesura; let us call such verses "common tricola." Table 1.1 lays out the data that allows us to comparatively analyze Parmenides, Homer, and Hesiod at the level of musical composition.

Table 1.1
Sample Comparison of Musical Phrasing

	Homer *Iliad* 1.1-146	Parmenides B-Fragments 1-146	Hesiod *Theogony* 1.1-146
Tricola with caesura and bucolic diaeresis	86	91	87
Tricola with masculine caesura	39	44	33
Tricola with feminine casesura	47	47	54
Tricola with punctuated caesura	17	34	16
Tricola constituting "rising three-folders"	1	3	3
Line-Ends in a monosyllable other than τε	2	7	1

Sources: Homer's *Iliad,* Murno and Allen eds.; Parmenides' B-Fragments, Diels and Kranz eds.; Hesiod's *Theogony,* Solmsen ed.

It is evident from Table 1.1 that both Parmenides and Hesiod closely parallel Homer in the use of common tricola.[4] Yet based on the testimony of Proclus, who uses Homeric verse as the measuring rod of excellence in composition, one would expect Homer to outmatch his imitators in the use of standard tricolon lines; but this is not the case. Furthermore, Homer and Hesiod had a distinct advantage over Parmenides in creating three-fold verses: the formular phrase, all or part of which may conveniently occupy the fifth and sixth feet of a line following bucolic diaeresis (i.e., the division between the second and third colon of a common three-fold verse).

Phrases and epithets are "formulaic" because they are deployed repeatedly throughout the narrative, often as many as a dozen times, to create a sense of cumulative history behind the character or place named, and to connect the emotions of the audience to the deeds of that character or place. From *Iliad* 1.1 -146 we find the following formulae, or parts of formulae, which occupy the fifth and sixth feet to create a three-colon line: δῖος ᾽Αχιλλεύς (7), νῆας ᾽Αχαιῶν (12), ἑκηβόλου ᾽Απόλλωνος (14), πάντας ᾽Αχαιούς (15), ἑκηβόλον ᾽Απόλλωνα (21), Φοῖβος ᾽Απόλλων (43,64,72), ὠκὺς ᾽Αχιλλεύς (58, 84).

From Hesiod *Theogony* 1.1-146 we find an even freer use of formular phrases involved in three-colon verse: e.g., ῎Αρτεμιν ἰοχέαιραν (14, 918), ἐννοσίγαιαν (15, cf. 456), ᾽Αφροδίτην (16, cf. 195, 822, 962, 975, 980, 989, 1005, 1014,), Κρόνον ἀγκυλομήτην (18, cf. 137, 168, 473, 495), Διὸς αἰγιόχοιον (25, 52), ἐντὸς ᾽Ολύμπου (37, 51), ὅσσαν ἰεῖσαι (43, 65, 67), δώματ᾽ ἔχουσαν (75, 114), οἴδματι θυίων (109, 131), αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα (116, 132) etc. Thus, it was far

easier for Homer and Hesiod to improvise three-colon verse, than it was for Parmenides, precisely because both relied heavily upon preestablished formulae in shaping the line, while Parmenides clearly did not. And whereas Hesiod seems to emulate Homer in his free use of epithets, Parmenides actually outdistances both competitors in the use of three-fold verses by about 5 percent on average. This statistic would suggest that Parmenides composed his verses with slightly more attention to musical phrasing, rhetorical effect, and dramatic flourish, the confluence of which can only be produced with great deliberation and care.

If we compare cases where the caesura of the line is punctuated into the text to show rhetorical emphasis the ratio of emphatic caesura-pauses is two to one in favor of Parmenides over Homer and Hesiod. This fact would indicate a more deliberate attempt by Parmenides to rival his predecessors and contemporaries in the phrasing of his verse. And while one can argue that Parmenidean diction seems at times more forced and awkward than that of Homer (e.g., Parmenides' excessive deployment of lines ending in a monosyllable other than τε) one must concede that the philosopher's aesthetic and musical awareness rivals that of the best poets of his time. We must keep in mind that Parmenides was a *Homeric* bard, who inherited the treasures of centuries of oral recitation, and who saw himself as composing within, and not against, the epic tradition; but he went beyond mere recitation by refabricating the Homeric language into an entirely original and unique work. Thus, given the level of complexity and depth inherent to Parmenides' uniquely metaphysical subject matter, given the sublimity of his aesthetic awareness, and his ability to phrase difficult arguments in supple, tightly woven hexameters, the criticisms of Proclus must be cast to the winds.

Parmenides pioneered the philosophico-epic genre, emulated by his successor Empedocles, and much later by the Roman poet-philosopher Lucretius, whose verses even Cicero admired. The urgency of Parmenides' message does not grant him the kind of creative freedom that we find in other lyricists of the time, who compose more or less at will on pastoral settings packed with free-roaming images of ordinary life. Parmenides' journey is extraordinary. The standard mythological framework of deities and deeds, upon which Homer and Hesiod relied so heavily, is insufficient for the supernatural experience recounted by Parmenides. His mission lies in reaching the light of a supersensible world; a world which, by definition, is both unfamiliar and hidden from ordinary experience. In the opening fragment, where chargers' hooves strike the ground of this world with ferocity, where the poet can draw upon a rich storehouse of earthborn images, and hence, where his freedom to manipulate the familiar into the extraordinary

is present the most, the beauty of his verses remains unmatched. In the remaining fragments, however, we see a different poet, one composing from a blueprint laid out for him in advance, a poet compelled, literally by cosmic necessity, to repeat the instructions of his inner voice, symbolized in the poem by his guiding goddess.

Parmenides employs, more often than Proclus imagined, many highly formalized poetic figures and turns of speech that approach the sublimity of Homer; for instance, his delicate use of isometry near the end of the proem, Diels 28 B 1.29 - 30. Both lines share the same scansion, the same principal caesura (‖), the same bucolic diaeresis (▲):

– ◡ ◡ – – – – ◡ ◡ – – ◡ ◡ – –
ἡμὲν ᾽Αληθείης ‖ εὐκυκλέος ▲ ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ
ἠδὲ βροτῶν δόξας ‖ ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι ▲ πίστις ἀληθής

This (implicit) sameness of meter conceals an explicit difference between line 29's "heart of well-rounded Truth "and line 30's "opinions of mortals," both of which Parmenides must learn from his guardian goddess in order to attain enlightenment.

Truth and opinion mark the only paths for thinking enquiry. Their contrasting differences are bridged in lines 29 - 30 with a beautiful chiasmus of symmetry and sound where each line opens with a dactyl, is then met with the tension of double spondees at midline, which suddenly releases itself with two successive dactyls, only to be bottled up again with a final spondee. The isometry highlights the well-roundedness and balance of Truth (personified) who, as we shall see, always demands spiritual equilibrium, inner peace, and reconciliation between contrary forces in nature.[5] The poet's chiasmic arrangement of metrical feet in the lines effectively turns the inside out and the outside in. Inner Spirit becomes outward Nature; outward Nature in turn becomes inner Spirit: both are one and the same in equilibrium, "for Thinking and Being are the same" (B 3). What we take to be as the world external to us (i.e., Nature) is really the world of our inner conscious thought (i.e., Spirit). Through the medium of poetic recitation Parmenides externalizes to the audience his own internalized experience of divine revelation in terms of a truth-bearing goddess who dwells outside the reach of mortal man. Truth reveals the nature of things-in-themselves to the few who achieve enlightenment, but to the many, to the uninitiated, to the mortals whose opinions set them at odds with Nature, she conceals herself entirely. Parmenides alone has been selected to receive the gift of enlightenment because his inward spirit has achieved equilibrium with Nature. This equilibrium expresses itself as noêsis.

Parmenides thus places himself in the position of an intermediary between the natural and supernatural worlds, a guardian-of-the-spirit who has

experienced the perfection of Truth, but must bring back to this mortal realm the lessons he has learned about the world beyond—which is really the world within, i.e., noêsis as such. His poetry reflects the mystical experience of a shaman capable of penetrating secret mysteries hidden from the many; this is what Mourelatos means when he says:

> The shaman is a mediator between men and god. He has the capacity of leaving his body in a trance to travel to Heaven or to the Underworld. He does this to accompany other souls, or to receive medical or cult information from a deity. His journey is a hazardous one, and calls for the protective escort of demonic powers. There may be wandering before or after the desired confrontation with the deity. The means of conveyance are sometimes flying chariots. There is certain affinity between the shaman and certain animals, especially the horse. The shaman is often also poet and singer and typically narrates his transcendental journey and experience in the first person.[6]

While too little is known of Parmenides' life to gauge the precise extent of his involvement with shamanism and Orphic poetry, we do know that the central theme of his poem (i.e., his travel from darkness into light involving transcendence beyond the mortal realm) recounts a mystical voyage. We know also that his immediate disciple Empedocles lived as "a combination of philosopher, religious mystic on Pythagorean lines, and magician or wonder-worker... [who] claims that his knowledge is the key to power over the forces of nature, that by it men can arrest the winds, make rain, and even bring back the dead from Hades" (Guthrie 1960, 51). Empedocles was, according to Simplicius (Diels 31 A 7), a zealous emulator (ζηλωτὴς) and associate (πλησιαστὴς) of Parmenides, and still more, of the Pythagoreans. Parmenides and the Pythagoreans emphasized the spiritualizing, self-activating power of the One beyond the many; the hiddenness of this One from the mortal mind, and the interplay and tension between contrary forces in nature as the key to understanding the essential relation between matter and energy.

The teachings of Pythagoras, Parmenides, and, by association, Empedocles were in some respects directly derived from, in other respects repudiations of, the religious doctrines of the famous Babylonian cult-master known to the Greeks as "Zoroaster" or "Zarathustra." Some western accounts record contact between Greek intellectuals and Zoroastrian clerics in sixth-century BC Babylonia; the religious tradition itself was already centuries old, and its teachings were transmitted over time through a rigorously disciplined oral tradition. We know that Zoroaster's teachings constituted the religious faith of the nobility of the Achaemenid Dynasty, which ruled in Persia as well as in half of the known world from 550 BC to 330 BC; we know also that the Achaemenians were the first Persians to commit Zoroaster's teachings

to inscription. History records numerous battles between the divided and quarrelsome Greek city-states and the centralized autocracy of the Persian empire, which exploited Greek division to its strategic advantage; but little is said of the cultural, religious, and philosophical exchanges between east and west. Pythagoras, for instance, is reported to have actually visited Zoroaster in Babylon (more likely he visited a leading Zoroastrian cleric, not the founder of the faith); but this we learn, not from the writings of Plato or Aristotle, but from a relatively obscure Ecclesiastical writer of the third century AD named Hippolytus. As the Achaemenian Dynasty extended its political and military influence westward into the Aegean, the religious observances, rituals, and doctrines of Zoroastrians became more and more prevalent in the Greek world. I will argue in the third section of chapter 3 that Parmenides repudiates popular Zoroastrian beliefs in his account of "the Way of Opinion," and that these verses are even laced with condemnatory references to Zoroastrians, repudiating their dualistic naturalism.

For instance, the poet's thematic emphases upon Light and Darkness, Day and Night, Being and Nothingness, are each vestiges of many ideas popular among the Zoroastrians. Zoroaster propagated the idea of a Supreme Being (Ahura Mazda, or "Wise Lord") responsible for the creation of all things. Ahura Mazda manifests himself in terms of Truth, Goodness, Light, Fire, and Radiant Energy. But the Wise God is not alone in the universe; for there exists of necessity a dark force that opposes the Good, called "Ahriman." Ahriman manifests himself in terms of Deception, Evil, Darkness, Void, and Non-Being—his power lies independent of Ahura Mazda. Zoroastrians focused their religious veneration around the visible, audible, and palpable signs of Ahura Mazda. First among these signs or indicators of Goodness is Light or Fire. We shall investigate this symbology in more detail later. For now it is important to understand that when we hear Parmenides condemn "mortal opinion" and "mere appearance" as degradations of Truth and Being (see esp. B 6), he is tacitly repudiating popular Zoroastrian beliefs, not merely stating his own epistemological standpoint. Much of Parmenides' poem reads like lyrics to an initiation rite of a mystery-cult. And in a way, that is exactly how his poem was intended to sound: it was a text written for a people starving for truth, who feed upon the cycle of Greek epic myth, animism, and animal sacrifice built around uncovering truth through visible signatures to and from the world beyond—a people who, as Persian dominance reaches its zenith in the west, are given over more and more to Zoroastrian influence and its numerous offshoots.

It should come as no surprise, then, when Parmenides tells us that truth is not to be attained easily through visible signs, but lies in a world beyond the reach of common men: an extrinsic, foreign, and paranormal world. Truth discloses Nature in the poet's noêsis; yet he cannot simply jettison the

commonly accepted beliefs with which he has come in contact, since he must share in discourse and communicate constructively with common men in order to guide them to the way of Truth. To do this he must take the journey of a shaman to the outer reaches of the cosmos and return back to earth. His mission is prophetic, his message divine.

Consider B 8.29 in which, to emphasize the self-identity, permanence, and immobility of Nature understood in terms of Being,[7] Parmenides craftily contrives a repetition of no less than ten τ-sounds in order to produce this striking consonance:

ταὐτόν τ᾽ ἐν ταὐτῷ τε μένον καθ᾽ ἑαυτό τε κεῖται[8]

Such a carefully measured repetition of the same consonant sound seems to reflect the goddess's forceful inculcation of doctrine tapping over and over again into the young, impressionable mind of Parmenides.

Consider as well Parmenides' elegant improvisation of onomatopoeia in the proem (B 1.19) to describe the great yawning chasm made by the opening of the Gates of Justice on the threshold dividing the way of Night from Day:

ἄξονας ἐν σὐριγξιν ‖ ἀμοιβαδὸν ▲ εἰλίξασαι.

Parmenides' maidens persuade vengeful Justice to open Her gates:

> Its doors then forced a yawning chasm great,
> Unfolding giant wings attached with pins
> Of brass in two-way hinges. Squealing dins
> The air with plaintive moans, as doors fixed fast
> With rows of riveted bolts wheel lazily past.

Notice the mechanical rattling of the bolts emphasized with a clanking triple ξ-sound—the sound that hinges make as metal grates upon metal. Then notice the onomatopoeia of creaking gates found in the succession of diphthongs οι-ει-αι embedded in ἀ-μοι-βα-δὸν and the emphatic double-spondee εἰ-λί-ξα-σαι to end B 1.19. Now stretch out each syllable to slow down the rhythm. The sound produced should be "ah-mooy-bah-don-aaay-leeeks-ah-sigh"—akin to the sound gates produce when slowly creaking open. Perhaps the gates of Justice have grown worn through disuse, and so swing open ever so slowly. The message might be that Parmenides' shamanic voyage is one that only few, if any, mortals are allowed to share in this life. Perhaps the gates of Justice are so immense that they cannot but produce such an extraordinary sound. The message might be that the Gates are not man-made, that the journey itself is supernatural.

IMAGERY AND METAPHOR: PARMENIDES' LITERARY RESPONSE TO HESIOD

The proem is the fragment richest in metaphor and imagery. And many of the keys to understanding the fragments as a whole are to be unearthed therein. For instance, Parmenides is drawn through the darkness of night on a chariot sped through the stars by swift chargers and lovely attending maidens. He reaches automatic Gates where night becomes day; and Justice holds the key to their double-locking bolts. Many scholars acknowledge the darkness-to-light motif as symbolic of intellectual or spiritual enlightenment. The Gates seem to transcend the mortal realm where night leads into day, and day into night. The heart of Truth is decidedly well rounded and symmetrical. And the wheels of Parmenides' chariot are hastened round on a burning axle. We know that he has traveled in a circuit because he has descended back to earth, the mortal realm, to relate the story of his goddess. We shall see in subsequent chapters just how these images of roundness in the proem interconnect with similar images in later fragments.

The archetype of roundedness is to be found in the perfect sphericity of the cosmos, which is (or perhaps imitates) the roundedness of Truth. Perfect cosmic sphericity, however, is nothing other than *geometrical* sphericity. And the geometrical sphere, as opposed to spheres made of bronze or wood, is an object exclusively for noêsis, i.e., something which cannot be fully grasped by means of the five senses alone. Sense-consciousness supplies the matter, but does not of itself discover, the forms which govern the existence of things. Form, universal, and principle are the exclusive domain of noêsis.

Furthermore, Thought (νοεῖν) and Being (εἶναι) are the same (B 3); i.e., that which *is* is thoroughly intelligible. Perfection is commensurate with thinkability, imperfection with sensibility. Parmenides explicitly recognizes a perfect cosmic sphericity (cf. B 8.42 - 49). But the perfect sphere is what Aristotle and Euclid would later call an "intelligible figure" (i.e., τὸ σχῆμα νοητικόν, a figure of thought) as opposed to a "sensible figure" (i.e., τὸ σχῆμα αἰσθητόν), for instance, a diagram of a sphere used to contemplate the intelligible sphere in its full universality. Euclid and his predecessors made use of sensible figures, in the form of diagrams, to ascend to contemplation of perfect geometrical figures. Parmenides anticipates this drive toward the universal and the intelligible by calling us to use our minds, not our senses, to contemplate the perfection of the cosmos by reminding us of things that cannot be grasped except in thought. Perfect sphericity is one of many access routes to Being. Parmenides was among the very first to substantivize the independent neuter participle "ἐόν" with the article "τὸ" creating a technical term to express the cosmic permanence of "Being," i.e., the instantaneous fact of eternal presence everywhere at once in the now.

The proem is replete with circle-metaphors implying completion, instantaneousness, and symmetry. Yet many scholars past and present have doubted the authenticity and reliability of the proem as a vehicle for making sense of the fragments as a whole. Patricia Curd remarks, for instance, that:

> Some commentators have seen [Parmenides'] journey as one to light and enlightenment, others as a progress along the road to the House of Night, but despite claims to the contrary, the topography of the poem is confusing, and I do not think that it is clear where the *kouros* has gone. . . . Although connections with other early Greek poetry can be found, I suspect that no interpretation of certain elements of the proem can ever be confidently accepted. The evidence for the sources of this aspect of Parmenides' thought and for other early use of allegory is just too meager for certainty.[9]

On the contrary, I maintain that *any* allegorical interpretation rooted in a close reading of the original, grounded in an understanding of the culture and context of the writer, conforming to the rules of common sense, constitutes an acceptable reading of any text written in an allegorical tradition. (The Genesis creation accounts found in the Hebrew Scriptures, the tales of Gilgamesh, Plato's allegory of the cave in *Republic VII* are each part of an ancient tradition of storytelling—each myth contains a multitude of possible interpretations; and this fact accounts for its literary richness.) That many seemingly valid interpretations of a story may conflict with each other only adds to the depth and meaning of the original. The literary richness of a text is measured in proportion to the plurality of its possible interpretations. In addition there is compelling evidence that Parmenides responds directly to, in fact models his poetic imagery around, certain themes developed by Hesiod in *Theogony.* Both poets, for instance, are divinely inspired to share their song: Parmenides by his experience with the goddess; Hesiod directly by the Muses. Let us consider briefly just a few of these connections.

Hesiod's *Theogony* emphasizes forgetfulness and concealment of evil. The Olympian Muses, daughters of Memory (Μνημοσύνη), delight the mind of Zeus by "bringing forgetfulness of sorrows, and rest from anxieties" (λησμοσύνην τε κακῶν ἄπαυμά τε μερμηράων, *Theogony,* 55). The divine world is thoroughly surrounded with strife and evil offspring. Sexual relations among humans and gods are infected with rape, emotional violation, and intrigue. In addition, perhaps alluding to himself, Hesiod claims that the Muses make the poet-singer "forget his heartache for the present" while he "remembers nothing of his cares" (αἶψ᾽ ὅ γε δυσφροσυνέων ἐπιλήθεται οὐδέ τι κηδέων/μέμνηται, *Theogony,* 102-103).

Parmenides, on the other hand, emphasizes his own mystical recollection of Being in Truth. The alpha privative name "Alethea" (᾽Αληθείη, B 1.29; 8.51) is likely intended as a play on Hesiod's goddess of denial and concealment Lethe (Λήθη). Lethe (the personification of forgetfulness and oblivion)

along with her siblings Famine and Hardship were born of Hateful Strife (Αὐτὰρ Ἔρις στυγερὴ τέκε καρτυρόθυμον/ Λήθην τε Λιμόν τε καὶ Ἄλγεα δακρυόεντα, *Theogony,* 224 - 225). The goddess informs Parmenides, by contrast, that Truth (the personification of recollection, epiphany, and disclosure) is open to contemplation precisely " because no evil fate has sent [him] to traverse [her] starry path, but Right and Justice teamed" (ἐπεὶ οὔτι σε Μοῖρα κακὴ προὔπεμπε νεέσθαι/ τήνδ᾽ ὁδον.../ ἀλλὰ Θέμις τε Δίκη τε, B1.26 - 28). Truth embodies tranquility, home, and reconciliation of contrary forces. She dissolves the poison of Hateful Strife, mother of Lethe. Truth is the *negation* of Forgetfulness. A major theme in the poem is that the fundamental Being of beings has escaped the notice of mortal opinion; this Being clothes itself in a world of sense-appearances which camouflage its inner simplicity and wholeness; but Truth reveals this wholeness to man.

In further contrast to Hesiod, Parmenides posits a lineage of the gods beginning, not with sorrow, distress, and bastard offspring, but with Love (Ἔρος, B 13), the personification of sexual union. Sexual relations are not the result of duress, violation, and denial; they flow naturally from mutual consent. Parmenides consistently portrays all interpersonal communication between his deities in terms of peaceful coexistence, equilibrium, and respect for the autonomy of others, never in terms of distress, antipathy, or violence. For instance, the goddess *welcomes* Parmenides into her halls; he does not just barge in. His attending maidens *persuade* Justice to open her Gates by using *gentle words*; they do not compel her to do so by blackmail and intrigue. Both the male and the female contribute mutually interactive reproductive material at conception, so that the fetus carries attributes of both parents; the woman is not merely a passive vessel into which the dominant life-giving male seed is sown. Furthermore, all personal interaction between human and divine, without exception, is made possible by female deities, each suggesting familiarity, warmth, and home. The poet's journey after all is a homecoming in which he attains inner peace and harmony with his mind—much along the lines of Odysseus' heroic νόστος, which involves travel through many towns and visitation to other worlds. Both Odysseus and Parmenides narrate their travels in the first person: a similarity shared with shamanic poetry.[10] Parmenides is drawn toward his goddess as toward an other, an alter-ego; yet this other represents the peace and tranquility of home. His communion with Her symbolizes the reflexivity of his own self-consciousness. In Being, as in the heart of well-rounded Truth and the tranquility of noêsis, there is no strife, no contrariety, no struggle for hegemony in which one force vies to destroy its equal and opposite; there is rather a transcendence of contrariety in the union of opposites. Just as Being has no contradictory—for such is inconceivable (B 2), so too it has no contrary, since it represents the synthesis of all contrary forces in nature.

In addition, there are vast cosmological differences between the two poems. Hesiod measures the symmetry of the cosmos in a linear fashion from outermost to innermost (*Theogony,* 722 - 725): "A bronze anvil falling down from the sky/Would fall nine days and nine nights and on the tenth hit earth./It is just as far from earth down to misty Tartaros./A bronze anvil falling down from earth / Would fall nine days and nights and on the tenth hit Tartaros" (726 - 730, Lombardo). Hesiod's linear measure of space matches his linear measure of time, where the Muses sing of what is, what was, and what will be (*Theogony,* 38); where what is is determined through-and-through by what *was*; where cosmic events are ranged along a temporal continuum with a determinate starting point, namely, ex nihilo generation of Earth from Chaos—nothingness—void, a violent history, a hopeless present, and an abysmal future. On a linear model of space-time, the universe simply burns itself out, for where there is a beginning there must also exist an end.

Parmenides, by contrast, measures the symmetry of the cosmos in circular fashion from innermost to outermost (B 8.39 - 41): "But now the outer limit shows the clue;/Since, once perfected from all points, just like/A massive sphere, it circles back to strike/Itself, in all ways equal from its core" (my translation). Parmenides' spherical measure of space involves a circular or closed-loop concept of time where past and future collapse into the timelessness of a singular ubiquitous Now presence; where there is no beginning or end to time; where what was and what will be are irrelevant to man's consciousness of Being. Being is forever now. The past and future are no-longer and not-yet, respectively. The closed-loop model calls us back to the truth of eternal presence in the now, consciousness of which is the essence of noêsis—man's spiritualizing self-oneness with nature. Parmenides sees time-consciousness itself as illusory, and man as perpetuating a mythic cycle that fails to provide necessary and universal justification for the way things are. The linear time-sequence model supports an us-versus-them historical mythology that exalts the insanity of the gods above human suffering, by connecting us to what we essentially are not, i.e., to a prehistory governed by deities prone to capricious violence, incest, and emotional violation, to a future that inevitably subjects man to the death-abyss of Tartaros.

In Tartaros, the moldy region at the bottommost edge of Earth, live the Titan gods in darkness (*Theogony,* 729). Poseidon has fitted bronze doors into the wall surrounding its harsh depths (*Theogony,* 732). Gyges, Kottos, Briareos stand guard over its doors so that no one who enters may escape (734ff.). Tartaros represents the infinite abyss of non-being (*Theogony,* 734; cf. B 1.18), which is so deep that one would fall through storm blast upon cruel storm blast for one year and still not reach the bottom. At the bottom stand the ominous houses of dark Night (*Theogony,* 744). Atlas stands before the Houses where Night and Day cross on a great threshold of bronze

(*Theogony,* 748 - 750). The path of Day "carries for people on earth Light the far-flashing, while [the path of Night] carries Sleep in her arms, and he is Death's brother, and she is Night, the destructive, veiled in a cloud of vapor" (*Theogony,* 755ff., Lattimore). There the children of Night dwell in their houses (*Theogony,* 758). In the depths of Tartaros flows the river-goddess Styx back upon herself in a confusing misty darkness over-roofed with towering rocks (*Theogony,* 776 - 778).

Parmenides matches this imagery by relating how earth-dwelling mortals carry on both dumb and blind, and in confusion judge "to be" and "not to be" the same yet not the same—their path is ever backward turning (B 6.9). Parmenides' mortals resemble Hesiod's dead floating hypnotically in the river Styx. For death-bound man there is no escape from uncertainty and confusion, no possibility of traveling from the realm of darkness to the realm of light, no exit from an endless cycle of repression and violence. Parmenides takes an alternate route; he finds an exit, as it were, along which swift Daughters of the Sun (Heliades, B 1.9) caress and bathe his car with dawning light, "abandoning/ Dark realms of Night to seek their father's ring/Of light; while turning back, with regal hand,/Smooth veils from fair faces" (my translation). Parmenides' maidens parallel Hesiod's Muses.

Hesiod tells us that the Muses are responsible for assisting public leaders in matters of justice and equity. They inspire public leaders with fluent speech to resolve conflicts by "conciliating both sides with gentle words" (μαλαχοῖσι παραιφάμενοι ἐπέεσσιν, *Theogony,* 90). Like public leaders, Parmenides' maidens represent him before Justice by "conciliating Her with gentle words" (τὴν δὴ παρφάμεναι κοῦραι μαλακοῖσι λογοῖσιν, B1.15). But this is the only point of comparison; the Muses help Hesiod escape the woes of the past and future—Parmenides' maidens allow him to find the bliss of eternal presence. The *Theogony* is a song of concealment and repression. Evil springs up when painful feelings of betrayal and shame are buried deep within the heart. Eventually these feeling erupt causing great woe for men and gods. Some of these images of concealment are found in *Theogony* 155 - 157 where Kottos, Briareos, and Gyges, offspring of Earth and Heaven, so hated their father that, as they were emerging from their mother Earth, he would "shove them back again, deep inside Earth, and would not let them into the light" (Lattimore). Consider *Theogony* 611 - 612 "he whose luck is to have cantankerous children lives keeping inside him discomfort which will not leave him in heart and mind" (Lattimore). In addition, Zeus was so jealous of the wisdom and craftiness of Metis, his first wife, that, when she was about to give birth to Athena, he "deceiv[ed] her perception by treachery and by slippery speeches, [and] put her away inside his own belly" (888 - 890, Lattimore)—a uniquely horrifying glimpse into the dark psychosis of emotional repression.

Parmenides deflects these images by representing mortals as if living buried in a dark underworld where confusion, blindness, and aimless wandering are the norm. This is Tartaros on earth. Like those doomed to the Styx in Hesiod, who cannot escape the gates of Tartaros, Parmenides' mortals cannot escape the darkness and confusion of their self-imposed sense-world, because Justice guards the gates blocking the way to enlightenment. Parmenides' mortals can only escape by ascending to Justice, by transcending in thought the sense-realities of this world.

Parmenides' ascent to Justice and his subsequent passage through Her guarded Gates symbolize thought's transcendence to Being, where the Being of Thought and the Thought of Being are one. Mortals are thus half human, half god. On the one hand, they merely sense without thoughtful reflection, and so are locked into a world of bustling confusion and absurdity; on the other hand, they possess the capacity to think, and are endowed with the power to pass beyond confusion to the profound tranquility and self-reflexivity of noêsis. But their passage is only possible through Justice, who alone can redeem mortals and lead them into the light and disclosure of Truth.

THE CHALLENGES OF RESTORING THE FRAGMENTS AS PARTS OF A GREATER WHOLE

In addition to the development of numerous thematic parallels with Hesiod's *Theogony,* Parmenides makes use of many ingenious rhetorical figures and tropes that enhance his poetic repertoire. Their effects upon the ear are difficult and often impossible to reproduce in English without distortion. In the verse translation to follow I have chosen to implement the traditional iambic pentameter in rhyming couplets; not so that I could imitate the rhythm of the Greek hexameter (which cannot effectively be reproduced in English), but so that I might match Parmenides' own dignified and elevated style through equally dignified and elevated phrasing in English.

We must understand that the practice of singing the Homeric poems (in competitions such as the Panathenea or in local festival celebrations) was alive during the time of Parmenides. Homeric singers developed and shaped these poems over centuries of oral recitation, so that much of the language of Homer was itself anachronistic or had fallen out of use in the vernacular of Parmenides. Thus, in choosing to pack his hexameter poem with Homeric words, Parmenides is casting his story in centuries of poetic tradition, and communicating through idioms that other lyricists of the time chose to avoid (e.g., Archilochus, Sappho, Bacchylides). The practice of anachronism is common to poetry across cultures and languages.

In contrast to most contemporary prose translations of Parmenides, which seem to aim merely at preserving the fragments as scattered pieces of an ancient jigsaw puzzle, as separate and unrelated curiosities more suitable for the museum than for celebration, my translation attempts to restore, that is, to make whole, what is for us a tattered original, with the express purpose of revitalizing the text and bringing it into the realm of literature where it belongs. But this requires creating a patch-work quilt sewn together, as it were, from fragments of the original cloth. Restoration, in other words, requires that we treat as continuous certain fragments of Greek that are in fact not continuous. On the one hand, the poem survives in clusters of fragments that appear to fit coherently together (e.g., B 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8), on the other hand, much of it survives in mere vestiges that cannot reliably be said to precede or follow any of the known fragments (e.g., B 4, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17).

Unlike the fragments of Xenophanes or Sappho, which originate from several distinct poems, the fragments of Parmenides originate from one and the same poem. We have in Parmenides the vestiges of one temple, the development of one world view, the experiences of one voyage. It is, therefore, not beyond the pale of reason to treat the Parmenides-fragments as one continuous piece. And so, for the sake of continuity, I have ordered the fragments according to theme and content in this fashion: B 1 - 11, 14, 15, 12, 13, 18, 17, 16, and 19. The rationale is simple: B 1 - 8 describe the Way of Being and Truth; B 8.50 - 61 marks a transition to the Way of Opinion; while B 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, plus the first two lines of B 12 concern the structure and movements of the heavens (the sun, earth, moon, and milky way) as well as the mixture of light and darkness which mortals posit as the first principles of things. The last three and a half lines of B 12, plus 13, 18, 17, and 16 deal with the nature of sexuality, and the origin and purpose of sexual union. B 19 states the most fitting conclusion to the poem extant. B 15 - 19, however, are of very uncertain context. We have perhaps one third of the original poem once called *On Nature,* much of which survives intact in the proem and in B 2 - 9, but little of which survives in the last seven fragments.

Before Hemann Diels published his pioneering collection of fragments and commentary in *Parmenides Lehrgedicht* (1897), the ancient poet remained little more than legend, his great poem hopelessly scattered throughout the corpus of Greek literature. In an attempt to reinvigorate the text as an artistic masterpiece I humbly submit before the reading public a poem that attempts to capture the exalted style of the original, a piece that can stand on its own as a sense-making whole, while intelligibly conveying the essential message of Parmenides. Thus, I have chosen to make my verses commensurate with Parmenides' meaning and intent, while choosing to avoid the pitfalls of a stubborn grammatical commensurability, which Proclus would have

inevitably condemned as *unadorned, dry,* and *simplistic.*

The advantage of choosing a fixed iambic rhythm for translation is that it imposes the discipline of economy in expression which matches the aesthetic sensibilities of classical Greek antiquity. By economy I mean a concise form of expression in which the least number of syllables is used to create the fullest possible meaning, every word playing a pivotal role, and none removable without damaging the sense of its surrounding context. Economy must not be measured by comparing the number of lines between translation and original, but by comparing the number of syllables. It is the syllable, not the line, that is the key sense-making unit of speech in both languages. My pentameter consists of 10 syllables per line; the Parmenidean hexameter averages 15.5—the minimum being twelve (i.e., six spondees), the maximum being seventeen (i.e., five dactyls with a final spondee). My translation consists of 254 pentameter lines—2,540 syllables. The Greek Fragments constitute roughly 146 hexameter lines, totaling 2,418 Greek syllables. My translation betrays an excess of merely 122 syllables, a scant 4.8 percent deficiency in economy compared to Parmenides.

Greek poetic rhythm is established on the basis of syllable length, where the ictus, or metrical emphasis, is placed upon the thesis, i.e., the first (and always long) syllable of each foot. English poetic rhythm is shaped around stress accent, which words have independently of their use in poetry, much the way Latin words have their own syllable lengths before they enter into lines of verse. Thus, the Greek maintains a natural plasticity of cadence which English can never match; that is, Greek words often reshape themselves from line to line to suit the demands of the singer. English pentameter is throughly iambic (⏑ ′ ⏑ ′ ⏑ ′), sometimes, but rarely, with a final or beginning trochee (′ ⏑). The translator's task is to avoid monotony by a strategic use of enjambment, internal rhyme, and alliteration. Parmenides, however, enjoys a much broader rhythmical freedom. Spondees can always stand in place of dactyls in the first five feet; but the sixth foot must always be a spondee. This yields Parmenides no fewer than thirty-two possible rhythms from which to shape a given line. Of course, his freedom is somewhat tempered by a thoroughgoing dependence upon Homeric diction, which echoes in his mind and in his song. One must also remember that classical Greek enjoys a seemingly infinite variability of syntax where verbs and adjectives can be placed before or after, separated from or affixed to, the subjects they modify. Nouns and adjectives may be joined or separated for effect, or even turned inside-out to form a verse consisting of a crosswise arrangement of contrasted pairs to give alternate emphasis. For instance, in B 10.4 nouns (indicated below by capital letters) occupy the extremes of the line, but their modifying adjectives (in lowercase) the insular parts in alternating arrangement, upsetting the expected proportionality A:a :: B:b,

to produce a seemingly confused formulation, which mirrors the confused, wandering, and discombobulating effects that the moon creates on earth:

A : b :: a : B
ἔργα τε κύκλωπος πεύσῃ περίφοιτα σελήνης.[11]

The rules of English grammar do not permit an intelligible translation that would preserve Parmenides' word order. "Works rounded learn wandering moon" will not do. Greek, however, is bound to place logical connectives and inferential particles as the second element in each clause. Note Parmenides' use of γάρ, δέ, and ῥα throughout. This limitation is built-in by custom, quite like the subject-first-verb-second rule in English, or the periodic structure of Latin and German, which forces the completing verbal idea to the end of a sentence. Nevertheless, translation by means of iambic pentameter holds a further advantage.

Parmenides was a *didactic* poet. Homeric bards, by contrast, sang epic narrative. Parmenides and Empedocles, like Hesiod, wanted to teach us about the way things are, as well as the manner in which we ought to contemplate them. The Homeric poets had a different, inherently less prescriptive, agenda. But just as the hexameter line represents the vehicle of communication in both the epic and the didactic genre, so English poets made use of the rhyming couplet in iambic pentameter for composition in both epic and didactic verse. For instance, Alexander Pope's verse translation of Homer's *Odyssey* is well known, but lesser known are his didactic poems. They read remarkably like Parmenides. Consider this passage from Pope's didactic poem *An Essay on Criticism* (lines 201 - 214):

> Of all the causes which conspire to blind
> Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
> What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
> Is *Pride,* the never-failing vice of fools.
> Whatever Nature has in worth denied,
> She gives in large recruits of needful Pride;
> For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find
> What wants in blood and spirits, swell'd with wind:
> Pride, where Wit fails, steps in to our defense,
> And fills up all the mighty void of sense.
> If once right reason drives that cloud away,
> Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
> Trust not yourself; but your defects to know,
> Make use of every friend—and ev'ry foe.

If one wishes to follow one's predecessors in style, the way Parmenides followed Homer, then one should adopt the traditional pattern used by the English poets to translate epic and didactic poetry from the Greek.

NOTES

1. Elea is a Greek town located on the coast of Lucania on the southwestern Italian peninsula; in ancient times this region of southern Italy was called "Magna Graeca." Plato records in his dialogue *Parmenides* (127a) that Antiphon reports Parmenides to have visited Athens late in his life, accompanied by Zeno of Elea, in order to participate in the Great Panathenaea, a city-wide celebration of the arts, local literature, and athletics. In the same passage, Socrates, then very young, is said to have sought a hearing of Zeno's treatise. According to David Gallop (p. 4), a fairly reliable estimate of Parmenides' date of birth may be found in Plato's *Theaetetus* 183e where Socrates recalls that "Parmenides seems to me, as Homer puts it, venerable and awesome. I met the great man when I was very young and he was very old, and he seemed to me to have a sort of depth which was altogether noble" (Gallop trans. 1984, Fragment A 5, p. 106). If this meeting took place around 450 BC, that would provide a date of birth at around 515 BC.

2. All lines quoted from Parmenides' poem are based upon the B-Fragments of Diels and Kranz *Die Fragmente Der Vorsokratiker,* (fifth edition). From Proclus and other scholars we have not only reliable testimony, the A-Fragments, but also many of the original words of Parmenides, the B-Fragments, e.g., B 1.29 - 30; B 2; B 3; B 4; B 6.1; B 8.4, 5, 25, 26, 29 - 32, 35 - 36, 43 - 45. Proclus' criticism is based in part on the fact that, in spite of drawing heavily on Homeric rhythms and formulae, the inherent difficulties of Parmenides' subject matter often forced him to use terms more suitable in prose diction. Some examples are given by A.H. Coxon (p. 7): ἀγένητον, κρίσις, διαιρετόν, πεφατισμένον, ἑκάστοτε. Nevertheless, Parmenides' reliance on Homeric diction is evident throughout: "The 150 surviving lines of Parmenides contain an average of only one non-Homeric word in every three verses; of these 55 words all but five (χνοίῃσιν, δοκίμως, βεβαίως, τόπον, λαοῖσι) are directly related to or compounded from words used by Homer" Coxon (p. 7).

3. In these examples one must count each long syllable as a half note in music, and each short as a quarter note. Thus the quantity of sound in each line increases to create the rising three-fold effect. For an excellent analysis of colometry in Homer, see G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary* (Vol. I), pp. 17- 37.

4. Index of lines:

Homer, *Iliad* 1.1 -146

Tricola with masculine caesura: Book 1.7, 11, 15, 24, 25, 29, 31, 37, 39, 40, 42, 43, 53, 58, 65, 67, 68, 72, 73, 76, 77, 80, 84, 88, 93, 106, 108, 111, 114, 115, 116, 117, 124, 128, 129, 132, 134, 139, 143.

Tricola with feminine caesura: Book 1.2, 4, 12, 14, 18, 19, 21, 23, 26, 27, 30, 32, 44, 46, 47, 48, 50, 54, 61, 64, 71, 74, 78, 82, 83, 86, 89, 91, 92, 96, 97, 101, 103, 107, 110, 112, 118, 119, 120, 121, 126, 127, 133, 137, 138, 141, 142.

Tricola with punctuated caesura: Book 1.15, 25, 29, 32, 37, 43, 47, 72, 74, 76, 80, 83, 112, 114, 115, 134, 137.

Rising Three-Folders: Book 1.145.

Lines Ending in a Monosyllable Other Than τε: Book 1.44, 128.

Parmenides: Extant Fragments

Tricola with masculine caesura: B 1.3, 5, 9, 10, 21, 22, 29, 30, 32; B 2.1, 2, 6, 7; B 5.2; B 6.4, 6; B 7.2; B 8.2, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 20, 23, 24, 26, 36, 38, 41, 44, 45, 50, 51, 56, 59; B 9.2, 3; B 10.2; B 11.3; B 12.1, 2, 3; B 16.3.

Tricola with feminine caesura: B 1.1, 7, 11, 12, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 28, 31; B 2.3, 5; B 6.1, 7, 9; B 7.3; B 8.4, 5, 9, 12, 13, 17, 19, 22, 28, 31, 33, 34, 39, 46, 48, 49, 55, 57, 60; B 9.1; B 10.1, 3, 5; B 11.1 (first foot and a half not extant); B 12.4; B 14; B 15; B 16.4; B 19.1.

Tricola with punctuated caesura: B 1.1, 5, 9, 28, 30; B 2 .1, 4; B 5.2; B 6.4, 7; B 8.2, 5, 8,9,10,13,16, 20, 22, 23, 24, 28, 33, 36, 37, 46, 48, 49, 51, 56, 57, 59; B 12.2; B 16.4.

Rising Three-Folders: B 1.27; B 8.32, 40.

Lines Ending in a Monosyllable Other Than τε: B 1.25; B 8.5, 10, 45, 56; B 9.2; B 14.

Hesiod: *Theogony* 1.1 - 146

Tricola with masculine caesura: lines 3, 9, 10, 21, 25, 26, 29, 33, 36, 43, 52, 53, 55, 57, 59, 69, 73, 76, 79, 84, 92, 93, 94, 99, 102, 105, 107, 117, 127, 131, 134, 137, 146.

Tricola with feminine caesura: lines 2, 12, 14, 15, 18, 20, 24, 28, 34, 35, 37, 40, 41, 45, 47, 51, 56, 58, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 70, 71, 75, 77, 78, 88, 89, 91, 95, 96, 103, 106, 108, 109, 110, 113, 114, 116, 119, 120, 123, 124, 128, 130, 132, 135, 139, 140, 144.

Tricola with punctuated caesura: lines 25, 26, 40, 43, 52, 55, 59, 60, 61, 67, 69, 71, 92, 107, 117, 127.

Rising Three-Folders: lines 1, 11, 136.

Lines Ending in a Monosyllable Other Than τε: line 144.

5. My reading of εὐκυκλέος ("well-rounded") is shared only by Simplicius and Diels. Most contemporary scholars along with Plutarch, Sextus Empiricus, Clement of Alexandria, and Diogenes Laertius prefer the reading εὐπειθέος ("well-persuasive") presumably by affinity to the Goddess Πειθώ ("Persuasion"), who attends upon Truth, B 2.4. I will argue in the sequel that the εὐκυκλέος-reading is much more consistent with the metaphor of cosmic sphericity which purportedly gives the clue to understanding the nature of existence as a whole (see B 8.42 - 49). The poem is replete with images of circularity; but, by contrast, Persuasion plays merely a restricted role as handmaid to Truth—and it is the heart of Truth in particular that Parmenides speaks of in B 1.29. Other images of circularity are found in the wheels of Parmenides' chariot which whirl like rotors turning on a lathe (B 1.6 - 8); the cosmos extends outward in a perfectly spherical shape (B 8.42 - 43); the inner and outer rings of the stars blast forth a fire seen on earth (B 12.1 - 3); Parmenides' route to the stars sets him back on earth as if he has traveled in a circuit, etc.

6. A.P.D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides,* pp. 42 - 43.

7. "Being" designates the unique participle ἐόν, which may be substantivized by article τό, e.g., B 8.32. Although participles of the verb "to be" are found as substantive expressions both with and without the article in Homer (e.g., τὰ ἐσσόμενα –things to come, the future; ἐσσομένοισι–men in future generations, etc.) the singular neuter participle with and without the article is used in Parmenides for the first time in Greek to mean "existence in general." To ἐόν refers not to some one particular being, but to Being as Being, i.e., that which is akin to a universalis motor, or a primordial conatus animating the existence of all things, by which each is linked to a common energy, within which there is no distinction of essence, no distinction between the genera, species, and powers of things as we know them, and no

distinction between light and darkness, good and evil, and so forth—a use of the participle not found prior to Parmenides, but one adopted less than a century later by his renowned disciple Plato, who, in his remarkably rich dialogue *Parmenides,* tells of a young Socrates imbibing the wisdom of the aging poet, while dreamily admiring the sublimity of his verses.

8. Literally saying of τὸ ἐὸν that "remaining self-same in itself, it lies situated alone by itself"—a primordial formulation of the absolute independence of Being from beings.

9. Patricia Curd, *The Legacy of Parmenides,* p. 19.

10. See K. Meuli, "Scythica," *Hermes* 70 (1935), 121-176; and A.P.D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides,* chapter 1.

11. Literally: "you (Parmenides) must learn the wandering deeds of the round-eyed spotted moon."

2

Translation of the Diels B-Fragments

THE COSMIC VISION

Parmenides recounts a dream voyage through the stars in a chariot drawn by swift chargers and beautiful attending maidens. Traveling through profound darkness the train arrives at the gates of the ways of Night and Day. Avenging Justice holds the keys; yet the maidens persuade her to open the gates to insure safe passage to the palace of the Goddess, who teaches Parmenides the Truth of Being.

The Goddess instructs Parmenides on two ways of thinking inquiry: The one, that Being is, and must always be; the other, that Being is not, and cannot ever be. She then counsels him not to follow the second path, the Way of Opinion, as it represents the errant path of mortal minds, which do not recognize the eternal Essence of all that is. But by following the Way of Truth, Thinking and Being are found to be the same; while the unlimited source of all there is is ungenerable, indestructible, systematic, and whole, subsisting in one eternally present "now" which transcends the passage of time. The circumference of the cosmos holds the clue to Being's unified simplicity. The Goddess then tells Parmenides to learn the opinions of mortals, so that he may never be outmatched in argument. Finally, the Goddess speaks of Destiny who rules sexual intercourse and painful birth. She warns that everything contained in the mortal cosmology is bound by Necessity to inevitable decay; but Being shall never cease to be.

The following translation recognizes Hermann Diels' original numbering of the B-fragments from *Parmenides Lehrgedicht* (1897), which are listed on the left in parentheses. But Diels' original ordering of the B-Fragments has been modified to register a coherent flow of ideas and images.

PARMENIDES: ON NATURE

(B 1) Careering chargers, thundering swift, dispatch
My heart to places only hearts can match.
Then destinies, far out in front, fast speed
Me down a road of song, whose windings feed
The knowing man through every village found.
This way conveyed I came. For coursers crowned
With wise renown advanced my speeding heart
Along—outstretching far my quickening cart.
Fair maidens led the way. From out its shaft
The axle sent a whining cry abaft,
Hot-burning under constant friction, bright
Within fast flickering hubs. For in their flight
Two wheels whirled the axle on a lathe,
As fleet Heliades caress and bathe
My car with dawning light, abandoning
Dark realms of Night to seek their father's ring
Of light; while turning back, with regal hand,
Smooth veils from fair faces. Right there stand
Twin lofty gates dividing the way of Night
From Day. A lintel and sill of stony might
Encase them strong on either side, while doors
Of massive sweep and sway fill up with force
Their heavenly frame. And painful Justice holds,
With pain-dispensing woe, both locking bolts.
But gently urging maidens urged their way
With softened words, and quick She thrust away
For them the bolt-bars from the guarded gate.
Its doors then forced a yawning chasm great,
Unfolding giant wings attached with pins
Of brass in two-way hinges. Squealing dins
The air with plaintive moans, as doors fixed fast
With rows of riveted bolts wheel lazily past.
Through open gates swift maidens reined my horse
And car to trace their high celestial course.
A gracious goddess kindly welcomed me
With open arms and hospitality.
My right hand softly she entwined with hers
And spake to me in song this gentle verse:
"O Child of high-soaring ecstasies,
Immortal charioteers and chargers seize
You to my palace halls. I welcome you
Today! No evil Fate has sent you to
Traverse this starry path of mine (far back

It lies, removed from man's own beaten track),
But Right and Justice teamed. Necessity
Demands you learn of nature's panoply:
To wit, well-rounded Truth's untrembling core
Of life, plus opinions born of common lore,
In which there is no true belief. Still yet
There is one thing you must not soon forget
How needs must seem those things which seem-to-be,
Far-penetrating all reality."

(B 2) "Arise, I say, take home my warbling lays
To hear afresh. These are the only ways
A thinking man should seek: One claims quite free
That *Being Is, and is not not-to-be!*
(She is Persuasion's path, attending Truth).
The other, in opposite vein, retorts forsooth,
There is no Being! There must not ever be!
This path, I say, you'll never learn to see;
For neither can you know non-being, a sheer
Impossibility, nor phrase it clear,
(B 3) For Thinking and Being are one and the same."

(B 4) "Behold within your mind's own deepening frame
Those presences steadfastly fixed, yet all
Removed from obviousness; for never shall
These beings dissolve their ineluctable hold
On Being, whether scattered manifold
Across the cosmic all, or packed into
(B 5) A rounded ball; for, where I start, thereto
(B 6) Shall I again return self-same. Now you
Must say and think that Being exists as true
Necessity; since Being is to Be,
But nothingness impossibility.
I urge you now to contemplate these lays,
For from the first path's search I block your gaze.
Far off her winding course have mortals strayed
Alone in ambiguity, dismayed
Mid nothing seen nor known; for helplessness
Drives on the mind far-wandering their heart's abyss.
They carry on both dumb and blind, amazed,
Confused, these feckless tribes, who wholly dazed,
Adjudge *to be* and *not to be* the same,
Yet not the same—A backward turning game
The path of all. So never be seduced
(B 7) By thoughts that nothings equal beings reduced.
Blot from your thought this course! Raise high a fence!
Don't let old Habit's harsh experience
Propel you headlong down this fruitless path.

But close your blinded eyes, your ears with wrath
Of worldly sounds beset, and stay your tongue,
To judge, by reason's aid alone, among
The paths my strife-filled refutations rive.
(B 8) "Thus only one path's myth remains alive,
The one that claims that 'Being Is!' Along
This path are posted many signs that throng
The passerby, such as UNGENERABLE
And absolutely INDESTRUCTIBLE,
UNWAVERING, ENDLESS, EVERY-LIMB-ONE-WHOLE;
No *was* nor *will:* all past and future null;
Since Being subsists in one ubiquitous
Now—unitary and continuous.
For what descent would one assert for Being?
And how, from whence, will Being grow, so teeming
With vast increase? I bid you neither say
Nor think that Being springs from nothing's way;
The notion that this Being is not is not
For thought to think, nor lips to speak. For what
(8.10) Necessity would rouse vast Being to grow,
Begun in time or sprung ex nihilo?
So, Being must exist in fullest might,
Or not at all. Nor will the strength of right
Belief compel a thing to come-to-be
From nothing absolute. Its plain to see:
From nothing only nothing comes, because
By law does justice hold from Being the cause
Of generation and decay. She feigns,
But slackens not her dominating chains.
Her grips grow stronger still! Your judgment o'er
My words resolves this crucial either-or,
Reflect it to your very core: *Being* is,
Or Being is not. Decide I say! Dismiss
The latter from your heart, a nameless course,
And thoughtless too, for she shows not the source
Of Truth. Traverse, instead, the Way of Being.
Embrace the Is, authentic, never fleeing.
So how, I ask, would Being cease? And how
Would Being come-to-be? It is not *now,*
(8.20) If once it *was,* not even should it last
The span of future time extending past
Us now. So, genesis is quenched; its ruin
Not for experience. Nor is it strewn
Across vast multitudes, divided from
Itself; since all of Being is like, not some
Of it more here, and some of it less there.

The former forbids all binding holds unfair;
The latter neglects that all is filled to full
With Being. Hence, all exists together whole,
As being pulls itself to being by forced
Attraction mutual. But quite divorced,
Unmoved within the limits of great chains
Exists a sourceless, ceaseless Being; twin banes
Of birth and death long banished to the tides,
For true belief has pushed them out. It bides
The same in self-same place, remaining on
(8.30) Its own, and so remains in fetters drawn
Steadfastly to its core. For powerful
Necessity ensnares it in her pull
Of chains and shackles binding fast, cinched tight
On every side. On this account 'tis right
For Being to be not incomplete. It lacks
No thing; since, if it did, its need would wax
For everything. Self-same as well the thought
And thinking act that *Being Is*; for not
Without the Being, in which it is expressed,
Will you discern the thinking act impressed
Upon the mind; for nothing else outside
Of Being exists or ever will. Cold pride
Of Fate confined it whole and motionless
To stay. Whence flow all names which mortals dress
With playful suppositions based on mere
Belief that naming captures Truth. You hear
(8.40) Them speak of generation and decay,
Of being and non-being, of flight away
From place of rest, exchange of brilliant hue.
But here the outer limit shows the clue;
Since, now perfected from all points, just like
A massive sphere, it circles back to strike
Itself, in all ways equal from its core.
This limit needs must never be some more
Here, and some less there. For neither can
There be a what-is-not to halt its span
Out through itself toward self-same unity,
Nor can pure Being escape the symmetry
Of cosmic equipoise. It can not change
Intensity, nor broach its rounding range
To bulge with excess or deficiency,
Since all remains untouched simplicity.
For, equal to itself from every source,
Being meets with equal limits all its force."

(8.50) "I cease here now, concerning Truth, my thought
And trusted speech for you; and learn you ought
The ways of mortal minds. So listen close
To hear the words deceptive order chose:
Men set their minds two shapes to name, but one
Of these must not be voiced; and here they've gone
Astray. They judged two masses opposite
In strength, and laid down signs to seal the split.
Of these, the first fires forth ethereal flame,
So gentle and smooth, in all directions same
Unto itself; the other, not a whit
The same, but in itself its opposite—
Dark Night, a dense and weighty mass. To you
(8.60) I voice whole worlds of seeming things untrue,
Lest any mortal judgment should surpass
(B 9) You unawares. But since all things alas
Are named for Light and Night, and since both powers
Have been assigned to these and those, there flowers
Full in all both Light and darkening Night
In equal quantities, for none in sight
Has share of one exclusively its own."
(B 10) "The aether you shall know, and all which sown
Therein did grow, both constellations far
And wide, and Sun's destructive deeds, which scar
The earth with rays hot blazing torches burn,
And whence these came to be. I bid you learn
The wandering works and nature of the Moon,
Our spotted sphere. You'll even know the swoon
And sway of Heaven's vaulting love embrace;
Both whence he grew, and how, in shamed disgrace,
Necessity once dragged him off to hold
(B 11) The limits of the stars; and how, it's told,
The Earth, and Sun, and Moon, with aether round
Them drawn; our Heaven's scattered milky fount,
Olympian heights, and thermal forces from
(B 14) The stars awakened to their being. Benumb
With night, while circling earth, there shimmers strange
(B 15) A borrowed light, which searches in its range
(B 12) The blinding rays of Sun. The starry wreaths
Of thinner breadth bring forth a fire that breathes
And blasts full force; the ones beyond cloud black
With darkest Night, but still afar shine back
Their share of shimmering light. And in their midst
There lives the goddess Destiny, who sits
In queenship over all. For intercourse
Of lovers mixed, and loathsome pangs which course

The womb she rules over all. She sent
The woman off to mate with man, and bent
It back for man with woman to mate again.
(B 13) And Eros first she destined to begin
(B 18) The lineage of the Gods. And when a man
And woman intertwine to seal the plan
Of Passion's love-affair, a life-force forms
From blood diverse, which courses thick and swarms
The veins to fashion bodies well-produced,
Of tempered forces born. For when, once loosed,
Life's forces clash in strife upon the sown
Seed, no unity will they have grown
Within the body mixed, and curses shall vex
The growing child with indeterminate sex.
(B 17) But when Love's seeds implant themselves upon
The right side of the mother's womb, they spawn
New baby boys, but on the left they yield
(B 16) Girls. For just as each one holds, concealed
Within, some mix of Light with darkest Night,
Which rushes through their wandering limbs, so might
Exist the mind of man. For wisdom's seat
Persists the same for everyone you meet:
A nature growing in the limbs; since Thought
(B 19) Is marked by greater growth. And so the lot
Of all there is or ever was I've shown
To you according to opinions known,
But, after they've grown, they'll cease to be,
Their names but signs affixed by man's decree.

3

The Question of Being: A Dialectic of Alternative Paths

THE GROUNDING OF A METAPHYSICS OF BEING

Interpreting Parmenides invariably leads us to many of the foundational questions of metaphysics: What is the meaning of essence and existence as such? How can I be certain that reality is not just an illusion stealthily concocted by my senses and imagination? What is the purpose and significance of self-conscious life? Is there a beginning to the space-time continuum? Can something come-to-be from nothing? Is my soul immortal?

Exploring these questions in Parmenides requires that we first come to terms with the general meaning of the verb εἰμί in all of its inflected forms as present indicative ἔστι (is), infinitive εἶναι (to be), and participle ἐόν (Being). We must then ask whether differences in inflection and syntax cause discernible differences in the verb's meaning. And, if there are differences in meaning produced by differences of inflection, are the correlations predictable and exact, or do they differ from context to context? Finally, what impact would such differences of meaning have on our understanding of the Parmenidean concept of Being?

Charles Kahn points out in his valuable essay "The Greek Verb 'To Be' and the Concept of Being" that "the most fundamental value of *einai* when used alone (without predicates) is not 'to exist' but 'to be so,' 'to be the case,' or 'to be true.'"[1] Kahn calls this sense of the verb "to be" its "veridical usage." Kahn's innovation challenges those standard interpretations of Parmenides based on a much later distinction between essence (i.e., *what* a things is) and existence (i.e., the *fact* that a thing is, abstracted from any of its worldly determinations). These standard interpretations argue that Parmenides intended to distinguish very subtle differences of meaning by the verb ἔστι, for instance:

(1) ἔστι as existential "is," expressing the *fact* of a thing's presence:
E.g., B 2.3: ὅπως ἔστιν: "that it is," where "it" implies unqualified existence, as conveyed in ἔστιν.
(2) ἔστι as the "is" expressing the *possibility* of a thing's presence:
E.g., B 6.1: ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι: "since it is possible to be," where the phrase "it is possible" (ἔστι) has the infinitive "to be" (εἶναι) as subject, and the ideas of possibility (ἔστι) and existence (εἶναι) are inseparably linked.
(3) ἔστι as the copula "is" *linking predicate to subject:*
E.g., B 8.48: ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ἄσυλον: "since all is inviolate."

Although these distinctions between the various uses of ἔστι are obvious in later Attic prose, it is much more difficult to argue that Parmenides had uses (1) and (2) clearly distinguished. For instance, while it may be argued that at B 6.1 the term "Being" (ἐόν) lies hidden as an impersonal "it" in the clause "since it is possible to be" (ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι), by assimilation to the immediately preceding clause "it is necessary to say and think that Being is" (χρὴ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ᾽ ἐὸν ἔμμεναι), it is far less clear just what the impersonal "it" represents in B 2.3's "that it is" (ὅπως ἔστιν) and "that it is not possible not to be" (ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι), and 2.5's "that it is not" (ὡς οὐκ ἔστι) and "that it must not not be" (ὡς χρεών ἐστι μὴ εἶναι)–unless we supply "Being" implicit by analogy from B 6.1. What we find in the poem is more of a primordial monistic theory of Being, than a sophisticated ontological system of classification between various modes of Being.

Kahn's contribution possesses great merit precisely because he breaks free not only from total dependence upon the post-Parmenidean essence-existence distinction, but from the much more problematic application of the three (or more) uses of "is" presupposed by standard interpretations. Kahn sees the poet in his proper historical context as an early philosopher espousing a much more holistic message about the way things are than many scholars are willing to countenance. Thus, I argue parallel to Kahn, that the many and various uses of the verb "to be" that we find so prevalent in the later Attic prose writers were simply not available to Parmenides *as established literary practice.*

If, then, we ask ourselves the questions: What is the case? What is true? What is so?—our answer will vary, according to Parmenides, depending upon which path of inquiry we take, and what realm we find ourselves in as a result. Mortals firmly believe, for instance, that they know what is the case and what is true. They even ascribe names to designate differences between things in the temporal world (B 9). But they miss out on what is the case *absolutely,* and what is true *without qualification.* Mortals miss out on the distinction between what-a-thing-is in terms of its specific essence (i.e., whatness understood as *ens temporalis,* that which *exists in this world*

of ordinary sense-experience), versus the Truth of Being-as-such, that whose essence=existence (i.e., whatness understood as *ens transcendentalis,* that which *exists in the world beyond* ordinary sense-experience). For instance, my human existence is but a modality or determination of Being; but Being is not a determination of any thing other than itself. Thus, while my essence as a human being may be limited to "rational animal" or some such formulation, and while this formulation captures what is the case in the temporal world, while serving as a basis for further predicates that may be truly affirmed of me, nevertheless, my essence simply as a being is the same as that of any other being, and therefore not limited to any specific determination that would distinguish me from other beings. Parmenides seeks to know the Essence and Being of beings, and not the specific essences of individual beings, which differ across categories. Being and Essence appear to have no specific limitation at all, no duration, and no defining epithet.

On the other hand, to seek for what a thing is is to seek after its definition. And it is not immediately clear whether Being even has a definition, since definitions reveal starting points and ends, serving as determinations or limits to the thing defined, while Being is precisely that which, according to Parmenides, contains neither a starting point (B 8.27), nor a determinate end (B 8.4, 8.27). It appears that we cannot even begin our investigation of what Parmenides means by the term "Being" (ἐόν), for insofar as we limit what we assert to assertions which describe this temporal realm, we cannot say for certain what existence means in and of itself. We can only point to determinate sensible modalities of existence. Sensation has access only to being-such-and-such, not to Being-as-such.

The lesson of the poem may just be that philosophy begins with transcendence, by passing through the gates of Justice, and not with the search for viable explanations of what is the case or what is true in reference exclusively to this temporal world. As Aristotle would claim much later, the task of quantifying the sensible world belongs exclusively to the departmental sciences (e.g., geometry, zoology, physics), which deal, either in theory or in application, exclusively with measurable quanta (e.g., intelligible spatial magnitudes, animals, kinetic change) but not to philosophy as such, whose object is ideal and unquantifiable Being.

Thus, in one sense, Being is something absent from mortal common sense, just as the goddess is absent from Parmenides as kouros seeking, but not holding, the light of Day. In another sense, Being is something immediately present to the mind in the here and now, just as the goddess is immediately *present* to Parmenides as kouros basking in the light of Day. This dialectical tension between the *otherness* and *immediacy* of Being, that is, between the *absence* and *presence* of Truth personified, animates the poem throughout.

Parmenides must journey to Truth, for She lies outside the realm of sensation and time as something absent, even though She is ever-present as thought, mind, and spirit. The poet frames this tension between spirit and nature, between the ideal and the real, between the absent and the present in B 4, where (depending upon how one construes the Greek) the goddess warns that Parmenides must either (1) "take into view those things which, though absent, are nevertheless present to the mind" (reading ὅμως as most likely going with παρεόντα) or (2) "take into view those things which, though present to the mind, are nevertheless absent [sc. to sensation]" (reading ὅμως as less likely going with ἀπεόντα). In either case, Parmenides must look for truths that undergird this temporal realm, which, though by no means obvious, are nevertheless firmly present to the mind.

This tension between absence and presence, between that which is mediated through the senses and that which is immediately present to the intellect, expresses itself in the syntax of the verb " is." We know, for instance, that Parmenides uses ἔστι in the *third person.* We might infer from this that Parmenides is speaking of an Essence *other than* his own. We know that he also uses ἔστι in the *present indicative.* We might infer from this that the Essence of which he speaks is immediately present to his mind in the here and now. On the barest reading, ἔστι conveys both immediacy and otherness, i.e., both presence and absence. The verb ἔστι is grammatically impersonal, but the host of goddesses and powers with whom Parmenides communicates are very personal indeed. Yet the verb "to be" remains strangely elusive and plastic, appearing now as present indicative, then as infinitive, and then again as participle. Any commitment to a consistent word or phrase presupposes an elaborate understanding of Parmenides' world-view.

THE PROBLEM OF TRANSLATING THE VERB "TO BE"

The problem of translating the verb "to be" is most evident in B 2.2 - 4, where we find no less than six uses of it in a passage where the goddess introduces a dialectic of choice between the alternative paths of "is" and "is not." Here is the text of Cohen, Curd, and Reeve (CCR: 37, 1995):

> the only ways of inquiry there are for thinking:
> the one, that *it is*$_1$ and that *it is not possible*$_2$ for it not *to be*$_3$,
> is the path of Persuasion (for it attends upon Truth),
> the other that *it* is$_4$ not and that *it is*$_5$ necessary for it not *to be*$_6$.

The first path of inquiry is one that Parmenides must take if he is to contemplate the presence of Being beyond the veil of opinion and appearance; the

second represents the backward-turning, downward-spiraling, self-concealing path of mortal minds (cf. B 6.9), from whom Being and Truth are absent altogether.

There are six occurrences of some form of the verb "to be" in these lines, which I have numbered for reference. Smyth's *Greek Grammar* indicates that there may be as many as three different uses of "is" (ἔστι) in a passage of classical Greek:[2]

(a) ἔστι may express the *existence* of a thing (CCR uses 1, 3, 4, and 6)
(b) ἔστι may express the *possibility* of a thing (CCR use 2)
(c) ἔστι may connect predicate to subject as *copula* (CCR use 5).

Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, this distinction between different uses of ἔστι does not become standard until a period well after Archaic poetry. Nevertheless, most commentators on Parmenides (with the exception of Kahn and Furth) presuppose a hard and fast distinction between different uses of the verb.

There is a further problem: the idea of unqualified Being, whose simultaneous presence and absence structures the Way of Truth and the Way of Opinion, respectively, appears buried in obscurity underneath the impersonal expression "it is" used to translate ἔστι at (1) and (4). Here the reader is left flummoxed as to the significance of the impersonal "it," when clearly, given both the tense and person of the verb, Parmenides conveys in ἔστι the two-sidedness of immediacy and otherness, i.e., the presence of Being (Way of Truth) and the absence of Being (Way of Opinion). The mystery of the unitary Essence of all things is the question that animates Parmenides' personal essence. The question forces itself upon his mind with an urgency of choice deliberately reflected in the dual function of ἔστι as third person (expressing otherness), and as present tense (expressing immediacy), as well as in the dual significance of ἔστι as grammatically impersonal, implying unidentifiability, and as dramatically personified in the goddess Truth, implying familiarity, warmth, and home.

Parmenides' poetic style hearkens back to the oral tradition of Homer. His reliance on Homer forces the use of carefully chosen expressions and formulae. And it is not the practice of Archaic poets to distinguish between multiple uses of ἔστι. Nevertheless, the method of assuming multiple uses for the verb and then selecting or defending a favorite sense or group of senses from among the list, as *the* Parmenidean sense, remains standard to virtually all of mainstream scholarship in English. The only thing we can safely infer about ἔστι, however, is that it communicates ongoing activity in the present, that it expresses the sheer immediacy and otherness of Being,

and that it only rarely comes into play in the poem as a copula linking predicate and subject.

Commenting on the role of ἔστι in the poem, Montgomery Furth claims that "Parmenides' discussion of 'being' shows no sign of the conceptual distinction considered elementary nowadays, between the 'is' linking subject and predicate and the 'is' of existence; and in fact it needs no documentation here that this distinction was not reflected in either ordinary or philosophical Greek idiom until, at least, a much later date than his, the word ἐστι expressing both concepts."[3] Furth concludes that there is a "fused" sense in ἔστι combing both the concept of existence (existential-ἔστι, edited with emphatic pitch accent on the first syllable) and being-of-a-certain-sort (copula-ἐστι, edited as enclitic for deemphasis).

If we follow Furth in fusing together the two senses of ἔστι, we can safely infer that beings-of-a-certain-sort are intimately connected with a universal cosmic source; that this source (ἀρχή) of beings is the sourceless Being (ἄναρχον ἐὸν) which gives of itself over and over in the copula "is," which allows individual finite beings to take on the several attributes and predicates specifically determining them to a-certain-sort of existence. For Parmenides, the function of Being is *to give* essence to specific individuals; the function of specific individuals is *to receive* the several essences they claim as their own peculiar worldly and temporal determination. Being discloses its Essence only in the now; but the Essence thus disclosed melts into the various and manifold essences that we experience in time. The Being of all things is unitary in form, eternal, and infinite; but this same Being is perceived by the senses in terms of individual beings, i.e., as materially manifold, temporal, and finite, because the various beings that we can admit as existing in reality each exist as distinct from one another according to matter, as undergoing change in time, and as limited to a specific and quantifiable essence. The lesson of the poem is that beings cannot claim the worldly essences that belong peculiarly and severally to them without there necessarily existing a transworldly, sourceless, and timeless Essence which gives of itself in the now.

David Gallop, G.E.L. Owen, and Jonathan Barnes generally prefer an existential reading of ἔστι in CCR cases 1, 3, 4, and 6 (over any other reading).[4] Thus, they run the risk of disconnecting beings-of-a-certain-sort from their unitary and timeless source-Being. Their existential reading has weight, however, because Parmenides is concerned with accounting for the existence of all things. But limiting ἔστι to an exclusively existential function threatens to sever the important link between the finite and the infinite, between the temporal and the transcendent.

A. H. Coxon claims that "in defining 'the only ways of enquiry which can be thought' (B 2.2), [Parmenides] isolates the expressions 'is' and 'is not' deliberately both from any determinate subject and from any further completion. In so doing he assigns to them no restricted sense but treats them as the marks of 'asserting and thinking,' with the possibility and presuppositions of which he is concerned throughout."[5] Coxon realizes that when a word from one language admits several translations in another, it follows that the original word has packed into it a certain richness of meaning that remains *untranslatable* in the metalanguage. Parmenides plays upon the richness of ἔστι by mythologizing its significance in the persona of a nameless but familiar goddess bestowing Truth, and thus by making what is absent and other-worldly immediately present to the mind, and what is distant and ineffable very personal indeed. The force of cosmic presence, reflected in Parmenides' own presence of mind, leads him to Her. Contemporary translations of the poem, however, seem to lead us away from Her. We must take pains, therefore, not to limit the significance of ἔστι to merely one of what are many possible significations.

A serious danger of clinging to just one signification of ἔστι is that it may lead one to interpret Parmenides as having chosen the least likely among them: namely, predicative-ἔστι. Limiting the role of ἔστι exclusively to its copula function runs the same risk as limiting the verb to an exclusively existential function; namely, the risk of missing out on the important *connection* between beings-of-a-certain-sort and their unqualified source-Being, i.e., the intimate linkage between finite actualities and infinite possibility. This linkage is personalized in the mythical interaction between human and divine, mortal and immortal, Parmenides and his guiding goddess. Patricia Curd, for instance, advocates the primacy of predicative-ἔστι in Parmenides, and goes so far as to denominate the poet a "predicative monist" by claiming that "the 'is' in Parmenides that seems to be the natural home of *noos,* to which *noos* travels if it takes the proper route of inquiry (*hodos dizesios*), is more than an existential 'is.' Rather, it is predicative in a certain fundamental sense: what we know in knowing what-is is the real or genuine character of a thing; thus it is what we know when we know just what something genuinely is, or what it is to be that thing."[6] On the contrary, I answer that (1) existence, as such, is more fundamental than predication, since there must first *exist* a substratum before relevant predicates can be *affixed* to a subject, therefore, predicative-ἔστι can not take precedence over existential-ἔστι, and (2) what Parmenides seeks to discover in the poem is decidedly not what it is for an individual thing to be the kind of thing it is, but rather what it is for a thing to be without qualification; therefore, Parmenides does not seek to know the specific essence of individual beings, but rather the universal

Essence of all things taken together qua beings.

Curd's emphasis on knowing "what it is for [a] thing to be" imports to the poem the extraneous and decidedly later Aristotlean notion of specific essence; the Philosopher calls the specific or quantifiable essence of a thing its "what-is-it?" (τἰ ἐστι) or "the-what-it-is-to-be" for that thing (τὸ τἰ ἦν εἶναι, gnomic imperfect, dative of reference understood). But Curd's analysis misses the deeper significance of the linkage between the finite and the infinite, because it conflates the idea of specific essence (i.e., qualified existence) with the idea of Being-as-such (i.e., unqualified existence). For instance, what-it-is-for-Socrates-to-be expresses merely his specific essence, i.e., *rational animal* (differentia + genus), not his source-Being, which is Parmenides' focus throughout. According to Aristotle (and by extension Curd), any predication which enunciates the specific essence of a thing is to be ranged under the category of "substance" or "whatness," (οὐσία or τἰ ἐστι). Recall that Aristotle's categories are primarily classifications for different kinds of predication, and only secondarily classifications for different grades of Being. But specific essence does not tell us what it is for Socrates to be *without qualification.* Aristotle even reserves a special place for inquiry into unqualified existence when he says: "There is a science which theorizes on Being qua Being and on the attributes which belong to it in virtue of its own nature."[7]

Parmenides leaves the investigation of (what would be) specific essences to the Way of Opinion. Along this route mortals make use of opinion by applying names and definitions to visible shapes, thus marking out the essence specific to each (cf. B 8.53ff., and B 19.1 - 3). Even Aristotle, who championed the investigation of specific essences, relegated the act of knowing what they are and of quantifying their behavior in the world to the departmental sciences (e.g., geometry, zoology, physics). The investigation of Being qua Being belongs exclusively to Aristotle's first-philosophy; and it is this type of investigation (as opposed to the investigation of merely specific essences) that ought to be attributed to Parmenides. Thus, contrary to Curd, Parmenides does *not* use predication as the clue to Being. Ironically, mortals fall into error, as Parmenides sees it, precisely because they use ἔστι as a means and not as an end to be investigated for its own sake; that is, mortals use ἔστι as mere copula for attaching limiting predicates to beings, thus limiting the Being of things to a set of specific determinations, which divorce finite beings from their infinite and super-sensible source, and mankind from any chance of recognizing the connection.

Mortals trap themselves within a world of specific essence behind a veil of appearances that severs all connection to the infinite; they thereby miss out on the spiritualizing power of Truth, which already exists for them as

Thought, if they would only bother to look within themselves! Mortals avoid the pursuit of spiritual oneness with the infinite in favor of control, domination, and personal power, a power that comes from determining, dividing, and denominating the temporal world around them as essentially other. In other words, mortals fail to appreciate the gift of their own self-conscious oneness with nature, i.e., the living recognition of Truth's gift of thought to man, a thought that allows man to see the macrocosm of the All within the microcosm of the mind.

Specific essences emerge from contrary forces in nature: light and darkness, B 1.11, B 9; future and past, B 8.19 - 20; generation and decay, B 8.21. Mortals posit these forces as first principles of things. But their path of inquiry continually leads them round in a vicious circle from contemplation of one principle to the contemplation of its equal and opposite, and back again; since every contrary principle is defined in terms of a correlative other. The message of the poem is that mortals fail to find an exit ramp off this circuit. In order to exit they must abandon their contrary principles through contemplative transcendence to a third concept that negates both contraries while absorbing them into an intermediate and higher truth.

ZOROASTRIANISM, PERSIAN HEGEMONY, AND THE ESSENTIAL TENSION OF CONTRARY FORCES IN NATURE

Parmenides believes that natural energies and forces are to be ultimately understood in terms of a polar tension between opposite and contrary first principles, which contain a built-in *a priori* necessity for releasing that tension through an intermediate and higher third notion dissolving the original tension of difference. To understand how this unique idea of dialectical assent to truth by means of an intellectual transcendence of contrary principles became so deeply embedded within the Greek consciousness, we must appreciate the fact that early Greek thinkers often absorbed and, in some cases, reacted against the growing cultural and religious influence of Zoroastrianism in Persia, Assyria, and Anatolia. During the life and times of Parmenides the eastern Mediterranean became increasingly influenced both politically and economically by the newly emerging Achaemenid Dynasty of Persia (550 - 330 BC) along with its mainstream religion built around centuries of oral transmission of Zoroaster's teachings.

The figure of Zoroaster is mysterious. Some western accounts, likely based on Persian legend, date Zoroaster to have flourished several thousand years in the past. According to Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Famous Philosophers,* I.8, "Aristotle in the first book of *On Philosophy* says that they [sc. the Magi] are more ancient that the Egyptians, and that according to them there

are two first principles, a good spirit and an evil spirit, one called Zeus and Oromasdes, the other Hades and Arimanius" (Translation from Barnes, *Complete Works of Aristotle,* v. II, 2390). Other sources date Zoroaster to have flourished too close to the present in the sixth century BC; but it is likely that this dating corresponds to the time when the Achaemenians made his teachings the official worship of the Persian Empire. It is far more probable, as Mary Boyce records, that Zoroaster flourished c. 1400 - 1200 BC. His teachings grounded an already existing set of cultural beliefs shared by the Indo-Iranians, and, once crystallized, were transmitted orally for several centuries with remarkable accuracy.

If Parmenides was born c. 515 BC, as many speculate, he would have grown into early manhood witnessing firsthand a sprawling Persian cultural influence in the eastern Mediterranean. By the time he reached maturity Achaemenian strategists were planning a full-scale invasion of mainland Greece by bridging the Hellespont into Thrace and Macedonia. Parmenides would have absorbed the influences of Near-Eastern culture and religion on the streets, in the markets, and on the open seas. We must not assume that Parmenides remained isolated from this Orientalizing influence in his comfortable sea-side birth place of Elea, in Magna Graeca far to the west on the shores of Lucania, as the full force of Achaemenian power spread over most of the Greek world within the span of his own life, by means of mercantile trade, military outposts, and political domination.

Prior to Xerxes' great invasion of mainland Greece, which was eventually repelled, and involved enormous loss to his own forces, the Achaemenians under Cyrus the Great had already defeated the Medes and incorporated their military power, their Magi, and their Zoroastrian orthodoxy into a vast western empire in Anatolia by 549 BC, then successfully advanced through Phrygia toward costal towns in Lydia and Caria; and finally began assaults on the islands of the Aegean Sea.

Herodotus reports that the advancing Persian armies sent reconnaissance by sea along the mainland coast of Greece, holding the captured Democedes as guide; massacred the Samians; captured Babylon and successfully held it; besieged Barca and Cyrene, Greek colonies on the North African coast; began hostilities against the Greeks on the Hellespont by subduing the Perinthians, who refused to accept foreign domination; successfully invaded Thrace; sent envoys to Macedonia to the west; attempted but failed to capture the important island outpost of Naxos; burned the city of Sardis to the ground along with the temple of Cybebe, a goddess worshiped by the local Lydians, which burning was then used as a pretext by the Persians for their burning of other Greek temples throughout the west; attacked Salamis; defeated the Cyprians; routed the Carians; attacked Ionia; invested Miletus;

and by these incursions spread their cultural values and spiritual predilections into Iraq, Anatolia, Egypt, the Aegean Sea, and mainland Greece itself.

In some cases the Persian invasion amounted to a cultural war in which elements of Greek religion and civic life were destroyed, ousted, or marginalized—these excesses would be visited in kind two centuries later by Alexander the Great. In other cases, the Persians tolerated the religious practices of those different from themselves so long as they willingly submitted to their rule by paying taxes to the King and allowing their sons to be conscripted into the Persian army, the same price for citizenship in the later Athenian and Roman Empires. At any rate, it is clear to those familiar with the history of the ancient Near East that the early Greek philosophers were profoundly influenced (in some cases for better, in others for worse) by the cultural norms and religious practices of their Achaemenian colonizers, and that Zoroastrianism was an inseparable element of this colonization from the sixth century BC onward. During the life of Parmenides Zoroastrianism was on the rise throughout an ever-increasing and culturally diverse Persian empire extending from the Indus river in the east to the Aegean Sea in the west.

Zoroastrians believed in a cosmic struggle between two fundamental but opposite energies in the universe, Good and Evil, represented in nature by Light and Darkness, and in the intellect of man by Truth and Deception. They believed there exists a Supreme Being, Ahura Mazda (or Ohrmazd, Oromasdes, or simply "Wise Lord"), creator of both the sensible and the intelligible, the material and the spiritual worlds, the source of cosmic order, and the arbiter of all that is. Zoroastrians also posited the existence of Ahriman, the prince of darkness, void, and cosmic disorder. The historian Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr. informs us that:

> although Zoroaster predicted that Ahura Mazda would ultimately win the cosmic struggle, all people were free to choose between Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, the Truth and the Lie. The Zoroastrians venerated light, using a network of fire temples tended by a large priestly class. Zoroastrianism appealed mainly to the Persians, not to the other peoples under their rule.[8]

The ideas of Zoroaster gained growing prominence both during and after Parmenides' life; they were an inseparable part of the cultural landscape of the eastern Mediterranean until the time of Alexander the Great. And it is quite likely the case that those to whom Parmenides refers as "aimlessly wandering two-headed mortal men" (B 6.4 - 5). who "judge in error that 'to be' and 'not to be' are the same yet not the same" (B 6.7 - 8), who live in "clans of undiscerning men" (B 6.7), whose path in life is "backward-turning"

(B 6.9), represent none other than the Zoroastrians themselves, along with their centuries-old dualism, and their seeming oblivion to the unity of the Being that they divide into opposing cosmic energies.

We must recall that Zoroastrianism would remain the official state religion of the three great Persian dynasties spanning a period of more than a thousand years following the generation of Parmenides, and that many elements of its teaching survive these centuries in the belief structures of pagan Greeks and Romans, Nestorian Christians, and Ismai'ili Shi'i Muslims. Many prominent Greek thinkers of the sixth century BC, most notably Pythagoras, actually sought personal contact with Zoroastrian cult-masters in Babylon. Hippolytus, a Christian writer of the third century AD, reports that Diodorus and Aristoxenus, the musician, claimed that Pythagoras once visited Zoroaster the Chaldean [in Babylon] (cf. Diels 28 A 14, 11)—it is more likely that Pythagoras met with a leading Zoroastrian cleric, not with the founder of the faith. Nothing is officially recorded, however, about Parmenides' personal experience with Zoroastrianism, but its cultural influence was clearly present during his own life; and traces of its doctrines are to be found especially in his poetic emphasis on the grandeur and dual finality of the Gates of the ways of Night and Day (B 1.11), in the mortal dualism that all things consist of Light and Darkness (B 9), as well as in the tension of choice between the Way of Truth, which claims that Being Is, and the Way of Opinion, which claims that Being is not (B 2.3 - 6, 1.29 - 30).

During the time of the early pre-Socratics Zoroastrian priests and laity would have been open to discussing the tenets of their faith with all inquirers, including inquisitive Greeks (Boyce 2001,76). Some of the earliest texts of Zoroaster's teaching from imperial Persia were left by the great Achaemenian kings in a specially evolved cuneiform script, the earliest known inscription of the Iranian language. The best-known texts of Zoroaster were composed much later around the sixth century AD, during the late-Sassanian period, by means of a specially invented "Avestan" alphabet. The sacred texts of Zoroaster are known, therefore, as "the Avesta." Once the teachings of the prophet became established in written form, religious scholars began interpreting their meaning and message; this interpretation was called "the Zand" by Persians. From the Zand of the lost Avestan texts we find some remarkable passages that strike close comparison to Parmenides.

For instance, we know that Parmenides condemns those who split the universe into equal and opposing principles which they call Light and Darkness: the former seen in fire here on earth, in the stars, and in the passing Sun; the latter seen where there is absence of fire and presence of void. These dualists simply "posited" or "laid it down" (κατέϑεντο, B 8.53) that such was the case in the world. The trouble Parmenides has with them is that they

never bother to prove that things are the way they believe them to be; nor do they give reasons why they believe thus. The best written accounts we have of what these beliefs might have been are to be found in the Zand. We must remember that although these written interpretations postdate Parmenides in composition, they are remarkably accurate accounts of Zoroastrian teachings that antedate Parmenides by several centuries. Consider the following passages:

It is thus revealed in the Good Religion that Ohrmazd was on high in omniscience and goodness. For boundless time He was ever in the light. That light is the space and place of Ohrmazd. Some call it Endless Light. . . . Ahriman was abased in slowness of knowledge and the lust to smite. The lust to smite was his sheath and darkness his place. Some call it Endless Darkness. And between them was emptiness. They both were limited and limitless: for that which is on high, which is called Endless Light... and that which is abased, which is Endless Darkness—those were limitless. (Boyce, 1990, 45 - 46: from the Greater Bundahishn, ch 1.1 - 10)

Contrast Parmenides' bold journey to the Gates of Justice and to the light beyond those gates with the Evil Spirit's encounter with the blinding light of Ohrmazd:

The Evil Spirit, on account of his slowness of knowledge, was not aware of the existence of Ohrmazd. Then he arose from the deep, and came to the boundary and beheld the light. When he saw the intangible light of Ohrmazd he rushed forward. Because of his lust to smite and his envious nature he attacked to destroy it. Then he saw valour and supremacy greater than his own. He crawled back to darkness and shaped many devs, the destructive creation. And he rose for battle. (Boyce, 1990, 46: from the Greater Bundahishn, ch. 1.15 - 17)

Compare Parmenides' teaching on the illusory nature of time and the necessity of a permanent and durationless now, in which the whole of all there is exists in one measureless instant, this whole being ungenerated, indestructile, and endless (B 8.3 - 7), with the Zoroastrian teaching that Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord, was forced to create the material world as essentially *in time,* not by His own choice, but reluctantly by the necessity of ultimately having to defeat evil in the world. If Ahura Mazda creates time, He is faced with the looming prospect that Ahriman's creation too must develop. And so, having no other choice, in order to make his assault powerless, the Wise Lord created time, with the foreknowledge that evil would ultimately be defeated in the world (cf. Boyce, 1990, 47: from the Greater Bundahishn, ch. 1.36 - 37).

It is interesting to note how effortlessly Parmenides links his account of the facts of the world to human speech and thought about those facts: his goddess, for instance, will not allow him *to say or to think* that material things come from nothing (B 8.7 - 8); she even warns him that, of non-being, he will never *come to know it nor put it into words* (B 2.7 - 8), for *thought and being are the same* (B 3). And, when accounting for popular myths from 'the opinions of mortals' about the way things appear, the goddess tells Parmenides that she is about to *speak in a deceptive ordering of words* (B 8.52). This effortless gliding of theme from facts to words, from the being of the *reality* of which we are conscious to the being of the *consciousness* we have of reality, from the ontological to the psychological, is anticipated centuries earlier by the Zoroastrians. In the following passage, note how easily the interpreter moves from the *reality* of evil in the world to the infection of deceptive *speech* caused by that reality:

> From the substance of darkness, which is Endless Darkness, he created lying speech. From lying speech the wickedness of the Evil Spirit was manifest. . . . From the substance of light Ohrmazd created true speech; and from true speech the holiness of the Creator was manifest. (Boyce, 1990, 47: from the Greater Bundahishn, ch.1 .49 - 50)

It should come as no surprise at this point that those currents of thought in Parmenides that focus heavily on the infinite timelessness of the now, on the perfect roundedness of Truth and spherical symmetry of the cosmos, as well as on the notion that Truth manifests itself in terms of inward spiritual revelation, are each currents that have been carefully channeled from the depths of the Zoroastrian tradition itself.

Zoroastrianism not only inspired other religious dualisms to arise throughout North Africa, Europe, and Asia (the most famous of which, Manichaeism, was the chosen path of Augustine before his conversion to Christianity), but the tradition remained the official state religion of Persia's three great empires ruled in succession for over a thousand years by the Achaemenians (550 - 330 BC), Parthians (250 BC - AD 226), and Sassanians (AD 227 - 661). The Sassanians, however, inevitably succumbed to the relentless lightning raids of the ambitious caliph Umar I (r. AD 634 - 644), as they trembled beneath the harsh bedouin cries of "Allah-o-Akbar" from Umar's increasingly numerous companies of highly motivated and increasingly unified Jihad warriors. All inhabitants of the lands of the former Persian Empire would eventually adopt Muhammad's revelation proclaimed daily in the muezzin's cries to morning prayer: *La ilaha ill Allah, Muhammad rasul Allah* (There is no god whatever but the One God, and Muhammad

is the messenger of God!). At the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate (c. AD 750)—hardly more than a century after the death of Muhammad—the Muslim world extended from the Ka'bah in Mecca eastward beyond the Indus basin, northward into Transoxiana, westward over the Pyrennes and into central France, and southward into the Sahara Desert.[9] The Persians succumbed quickly to the Arab conquests, exhausted after centuries of battle with the Athenian, Macedonian, and Roman Empires.

On the one hand, early Greek thinkers such as Pythagoras accepted many of the dualisms of ancient Zoroastrianism (note Aristotle's own acknowledgment of the importance of Pythagoras' dual column of contrary principles in the *Metaphysics* A, 986a23ff., a schematic of concepts likely influenced by Babylonian thought—note also Heraclitus' emphasis on Fire as the primal energy permeating a cosmic flux, possibly influenced by the uniquely Zoroastrian belief that light and fire are the essential signs and manifestations of a Wise Lord engaged in a constantly fluctuating struggle with evil and darkness), on the other hand, such thinkers as Parmenides repudiated dualism by transcending it through the pioneering art of dialectic.

DIALECTIC in the classical Greek sense may be defined as *a discipline that contemplates and debates the merit, demerit, and content of opposing or contrary ideas, propositions, or world-views, with the aim of transcending the tension of difference by discovering a higher truth.* Plato's dialogues represent highly sophisticated dialectical dramas. Aristotle institutionalized dialectic as the only acceptable method of scientific discovery at the Lycaeum in Athens. These twin pillars of classical Greek thought have inspired the modern debate between European rationalists and empiricists, as well as the contemporary rift between the so-called "continental" philosophy of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida, versus the Anglo-American "analytic" philosophy of Russell, Quine, and Searle. Dualism without dialectic, however, is dead to debate, because dualism as such posits no higher truth than the fact of opposition itself.

Zoroastrian dualism and Parmenidean dialectical monism became so deeply embedded in the Greek consciousness that it inspired Aristotle to formulate, in his *Physics,* a systematic study of contrariety in application to kinetic change (κίνησις). For instance, the classifications of kinetic change offered for examination in the *Physics* are (1) alteration (i.e., qualitative change between state and privation), (2) growth & diminution (i.e., quantitative change between the greater and the less), and (3) locomotion (i.e., change between inertia and motion with respect to place).[10] When a thing comes-to-be or passes away, the change occurs with respect to substance, according to Aristotle. Even substantial changes involve contrary movements, e.g., generation and decay.

Aristotle's examination of natural movement always posits two polar opposites separated along a continuum of possible change in the middle of which stands an intermediate notion. He names this intermediate τὸ μεταξὺ ("the in-between"), which expresses neither state nor privation, neither growth nor diminution, neither generation nor decay, but rather a synthesis of opposites, which at the same time negates the opposition itself. Sometimes there is not a name to mark the intermediate, as Aristotle says, but there is always an intermediate in contrary opposition, but never, of course, in contradictory opposition.[11]

Aristotle emphasizes the usefulness of polar opposite principles with synthesizing intermediate as explicative of reality when he discusses the contributions of his Greek predecessors:

> Again, in the list of contraries one of the columns is privative, and all [pairs of contrary principles] are referred to being and non-being, and to unity and plurality, e.g., rest belongs to unity and motion to plurality; and nearly all previous thinkers agree that beings and substance are composed of contraries, at least everyone argues that their principles are contraries, some argue for odd and even, some for hot and cold, some for limit and unlimited, and some for love and strife. All other [pairs of contraries] are manifestly referred to unity and plurality (let us assume this reference), while the principles of other thinkers fall under this pair as their genera. (my translation, *Metaphysics* Γ 2,1004b27-1005a18)

Without the contributions of early Greek metaphysical thinking, such as we find in Parmenides and Empedocles, who were influenced in turn by Babylonian thinking and Zoroastrian mysticism, Aristotle would have been hard pressed to develop his system of physical explanation to the pitch of perfection that we find throughout his work. For instance, the very idea that contradiction and contrariety are two fundamentally different species of opposition, or that every measure of qualitative difference of degree must have a standard unit as its basis, or that the concepts of unity and plurality lie at the root of all contrariety, as well as the concept of quantity as such—ideas which contemporary science borrows from metaphysics as foundational postulates—are truths Aristotle inherited directly from his predecessors both Near Eastern and Greek.

Without dialectic it would be impossible for Parmenides to transcend the duality of the Way of Opinion. Since the principles that mortals posit are contraries, the contemplation of either one invariably leads back to the contemplation of its opposite with no chance for exit, no chance for spiritual transcendence in the contemplation of a higher notion, and, by metaphorical extension, no chance to escape from the infinite recursion of a backward turning course. For instance, mortals discern a *manyness* of beings in *one*

universe, but they do not grasp the spherical symmetry and self-sameness of the cosmic *whole* (B 8.38, 42 - 49), which whole marks the synthesis, and mutual negation, of the one and the many. In other words, mortals fail to see the cosmos in its wholeness as a one forever becoming many and a many collapsing into self-same unity. Mortals specify, quantify, and name a diversity of beings, but they let appearances control their judgment, mistakenly believing all the while that *they* control appearances; they miss out on the wholeness of the universe which encapsulates the one within the many and the many within the one, just as they miss out on becoming one with the world through self-vitalizing and spiritualizing noêsis, which sees the macrocosm at large as one and the same with the microcosm of thought, i.e., the thoroughgoing interpenetration of Spirit and Nature, of Thought and Being. Mortals observe the encircling rings of heavenly fire (B 12.1 - 4), but see them merely as signatures and vestiges of cosmic symmetry and wholeness they do not fully understand—they immediately lead themselves from signs to opinions which further remove the primal cosmic force from their consciousness. The sum of their intellectual involvement with the world begins and ends shrouded behind a veil of appearance which covers over the Truth of transcendence.

Parmendies' mortals see night pass into day, and day into night. They posit a mixture of light and darkness in all things (B 9), yet never arrive at the Gates of Justice where the distinction between night and day collapses on a threshold.[12] Parmenides' entry into the light is possible only by passing through these Gates. Once we unearth the allegorical treasures of the proem, we find a central guiding theme: contemplation of Truth (the personified opposite of Hesiod's Lethe="forgetfulness," "concealment," "denial") involves becoming one with the spiritualizing energy underlying the appearance of all things.[13]

The Gates of Justice divide night from day, intellectual darkness from spiritual enlightenment, blindness from vision, subjectivity of relative perspective from objectivity of law. The Gates symbolize a threshold dividing the Way of Opinion from the Way of Truth; they distinguish the conscious act of sensory perception, which merely submits to the world *as it appears* (through a filter that shows the world for what it essentially is not), from the conscious act of intellection, which investigates the world *as it is* in Truth, freed from the filter of the observer's relative perspective. Thus, man is not the measure of all things (Protagoras); the measure of all things is given to man by Justice. Justice gives the gift of enlightenment—man's self-conscious reflexivity of thought. Enlightenment is, therefore, a matter of divine dispensation.

NOTES

1. Kahn, *Foundations of Language,* 2 (1966) 247. See also A.P.D. Mourelatos, *Route,* p. 48.

2. Here are Smyth's rules of grammar that determine how *estin* appears in our text: *Estin* receives an accent on the first syllable " at the beginning of a sentence; when it expresses *existence* or *possibility;* when it follows οὐκ, μὴ, εἰ, ὡς, καί, ἀλλά, ἀλλ᾽, τοῦτο, (τοῦτ᾽)" see § 187 b. For predicative *estin* see Smyth § 917. Use (5) in the Cohen, Curd, Reeve translation quoted here appears in the phrase ὡς χρεών ἐστι μὴ εἶναι where the predicate idea is χρεών ἐστι: "it is necessary." Here "a predicate substantive [e.g., χρεών] or adjective stands in the same case as the subject [would stand] when coupled to it by a copulative verb" (Smyth § 918 c). These distinctions explain the orthography of our texts, and some of the grammar, but apply reliably only to later authors like Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle. The problem of determining Parmenides' meaning and intent still lingers.

3. Montgomery Furth, "Elements of Eleatic Ontology" *Journal of the History of Philosophy, 7* (1969), 111 - 132, p. 112.

4. Gallop claims that "the first two routes [the goddess] mentions in fragment B2, 'is' and 'is not,' embody alternative answers to the following disjunctive question: 'does what is there for speaking and thinking of exist or does it not?'" (*Parmenides of Elea,* p. 8). G.E.L. Owen argues that "what is declared to exist in B 2 is simply what can be talked or thought about; for the proof of its existence is that, if it did not exist, it could not be talked or thought about" ("Eleatic Questions," p. 15, revised ed. reprinted in *Logic, Science, and Dialectic,* pp. 3 - 26). Barnes admits that Parmenidean monism requires pure reason to transcend the phenomenal world in order to contemplate the true Being of things (*The Presocratic Philosophers,* vol. I, pp. 204 - 205), but laments (vol. II, p. 3) that" if the Eleatics are right, scientists may as well give up their activities: *a priori* ratiocination reveals that the phenomena which science attempts to understand and explain are figments of our deceptive senses; the scientist has little or nothing to investigate—let him turn to poetry or to gardening." Parmenides, on the contrary, does not discard empirical science as useless or untrue, as empirical science had not yet been established; in fact, the goddess extols him to learn the opinions of mortals, i.e., "to do science," in order to engage others in fruitful discourse and not to be outdone in argument (B 1.30, 8.61). Parmenides is not about undermining or discounting empirical scientific investigation. He teaches us a method for transcending the testimony of the senses through contemplation of a higher Truth beyond the veil of appearance which common sense takes for granted. The other-worldly transcendence of Parmenides' Being is parallel both to the other-worldly existence of Plato's Forms, and to the independence of Aristotle's eternal unmoved mover.

5. A.H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides,* p. 20.

6. Patricia Curd, *The Legacy of Parmenides,* p. 39.

7. Werner Jaeger, ed. *Aristotelis Metaphysica,* Γ.1003a21-2:"Εστιν ἐπιστήμη τις ἣ θεωρεῖ τὸ ὂν ᾗ ὂν καὶ τὰ τούτῳ ὑπάρχοντα καθ᾽ αὑτό. Note Aristotle's use of existential-ἔστι. Not even Aristotle was a predicative monist, since he acknowledges and demonstrates the existence of a transcendent other-worldly Prime Mover in *Metaphysics* Λ. For fresh elaboration on these issues see Henn, "The Prospect of

Positive Theology Amid Two Theories of Transcendence in Aristotle," *The Modern Schoolman,* vol. LXXVII, no. 4, May 2000: 333 - 362, and "Aristotle's Doctrine of the Universal: A Speculative Reconstruction of Text and Tradition," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy,* vol. 13, no. 3, 1999:185 - 207.

8. Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *A Concise History of the Middle East* (3rd edition), pp. 16-17.

9. The best introduction to the nature and extent of the early Arab Jihad is contained in Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* Vol. III, pp. 62 - 130; Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam,* Vol. I, pp. 146 - 230; and Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *A Concise History of the Middle East,* pp. 29 - 117.

10. Aristotle, *Physics* 225b5 - 226b17.

11. Being and Non-Being, i.e., "Is" and "Is-Not" (ἔστιν and οὐκ ἔστιν), are contradictories which do not admit an intermediate. Another fault in mortals is that they "Adjudge *to be* and *not to be* the same, / But not the same." This would be fine if Being and Non-Being, "Is" and "Is-Not," were *contrary* concepts, since their intermediate would then represent a synthesis, but they are really *contradictories* of each other. And it is arguable that Parmenides faults them for confusing contradictories with contraries. But again these oppositions are not formalized until Aristotle, and only implicit in Parmenides.

12. The Gates of Night and Day mark " a point where Night and Day meet, a place where opposites are undivided, and where the familiar contrasts of human experience can therefore no longer be drawn. Thus, the youth's encounter with the goddess is located where all difference or contrast has disappeared. Even the antithesis between Night and Day, which will later emerge as the foundation of all other mortal dualisms (B 8.53 - 59, 9.1 - 4), has there been transcended" Gallop, p. 7.

13. The alpha-privative name for "Truth" is Ἀληθείη (B 1.29; 4.4; 8.51). Parmenides' casting of Ἀληθείη in the lead role as "Truth" likely originates as a play on Hesiod's casting Λήθη as "forgetfulness," "oblivion," and "concealment." Truth represents the *negation* of Forgetfulness. A major theme in Parmenides' poem is that the fundamental nature of things has escaped the notice of mortal opinion, and this nature clothes itself in a world of sense-appearances that masks its simplicity, cosmic symmetry, and immediacy.

4

Fragment B 3: The Metaphysical Unity of Thinking and Being

TRANSCENDING MORTAL CONTRARIETY

Parmenides cannot pass from darkness into light without opening the Gates of Justice, which guard a threshold where neither darkness nor light exists. The threshold of the Gates cancels out the contrariety between night and day. Arriving at this threshold is the key. Since the Gates symbolize a transcendence of tension between contrary natural forces (e.g., light and darkness, future and past, generation and decay), the clue to enlightenment lies in discovering truths about nature that transcend the tension of contrary principles. All truth begins with discovering an identity of essence within a prevailing difference of appearance.

But Parmenides himself is mortal. He would have never arrived at the Gates of Justice without divine assistance, the privilege of few. If we attend carefully to the allegorical significance of his cosmic flight to Justice, we find a shaman's message: contemplation of the way things are in Truth requires the spiritual energy to step beyond the limitations of ordinary opinion and sense perception to arrive at a threshold concept in which all tension between contrary principles vanishes.

Contrary principles pervade the whole of observable nature, e.g., forces of attraction and repulsion, compositions of matter and form, male and female sexual union, good and evil conduct, dense and porous mass. But such oppositions are not the whole truth, for truth requires contemplative passage from one contrary into its opposite *by means of* a third and higher principle that absorbs both into itself. Without acquiring the transcending third notion, we remain bound to the inherent limitation of sense perception; namely, that nothing exists unless it is quantifiable. Under this yoke we trudge along a backward turning track where opposite feeds into opposite

without release. The symbology of the poem is telling: contemplation requires tranquility of mind; tranquility of mind requires reconciliation of tension between contrary principles in nature; but, reconciliation of tension between contrary principles depends upon thought transcending to a third and higher notion; therefore, contemplation itself depends upon thought transcending to a third and higher notion.

For instance, mortals acknowledge generation and decay in all things (B 8.40), but fail to recognize cosmic *permanence,* a sourceless, ceaseless Being immune from generation and decay (B 8.26 - 28). Mortals ignore signs posted along the highway to the light: that Being-as-such is ungenerable, and indestructible, unwavering, endless, and whole in every limb (B 8.3 - 5).

Mortal contemplation rests upon the uncertainty of opinion. Parmenides' word for "opinion" is δόξα, the residuum of two verbs: (1) δοκέω, *I suppose, fancy, imagine that...,* (cf. intransitive δοκεῖ μοι, *it seems or appears to me to be the case that...*), and (2) δέχομαι, which in Homer signifies a *passive mental acceptance* of the way things are. Liddel, Scott, and Jones cite the following under δέχομαι: "of mental reception, *take, accept* without complaint, χαλεπόν περ ἐόντα δεχώμεθα μῦθον: we *accept* the story, though it is hard to bear, *Odyssey* 20.271; κῆρα δ' ἐγὼ τότε δέξομαι: I will *receive* my doom, when the time comes, *Iliad* 18.115."[1] Δόξα, understood in connection with δέχομαι signifies "that which has been taken and accepted passively without question." Combining both verbal ideas, things *seem* the way they do because they impinge upon the passive consciousness of the observer. Things are merely accepted to be such as they appear, their underlying nature not questioned. Δόξα results from mental passivity and acceptance; it should be contrasted with Parmenides' need to seek the heart of Truth, and thus to choose not to accept the world for the way it appears to the senses.

Mortals, on the other hand, have nothing to seek; for them the world *is* just as it *appears* to be. The mortal path leads nowhere. It turns back upon itself to rest in the foggy underworld of sense experience from which it began. When opinions are searched out, when mental passivity turns active, the activity of thought, νοεῖν, comes into play by escaping this underworld to contemplate the Being of beings (The Way of Truth). Mortals however merely lay down presuppositions based upon superstitions that reaffirm the way things appear (The Way of Opinion).

This second path is not to be traversed, since, according to B 2, one cannot come to know non-being or phrase it coherently. Scholars including Diels, Coxon, and Austin speculate that the reasoning behind B 2 is to be supplied in B 3: "because Thinking and Being are one and the same." This amazing fragment challenges all assumptions about nature; it claims,

in essence, that the microcosm of thought *recapitulates* the macrocosm of Being by becoming one with nature. Thought becomes one with nature by assimilating its contents under one idea, by seeing nature as the reflection of one and the same Being, and by referring even the most minuscule existent back to a universally originative cosmic source. Opinion, on the other hand, divorces man from nature by accepting its sensible and quantifiable outer shell for what it is in itself, and thus seeing nature as merely sensible, fragmented, and isolatable. In opinion, nature is essentially other than mind; in thought, nature is essentially the same as mind. If we assume that B 2 immediately precedes B 3, then B 3 serves as the premise for the assertion of B 2; but even so, the reasoning is still enthymematic. We must supply a missing premise to understand the flow. Accordingly, *because* Thinking =Being (B 3), and because coming-to-know (cf. γνοίης B 2.7) and phrasing (cf. φράσαις B 2.8) require antecedent thought (suppressed premise), no one can come to know non-being, or phrase it clear (B 2.7 - 8). Where there is no Being there is no Thought, but where there is Thought there is Being; however, both knowing and phrasing presuppose antecedent Thought, therefore, the acts of knowing and phrasing necessarily presuppose Being; therefore, neither knowing nor phrasing can possibly express non-being.

In spite of the compelling logic, Malcolm Schofield relegates B 3 to the obscurity of a footnote on the grounds that its sources differ from those of B 2. Proclus preserves both B 2 and B 3, but does so in different locations: B 2 is found in his *Commentary to Plato's Timaeus* (Diehl, vol. I, 345); B 3 is found in his *Parmenides* (1152). Difference between sources and contexts, however, is no proof of disconnection between fragments; if it were, nearly every fragment of the poem would be relegated to a footnote, as the poem has been handed down to us in scattered shards carefully excavated from geographically diverse locations within the *Corpus Graecorum Scriptorum.*

While my rendering of B 3 slavishly adheres to Diels' *denn dasselbe ist Denken und Sein,*[2] it differs from most standard English translations. Schofield (1983, 246) translates B 3: "for the same thing is there both to be thought of and to be." Coxon (1986, 54) reads: "for the same thing is for conceiving as is for being." Austin, borrowing from Gallop (1984, 57) translates "because the same thing is there for thinking and for being." Sider and Johnstone note in their commentary (1986, 12), however, that there are two readings open to interpretation here: νοεῖν and εἶναι are either (a) dative infinitives *in reference to which* or *for which* there exists the same thing (τὸ αὐτό), or (b) substantival infinitives: as in "to think and to be are the same thing." I believe that both readings are admissible at the same time: the infinitives are substantival (but fossilized) datives. Schofield, Coxon, Austin, and

Gallop opt for (a) to the exclusion of (b), which is unfortunate. In rendering the infinitives as datives they recognize correctly that the infinitive originated as a case form having the properties of a verbal noun, akin to the article infinitive common in later Attic Greek. And while this is a sound philological basis for their handling of B 3, the phrasing of their respective translations is bound to confuse a beginner unaware of dative infinitives. This was precisely the same ambiguity of translation we found in chapter 3 concerning the mysteriously lingering impersonal "it" which surfaces repeatedly whenever we try to translate such important phrases as ὅπως ἔστιν (B 2.3), ὡς χρεών ἔστι μὴ εἶναι (B 2.5), and ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι (B 6.1). The problem is that our impersonal pronoun "it" is not expressed in the Greek, yet, it occurs over and over again in our standard translations. We link notions of substantiality to pronouns in our language; these pronouns multiply beyond any correlation in the Greek; then we allow our pronouns to carry the weight of the message. For instance, when the goddess exclaims "that it is" (B 2.3), she tells us absolutely nothing, unless we are willing to supply "Being" as the referent of "it." In the case of B 3, the infinitives νοεῖν and εἶναι, construed more as datives of reference, and less as mere substantive infinitives, leave dangling a third thing (namely, τὸ αὐτὸ), which presumably exists *for* both Thought and Being, as if both await in bated supplication the entrance of this mysterious third item which exists equally for both. But what is this third thing to which Thinking and Being must refer in order to have significance? Answer: there is no separate third thing, *denn dasselbe ist Denken und Sein!*

Even under a dogged dative infinitive interpretation we may still justify the identity "Thinking=Being" asserted in B 3. The infinitive, as dative, functions by referring one thing to another, much like the dative of possession is used in sentences such as: ἄλλοις μὲν χρήματά ἐστι, ἡμῖν δὲ ξύμμαχοι ἀγαθοί (Smyth, § 1476). If we used the same method of translating these datives as Gallop, Coxon, and Austin use in rendering the infinitives of B3, we would needlessly complicate matters with the awkward sentence "there are *for others* riches, but *for us* good allies." A fluid translation would read: "others have riches, we have good allies." By analogy "thinking and being have the same thing [i.e., each other]." Why, then, preserve a fossilized expression for a reader, who may not be familiar with idiomatic Greek, and who is bound to be left at a loss concerning the identity of the third thing to which Thought and Being presumably refer? This is no small matter. One who misses the lesson of Fragment B 3 misses the lesson of the poem.

G.E.L. Owen and J.E. Raven find a close connection between Parmenides B 3 and Descartes' celebrated *Cogito ergo sum.*[3] Descartes endeavors to infer the necessity of his being from his own activity of thinking. He discovers certainty in the very fact of his thought, regardless of its content; so that no matter how imaginary the world might seem, even if there exists an Evil Genius outside of his mind, who manipulates things to appear just the way He wants them to appear, nevertheless, Descartes can always conclude his own existence from his own unwavering activity of thought. Owen claims:

> The comparison [of Parmenides' notion of thinking] with Descartes' *cogito,* is inescapable: both arguments cut free of inherited premisses, both start from an assumption whose denial is peculiarly self-refuting. This seems sufficient to establish that Parmenides does not, in the sense described, rest his argument on assumptions derived from earlier cosmologists.[4]

Owen is correct, but the Cartesian parallel stops here. Descartes was a dualist, believing that mind and body, the inner consciousness *(res cogitans)* and its outward object *(res extensa),* are separate forms of existence. And he went to great lengths to justify their mutual interaction, while maintaining their ontological separation. In addition, Descartes viewed every conscious act as an act of thought. Parmenides (along with later Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle) interpreted the act of thinking (νόησις) far more selectively as a special act involving abstraction from the givens of sensation, as separate from the act of sensation (αἴσθησις), and as having an intelligible idea, an immutable form, as its exclusive object.

By contrast, Descartes asserts that I am the same one who senses or who takes note of bodily things as if through the senses. For example, I now see a light, I hear a noise, I feel heat. These are false, since I am asleep. But I certainly seem to see, hear, and feel. This cannot be false: properly speaking, this is what is called 'sensing' in me. But this is, to speak precisely, nothing other than thinking."[5] Descartes notion of what constitutes thinking is much broader than the Classical Greek conception. According to Parmenides, thinking and sensing are distinct functions of the mind. Sensation sets the material world it perceives in opposition to the mind, which projects onto that material a determinate form and meaning; thought involves noêsis, which sees the world it perceives as one and the same with the mind that perceives it. For this reason, Parmenides might be denominated a "noetic monist," who believed that *the Being of all things is inherently thinkable.* The factors of primary importance for Parmenides are the intellect (νόος), its ceaseless thinking activity (νόησις), and the thoughts it produces (νοήματα). Being reflects itself in the self-reflexivity of Thought. Every discoverable

fact, every universal law (of physical or mathematical proportion) which describes the cosmos or some part thereof, is reducible to a thought resulting from an activity which springs from the intellect. The existence of things has a significance which can only be recognized and established in thought. Since *Justice* both holds the key to thought, in her role as the guardian of enlightenment, and gives the law to man, in her role as presiding judge at the Gates, who usurps even the exalted position of Fate (Μοῖρα) as the force responsible for sending Parmendies along the Way of Truth (B 1.26 - 28). She keeps Parmenides' universe together by a rich fabric of *noetic laws.* These noetic laws are distributed by Justice, and discoverable through reflective intelligence as *a priori* laws of thought. Laws of thought undergird law in general; e.g., laws governing matter in the space-time continuum, mathematical laws, moral, civil, and criminal laws, as well as the Law of Nations.

NATURE AS INHERENTLY THINKABLE

Parmenides regards all that is as inherently thinkable. Thought discovers *within itself* certain laws of nature. Nature exhibits, therefore, an intelligible superstructure of principles ripe for discovery. The entire history of Western thought after Parmenides is the filling-in of this structure. But Parmenides never posits a distinction between what Descartes and the schoolmen before him called "objective reality" (i.e., the content of an idea) and "formal reality" (i.e., the object as it exists in its own right, cf. Cress, p. 71). Parmenides did not countenance difference between the structure of thought and the structure of the world being thought. In fragment B 3 the opposition between the subjective and the objective disappears along with the thinker's relativity of observation. This disappearance of relative perspective in B 3 is what distinguishes the Way of Truth from the Way of Opinion. On the one hand, opinion always presupposes a built-in perspective on reality by separating perceiver from perceived; on the other hand, thought in the sense of νόησις is not something that can be true or false, accurate or inaccurate, Νόησις is simply the expression of Being. Yet Parmenides did not find conviction in the inwardness of his own thinking in the manner of Descartes, but rather in the νόησις which sees Nature becoming one with Thought and Thought becoming one with Nature. Descartes inferred his existence from his essence: *cogito ergo sum.* For Parmenides, the Supreme Monistic Principle is just this, Thought = Being (B 3): Essence = Existence with respect to nature in general. Thus, one's essence as a thinker neither grounds, nor is grounded by, the fact of Being in general, since Thought and Being are simultaneous.

What, then, does Parmenides mean in fragment B 3? Does he mean what the distinguished George Berkeley (1685 - 1753) meant when he asserted that "to be is to be perceived" (*esse est percipi*)? Is Parmenides trying to equate Being in general with *being perceived,* so that the human intellect partakes the Truth of Being simply by *being conscious?* Or is Parmenides performing the ἐποχή of the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl (1859 -1938), a "suspension of judgment" as to whether there exists reality outside the mind, a suspension of judgment in which only that presented to the conscious "I" (the *transcendental ego*) as falling within its horizon of awareness is what can truly and exclusively be known and understood, the extramental remaining that which transcends the possibility of experience? Or is Parmenides intending to equate Being with a kind of Super-Intelligence in which humankind merely participates. Coxon argues just this point:

> though [B 3] asserts simply the identity of what can be conceived with what has essential being, the neoplatonic belief that P. identified Being with Mind was well-founded. Their identity is suggested by the expression ἀληθείης εὐπειθέος ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ [B 1.29] and confirmed by Anaxagoras' descriptions of νοῦς as μόνος αὐτὸς ἐπ' ἐωυτοῦ πᾶς ὅμοιος (B 12), which derives from P.'s characterisation of Being as μουνογενές . . . καθ' ἑαυτό and πᾶν ὁμοῖον. . . . Xenophanes' account of God as a mind transcending human minds in its power (B 23 - 25), since it is the immediate pattern for part of P.'s account of Being [B8.27 - 28], may also be regarded as suggesting that P. envisaged Being as Intelligence.[6]

Coxon's theory of a Parmenidean Super-Intelligence has the advantage of understanding nature as that which is inherently law-abiding, i.e., an object which exists precisely by being understood and contemplated by a universal Thought that maps laws onto beings.

Let us begin by investigating the validity of both the Berkelean and the Husserlian standpoint; then we shall move on to a second theory, one that relies simply on the poet's thematic distinction between the sensible and the intelligible. The main supporting text for the identity of Thinking and Being asserted in B 3 is B 8.34 - 38, which I translate:

> Self-same as well the Thought
> And Thinking Act that Being is; for not
> Without the Being, in which it is expressed
> Will you discern the Thinking Act impressed
> Upon the mind; for nothing else outside
> Of Being exists or ever will. Cold pride
> Of Fate confined it whole and motionless
> To stay.

The Thinking Act and the content of its emerging Thought are identical says Parmenides. But the activity of Thought (νοεῖν) is expressed in the most unexpected of places, not on papyrus, nor in dialogue with others, but rather in the very activity of Being! Presumably, written and spoken discourse is a secondary expression of that which is, not the real article. And here the validity of Husserlian interpretation must be closely examined. For both seem to reduce Being to the subjectivity of consciousness, which is incompatible with the Parmenidean ban on relativity of observation and opinion. And this is where we find advantage in Coxon's analysis: a Super-Intelligence would be immune from the allegation of relativity of perspective. So too, Bishop Berkeley's Divine Essence transcends the world of relative perspective to contemplate all that is in one infinite glance; so that, His perception=Being, though any given human perception is bound to be limited both in scope and in power.

It is safe to conclude that it is not Parmenides' own individual thought that is self-same with Being, it is Thought universally taken that is self-same with Being. According to Berkeley it is not until something is perceived that it is granted the privilege of existence; but God perceives all things, so that our individual finite perceptions are but modalities of God's universal purview. Alternatively, for Husserl, that which exists extra-mentally is inevitably subject to the ἐποχή on the grounds that it *transcends* possible experience; that is, the objects of direct realism (such as the desk which I find myself writing at, the trees outside my window, the books on my shelf) transcend consciousness; I am only in touch with my peculiar representations of them, and I make certain assumptions in imagination about their 3-dimensionality, their permanence, their weight, and so on. Consider the following scientific claims about the world:

Newton's First Law of Motion:
Every body continues in its state of rest, or of uniform motion in a right line, unless it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed upon it.

Faraday's Law of Electrolysis:
The amount of a substance undergoing chemical change at each electrode during electrolysis is directly proportional to the quantity of electricity that passes through the electrolytic cell.

First Law of Thermodynamics:
The total amount of energy in the universe is constant.

What accounts for the objectivity and scientific value of these claims? The answer, from a phenomenological point of view, is not that the same world is being measured every time we conduct investigations about physical laws

(an assumption only recently challenged in the twentieth century by Quantum Physics), it is the fact that all consciousness in general is regulated by the same set of *a priori* laws. Without these *a priori* laws of thought, there would be no objectivity in science, as it would be possible for the world to appear essentially different for different observers. Parmenides seems to be telling us that mortals fall into error by focusing too heavily upon the description of fleeting appearances, and too lightly upon the permanence of the thought by means of which these appearances are defined.

Husserl's theory suspends judgment about the existence of extra-mental realities. And he defends the soundness of this phenomenological "suspension of judgment," the ἐποχή, with these words:

> Wir haben eigentlich nichts verloren, aber das gesamte absolute Sein gewonnen, das, recht verstanden, alle wetlichen Transzendenzen als intentionales Korrelat der ideell zu verwirklichenden und einstimmig fortzuführenden Akte habitueller Geltung in sich birgt, in sich "konstituiert."[7]

Through phenomenological ἐποχή Husserl posited something very close to Parmenides B 3. He posited that "Das Gewußte" (the Known or Perceived object) is the same as "Das Bewußte" (the Knowing or Perceiving act of mind); namely, that the Being of the reality we are conscious of is nothing other than the Being of the consciousness we have of reality. All reality is constituted to be what it essentially is exclusively through thought's bestowal of meaning according to *a priori* laws. Whether or not these views are natural extensions of the Parmenidean standpoint is left here for the reader to decide. It is my opinion that Berkeley and Coxon more closely approach the message of Parmenides, though Husserl's Phenomenology is intrinsically more sophisticated in structure.

INTERPRETING FRAGMENT B 3 IN LIGHT OF B 8.34 - 38

In B 8.34 - 8 Parmenides dissolves the perceiver-perceived dichotomy *explicitly,* while Berkeley and Husserl seem to do so only implicitly. Behind the Berkelean and Husserlian standpoints looms the possibility that there *might exist* a world beyond consciousness that is called the real world, consisting of *realia,* or what Aristotle would call πράγματα. Aristotle's division between the intramental and the extramental, i.e., between the noematic and the pragmatic, is well attested in the corpus. The German logician Friederich Ueberweg (1826 - 1871) cites several relevant passages from Aristotle in his *System der Logik und Geschichte der logischen Lehren,* 1871 (Thomas M. Lindsay translation, p. 3): τὸ δ᾽ αὐτό ἐστιν ἡ κατ᾽ ἐνέργειαν

ἐπιστήμη τῷ πράγματι, *De Anima,* 431a1 ("Actual knowledge is the same thing as reality")—implying that knowledge constitutes reality through an *isomorphism* between knower and known; τοῦτο δ᾽ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐστι τῷ συγκεῖσθαι ἢ διῃρῆσθαι, ὥστε ἀληθεύει μὲν ὁ τὸ διῃρημένον οἰόμενος διῃρῆσθαι καὶ τὸ συγκείμενον συγκεῖσθαι, ἔψευσται δὲ ὁ ἐναντίως ἔχων ἢ τὰ πράγματα, ποτ᾽ ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστι τὸ ὡς ἀληθὲς λεγόμενον ἢ ψεῦδος, *Metaphysics,* 1051b3 ("this <i.e., the state of truth or falsity > exists, in the case of reality, in combining and separating. So that the one who thinks that that which is separated *is* separated and that which is combined *is* combined asserts truly, while the one who thinks in a way contrary to reality asserts falsely"); συμβαίνει δὲ ἐπιστήμην μὲν πᾶσαν ἐπιστητὸν εἶναι τὸ δὲ ἐπιστητὸν μὴ πᾶν ἐπιστήμην, ὅτι τρόπον τινὰ ἡ ἐπιστήμη μερεῖται τῷ ἐπιστητῷ, *Metaphysics,* 1057a11 ("it follows that all knowledge is knowable, but not all that is knowable is knowledge, because in a certain sense knowledge is measured by the knowable")—presumably Überweg wants us to think of " the knowable" as pure objective reality, as existing *outside* the mind of the knower, while actual knowledge is that which exists *in* the mind of the knower, once reality has been mentally assimilated. Knowledge is a coincidence of the subjective and objective, of knower and known, of Spirit and Nature. Husserl would claim transcendence for this real world. Berkeley, on the other hand, would assert that this world does not exist (for man) unless it is perceived. Rather than positing an ontological standpoint resembling that belonging to these thinkers, Parmenides calls us to live a life of spiritual contentment where all tension between opposites, including the opposition between Spirit and Nature vanishes within the tranquility of a contemplative oneness with Being, i.e., noêsis as such. Parmenides calls us to the challenge of achieving symbiosis, unification, and harmony with all things in the universe.

The theories of Berkeley and Husserl, arguably among the most conformable to Parmenides B 3, appear to be sophisticated reformulations of the Protagorean dictum that *man is the measure of all things, of things that are, that they are, of things that are not, that they are not.* There is little to disprove the wisdom of Protagoras, except one's own personal *conviction* in an unchanging truth which transcends the idiosyncracies of individual perspective. Conviction in the unchangeable motivates Parmenides' emphasis on the goddess Persuasion, Πειθώ (B 2.4), guardian of the Way of Being, and handmaiden of Truth. Her function is to *convince* Parmenides of the existence of a permanent world beyond the fleeting seeming-realities (τὰ δοκοῦντα) of opinion. She is responsible for him holding *metaphysical conviction* in a permanence outlasting the human condition, the lack of which conviction might have driven Husserl into the ἐποχή, and Berkeley toward solipsism.

There is no evidence that Parmenides intended to subjectify Being or objectify Thought. The two sides of his equation in B 3 dissolve harmlessly into one another without distinction. Nor does he posit an isomorphism between thought and reality, since thought *is* reality, the microcosm *is* the macrocosm. Evidence for the soundness of this truth is found in the fact that all universals repeat their unity of definition in a potentially infinite array of instances in exactly the same way, as a signet stamping its impression onto lumps of wax, even though each individual instance reflects this unity of definition in a multitude of different ways, according to its own individual position within a larger context.

Parmenides claims that Thought *expresses itself* in Being (B 8.35 - 36)—the opposite of what common observation would expect. Common-sense understood as "direct realism" says that my thoughts and impressions are determined by external realities impinging upon my mind. I experience the colors, texture, and scent of a tree, because there exists a tree-reality, exactly like the one I sense, which endures on its own. But, according to Parmenides, it is not this tree-reality, but the thought of the tree, which is truly real.

While the above interpretation of B 3 relies upon the reflexivity of self-conscious thought, there is another way of looking at the fragment which places emphasis on the *content* of thought. I call this second interpretation, which has its roots in Simplicus (c. 405 - 483 AD), the sensible/intelligible hypothesis. This view posits two types of content for human consciousness: (1) intelligible archetypes (i.e., forms, ideas, pure beings of thought), and (2) concrete sense-impressions. The archetype informs the concrete impression, as a form stamping its seal onto a lump of wax, or as form in general *supervening* upon matter—a process known, from Aristotle, as "epigenesis" (ἐπιγίνεται τὸ εἶδος τῇ ὕλῃ, ἡ μορφὴ τῷ σώματι, *Metaphysics,* 1036a31, b6; cf. *Physiognomonics,* 808b29). The interdependence of thought and sensation is so thoroughgoing that we can separate the two only by metaphysical analysis. Simplicius was the first commentator to apply the sensible/intelligible distinction to Parmenides (cf. Coxon, p. 256). The basic idea is that sensations without forms are blind, and forms without concrete sensations are empty. Sensation can not, in and of itself, make heads or tails of its impressions, but must rely upon thought to gather, organize, and sort through a plethora of sights, sounds, and feelings—the harsh bustling dissonance of the world at large. Intellection (νοεῖν) is required in order for these raw materials of sensation to have any significance or meaning. Intellection is necessary to attain universality, because its activity coordinates a manifold of sensory inputs according to one idea floating as unity beyond the many.

If Thought, the Act of Thought, and Being are the same (B 8.34 - 8) what is the content of the emerging Thought that would yield insight into the nature of Being? The answer consists in more than just laying down an ontological standpoint. Indeed, if contemplative tranquility dissolves the tension between thought and reality, perceiver and perceived, subject and object, mind and matter, how could Truth involve a standpoint at all? The poetic richness of images described in the poem suggests that Being implies perfect intelligibility, since it is identical to Thought. Parmenides reinforces the importance of intelligibility though his repeated imagery of circles and spheres. It is possible that he sees the whole of Being as one intelligible object, much as Euclid would later model his geometry as a science of intelligible spatial magnitudes.

Euclid's term for "intelligible geometric figure" is νοητικὸν σχῆμα (e.g., the ideal sphere, rhombus, isosceles triangle, etc.), contemplation of which rests upon the understanding of certain universal propositions made accessible to the mind through the construction of a sensible figure, an αἰσθητὸν σχῆμα, as, for instance, a diagram of a sphere, a rhombus, or an isosceles triangle. Such drawings do not depict the intelligible figure in its full universality; they merely allow us to glimpse imperfectly the many aspects of its perfect essence. Before a geometric proposition can be contemplated in its full universality, the intelligible figures involved must first be made manifest and accessible to sensation and imagination. Once the learner grasps the appropriate spatial relations involved in the sensible diagram, the proposition becomes comprehensible in its appropriate universality in such a way that the apprehension of the universal and the registration of the particular take place simultaneously.

The lesson here is that sensibility approximates intellection, just as the diagram of a triangle approximates the perfection of the intelligible triangle itself, so too the "well-rounded sphere" (B 8.43) and the "heart of well-rounded Truth" (B 1.29) approximate the perfect symmetry of a purely intelligible cosmos. It may be the case that Parmenides uses sphere-imagery to prop up other, more general ideas about the universe. For instance, spherical cosmic expanse suggests equality of measure in every direction from a center point; perhaps the philosopher should focus on discovering a common root to all that is, or perhaps all that is springs from and is an expression of one and the same Being. Mortals, on the other hand, look to the heavens only to see visible signatures of oneness in the encircling rings of heavenly fire. They posit a mixture of light and darkness in all things because the inner and outer rings of the stars emit light in varying degrees

(B 12). But their knowledge of the cosmos stops at their description of sensible shapes, never extending to contemplation of the purely intelligible identity of beings in terms of one simultaneously ubiquitous Being.

Parmenides speaks of the heart of *well-rounded*[8] Truth (B 1.29). Truth suggests balance and symmetry. The galaxy imitates this symmetry by reaching out equally in all directions *ad infinitum.* But Being (personified in Justice and in Truth) is the force that holds all things together (B 4.2), much like the internal cohesive force that holds a droplet of rain water together on a leaf. Perhaps the notion of "bonds which hold beings together" (B 8.25) represents a primitive description of what we know to be gravitational and electro-magnetic forces, i.e., macro- and micro-cohesion of matter. We know that Parmenides did not attempt to quantify these forces to the extent of the Atomists, but his writing suggests that there exists between beings both an *internal* cohesive force that keeps the parts of individual bodies together (electro-magnetism) and an *external* cohesive force that keeps larger systems of bodies togther (gravitation). On a macrocosmic scale, the "bonds which hold beings together" give celestial bodies what appears to be a kind of gravitational integrity and ring structure, as they collectively maintain an apparent orbital movement around a fixed center. On a microcosmic scale, these same bonds give individual parcels of matter what we know to be electro-magnetism or internal cohesion, i.e., electronic bonding among atoms to form molecules exhibiting definite geometric structures responsible for the tangible properties of larger, directly visible bodies, or what the early Atomists described by positing different species of atomic shape. Parmenides was no Atomist, yet he explicitly recognized that mortals err by taking the visible *effects* of these bonds to be the whole truth. Mortals observe heavenly movements, quanta of light emitted from the night sky, as well as the colors, sounds, and tastes of things on earth, but they overlook the *principal force* and *primary cause* of the bonds which hold all things together to form a cosmic whole.

By contrast, wherever the goddess begins, there must she always return self-same (B 5), suggesting a profound circularity in which, beginning travel in a straight line from any point in the cosmos suggests inevitable return to that same point. Again, all of Being is like, and there are no pockets in the galaxy where Being varies intensity (B 8.22 - 25); all is filled to full with Being, and everything exists together in a whole, because beings are drawn together by forces of mutual attraction (B 8.25). Again, the bonds of Necessity reign in the heavens tight from all sides (B 8.30 - 31). The periphery of the universe is perfected from all points just like the skin of a massive sphere (B 8.42 - 43); and it circles back to strike itself in all directions equal from its

core (B 8.44). There is no non-being to prevent that which is from reaching out through itself to form a perfect whole (B 8.46 - 47). Being does not broach its rounding range to bulge with excess or deficiency, since all things remain untouched and inviolate (B 8.48). Being equals itself from every source, and meets with equal limits all its force (B 8.49). Each of these teachings express the idea that the universe is a closed system in which the sum total of energy is constant. Let us then proceed to examine the implications of this closed-system perspective as over against the competing and equally defensible view that Parmenides' universe lies open-ended and infinite.

NOTES

1. Liddell, Scott, Jones eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon,* Oxford, 1968, p. 382. Mourelatos claims that it is " plausible to assume that the idiom δοκεῖ μοι stays close to δέχομαι....A certain parallel development of δοκεῖν is offered in other Indo-European languages by words for 'seeming' and 'opinion' which are based on the idea of 'taking.' In English we have 'I take it that,' 'I take it for, as well as the derivatives from Latin *sumere* (assume, presume, etc.) and *capere* (perceive, conceive). The German vocabulary of cognition is also rich in *nehmen*-words *(annehmen, vernehmen, wahrnehmen,* etc.)," *Route,* p. 199.

2. Diels and Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* (eventh edition), vol. I, p. 231.

3. See Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers,* (second edition), p. 241.

4. Ibid., Owen, p.16. There is a striking resemblance between Descartes' method of doubt in the opening sentences to Meditation Three and the advice the goddess imparts to Parmenides in B 7. As if having read B 7's warning to resist the old habits of experience which impel one to take the world merely for the manner in which it appears to the senses, in effect, to block these appearances from reason by closing one's eyes, plugging one's ears, and holding one's tongue, lest some hasty judgment about the world escape before reason can detect the error, Descartes says "now I will shut my eyes, I will stop up my ears, I will divert all my senses, I will even blot out from my thoughts all images of corporeal things—or at least, since the latter can hardly be done, I will regard these images as nothing, empty and false as indeed they are" (Adam and Tannery edition, p. 34; Cress translation, p. 67). There is clearly more resemblance here between Parmenides' method of contemplation in B7 and Descartes' method of doubt in the Mediation 3, than there is between, say, Parmenides' assertion of an identity between Thought and Being in B 3, and Descartes' famous *cogito ergo sum.*

5. Descartes, *Meditations On First Philosophy* (Meditation Two), Adam and Tannery edition, p. 29; Cress translation, p. 64.

6. Coxon, ibid, p. 181.

7. Chapter 5.50, end of paragraph 2, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologishen Philosophic,* 1913. Professor Verdu paraphrases the significance of this passage in his final Seminar *Husserl & Phenomenology* at the University of Kansas, 1990: "We have in fact lost nothing [through theἐποχή], but have won total absolute Being, which—if correctly understood—harbors within itself and 'constitutes' all worldly transcendences as the intentional correlates of ['subjective'] acts of habitual [and thus ideal] validity, transcendences to be realized according to such ideal validities [i.e., according to transcendental Laws] and to be carried out in unison with such ideal validities [i.e., in unison with such transcendental Laws]."

8. My reading ofεὐκυκλέος (well-rounded) at B1.29 is shared only by Simplicius and Diels. Most contemporary scholars follow Plutarch, Sextus Empiricus, Clement of Alexandria, and Diogenes Laertius who prefer the reading εὐπειθέος ("well-persuasive") presumably by affinity to the GoddessΠειθώ (Persuasion) who attends upon Truth, B 2.4. My reading, however, is much more consistent with the metaphor of perfect cosmic sphericity which purportedly gives the clue to understanding the

nature of Being as Parmenides sees it (cf. B 8.42 - 49). The poem is replete with images of circularity. The wheels of the chariot whirl as if turned on a lathe (B 1.6 - 8), the cosmos extends outward in a perfectly spherical shape (B 8.42 - 43), and the inner and outer rings of the stars blast forth a fire seen on earth (B 12.1 - 3). Images of circular symmetry and roundedness were also associated by the Zoroastrians with Ahura Mazda: "Ohrmazd fashioned forth the form of His creatrues from His own self, from the substance of light—in the form of fire, bright, white, round, visible afar" (Boyce translation, 1990, 47: From the Greater Bundahishn, ch. 1.44).

5

Parmenides′ Closed-Loop Concept of Time and the Illusion of Linear Time-Consciousness

PARMENIDES' COSMOLOGICAL PARADOX

Parmenides appears to espouse the paradoxical double assertion that Being is both *infinite,* because of its eternity in the now (B 8.1 -10; 8.19 - 21), and *finite,* because girded by a sphere-like spatial frontier (B 8.42 - 45). In this chapter I set out to critique some of the standard solutions to the paradox given by classical scholars, e.g., Taràn (1965, 178), and Owen (1986, 21), contrasting Sorabji (1983, 98 -130), Gigon (1968, 261), and Gallop (1984, 20). I will then argue for my own solution, in order to establish that Parmenides' assertion of cosmic sphericity in the context of an eternal now represents, not a paradox, but a synthesis of compatible ideas carefully calculated as a literary response to Hesiod's linear measure of space-time in *Theogony.* Let us begin by unfolding the paradox.

Thesis: Being is temporally infinite (B 8.1 - 10).

Thus only one path's myth remains alive,
The one that claims that "Being Is!" Along
This path are posted many signs that throng
The passerby, such as UNGENERABLE
And absolutely INDESTRUCTIBLE,
UNWAVERING, ENDLESS, EVERY-LIMB-ONE-WHOLE;
(8.5) No *was* nor *will:* all past and future null; 100
Since Being subsists in one ubiquitous
Now—unitary and continuous.
For what descent would one assert for Being?
And how, from whence, will Being grow, so teeming
With vast increase? I bid you neither say

Nor think that Being springs from nothing's way;
The notion that this Being is not is not
For thought to think, nor lips to speak. For what
(B 8.10) Necessity would rouse vast Being to grow,
Begun in time or sprung ex nihilo? 110

Antithesis: Being is spatially finite (B 8.42 - 49).
But here the outer limit shows the clue;
Since, now perfected from all points, just like
A massive sphere, it circles back to strike
Itself, in all ways equal from its core.
(B 8.45) This limit needs must never be some more 170
Here, and some less there. For neither can
There be a what-is-not to halt its span
Out through itself toward self-same unity,
Nor can pure Being escape the symmetry
Of cosmic equipoise. It can not change
Intensity, nor broach its rounding range
To bulge with excess or deficiency,
Since all remains untouched simplicity.
For, equal to itself from every source,
Being meets with equal limits all its force. 180

Parmenides' description of the outermost cosmic limit(πεῖρας πύματον) as *resembling* the surface of a well-rounded sphere (B 8.43) appears to conflict with his assertion of Being as infinite in the now (B 8.1 -10). How can cosmic Being have durationless and infinite existence (B 8.5), if its outer reaches are limited in the shape of a spheroid (B 8.43)? That is, how does Being's trans-temporal eternity square with its apparent spatial frontiers?

G.E.L. Owen sees a way around the paradox by simply denying the concept of a spherical universe asserted in the Antithesis:

> Parmenides' treatment of space exactly matches his treatment of time; there is no place in it for boundaries or a spherical universe. And if that is so there is a rider that deserves to be added. It is sometimes said that Melissus differed from Parmeinides "in holding that reality was spatially as well as temporally infinite" [Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy, 325]. Both, we are told, agreed that "reality is eternal"; but it was Melissus who saw the inconsistency of saying in the same breath that it had spatial frontiers.[1]

While Owen regards Melissus as refining Parmenides' seemingly troubled position, Taràn copes with the paradox by discounting the views of those who would find atemporal eternity in the Thesis (B 8.5 - 6):

The eagerness to read into [B 8.5 - 6] the notion of atemporal eternity was probably the cause of the neglect of the connection of these lines with those that follow them; and this neglect had the consequence of obscuring the reason and the extent of the denial of γένησις and ὄλεθρος in lines 5 - 6. It is understandable that those who try to read here the concept of atemporality did not pay attention to the connection of ὁμοῦ, πᾶν, ἕν, συνεχές [B 8. 5 - 6] with νῦν ἔστιν [B 8.5], for, had they done so, it would have invalidated their contention that the reason of οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἦν οὐδ᾽ ἔσται is the eternal present. . . . [Parmenides] says that Being is now, by which he means the present tense of the verb to be. The present, however, is in time; this shows that Parmenides did not intend here to assert the atemporality of Being, for, had this been his intention, he could not have failed to know that the present is a part of time.[2]

On the contrary, even within a linear model of time (such as we find in Aristotle's *Physics,* 220a10 - 22), the now-moment serves as a limit to the future and past. And just as a mathematical point is the limit of a line, or a line the limit of a surface, or a surface the limit of a solid—none of these limits constituting parts of the quanta they limit—so too the now constitutes no part of time:

[For] an object in locomotion follows in a way a point; for a point maintains the continuity and serves as the limit of a line, since it is the beginning of one and the end of another line. But if a point is so taken that it is used as two, a stop is necessary, if the same point is to be a beginning as well as an end. As for the moment, it is always distinct because the body in locomotion is always in motion; hence time is a number not as in the case of the same point when this is both a beginning and an end, but rather as the extremities of the same object, and not as if these were parts, both because of what was said (for the intermediate point will be used as two, and so there will be rest) and because it is evident that neither is a moment a part of time nor is a division a part of a motion, just as points are not parts of a line. However two lines are parts of a line. Accordingly, qua being a limit, a moment is not time but an attribute [of it]. (Apostle & Gerson trs., *Aristotle: Selected Works,* p. 207)[3]

The now is to time as a point is to a line, i.e., both represent *measureless limits* constituting no part of the quanta they limit.

Richard Sorabji supports my idea that Parmenides' now constitutes no part of time:" Whittaker argues, following Taràn, that Parmenides could have had only one reason for introducing the idea of non-durational eternity—the belief that mere duration (as opposed to measured time) implies change; yet Greek philosophers down to and including Aristotle had no inkling of such an idea ... [Parmenides] had *several* reasons for introducing the idea of non-durational eternity, all of them different from the one envisaged by Whittaker."[4]

Parmenides' reasoning at lines 8.5 - 6 is more transparent than Taràn would suggest. The reason why Being is neither generated nor destroyed has to do with its subsistence in one ubiquitous now. Eternity and incorruptibility are attributes Parmenides *presupposes* of Being; their connection with Being is not, therefore, subject to direct proof. Since all of Being exists together in the now, the universe, as a whole, has no future or past; it rather exists entirely out of time by standing in one and the same now, though there is consciousness of time and of specific events unfolding in time. The central point of the Thesis (B 8.1 -10) is that the durationless activity expressed by present tense ἔστι differs from activities expressed by other present tense verbs. For instance, walking, dancing, and singing indicate activities which unfold with the passage of time; they are *present,* but they contain a definite beginning and end; they come to be and pass away; they waver in intensity over the duration of their existence. But existence as such, expressed through present tense ἔστι, marks an activity which has no beginning or end, which neither comes to be nor passes away, and which does not vary in intensity from one episode to the next. Being remains constant in the now, yet there is consciousness of time and of activities determined in time—activities that constantly change, that generate and decay, etc. How, then, can the now maintain its sameness and identity when it appears to transfer itself (and thus to become different from itself) from one episode to the next? How can the now be both "unitary" (ἕν, B 8.6) and "continuous" (συνεχές, B 8.6) when continuity applies to the cohesiveness of parts contained in a *complex,* while unity applies to the self-identity of a *simplex?* One must argue that the same now holds together as one, even though it lies embedded within distinctly separate episodes, much as the line AB, divided at midpoint C, represents two distinct segments, AC and CB, even though midpoint C is common to and continuous with both segments. If, by analogy with linear time, we further divide the line AB into a thousand-and-one segments, each dividing point would appear to be distinct from every other, just as there appear to be distinct episodes in time and thus many distinct "nows"—but both appearances are illusory, because the line AB is formed by the continuation of one and the same extensionless point, just as any episode of time represents the continuation of one and the same durationless now. The now is that through which time passes—it limits time, but is itself unlimited; it is, therefore, the *necessary condition* for the passage of time. The now is also that which, by continuing itself, generates time; just as the extensionless point, by continuing itself, generates a line. In addition, Taràn's argument is circular; the reason why Parmenides (allegedly) avoids commitment to an eternal present is not unearthed in another passage of text, but in the

scholar's own assertion that "the present... is in time." The negating οὐδέ which begins B 8.5 continues the series of negative predicates "ungenerable" (ἀγένητον), "indestructible" (ἀνωλεθρόν), "unwavering" (ἀτρεμές), and "endless" (ἀτέλεστον), already asserted of present tense ἔστι at B 8.3-4 (but not to be asserted of other present tense verbs expressing activities such as walking, dancing, and singing). Parmenides' hypothesis that"Being subsists in one ubiquitous/ 'Now'—unitary and continuous" (cf. ἐπεὶ νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν,/ἕν, συνεχές) gives a reason either (1) for the denial of past and future duration to present tense ἔστι (first half of 8.5), or (2) for the entire series of negating predicates going back to 8.3. Nowhere in Parmenides will one find the assertion that the present or now-moment is *in time.*

We see that Owen solves the paradox by questioning the plausibility of the finite spatial frontier assertion of B 8.42 - 49 (Antithesis), while Taràn does so by questioning the logical integrity of any assertion of atemporal eternity at B 8.1 - 11 (Thesis). Yet both do so by going outside the Parmenidean system for the solution.[5] O. Gigon, by contrast, stays inside the system by arguing that:

> Die nächste These, die dem Seienden nur reine Gegenwärtigkeit gibt und Vergangenheit und Zukunft ablehnt, ist wohl eines der großartigsten Zeugnisse der gedanklichen Tiefe des Parmenides. Ewigkeit ist gleichbedeutend mit dem reinen "Jetzt." In dieser Weise modifiziert Parmenides ausdrücklich die alte traditionelle Ewigkeits formel, die noch Heraklit 22 B 30 angewandt hatte, und wird zum Begründer der antiken Philosophie der Zeit überhaupt. Was Platon im Timaios 37 E-38 B sagt, ist letzten Endes nichts anderes als die Ausfürhrung dessen, was Parmenides an unserer Stelle lehrt.[6]

Gigon does two things here. First, he rightly places Parmenides in contrast to Heraclitus, famous for the claim that "this cosmos, the same for all, is no production of men or gods, but *was, is,* and al ways *will be* an ever-living fire," (κόσμον τόνδε, τὸν αὐτὸν ἁπάντων, οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἦν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται πῦρ ἀείζωον, Diels 22 B 30). There are clearly shreds of Zoroastrian thought in these words. Parmenides perhaps recognizes the connection and rebuffs both the Zoroastrians and Heraclitus. At Diels 28 B 8.5 - 6 Parmenides appears to challenge "The Riddler" by arguing explicitly that the verbs "was" and "will be" apply neither to Being in general, as a cosmic whole, nor to present tense ἔστι in particular, as durationless activity. Second, Gigon correctly sees Parmenides as the source of inspiration behind Plato's words in the *Timaeus,* 37e - 38a, which are rendered by Jowett as follows:

For there were no days and nights and months and years before the heaven was created, but when he constructed the heaven he created them also. They are all parts of time, and the past and future are created species of time, which we unconsciously but wrongly transfer to eternal Being, for we say that it "was," or "is," or "will be," but the truth is that "is" alone is properly attributed to it, and that "was" and "will be" are only to be spoken of becoming in time, for they are motions, but that which is immovably the same forever cannot become older or younger by time, nor can it be said that it came into being in the past, or has come into being now, or will come into being in the future, nor is it subject at all to any of those states which affect moving and sensible things and of which generation is the cause."[7]

David Gallop resolves Parmenides' cosmological paradox in a most constructive fashion by reinterpreting the apparent assertion of finite spherical frontiers evident in the Antithesis (B 8.42 - 9):

"like a sphere" might be used to describe a physical object, such as an orange. But it might be used as "circular," "triangular," and "square" are often used in English, to characterize a non-spatial item bearing some important resemblance to the relevant shape. From the fact that the goddess calls her reality "sphere-like," it therefore cannot be inferred that she did, or that she did not, conceive of it in material or spatial terms.[8]

I develop this line of reasoning by arguing that there are two ways of solving the paradox consistent with Parmenides' system of thought. First, following Gallop, the supposed spherical limit is really no limit at all, but an analogy of resemblance designed to account for balance, truth, and infinite cosmic expanse in all directions. The universe stretches infinitely outward in the shape of a perfect sphere. The visible bodies of the heavens are ranged in a vortex, yet they continue to expand outward ad infinitum in such a way that there is no region in the space-time continuum for nothingness to exist. However, if the cosmos (qua sum of all that is) *were* a finite spheroid, as opposed to merely *resembling* one, two things would follow of necessity:

(1) Nothingness would exist beyond the limits of Being, since a spherical surface separates what is (inside the sphere) from what is not.
(2) The cosmos would *exemplify* a geometrical solid determined in Euclidean 3-space and existing in time, since all sensible spheres have these attributes.

But neither (1) nor (2) can possibly be true according to Parmenides, since contra (1) nothingness cannot exist beyond what there already is (B 6.2), and contra (2) the now—in which the cosmos exists as a whole—is not in time (B 8.5), nor is the cosmos as a whole determined in Euclidean 3-space, though individual sensible magnitudes appear to be so.

The paradox contains an added dimension: Spherical cosmic expanse suggests growth from a center, a starting point. But Being-as-such has no starting point; it is, as it were, "anarchical" and "unstoppable" (B 8.27). Furthermore, how could such a starting point mark an origin of generation, if Being is expressly not to be generated or destroyed, while remaining one whole in every limb, equal to itself in every direction of expanse? An answer appears once we begin to connect the repeated spatial metaphors of sphericity and circularity to what I argue is Parmenides' concept of circular time. We know, for instance, that only the now *is,* that the past and future *are not.* We cannot go looking for a beginning to time the way we would go looking for the beginning of the highway from Corinth to Athens. There is no beginning to time for Parmenides, since all that was or will ever be is already now. The now is an eternal limit (a πεῖρας) to time. But this same limit that appears to deny temporal infinity to Being, actually confers it. The sphere-like outer limit of the cosmos also appears to be a spatial limit to Being, a limit to cosmic expanse. But rather than limiting the universe to a ball submerged in Euclidean 3-space, outside of which would exist Nothing, this limit actually makes the universe endlessly whole. I argue that Parmenides concept of space is decidedly non-Euclidean, and that the idea behind sphericity is that, in a sphere, all contents have a common center point or origin. This origin, in the case of a sphere-like cosmos, is the Being of beings, an eternal source the same for all things. The center point is like an extensionless geometrical point. The point lacks extension in space, just as the now-moment lacks duration in time. Thus, in asserting a sphere-like πεῖρας, Parmenides calls us to contemplate the core and the source of all that is; just as we are to focus our thought on the now as necessary condition for the passage of time.

So, rather than seeing spatiotemporal limitation (i.e., a spherical outer limit and a now moment) in conflict with the infinity and eternity of Being, we need to recognize that these limits allow the universe to exist as a *whole greater than the sum of its parts.* Wholeness goes beyond mere totality of parts, because wholeness adds the concept of unity to the parts, i.e., it coordinates them into one idea. TOTALITY *is a manyness of items which do not exhibit an underlying organizational unity, i.e., a many without a discernable one.* By contrast, WHOLENESS *constitutes a one beyond many, a synthesis of unity and plurality, i.e., an identity of essence within a prevailing difference of appearance.* Thus, a whole *can be* greater than the sum of its parts, when construed as an essence embracing those parts under one identity, rather than construed as a mere extensive quantity, i.e., as a mere totality. For example, I along with 9 others are stranded on a distant island. Each of us decides, at first,

to build our own shelter, and each expends 1 unit of labor to do so. But none of us individually has the power to build a shelter strong enough to sustain the coming storm. If we combine our efforts, however, we may build a super shelter which would survive the coming storm; each again expends 1 unit of labor to do so. But the sum total of our labor has not increased as a result of banding together, nevertheless we are able to achieve something greater than the sum of our individual labors aggregated separately.

Thus, if at every conceivable point in the universe there is existence in the now, perhaps every point in the universe refers back to a fixed center. Perhaps generation and corruption run on a cycle in the temporal world with the passage of time. There is expansion of cosmic events out of an eternal now which produces a future and past inevitably destined to collapse into the self-same instantaneous now, but there is room also for the eventuation of cosmic expanse out of a core which produces space and time as such, reaches a zenith, and collapses the cosmic manifold back into its own originative unity. This is one way to acknowledge the significance of temporality, while adhering to the dictum of a timeless present. After all, the outermost limit of Parmenides' universe is precisely that which *reaches out through itself to arrive at perfect self-sameness*—in the phrase ἱκνεῖσθαι εἰς ὁμόν (B 8.46 - 47), for instance, ἱκνεῖσθαι suggests an "arrival" or a "journey," which implies a determinate starting point and destination; though the impetus or source of movement need not be subject to these constraints. Parmenides sphere-like outer limit transforms the mere *totality* of all there is into an integrated, organized, and thus "cosmic" whole; i.e., a one forever becoming many, and a many forever collapsing back into self-same unity. We commonly recognize, for instance, *many* distinct epochs both lived and yet to be lived in the span of past and future time, but we can conceive of only *one* now. We recognize *many* distinct regions of space encompassed within a sphere-like outer limit, but we can conceive of only *one* cosmic source, self-same for all that is. We recognize, name, and specify *many* finite temporal beings in the cosmos, but we can conceive of only *one* infinite and eternal Being at their root. This core Being recapitulates cosmic expanse, zenith, and collapse, in the generation, flourish, and decay of every individual being. Stars burn themselves out to a flicker, then darkness, then void; plant life desiccates in arid wind, loses its life-giving force, and eventually withers away; humans degenerate with age, lose their reproductive capacity, and inevitably die. But each species perpetuates itself anew. Members are born again, but born only to repeat the same organic cycle ad infinitum. Why should a *cosmic* cycle of expanse, zenith, and decay be any different? If a unitary concept (conceived in thought as a universal essence, a whole: i.e.,

the idea of Humanity, of Beauty, of Quantity, of Being) continually repeats itself in a plurality of instances (e.g., people, artworks, quanta, things), what prevents the macrocosm of the universe from infinitely repeating itself in the microcosm of Thought, if Thought is in fact the vehicle for seeing mere totalities in terms of wholes? The mantra repeats—" for Thought and Being are the same" (B 3).

THE LINEAR VERSUS THE CLOSED-LOOP MODEL OF TIME

Another solution to Parmenides' cosmological paradoxlies in appreciating the rich significance of the poet's repeated circle metaphors. The circle is the only geometrical figure featuring an infinity of sides. Construct a straight line through any point on the circumference and you have a tangent. But there are an *infinity* of tangents to the circle proving an infinity of points constitutive of the perimeter. In addition, the circle is the only figure where beginning and end are common (cf. Heraclitus, Diels 28 B 103). The spheroid augments this infinity by adding a third dimension. The sphere is a solid comprising an infinity of circles describable over its surface. We now have an infinity of infinite infinities. Inside the solid there are yet more circles to be found of infinitely variable size resting upon an equally infinite number of planes twisted around an axis whose midpoint is the center of every circle composing the sphere. Think of a series of concentric circles, then twirl them along a given axis to create a three-dimensional sphere. That sphere is determinable along an infinite number of possible axes. On this score, straight-line motion from any point in the cosmos, as conducted along the path of any given circle within the sphere, would involve inevitable circuitous return to the original point of departure. Any given starting point of straight-line motion you choose would rest upon one among the infinity of concentric circles—your journey would bring you back to the same point from which you began. At the same time there would be an infinity of possible directions you could choose to complete your circuit, since, in a sphere, one always begins straight-line motion in a circle resting on a specific plane.

Parmenides asserts that the cosmos *resembles* the mass of a well-rounded sphere (cf. εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκῳ, B8.43). This resemblance is an analogy, not an equation. He is not saying that the cosmos *is* a sphere, but rather that it shares many of the properties of a sphere; for instance, the cosmos is a *closed* (and therefore complete) system containing infinities; the sum total of quantifiable energy in this system remains forever constant. We must abandon, however, the idea that Parmenides' assertion of sphericity is merely an assertion about a cosmic solid resting in Euclidean 3-space. His

assertion of sphericity at B 8.43 is an assertion about the constitution of space and time as such; i.e., space is *curved* around a common source, while time passes through itself in passing through the now as if *forming a circle* where beginning and end are common. Thus, we can not travel from one edge of the universe to an edge on the opposite side, as if we were conducted directly through a sphere as along a chord subtending the arc of a circle, because this presupposes three things: (1) that the universe *is* a geometric sphere (when, according to Parmenides B 8.43 it merely *resembles* one, because sharing many of its properties); (2) that Euclidean 3-space determines the extension of the universe as a whole, and therefore transcends the realm of all that is (but this it clearly cannot do, since 3-space only determines magnitudes *contained within* the universe); and (3) that, because of (2), nothingness exists *outside* the universe, since the surface of any solid divides *what is* (inside the solid) from *what is not,* but, according to Parmenides B 6.2, there is no nothingness or non-being (outside the presumed sphere) to place in antithesis to Being (inside the presumed sphere). In other words, we cannot pierce the sphericity of the cosmos the way we would pierce the sphericity of an orange with a toothpick, because there is no geometrical limit to the cosmos, as there is for an orange, which would submerge it in Euclidean 3-space and determine it as a sphere. The words of the goddess are now beginning to assume profound dimensions: "it's all the same to me where I start, for there shall I again return self-same" (B 5).

The poet's emphasis on circularity throughout calls us to reevaluate our common sense linear concept of time. On a linear model, there are two measurable dimensions of time, future and past. The unit of measure is any stretch of time, a nanosecond, a minute, a year, limited by the instantaneous now through which time itself passes as thread through the eye of a needle. But this model is clearly insufficient, since nothing would prevent there being a beginning and end to time, and Parmenidean Being remains motionless and constant, containing no starting-point and no stop at an end or terminus. However, if this temporal thread is closed to form a circular loop, on the other hand, time passes through itself in passing through the now ad infinitum. The movement of all history would, on the circular model, collapse back upon itself. Relativity between historical epochs in terms of before and after would be inaccurate, since that which has past will come again.

"Was" (ἦν, B 8.5) and "will be" (ἔσται, B 8.5) are words mortals use to describe what is really the infinite presence of Being in the now. What common sense takes to be the future's transformation into the past is really the manifestation of Being's intensity in the now, not the passage of time.

We end up, over eternity, in the same now from which we (seemed) to have begun our existence. In other words, if we picture the phenomenon of time as a chariot race conducted on a circular track, we cannot then speak of destination, or of traveling from point A to point B (as we could in the line AB mentioned earlier). There is no real accomplishment of an end when said end=point of departure. (Notice that mortals busy themselves, in fact define themselves, by attaining worldly ends, frittering away the spiritual fullness of life.) Thus, instead of picturing the chariot moving around the track, it is more appropriate to think of our chariot as motionless on the same fixed point, while forcing the track under itself by means of its own horsepower. This puts us *inside* the chariot, just as the fact of our own existence puts us forever inside the now. The now is motionless. The sheer immediacy and presence of Being in the now mirrors itself in the phenomenon of time-consciousness. Remember that time involves destination, getting from point A to point B. According to the linear model, time is a measure of motion, and so implies movement of some sort. But Being stands motionless (ἀκίνητον, B 8.27), and motion is also a measure of time, as measuring time involves enumeration, distance, movement from beginning to end. In a circle, however, there is no before and after, no beginning and end. Thus, from a closed-loop point of view, time-passage is illusory; and man's obsession with time is tantamount to common sense missing out on the oneness of eternal presence. For Parmenides, the now is motionless, and time a figment of the imagination, since all time is already contained, and thus neutralized, in the now. In other words, time, as such, presupposes the now as its condition of actualization. We speak of future and past, but neither comes to pass without standing in the now. When the future has past, it no longer exists; but neither did it exist before it came to pass. For mortals, it is as if the now is constantly in motion with the passage of time (like a chariot circling a track, or a planet orbiting the sun) since all that matters is measurable, and only past and future episodes of time are measurable. But the now is not divisible so as to exist at one time here and at another time there. And if the now is not divisible, it is not measurable. But all that matters to mortals, all that counts as existing, is measurable. The now is not measurable; therefore, the now does not matter to mortals.

Being, on the other hand, exists exclusively in the same now eternally; its existence is durationless and constitutes an immediate and infinite *cosmic presence.* Being is present to thinking consciousness *immediately,* i.e., without the mediation of sensory inputs or episodes of time. Being does not flourish during one point in history only to decline in another. Nor does it vary intensity in the moment, since it is the same throughout all cosmic expanse.

Parmenides emphasizes atemporal eternity by saying unambiguously that Being is ungenerable, indestructible, unwavering, and whole in every limb. Generation, decay, change, and possession of parts presuppose a concept of linear time and a complexity of organization, none of which apply to the immediate simplicity of Being. Concerning this simplicity he goes on to assert (B 8.5-6):

> No *was* nor *will:* all past and future null;
> Since Being subsists in one ubiquitous
> Now—unitary and continuous.

"Was" and "will" tell us nothing about Being, because the now, in which everything is, is "ubiquitous" or everywhere the same at once. Parmenides literally says that "Being exists, all together, in the now." Just as common sense perceives different entities occupying different parts of space, so by analogy, different events must appear to occupy their own relative position on the time continuum. But if each thing had its own time, its own now, split apart from everything else by time, just as each thing occupies its own place split apart by everything else in space, such would contradict the very presence of the now whose permanence conditions the phenomenon of time. The time phenomenon, in other words, necessarily presupposes a common now-presence shared by all things regardless of their spatial relativity to one another. For instance, a NASA probe sends back messages from Mars to earth at near light-speed. It takes x number of minutes for these messages to reach earth, because they must traverse distance over time. But how could we measure the lag time between here and there without presupposing a common point of reference, a now moment, as one and the same for Earth and Mars? In a sense, whatever events we detect through our telescope on the surface of Mars as transpiring "now" on Earth *already transpired,* relative to Mars, x minutes in the past. Whenever we view any body through a telescope we are looking into the past. But this lag time between here and there as well as the apparent ontological difference between the Earth-now and the Mars-now results from the sluggishness of the photons constituting the phenomenon of visible Mars-events, not from any real difference between determinate nows. When we look at Mars through a telescope we are looking into the past; yet the same now is present for both observer and observed regardless of the distance by which both are separated in time and space. If each being existed in its own relative now, so that the now was as various as the plurality of beings in the cosmos, there would be as many separate universes as there were individual beings, which is absurd. The ubiquitous now is what makes all beings one cosmos, one Being. So, even though there

is observable relativity of time and motion between any two individual entities located within the space-time continuum, and this relativity must be accounted for within our observational calculus, there is only one now common to all things, which allows each to occupy its own relative position within the space-time continuum.

There are, then, two contrarily opposed dimensions of time: future and past—neither of which exist in any meaningful way for Parmenides. The now-moment, however, which is the same for all things and events, transcends temporality, because it constitutes no part of time. The now is not a dimension of time insofar as it is not a measurable part of time. Likewise, that-which-is in the fundamental sense, transcends spatiality: i.e., Being-as-such is not *in space,* though there exist individual beings in different parts of space, just as Earth and Mars appear to occupy different parts of the time continuum. Nor is there more of Being here and less of Being there; i.e., there are no indentures or bulges in the universe that would cause a void to exist, since void is non-being; and non-being is not to be juxtaposed with Being as if it were a contrary. Non-being is the contradictory, the absolute negation and destruction of Being (just as Ahriman is the negation of Ahura Mazda, or as Ἀλήθεια is the negation of Hesiod's Λήθη). However, non-being is not the contrary opposite of Being, the way the past is the contrary opposite of the future, or night the contrary of day, or decay the contrary of generation; if such were the case, non-being would have to exist as the natural balance to Being. The now is also a limit to time, just as the point is a limit of a line, and the line a limit of a plane, and the plane a limit of a solid. On the other hand, any body possessing mass changes the nature of the space occupied; but we are not to speak of full-space as "Being" and void-space as "non-being," since Parmenidean Being constitutes space and time as such, regardless of the individual things and events determined therein. Inside the now there is permanence and changelessness of Being, since, if Being were subject to change, it would be true to say of it that, at some time, past or future, *it is not.* Colors change on the surface of things. Bodies move from place to place. Things come to be and pass away. But all of these changes are deceptive, because they apply to that which, strictly speaking, does not exist. They do not apply to the true Being of the thing(s) in question. Thus, mortals range past and future along a continuum as mirror images of each other, but they fail to perceive that the now-moment is ever-present for all things throughout the vastness of the universe, and therefore fail to see the now as necessary condition for the passage of time.

THE GATES OF JUSTICE AS "NOW-GATES"

The Gates of Justice are metaphor for the now. Just as Parmenides travels the way of Night to pass over into the light of Day by crossing the threshold of these Gates, so temporal beings can pass through time only by passing through the "now" at every moment of their existence. The metaphor plays to our linear assumptions about time. Yet Parmenides must eventually return to the mortal world to reveal what he has learned from the goddess. Perhaps his journey over the threshold forces him back to where he started, as on a circuit. After all, the goddess is just as likely to reveal the truth as she is to revert back to speaking in a " deceptive ordering of words" (B 8.50 - 52). This profoundly circular journey forces Parmenides to rethink everything he has taken for granted as a mortal. The mind's revolution of one principle into its equal and opposite is the process of dialectic. Dialectic is *conversation between interlocutors, communication between worlds, linkage between the finite and the infinite.* The poem charters the concept of dialectical philosophy in the West. Parmenides converses with the goddess at her palace halls; his protecting maidens converse with Justice by persuading her to open the gates; the goddess prepares Parmenides to return to earth from the world beyond in order to converse with mortals, having Herself already communicated with him, etc. The product of dialectic, however, consists in a contemplative transcendence of contrary principles that involves their mutual reconciliation in a third and higher principle.

The now is just such a principle, because it represents the reconciliation of future and past. The opened gates of Justice also constitute a reconciliation between day and night, equal and opposite powers. The now allows the future to pass into history; so too, the opened Gates of Justice allow Parmenides to pass from the temporal to the eternal realm. Justice mediates opposing powers by reaching a decision that neutralizes the original opposition; just as the now mediates the tension of future and past by collapsing all time into a measureless moment. The now is, on this score, both logically and ontologically prior to past and future; just as the Gates of Justice are metaphorically prior to day and night. If there is to be time at all, there must first be a (durationless) limit subsisting outside of time; just as there must be a threshold at the Gates of Justice where neither day nor night exists.

Mortals fail to recognize the very now they take for granted when measuring episodes of time, or locating events in the future and past, or developing their own sense of shared history through myth. They fall victim to the illusion of time, because their vision is diffused through a veil of appearance and deception that presents all things as if in constant (Heraclitean) flux.

Let's call these appearances or seeming-things (cf. τὰ δοκοῦντα, B 1.31) "immanent beings," since they exist by *remaining in* the space-time manifold as objects of sensation, while changing shape, color, and texture over time. Parmenides calls us, through his prophetic verses, to contemplate a changeless Being that "transcends" or "rises beyond" the threshold of sense-consciousness to a world perceived only in thought.[9] If there is a purpose to life, it rests in lifting up one's level of self-conscious reflection beyond "the beings of this world" toward a transcending spiritual oneness with nature. Thus, the inherent compatibility of Thought and Being is built into the way things are; i.e., thinking is essential to being human.

Thinking allows us to rise to the level of gods. We determine for ourselves the manner and quality of the conscious filter through which we view our lives and the world around us. Although we do not control the way things are, nor have the power to determine cosmic events to be other than they are, we do have the power to choose to be one with nature. We choose between whether to accept the way things *seem,* i.e., reluctantly through animal sensation, as prey to our surroundings, or we choose to participate Being by becoming one with the way things really *are,* by actively developing mindful tranquility amid the apparent flux of our surroundings. Such is the moral teaching of Parmenides.

NOTES

1. G.E.L. Owen, "Eleatic Questions" from *Logic, Science, and Dialectic,* p. 21.

2. Leonardo Tarán, *Parmenides: A Text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays,* pp. 178-179.

3. Immanuel Bekker's text, *Aristotelis Opera,* (1839), vol. I, *(Physics)* p. 220a10-22, reads as follows: καὶ γὰρ στιγμὴ καὶ συνέχει τὸ μῆκος καὶ ὁρίζει· ἔστι γὰρ τοῦ μὲν ἀρχὴ τοῦ δὲ τελευτή. ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν μὲν οὕτω λαμβάνῃ τις ὡς δυσὶ χρώμενος τῇ μιᾷ, ἀνάγκη ἵστασθαι, εἰ ἔσται ἀρχὴ καὶ τελευτὴ ἡ αὐτὴ στιγμή. τὸ δὲ νῦν διὰ τὸ κινεῖσθαι τὸ φερόμενον ἀεὶ ἕτερον· ὥσθ᾽ ὁ χρόνος ἀριθμὸς οὐχ ὡς τῆς αὐτῆς στιγμῆς, ὅτι ἀρχὴ καὶ τελευτή, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τὰ ἔσχατα τῆς αὐτῆς μᾶλλον, καὶ οὐχ ὡς τὰ μέρη, διὰ τε τὸ εἰρημένον (τῇ γὰρ μέσῃ στιγμῇ ὡς δυσὶ χρήσεται, ὥστε ἠρεμεῖν συμβήσεται), καὶ ἔτι φανερὸν ὅτι οὐδὲ μόριον τὸ νῦν τοῦ χρόνου, οὐδ᾽ ἡ διαίρεσις τῆς κινήσεως, ὥσπερ οὔδ᾽ αἱ στιγμαὶ τῆς γραμμῆς· αἱ δὲ γραμμαὶ αἱ δύο τῆς μιᾶς μόρια. ᾗ μὲν οὖν πέρας τὸ νῦν, οὐ χρόνος, ἀλλὰ συμβέβηκεν.

4. Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum,* Cornell, 1983, p. 106.

5. Sorabji even describes Parmenides as "groping towards the idea [of timelessness]" as if clumsily trudging through a forest of concepts unfamiliar to him (Ibid., Sorabji, p. 99); yet it is this same Parmenides who remains one of the few historical links between Western monism and its ancient Near-Eastern ancestor. Parmenides was a spiritualist, not a critic nor an academic philosopher. And the tension between opposite and contrary principles that marks the poet's emphasis along the Way of Opinion condition other relevant dualities discovered in later metaphysics, e.g., matter v. form, truth v. deception, unity v. plurality, property v. accident, actuality v. potentiality, electromagnetism v. gravitation, positronic v. electronic energy, necessity v. contingency in events, sameness v. otherness. It is no accident that for virtually every significant philosophical concept, there is an equal and opposite concept defined in terms of it—contrary principles pervade the whole of quantifiable nature.

6. O. Gigon, *Der Ursprung Der Griechishen Philosophie: Von Hesiod bis Parmenides,* p. 261.

7. Jowett translation in Hamilton & Cairns, eds., *Plato: The Collected Dialogues,* p. 1167. Jonathan Burnet's text, *Platonis Opera,* tomus IV, Oxford, 1902, pp. 37e1-38a6, reads as follows: ἡμέρας γὰρ καὶ νύκτας καὶ μῆνας καὶ ἐνιαυτούς, οὐκ ὄντας πρὶν οὐρανὸν γενέσθαι, τότε ἅμα ἐκείνῳ συνισταμένῳ τὴν γένεσιν αὐτῶν μηχανᾶται· ταῦτα δὲ πάντα μέρη χρόνου, καὶ τότ᾽ ἦν τότ᾽ ἔσται χρόνου γεγονότα εἴδη, ἃ δὴ φέροντες λανθάνομεν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀίδιον οὐσίαν οὐκ ὀρθῶς. λέγομεν γὰρ δὴ ὡς ἦν ἔστιν τε καὶ ἔσται, τῇ δὲ τὸ ἔστιν μόνον κατὰ τὸν ἀληθῆ λόγον προσήκει, τὸ δὲ ἦν τότ᾽ ἔσται περὶ τὴν ἐν χρόνῳ γένεσιν ἰοῦσαν πρέπει λέγεσθαι—κινήσεις γάρ ἐστον, τὸ δὲ ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ἔχον ἀκινήτως οὔτε πρεσβύτερον οὔτε νεώτερον προσήκει γίγνεσθαι διὰ χρόνου οὐδὲ γενέσθαι ποτὲ οὐδὲ γεγονέναι νῦν οὐδ᾽ εἰς αὖθις ἔσεσθαι, τὸ παράπαν τε οὐδὲν ὅσα γένεσις τοῖς ἐν αἰσθήσει φερομένοις προσῆψεν.

8. Gallop, *Parmenides of Elea: A Text and Translation,* Toronto, 1984, p. 20.

9. The distinction between immanent and transcendent is a function of the type of consciousness employed to contemplate the world around us. Following

Parmenides, immanent beings are nothing other than the "seeming-things" (τὰ δοκοῦντα, B 1.31) expressed through the"opinions" (δόξαι) of sense-consciousness; while transcendent Being (ἐόν) is the subject of the poem, and is expressed by Parmenides through a host of profoundly intertwined metaphors such as cosmic *wholeness,* a transcendence of one and many; the *Gates,* a transcendence of Night and Day; *permanence* and *changelessness,* a transcendence of generation and decay; the *now,* a transcendence of the two-fold dimensionality of time: past and future; and so on. Sir William Hamilton gives a helpful genealogy of the term "transcendent" and "transcendental" in Vol. II of his *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic,* pp. 140 -141: "By the Schoolmen, whatever, as more general than [Aristotle's] ten categories, could not be contained under them, was said to rise beyond them—to *transcend* them; and, accordingly, such terms as *being, one, whole, good,* etc., were called *transcendent* or *transcendental* (*transcendentia* or *transcendentalia*). Kant, as he had twisted the term *category,* twisted also these correlative expressions from their original meaning. He did not even employ the two terms *transcendent* and *transcendental* as correlative. The latter he applied as a synonym for *a priori,* to denote those elements of thought which were native and necessary to the mind itself, and which, though not manifested out of experience, were still not contingently derived from it by an a *posteriori* process of generalization. The term *transcendent,* on the contrary, he applied to all pretended knowledge that transcended experience, and was not given in an original principle of the mind. *Transcendental* he thus applied in a favorable, *transcendent* in a condemnatory acceptation." I wish to emphasize that my use of the terms "transcendent" and "transcendental" is neither Scholastic, since Aristotelian categories cannot be reliably applied to Parmenides, nor Kantian, since I use both terms correlatively. According to Parmenides, that which one must transcend if one's contemplation is to reach the plane of Truth is precisely the world of "seeming-things" (τὰ δοκοῦντα, B 1.31) that permeate our consciousness of the world nearest our senses. Intellectual transcendence means leaving behind those things which merely seem to be, in order to grasp the permanence, presence, wholeness, and infinity of Being, as anything which exists by seeming exists as essentially changeable, in time, fragmented, and finite.

6

Necessity, Possibility, and Contingency

PARMENIDES' FOUR-FOLD SYNTHESIS OF BEING

The goddess Necessity (' Ανάγκη) is the cosmic force behind the linkage between Thinking and Being. Parmenides tells us that She is ultimately responsible for binding and rounding the universe into a sphere-like expanse, the depth of whose perfection can only be contemplated in Thought beyond mere sensation. Variegating his manner of expression, the skillful poet uses four different types of expression to convey the same idea of necessity: the personified goddess ' Ανάγκη (B 8.30, 10.6), and her impersonal manifestation, ἀνάγκη (B 8.16); the personified goddess Μοῖρα (B1.26, 8.37), indicating "Fate," or "Pre-Destination," of cosmic events; the δαίμονες, "destinies" who lead Parmenides along his inevitable road of song to the Gates of Justice (B 1.3), as well as the lone Δαίμων, which I personify "Destiny," due to Her unique role in ruling over the pleasure of sexual intercourse and the pain of childbirth (B 12.3); and finally the series of impersonal expressions, each sharing the same root signifying "it is necessary" or one "must" do something, etc.: χρεώ (B1.28); χρῆν (B1.32); χρεών (B2.5); χρή (B6.1); χρέος (B 8.9); χρεών (B 8.11); and χρεόν (B 8.45).

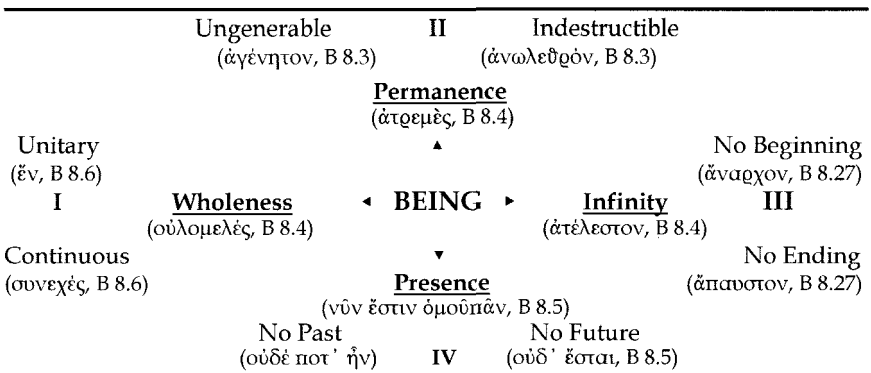
The role of Necessity is three-fold: She represents the force that binds the cosmos together to form a whole (B 8.30); She once dragged off Heaven (Οὐρανός) to hold the limits of the stars (B 10.6); and She personifies the primal force in nature that brings Thought to Being. Necessity permeates the cosmos; though mortals walk the earth unaware of Her presence.

The same Necessity that caused the cosmos to come together as one also compels Parmenides, by means of watchful δαίμονες, down a road of song (B1.3). She disguises herself in the Δαίμων governing sexual relations (B 12.3). She works together with Μοῖρα to chain the cosmos in fetters that tighten it into an immovable whole (B 8.37). She also assures Parmenides

that his *fate* on the journey is not an evil one (B1.26). Necessity is ultimately responsible for Parmenides' *need* to learn all things (B 1.28); for the *need* in seeming-things to merely seem to be (B 1.32);[1] for Being's *need* to exist and never cease (B 2.5); for the *need* to say and think that *Being is* (B 6.1); for the hypothetical *need* which *would have* aroused Being to begin in time, though it did not (B 8.9); for Being's *need* to exist everywhere in fullest might (B 8.11); for Parmenides' *need* to dismiss the path of non-being all together (B 8.15); and for the cosmic *need* for symmetry and balance (B 8.45). Parmenides also contrasts Necessity with the "two-headed" contingency in judgment (B 6.5) found in mortal assumptions of first principles.

As illustrated in Figure 6.1, Parmenides' concept of Being involves a four-fold synthesis of contrary notions, each of which is universally predicable of Being. The goddess imparts these contrary notions to the boy through her discourse on the Way of Truth (esp. B 2 and B 8), but mimics these dualities in a deceptive arrangement of words, which enunciate the error of popular opinion. Transcending opinion means arriving at universal pairs of contrary principles and positing a synthesis between them that yields unitary threshold notions foundational to the Being of beings—notions that negate, by synthesis, the contrariety of the originally opposed principles.

Figure 6.1
Parmenides' Four-Fold Synthesis of Being



The merging of unity (cf. ἕν, B 8.6) and plurality (understood from συνεχές, B 8.6, which indicates the cohesiveness of parts in a complex), by synthesis I, yields the concept of Wholeness (cf. οὐλομελές, B 8.4), which concept reaffirms that Being is both unitary and continuous. The merging of ungenerability (cf. ἀγένητον, B 8.3) and indestructiblity (cf. ἀνωλῦερὸν,

B 8.3), by synthesis II, yields the threshold concept of Permanence (cf. ἀτρεμές, B 8.4). Again, Being is that which is both ungenerable and incorruptible in space-time; the term ἀτρεμές simply expresses the fact of cosmic changelessness. The twin notions of having no beginning (ἄναρχον, B 8.27) and no ending (ἄπαυστον, B 8.27) in space-time yields, by synthesis III, the threshold concept of Infinity (cf. ἀτέλεστον, B 8.4). And finally, that which has no future (οὐδ᾽ ἔσται, B 8.5) and no past (οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἦν, B 8.5) is, by synthesis IV, that which exists only now in motionless and eternal Presence. This four-fold synthesis of concepts yields those attributes which are predicable of Being by necessity. None of these opposed concepts can apply with any degree of reliability to contingent facts, to things that come to be and pass away, to things existing in time, or to things which have a discoverable beginning or end. But what necessity signifies in and of itself, and the manner in which it is opposed to contingency of events, has yet to be clarified.

It is best to examine the difference between contingency and necessity in the context of B 6, because it is here that the goddess places nothingness in antithesis to Being; and it is the ontological division between Being and nothingness that defines the modality division between impossibility and necessity. It is between these two extremes of necessity and impossibility that contingent events are ranged as along a continuum of possibility, where the probability of any contingent event=x, and x is greater than zero, but less than one. The goddess warns the boy that he:

> Must say and think that Being exists as true
> Necessity; since Being is to Be,
> But nothingness impossibility.
> I urge you now to contemplate these lays,
> For from the first path's search I block your gaze.
> Far off her winding course have mortals strayed
> Alone in ambiguity, dismayed
> Mid nothing seen nor known; for helplessness
> Drives on the mind far-wandering their heart's abyss.
> They carry on both dumb and blind, amazed,
> Confused, these feckless tribes, who wholly dazed,
> Adjudge *to be* and *not to be* the same,
> Yet not the same—A backward turning game
> The path of all.

Just as one must necessarily say and think that *Being is,* the prospect that *nothingness is* is impossible—a clear repudiation of Zoroastrians accustomed to believing in the existence of both Being *and* non-being, Light *and* Darkness,

Goodness *and* Evil, Ahura Mazda *and* Ahriman. Parmenides' term for "nothingness" is μηδέν (B 6.2): a combination of the negative particle, μή, "not,"andiĕν, "one." "Nothing" means "not one." Nothing negates oneness in general; in particular, it marks the absence of any one thing, from which the Latin "ne-hilum" or "nihil" is derived. To assert the existence of nothingness, whether in terms of Ahriman as the Zoroastrians believed, or in terms of void space as the Atomists postulated, or as sheer emptiness beyond the visible universe in general, would be self-contradictory, since nothingness negates the very unity that makes Being an integrated cosmic whole, a one beyond the many and a many within the one.

The goddess hints that these mortals unfortunately adjudge " to be" and "not to be" the same yet not the same (B 6.8 - 9). The lesson of her teaching, that to be and not to be are clearly not the same, but negations of each other, serves as a template for Aristotle's Law of Non-Contradiction (cf. *Metaphysics,* 1006a30): i.e., a thing *can not both be and not be* in the same respect at the same time. Socrates, for instance, can not both be and not be human in the same respect at the same time. If a thing could both be and not be simultaneously, all manner of discourse would fall by the wayside, since, of any assertion, its contradictory could be affirmed as equally true, not to mention that a thing could simply alter its identity without cause at any given moment, making all names referentially opaque. Since mortals ignore the crucial difference between Being and nothingness, they discount the necessity that drives things to be the way they are in the now—in effect, they regard all things and events as merely *contingent* through and through.

The cause of mortal two-headed contingency of judgment lies in the fact that they live outside the now; thus they fail to see any lasting permanence in things, as all appearances undergo metamorphosis in time. They see only this or that particular cluster of events as subject to generation and decay. Their belief in contingency admits a kind of cosmic lawlessness into the picture, which runs counter to the Greek sense of κόσμος implying " order," "pattern," "arrangement," and "justice" understood without the presence of a supposedly potent, perhaps co-equal, force of disorder, emptiness, amorphism, and injustice.

Parmenides was among the first of the Greeks to assert that all things and events are determined by necessity through and through. Cosmic necessity enforces arithmetical, geometrical, and physical laws, many of which were present and known with rigor by Babylonian astronomers and mathematicians, as well as by Greek geometers in the time of Parmenides. In spite of this, mortal opinion shows a lack of awareness of such necessity, because it expresses itself through contingent judgments, which may or may

not actually be true. Contingency in events and states of affairs constitutes a continuum of probability between the extremes of absolute necessity (one-hundred percent likelihood of existence) and absolute impossibility (zero percent likelihood of existence). If we truly understood the Way of Truth, we would come to the realization that everything that happens in the universe is already ordered from eternity to happen exactly as it does.

Aristotle contrasts necessity with contingency in *Metaphysics,* 1027a15 where he questions whether or not things always happen of necessity and for the most part, or whether there is some other option besides. He concludes (unlike Parmenides) that things often happen "contingently" and "accidentally." "Contingency" is the established translation of Aristotle's make-shift phrase τὸ ὁπότερ᾽ ἔτυχεν (*Metaphysics,* 1027a17), literally meaning "the-in-which-of-two-ways-it-happens." The aorist ἔτυχεν is gnomic. Aristotle's phrase τὸ ὁπότερ᾽ ἔτυχεν is the ancestor of what contemporary logicians call "two-way possibility." The "two-ways" involved in two-way possibility are *is* and *is not.* The sea battle at Salamis, for instance, was contingent upon certain troop movements, convoys of warships, and military decisions on both sides that could have caused the battle not to have existed at all, or to be quite otherwise than as it happened.

Contingency as two-way possibility is anticipated in the forked path of "is" and "is not" that the goddess lays out for Parmenides. Contingency is also anticipated in the Zoroastrian account of creation in which Ahriman, the prince of darkness and evil, threatens to wreak havoc on the creatures of the world by causing a "mixture" of evil to abide along with the good present in every living thing. This mixture of evil in creation causes contingency in events by forcing the eternal cosmic sequence that has been predestined by Ahura Mazda to go awry at unpredictable times. The Evil Spirit is not all-powerful, nor can he prevent the creatures of Ohrmazd from eventually returning to the domain of Light. Ohrmazd knew that if he failed to set a time for the great battle with Ahriman, Ahriman would forever be enabled to make trouble for all of creation. In his omniscience, Ohrmazd knew that in postponing the battle for 9,000 years, the first 3,000 would go according to Ahriman, the next 3,000 years would accord with a Mixture of both good and evil, going according to both Ahriman and Ohrmazd, and finally, at the last battle, it will be possible to defeat Ahriman entirely (cf. Boyce, 1990, 45: from the Greater Bundahishn, ch.1.24 - 28). It is quite possible then, that Parmenides is referring to this well-known story of creation from the Zoroastrians, when he refers to a "mixture" (κρᾶσις) growing in the limbs of each thing (B16). The goddess, speaking in a deceptive ordering of words about the opinions of mortals, argues in B 16 that:

Just as each one holds, concealed
Within, some mix of Light with darkest Night,
Which rushes through their wandering limbs, so might
Exist the mind of man. For wisdom's seat
Persists the same for everyone you meet:
A nature growing in the limbs; since Thought
Is marked by greater growth.

In both the Goddess' account of mortal opinions about the world as well as in extant Zoroastrian sacred texts we find the same Mixture concomitant with the growth and development of organic beings in nature. The central idea is that, in Parmenides, "mortal opinion"—the shadow of popular Zoroastrian cult-legend—has fashioned its own account of the world in which things and events are just as likely to occur as not to occur, where there is no room for ultimate cosmic necessity, and where one is just as likely to encounter good as evil, since all things are caught in a galactic Mixture in which both good and evil duel for hegemony.

The goddess teaches Parmenides, however, that he cannot have it both ways. What separates the boy from those she mocks as "splay-brained" and "wandering" (B 6.5), who tread the earth divorced from any sense of oneness with nature, is precisely his *willingness to be convinced through argument* that there never really was a choice between alternative paths; never a choice between Being and non-being, good and evil, Truth and deception. The goddess herself, assisted by the pull of necessity, even makes the decision for Parmenides when the paths are reintroduced at B 8.16: κέκριται δ᾽ οὖν /τὴν μὲν ἐᾶν ἀνόητον ἀνώνυμον (οὐ γὰρ ἀληθὴς)/ἔστιν ὁδός—"Decide I say! Dismiss/The latter from your heart, a nameless course,/And thoughtless too, for she shows not the source/Of Truth." At this point Parmenides stands within the palace of the goddess, where only Necessity reigns supreme.

Before Parmenides becomes persuaded to discover Truth through the power of his own thought, forced, as it were, to take this route of necessity, as he first arrives at the grand palace halls, he is initially presented at the beginning of the story with a *choice* between alternate paths, *is* and *is-not* (B 2). Which path he chooses, qua mortal, is contingent upon whether he uses self-conscious thought or mere opinion to determine the matter. As a shaman capable of raising his plane of consciousness to the level of the supersensible, the paths stretching out before him no longer present themselves in terms of a choice, because the need to learn all things now compels him down the path of *is*. Mortals who rely entirely upon opinion, however, never take advantage of the choice, never gain access to stately halls because

their two-headed beliefs and superstitions about the world prevent them from recognizing the absolute necessity of Being. Some primitive notion of two-way possibility appears to motivate the poet's selection of the eccentric, non-Homeric term "δίκρανοι" to describe mortal "two-headed" ambiguity.[2] Two-headed indifference about the world leads to confusion, uncertainty, and, ultimately, to the judgement that "is" and "is not" are possibilities equally open to all things.

Mortals err metaphysically because their understanding of unqualified Being is clouded by impressions of particular individuals possessed of determinate finite qualities. These individuals exist, but none exists in an *unqualifiedly.* The existence of Kallias or Socrates, for instance, is qualified insofar as it is limited to specifically human characteristics. Both gentleman may cease to exist at any moment, seemingly for whatever reason. When mortals speak of existence, they limit their assertions to qualifying attributes. But in doing so they turn their back on the unqualified Being of beings, without which there would be nothing of which to judge—no attributes, no sense-realities, no substrata. Mortals recognize only coming-to-be and passing away, i.e., forces that restrict entities to a finite existence in a world steeped in a "Mixture" of opposing forces. They adjudge all things as equally susceptible of existence and non-existence, because when they make assertions about things, they speak *not* of Being-as-such, but of being-such-and-such; that is, they know only of signs, vestiges, and manifestations of the One to whose immediacy they are unconscious.

Parmenides is often misconstrued as the enemy of scientific advance because of his monistic assertion that all things are one in Being. After all, if there really is no essential distinction to be drawn between the things that exist, which divides them into genera and species, then science (as it would soon come to be know), would be a fruitless endeavor. But such a conclusion would be hasty. Parmenides shows that there cannot be an epistemological difference among beings unless there is a ground for their ultimate and thoroughgoing ontological identity *as* beings. Science as we know it relies upon distinguishing genera and species through logical division and empirical observation, but such divisions are not possible without an implicit *identity* among the things divided, i.e., a *fundamentum divisionis.* Yet Parmenides seems to relegate the task of naming and distinguishing things to mortal opinion. It should come as no surprise, then, that scholars as prominent as Jonathan Barnes (cf. *The Presocratic Philosophers,* vol. II, p. 3), have suggested that, if we decide to take Parmenides at his word, we might as well toss science out the window and turn instead, as he puts it, to gardening or to poetry. Barnes, however, seems to neglect that all enquiry deserving

of the name "science" requires a set of necessary axioms, postulates, and first truths, which are not susceptible of deductive proof, if its propositions are to have any deductive value. Barnes also seems to miss the crucial influence of Persian Zoroastrianism as the intended target of Parmenides cultural criticism. Listening closely to this centuries-old tradition in the East, Parmenides became one of the first Greek thinkers to take seriously the role of absolute cosmic necessity. Absolute necessity ensures us that there exists an eternal order to things and events which opens them up to scientific investigation. This would make his poetic personification of Necessity the foundational discovery for the possibility of science in the strict (Aristotelian and later Hellenistic) sense. Patricia Curd (cf. *The Legacy of Parmenides*) is among the few contemporary scholars who recognize that Parmenides advanced rather than hindered his successors' search for knowledge.

Parmenides, for instance, anticipates the Law of Conservation of Matter as it was known centuries later to Epicurus: It is not possible for something to come to be from nothing; or with different phrasing: the total amount of matter and energy in the universe remains constant regardless of any apparent physical change among the things that are. Fragment B 8.12 -14 reports literally that "the force of conviction will never allow any one thing to come to be from non-being." Ex nihilo generation of matter and energy does not make sense if there exists eternal Being in the now; nor is nature governed by chance; nor are things and events to be subsumed under dualistic principles. There is no term or personification in the entire poem that even remotely suggests chance or chance occurrences in nature, except the image of two-headedness in which mortals find themselves dismayed and confused. Necessity means being freed from chance and contingency, being guided by what is certain in things. Parmenides' poem is more a declaration of independence for philosophy in general and a grounding of the possibility of science in particular, than a propaedeutic to gardening or poetry, as Barnes would suggest.

THE FEMININITY OF PARMENIDES' GODDESS

Parmenides' goddess provides safe haven from confusion and uncertainty. Her words resound from the depths of his soul with the power of necessity. Yet she is referred to merely as θεὰ πρόφρων (B 1.22), "a kindly deity." She is described by epithet, but given no proper name. Her nature is ethereal and mysterious. Who is she? Could she be the inward manifestation of Parmenides' own self-conscious reflection? Does she represent Being-as-such (τὸ ἐόν), the very focus of Parmenides' enquiry, as Scott Austin so

aptly suggests?[3] Could her individual existence represent the cosmic energy which draws human consciousness closer to Nature in thought? Could the (finite) thought of (infinite) Being duplicate itself in the (infinite) Thought of a (finite) being, such as Parmenides? The answer might be that the self-conscious reflexivity of human thought connects the finite to the infinite, humanity to divinity, intellectual oblivion to spiritual enlightenment. Philosophers such as Anselm and Descartes who attempt to deduce the existence of a Supreme Being draw upon the connectedness of man's thought of Being (as that than which nothing greater can be thought) to the actual existence and structure of Being in world at large. Both philosophers attempt to establish an irrefutable link between the finite and the infinite.

Martin Heidegger defines the uniquely human reflexivity of thought as *"Zusammengehören,"* i.e., the mutual penetration, listening, and belonging-together of Man and Being, which comes to pass through the cognitive event whereby man appropriates the infinite. Several important passages from Heidegger, highlighted in the Verdu lectures, suggest a vital connection with Parmenides, for instance:

So wird denn, um das Zusammengehoren von Mensch und Sein eigens zu erfahren, ein Sprung nötig. Dieser Sprung ist das Jähe der brückenlosen Einkehr in jenes Gehören, das erst ein Zueinander von Mensch und Sein und damit die Konstellation beider zu vergeben hat. Der Sprung ist die jähe Einfahrt in den Bereich, aus dem her Mensch und Sein einander je schon in ihrem Wesen erreicht haben, weil beide aus einer Zureichung einander übereignet sind. Die Einfahrt in den Bereich dieser Übereignung stimmt und be-stimmt erst die Ergahrung des Denkens.[4]

And again, *"Das Denken ist auf das Sein als das Ankommende (l'avenant) bezogen. Das Denken ist als Denken in die Ankunft des Seins, in das Sein als die Ankunft gebunden."*[5] These ideas about the mutual appropriation of Man and Being are quite consistent with the spirit of B 3 and B 8.34 - 36. The goddess may very well symbolize Parmenides' own symbiosis with Nature, his self-conscious reflexivity of Thought retrieving Being from its hiddenness. But she is also the harbinger of Truth—a blindingly radiant light filtered to the mortal mind through a thick veil of majesty tinged with dissimulation.

Her femininity in itself suggests beauty, adornment, accessory, disguise. She both reveals and conceals herself. She shows Parmenides a way to Truth, but refuses to reveal who she is. She speaks with lovely cadence of Truth's well-rounded heart, but she then turns her back on Parmenides to speak in a "deceptive ordering of words" (B 8.52). Her femininity calls Parmenides toward an *other.* If he is to find the solace, home, and tranquility promised

by the goddess, he must transcend the strife of contraries, but this requires the contemplation of one principle in terms of its *other.* This is no accident. The basic concepts of philosophy divide themselves into contrary principles, each defined it terms of its relative other: generation and decay, form and matter, essence and accident, good and evil, right and wrong, female and male, mind and body, necessity and contingency, permanence and change, truth and deception, temporality and eternity, etc. Nearly all thinkers of the pre-Platonic era agreed that all things are composed of contraries, for each posited contraries as philosophical first principles (cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 1004b31ff.).

Opposition between principles is the impetus for dialectic, as there must be an opposition in order for one to transcend to a higher truth. The alternative paths of *is* and *is not,* presented to Parmenides by his alter-ego, the goddess, reflect perhaps the Zoroastrian superstitions of his time; but these alternative paths also spark a dialectical movement of thought involving choice, listening, and dialogue with another. The fact that the goddess does not allow herself to be defined by name gives her a universal status reserved exclusively for ἐόν. It is quite interesting that Parmenides' goddess remains a nameless player in a mythology grounded in a Greek epic tradition where individualizing names and descriptive epithets for the gods are centrally important as indicators of character, divine status, and moral conduct. Repetition of the same epithet for the same player in Homer creates a strong emotional, almost cinematic, awareness of dramatic history behind the name. An epithet reminds the listener of the cumulative deeds, thoughts, and emotions of the player in question. Yet, in the poem, Being and the goddess have no cumulative history. Being exists all at once in the now, it never was, and never will be. Nor has the goddess been celebrated in the Greek epic tradition as such. She is precisely that which Hesiod and Homer have so carefully avoided in their stories. But there is good reason for her namelessness.

THE SANCTITY OF THE NAMELESS

The act of giving names to things was regarded by the ancient Greeks and Hebrews as an expression of *control* over them. For instance, no name for God is appropriate in the Hebrew scriptures. When God revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush, Moses asked for a name by which he might identify Him to his fellow Israelites. But God simply replied " I am who am" (Exodus 3:14)—as if He were telling Moses "I will be who I will be, so don't ask such questions!" Likewise, any defining epithet pinned to Parmenides'

goddess would betray her *unqualified* and *ethereal* aspect by restricting her nature to something grounded in this world. The goddess is of another world entirely. This makes her quite unlike the visceral and earthly-motivated gods of Homer and Hesiod. Her role is to serve mankind by guiding the intellect in the direction of Truth. In Homer and Hesiod, by contrast, men serve the interests of gods, whose motivations are pre-determined by internecine rivalry, blood-lust, and revenge.

As if violating the sanctity of the nameless, Parmenides' "mortals" conquer, divide, and degrade their world by naming opposing shapes (B 8.53)—again a clear reference to Zoroastrians, who remain oblivious to any deeper significance behind their dualism. While it is common practice for parents to name their offspring, a rider to name his horse, and scientists to name the objects of their science, the Being of things defies naming. "Being" is expressed by a verb that prima facie expresses the least. "' Eóv" by itself can hardly be called a name, let alone an amplificatory description of anything. Names denote concretely real items, but it is not clear whether "Being" signifies any thing concrete. In fact, the question of whether or not the word has a significance worthy of investigation has absorbed much of the history of Western metaphysics. Aristotle even argued that "ἔστι" uttered just by itself without further qualification signifies nothing in particular.

Consider, for instance, *De Interpretation,* 16b22 - 25, where Aristotle appears to answer Parmenides directly with the claim that "neither the verb 'to be' nor 'not to be' is significant of any reality, not even if you say 'being' *without qualification*; for in itself it is nothing, but signifies some synthesis besides, which, without its constituents, is not to be thought."[6] Aside from the fact that Aristotle's assertion here refutes anyone who would claim independent significance for the term "Being," Aristotle's last sentence ending "ἐστι νοῆσαι" alludes to Parmenides both metrically and philosophically (cf. B 2.2 αἵπερ ὁδοὶ μοῦναι διζήσιός εἰσι νοῆσαι). Aristotle is saying here that ἔστι by itself is not suitable even for thought. His sentence at *De Int.* 16b25 ends strangely, like a hexameter line, with dactyl and final spondee. *Beginning* a prose sentence with the end of a hexameter line is acceptable, but never *ending* a sentence, unless one wishes to emphasize a special point or allude to someone else.[7] Aristotle's refusal to acknowledge any significance for ἔστι by itself recalls the second of Parmenides' paths: namely, that there is no Being, and must not ever be (B 2.5). The goddess exhorts Parmenides to avoid this path on the grounds that non-being is unknowable and inexpressible (B 2.7-8). Nevertheless, Parmenides' goddess is someone very real. She is the manifestation of Being come full circle in the self-conscious reflexivity of human thought.

Aristotle appears, at this stage in his career, to disavow the Parmenidean path that claims that *Being is,* since "to be" functions in thought merely as a connector of subject and predicate in a kind of semantic synthesis, i.e., the completion of a verbal idea. Being-as-such contains no particularizing determination (as it is always whole), and so amounts to nothing in particular. Aristotle had staked his philosophical reputation upon a highly developed system of categories as highest genera of predication. Thus, he maintained a vested interest in explaining the behavior existence-verbs (e.g., ἔστι, γίγνεσθαι, and even φύειν—a homeric copula) in terms fully compatible with his commitment to the categories. He maintained this commitment well into the *Metaphysics,* where the categories actually pose somewhat of a threat to the founding of a distinct science of Being qua Being. For instance, How can God (i.e., "the Intellect," ὁ νοῦς, of *Metaphysics* Λ 9, 1074b15ff.), qua immaterial form (cf. ὅσα μὴ ὕλην ἔχει, 1075a4), transcend the categories ontologically and still be *the one in reference to which* all things are called "beings" if the determination of a thing under the category Substance automatically implies material composition? God is immaterial form, God is substance, yet substance is verifiable only in composites of matter and form. How can God be called a "substance" without abuse of language? The idea that there can be legitimate scientific investigation of Being (and by association the highest Intellect) appears utterly foreign to the Aristotle who composed *De Interpretatione,* yet quite feasible, albeit an immense challenge, to the composer of the *Metaphysics.*

In the *Eudemian Ethics* 1218a34 - 36 Aristotle derides the Platonic theory of ideal Forms by arguing that the Good-in-Itself, αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθόν, does not exist, but only an ἴδιον ἀγαθόν—i.e., a particular individual good (and by analogy only an ἴδιον ὄν—i.e., a particular individual being). Aristotle reacts here against those Platonists who posit the existence of ideal archetypes as causes of the characteristics of things perceived by us in the world of sense-experience. If there were to exist a purely ideal and independent Good or Being, then these archetypes must subsist in an eternal other-world beyond the realities known through sensation; but this needlessly multiplies the number of existing things for Aristotle, since the perfection supposedly contained in the Form or Idea is already constitutive of the sense-reality before us. Aristotle might have in mind the criticism that there cannot exist an ideal Form without its correlative instantiation in the real world. The Platonists are wrong in asserting *separateness* and *independence* of Forms, according to Aristotle, since all Forms need material instantiation in order to be Forms in the first place. The ideal and the real are corelative and codependent factors of what is. Thus, it is not the intelligible and ideal

character of Plato's Forms that Aristotle criticizes, it is the unwarranted assertion of their separate existence in complete independence from sensible reality. Aristotle criticizes the opinion that there can exist an ideal otherworldly unity of Form without a corresponding material plurality of individuals in this world.

Parmenides criticizes mortal opinion for reasons diametrically opposed to those by which Aristotle refutes the Platonists: namely, mortals assert independent existence for the material sensible beings of this world, without ever contemplating their formal archetype as Being-in-Itself, without which sensible beings could never be what they appear. In addition, mortal time-consciousness is fundamentally linear in character. They see the future feeding into the past without the presence of an eternal now, which is the necessary condition of time as a measure of motion.

In Parmenides there are swarms of interlocking concepts that lead to a constructive synthesis of ideas comprising the concept of Being—e.g., Wholeness, Permanence, Infinity, and Presence. Given that Parmenides so freely exhibits a host of modalities attaching to the concept of Being (which competing philosophies regard by and large as unknowable and inexpressible) it pays here to enumerate and examine the specific teachings of the goddess one-by-one, in order to gain an appreciation of the poem's thematic unity.

NOTES

1. The goddess gives her instruction in riddles. At B 1.31 - 32 she tells Parmenides to figure out how those things which seem-to-be, i.e., sense appearances, are not in the final analysis truths, but merely seeming-things: ἀλλ᾽ ἔμπης καὶ ταῦτα μαθήσεαι, ὡς τὰ δοκοῦντα/ χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντὸς πάντα περῶντα. Liddell, Scott, and Jones gloss the common meaning of the adverb δοκίμως as "genuinely" or "acceptably" (LSJ, p. 442). And we have already shown that Parmenides does not regard seeming things as *genuine*; rather it is mortals who do so, hence Parmenides plays on the common acceptation quoted in LSJ as "genuine." The adverb should be taken to denote the manner in which mortals regard the world as "genuine" or "acceptable" to *themselves.* Under this reading Parmenides must find out *why* mortals take appearances for the genuine article, and why they accept these appearances without question; in other words, he must learn why it is necessary for "seeming-things" to merely *seem* to be. Thus I translate δοκίμως as the first "seem" in "How needs must seem those things which seem-to-be/ Far-penetrating all reality" (B 1.31 - 32). A more cumbersome translation might go: "how it is necessary for mortals to regard mere seeming-things as the genuine article."

2. Lidell, Scott, and Jones, p. 430 lists Parmenides as the only source for δίκρανοι in the *corpus scriptorum Graecorum.* Coxon, p. 183, advances the ingenious, though improbable, suggestion that δίκρανοι is really "an allusion, though it has escaped notice, to the fabulous small snake called ἀμφίσβαινα, which was two-headed and dull-eyed (cf. τυφλοί [B 6.7]) and, as its name indicates, moved in either direction indifferently." ἀμφίσβαινα is found in Aeschulus, Agamemnon 1233, where Cassandra calls her mother a "Viper double-fanged" (to quote Lattimore's phrase, cf. *Agamemnon,* 1227 -1236). Cassandra expresses her own "double-headed" confusion between love for her mother and mistrust over her mother's enmity toward Agamemnon. The double-fanged ἀμφίσβαινα is also intended to emphasize Clytaemnestra's own two-headed uncertainty over murdering one most dear—on the one hand, murder would be an act of hateful rage, on the other, it would directly benefit those she loves. Coxon's view on the meaning of δίκρανοι in Parmenides, though insightful, is nevertheless doubtful, because the cultural and historical context of the sixth century Mediterranean places Parmenides squarely in the middle of Persian Zoroastrian influence; if he intended to draw upon Aeschulus, he would have simply used the word ἀμφίσβαινα in his poem. Parmenides is far more likely concerned with the belief system of the Persians and Medes which directly challenge Western ways of thinking, than he is about Clytaemnestra contemplating her next move.

3. Scott Austin, *Parmenides: Being, Bounds, and Logic,* 1986, p.43.

4. Heidegger, *Identitätund Differenz,* Günther Neske ed., Pfullingen, 1957, pp. 14 - 15. "An abrupt leap becomes then necessary in order to experience one's own belonging-together between Man and Being. This leap has the suddenness of an unabridged re-entry into the belonging which alone bestows the interrelation of Man and Being and hence, the 'constellation' (or 'linkage') of the two. This leap is the sudden entrance into the realm which has enabled Man and Being to have already reached (or 'appropriated') each other. Only the re-entry into this realm of mutual appropriation delineates and determines the experience of thinking" (Alphonso Verdu

trans., (Lecture Notes) *Heidegger:* Lawrence, University of Kansas, 1989).

5. Heidegger, *Brief über den Humanismus,* Vittorio Klostermanned., Frankfurt/M, 1946, p. 46. The sense here is that thinking is *of Being* [objective genitive] insofar as thought is brought about to pass by Being (itself), and thus belongs to Being. At the same time it is *of Being* [subjective genitive] insofar as it, as Man's own, listens to Being.

6. My translation covers the Minio-Paluello O.C.T. edition: οὐ γὰρ τὸ εἶναι ἢ μὴ εἶναι σημεῖόν ἐστι τοῦ πράγματος, οὐδ᾽ ἐὰν εἴπης ψιλόν. αὐτὸ μὲν γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστιν, προσσημαίνει δὲ σύνεσίν τινα, ἥν ἄνευ τῶν συγκειμένων οὐκ ἐστι νοῆσαι.

7. Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De Thucydide,* concerning Pericles' funeral oration.

7

The Teachings of the Goddess

METHOD OF DIVISION

It has become common practice among philologists to search Parmenides for a set of predictable linguistic patterns in the hope of unlocking the riches of his complex system of thought. Unfortunately Parmenides' poetic style displays a deliberate and highly unpredictable variation of expression, which keeps the reader guessing. For instance, he uses the present indicative, infinitive, and participial form of the verb "to be" (εἶναι) in order to express different aspects of fundamental existence. He uses negative particles in idiosyncratic ways to convey both positive doctrine about what Being is, and negative doctrine concerning non-being and nothingness.

Scott Austin's textual analysis makes use of the type of negation involved in a given context to distinguish between statements asserting something about "non-being" and statements asserting something about "what Being is not."[1] But rather than focusing his analysis on the content of those statements, Austin divides them up according to the *grammatical form* of the negation and assertion presented in each—a sound philological practice to be sure, but one which unnecessarily complicates the philosophical message.

It is helpful to adopt a simpler method of division, which posits three groups of teachings:

(a) positive doctrine about what being is,
(b) caveats and counterfactual claims about what being is not,
(c) negative doctrine concerned with non-being and nothingness.

This division is valuable because it accounts for *every* significant use of the verb "to be," while acknowledging Parmenides' freedom as a poet to speak about the multi-dimensionality of existence.[2] Parmenides' successors (esp. Plato and Aristotle) were much more concerned than he about consistency in the use of terms, because the dialectical practice of defining and parceling out the various meanings of a term had, by the classical period, become established practice.

Austin appears to turn the innocent simplicity of Parmenides' poem into a treatise on the many uses of negating particles in Greek:

> the [*ouk esti,* "is not"] sequence as such . . . is not used assertorically to deny a predicate of being, nor, of course, is it used to say that being does not exist. . . . It is striking to notice the number of times *esti,* "is," is repeated and how consistently it is not associated with an immediately preceding negative. . . . I believe that the frequent use of alpha-privatives testifies to a desire to move negations away from the copula.[3]

Austin's analysis is overly sensitive to variations in the use of Greek particles, when in fact the poem is a deliberate rebellion of syntactic innovation, pushing the envelop of meaningful discourse about the underlying assumptions of discourse itself. For instance, the assertion that "οὐκ ἔστι" is never used to deny a predicate of Being is simply false. It is true that οὐκ ἔστι constitutes a decidedly more emphatic denial than the alpha-privative and other cases where the negative particle is removed from some form of the verb "to be." But in B 2.3, for instance, the goddess simply shows that the Way of Truth asserts:

> That *Being Is, and is not not to be!*
> ἡ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι.

Here the οὐκ ἔστι in ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι is used assertorically to deny non-existence of τὸ ἐόν understood, contrary to what Austin assumes—otherwise, we have "non-being is not to be" (Austin)—which is as true as "Being is not not to be" (Henn), but has the disadvantage of making the teaching a statement about non-being, which it patently is not. Austin wants to say that the words οὐκ ἔστι ("it is not") constitute , in every instance, statements about non-being. But this generalization is not even true in the place where we would expect it the most, B 2.5 (the Way of non-being), because here Being still remains the grammatical subject both of ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν, "that *it* [i.e., Being] is not," and of ὡς χρεών ἐστι μὴ εἶναι, "that it is necessary for *it* [i.e., Being] not to be." When the goddess

asserts something about non-being, she generally uses τὸ μὴ ἐόν, B2.7; μὴ ἐόντα, B 7.1; μὴ ἐόντος, B 8.12; or οὐκ ἐόν, B 8.46—all of which are participial expressions signifying non-being(s), in the substantive form, as the subject of her lessons. In B 2.3 above it is manifest that οὐκ ἔστι, "it is not" (where Being is the subject of the impersonal expression) is used within a *double-negative* sequence that denies the negative predicate μὴ εἶναι of Being. Parmenides is not interested in using the same token over and over again to convey the same idea. Just the opposite, he deliberately varies his form of expression in order to force the listener's attention to every word.

The poem contains a total of 41 particles specifically used for a variety of purposes; their categories are γάρ, ἐπεί, ἐπειδή, οὕνεκεν, and τῷ.

Γάρ occurs 21 times as an inferential conjunction showing regressive reasoning from conclusion to premise; it means "for" or "because." Inferential γάρ occurs at B 1.27; B 3(?); B 5.2; B 6.1, 6.5; B 8.8, 8.17, 8.19, 8.25, 8.30, 8.33, 8.35, 8.36, 8.44, 8.46, 8.49; B 12.4; B 18.4 (Latin "nam" used inferentially); B 16.1, 16.2, 16.4. As one would expect, the particle also functions non-inferentially as a confirmatory adverb meaning "in fact," or "indeed." Γάρ occurs 8 times in this capacity: B 1.4, 1.7; B 6.3; B 7.1(?); B 8.4, 8.6, 8.53; B 12.1(?). The number of occurrences of inferential as opposed to non-inferential γάρ is, of course, open to dispute.

Ἐπεί occurs mostly as causal conjunction: "since," "because" (8 occurrences: B 1.26; B 8.5, 8.22, 8.27, 8.37, 8.42, 8.48; B 9.4); but also functions as an adverb showing temporal sequence: "after," "then" (B1.2).[4]

Ἐπειδή, emphatic form of ἐπεί, occurs as a causal conjunction: "since in fact" (1 occurrence: B 9.1).

Οὕνεκεν is a relative conjunction: "on which account" (1 occurrence: B 8.32).[5]

Τῷ is a deductive inferential particle: "therefore" (2 occurrences: B 8.25 and 8.38). The paucity of deductive particles shows that the goddess is more interested in regressive reasoning from conclusion to premise than in progressive reasoning from premise to conclusion; the practice is consistent with the need to defend the integrity of investigation. The goddess wants Parmenides to think for himself, to seek out the reasons for the world being such as it is.

Rather than allowing these and other such idiosyncracies of particle use and negative predication to determine the manner in which we divide the teachings, it is far better to adopt the simpler division mentioned above. In my glosses below I omit the surrounding context, except in cases where an explicit logical connective is used to link one teaching with another

under the same category of doctrine. For instance, doctrine (2) might be the premise for doctrine (33)—as long as B 3 really follows B 2, but I separate both teachings under different categories of Doctrine for the sake of analysis. It is hoped that revealing the bare content of the poem in this fashion will be of some service to the reader.

POSITIVE DOCTRINE ABOUT WHAT BEING IS

1. Being exists.
   ὅπως ἔστιν (B 2.3)

2. Thinking and Being are the same.
   τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸνοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι (B 3.1)

3. It is necessary to say and to think that Being is;
   χρὴ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ᾽ ἐὸν ἔμμεναι (B 6.1)

4. since Being is to be.[6]
   ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι. (B 6.1)

5. Only one path's myth still remains: That Being is.
   μόνος δ᾽ ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο/λείπεται ὡς ἔστιν (B 8.1 - 2)

6. Being exists ungenerable* and indestructible*, for it is whole-limbed, unshakable*, and endless*.[7]
   ὡς ἀγένητον ἐὸν καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν ἐστιν,
   ἐστι γὰρ οὐλομελές τε καὶ ἀτρεμὲς ἠδ᾽ ἀτέλεστον (B 8.3 - 4)

7. All [of Being] exists together and whole in the now.
   νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν (B 8.5)

8. All [of Being] is like [unto Itself] in the now.[8]
   πᾶν ἐστιν ὁμοῖον (B 8.22)

9. All is filled with Being;
   πᾶν δ᾽ ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος (B 8.24)

10. therefore, all exists together;
    τῷ ξυνεχὲς πᾶν ἐστιν (B 8.25)

11. for being pulls itself to being.
    ἐὸν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει (B 8.25)

12. There exists a sourceless* ceaseless* Being.
ἔστιν ἄναρχον ἄπαυστον (B 8.27)

13. The Thinking Act and Thought that Being exists are the same.
ταὐτὸν δ᾽ ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὕνεκεν ἔστι νόημα (B 8.34)

14. Fate confined Being to be whole and immovable*.
τό γε Μοῖρ᾽ ἐπέδησεν/οὖλον ἀκίνητόν τ᾽ ἔμεναι (B 8.37 - 38)

15. All [of Being] remains untouched*.
πᾶν ἐστιν ἄσυλον (B 8.48)

CAVEATS AND COUNTERFACTUAL CLAIMS ABOUT WHAT BEING IS NOT

16. Being is not not to be.
οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι (B 2.3)

17. Being shall never sever its ineluctible hold on being.
οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ ἐὸν τοῦ ἐόντος ἔχεσθαι (B 4.2)

18. Among mortals, "to be" and "not to be" are adjudged the same yet not the same.
οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταὐτὸν νενόμιστον (B 6.8)

19. Do not be trapped into believing that non-beings somehow exist.
οὐ γὰρ μήποτε τοῦτο δαμῇ εἶναι μὴ ἐόντα (B 7.1)

20. Being never *was* nor *will be.*
οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἦν οὐδ᾽ ἔσται (B 8.5)

21. You must decide whether there is Being or there is not.
ἡ δὲ κρίσις...ἐν τῷδ᾽ ἔστιν·/ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν (B 8.15 - 16)

22. How could Being ever cease? And how could Being come-to-be?
πῶς δ᾽ ἂν ἔπειτ᾽ ἀπόλοιτο ἐόν; πῶς δ᾽ ἄν κε γένοιτο; (B 8.19)

23. If [Being] had come-to-be, it would not exist now;
not even if it should come-to-be in the future.
εἰ γὰρ ἔγεντ᾽, οὐκ ἔστ(ι), οὐδ᾽ εἴ ποτε μέλλει ἔσεσθαι (B 8.20)

24. Being is not divisible.
οὐδὲ διαιρετόν ἐστιν (B 8.22)

25. It is not right for Being to be incomplete*;
οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον τὸ ἐὸν θέμις εἶναι (B 8.32)

26. since Being lacks no thing; yet, if it did, its need would wax for everything.
ἔστι γὰρ οὐκ ἐπιδευές· ἐὸν δ᾽ ἂν παντὸς ἐδεῖο (B 8.33)

27. Not without the Being, in which it is expressed, will you discern the Thinking Act impressed within the mind.
οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ᾧ πεφατισμένον ἐστιν,
εὑρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν (B 8.35 - 36)

28. Being must not exist a little more here, or a little less there.
τὸ γὰρ οὔτε τι μεῖζον
οὔτε τι βαιότερον πελέναι χρεόν ἐστι τῇ ἢ τῇ (B 8.44 - 45)

29. Being is not such that there would be more of it here, and less of it there.
οὔτ᾽ ἐὸν ἔστιν ὅπως εἴη κεν ἐόντος
τῇ μᾶλλον τῇ δ᾽ ἧσσον (B 8.47 - 48)

NEGATIVE DOCTRINE CONCERNED WITH NON-BEING AND NOTHINGNESS

30. The path [that claims there is no Being] is wholly unlearnable.
τὴν δή τοι φράζω παναπευθέα ἔμμεν ἀταρπόν (B 2.6)

31. [The path of non-being claims] that there is no Being,
ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν (B 2.5)

32. and that there must not ever be.
ὡς χρεὼν ἐστι μὴ εἶναι (B 2.5)

33. For neither can you know non-being—a sheer Impossibility—nor phrase it clear.
οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἐὸν (οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν)
οὔτε φράσαις (B 2.7 - 8)

34. Nothingness is impossibility.
μηδὲν δ᾽ οὐκ ἔστιν (B 6.2)

35. I forbid you to say or think [that Being comes] from non-being.
οὐδ᾽ ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐάσσω/φάσθαι σ᾽ οὐδὲ νοεῖν (B 8.7-8)

36. The strength of right belief will never compel a thing to come-to-be from non-being.
οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐφήσει πίστιος ἰσχύς
γίγνεσθαί τι παρ᾽ αὐτό (B 8.12 - 13)

37. Nothing outside of Being exists or ever will.
οὐδὲν γὰρ ἢ ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται/ἄλλο πάρεξ τοῦ ἐόντος (B 8.36 - 37)

38. For neither can/there be a what-is-not to halt its span/out through itself toward self-same unity.
οὔτε γὰρ οὐκ ἐὸν ἔστι, τό κεν παύοι μιν ἱκνεῖσθαι
εἰς ὁμόν (B 8.46-7)

NOTES

1. Austin, *Being, Bounds, and Logic,* p. 22ff.

2. There are some miscellaneous uses of the verb "to be" that neither possess great philosophical significance nor involve nor allude to fundamental existence as such: these are ἐστιν, B 5.1; ἔασι, B 8.2; εἶναι, B 8.39; εἰσίν, B 8.54; ὄν, B 8.57 (cf. *Odyssey,* η 94, Coxon); ἐστί, B 16.4; ἔασι, B 19.1.

3. Ibid., Austin, pp. 23 and 25.

4. Ἐπεί at B 1.2 is an adverb showing temporal sequence.

5. Οὕνεκεν at B 8.34 functions like ὅτι "that" in "I know (or claim) *that* such-and-such is the case," and does not show causal connection.

6. That is, the essence of Being is to exist *causa sui.* The essence of man, on the other hand, is to think. Yet man and Being are linked in the sense that man is the sole being that thinks, while Being is the sole object of man's thought. All thoughts are reducible to statements about Being, whether we are conscious of it or not. Whenever one asserts that something is the case in a proposition, one is also asserting the existence of a state of affairs.

7. All alpha-privatives are indicated by an asterisk *.

8. The adverb νῦν ("in the now") is crucial here. In the now, there is no ontological difference between this or that being, nor are there a plurality of beings as such, as there is only one unchangeable, permanent, and atemporal Being. When we speak of time, we are really referring to a parameter of consciousness grounded on the permanence of a cosmic now. The illusion of linear time-consciousness is that there exist many beings, but not One Being, that there is ontological difference between these beings, but not identity, and that these several beings undergo change over time, as opposed to remaining self-same in Being.

The Diels and Kranz Greek Text in the Order Translated

B 1

ἵπποι ταί με φέρουσιν, ὅσον τ᾽ ἐπὶ θυμὸς ἱκάνοι,
πέμπον, ἐπεί μ᾽ ἐς ὁδὸν βῆσαν πολύφημον ἄγουσαι
δαίμονες, ἣ κατὰ πάντ᾽ ἄστη φέρει εἰδότα φῶτα·
τῇ φερόμην· τῇ γάρ με πολύφραστοι φέρον ἵπποι
ἅρμα τιταίνουσαι, κοῦραι δ᾽ ὁδὸν ἡγεμόνευον.
ἄξων δ᾽ ἐν χνοίῃσιν ἴει σύριγγος ἀυτήν
αἰθόμενος (δοιοῖς γὰρ ἐπείγετο δινωτοῖσιν
κύκλοις ἀμφοτέρωθεν), ὅτε σπερχοίατο πέμπην
Ἡλιάδες κοῦραι, προλιποῦσαι δώματα Νυκτός,
εἰς φάος, ὠσάμεναι κράτων ἄπο χερσὶ καλύπτρας.
ἔνθα πύλαι Νυκτός τε καὶ Ἤματός εἰσι κελεύθων,
καὶ σφας ὑπέρθυρον ἀμφὶς ἔχει καὶ λάϊνος οὐδός·
αὐταὶ δ᾽ αἰθέριαι πλῆνται μεγάλοισι θυρέτροις·
τῶν δὲ Δίκη πολύποινος ἔχει κληῖδας ἀμοιβούς.
τὴν δὴ παρφάμεναι κοῦραι μαλακοῖσι λόγοισιν·
πεῖσαν ἐπιφραδέως, ὥς σφιν βαλανωτὸν ὀχῆα
ἀπτερέως ὥσειε πυλέων ἄπο· ταὶ δὲ θυρέτρων
χάσμ᾽ ἀχανὲς ποίησαν ἀπάμεναι πολυχάκους
ἄξονας ἐν σύριγξιν ἀμοιβαδὸν εἰλίξασαι
γόμφοις καὶ περόνῃσιν ἀρηρότε· τῇ ῥα δι᾽ αὐτέων
ἰθὺς ἔχον κοῦραι κατ᾽ ἁμαξιτὸν ἅρμα καὶ ἵππους.
καὶ με θεὰ πρόφρων ὑπεδέξατο, χεῖρα δὲ χειρὶ
δεξιτερὴν ἕλεν, ὧδε δ᾽ ἔπος φάτο καί με προσηύδα
ὦ κοῦρ᾽ ἀθανάτοισιν συνάορος ἡνιόχοισιν,
ἵπποις ταί σε φέροισιν ἱκάνων ἡμέτερον δῶ,
χαῖρ᾽, ἐπεὶ οὔτι σε Μοῖρα κακὴ προὔπεμπε νεέσθαι
τήνδ᾽ ὁδόν (ἦ γὰρ ἀπ᾽ ἀνθρώπων ἐκτὸς πάτου ἐστίν),
ἀλλὰ Θέμις τε Δίκη τε. χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι
ἠμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ

ἠδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθής. 30
ἀλλ᾽ ἔμπης καὶ ταῦτα μαθήσεαι, ὡς τὰ δοκοῦντα
χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντὸς πάντα περῶντα.

B 2

εἰδ᾽ ἄγ᾽ ἐγὼν ἐρέω, κόμισαι δὲ σὺ μῦθον ἀκούσας,
αἵπερ ὁδοι μοῦναι διζήσιός εἰσι νοῆσαι·
ἡ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι,
Πειθοῦς ἐστι κέλευθος (᾽Αληθείης γὰρ ὀπηδεῖ),
ἡ δ᾽ ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς χρεών ἐστι μὴ εἶναι, 5
τὴν δή τοι φράζω παναπευθέα ἔμμεν ἀταρπόν·
οὐτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἐὸν (οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν)
οὔτε φράσαις.

B 3

τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι.

B 4

λεῦσσε δ᾽ ὅμως ἀπεόντα νόῳ παρεόνα βεβαίως·
οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ ἐὸν τοῦ ἐόντος ἔχεσθαι
οὔτε σκιδνάμενον πάντῃ πάντως κατὰ κόσμον
οὔτε συνιστάμενον.

B 5

ξυνὸν δέ μοί ἐστιν,
ὁππόθεν ἄρξομαι· τόθι γὰρ πάλιν ἵξομαι αὖθις.

B 6

χρὴ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ᾽ ἐὸν ἔμμεναι· ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι,
μηδὲν δ᾽ οὐκ ἔστιν· τά σ᾽ ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα.
πρώτης γάρ σ᾽ ἀφ᾽ ὁδοῦ ταύτης διζήσιος <εἴργω>,
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ᾽ ἀπὸ τῆς, ἣν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν
πλάττονται, δίκρανοι· ἀμηχανίη γὰρ ἐν αὐτῶ 5
στηθενι ἰθύνει πλακτὸν νόον· οἱ δὲ φοροῦνται
κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοί τε, τεθηπότες, ἄκριτα φῦλα,
οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταὐτὸν νενόμισται
κοὐ ταὐτόν, πάντων δὲ παλίντροπός ἐστι κέλευθος.

B 7

οὐ γὰρ μήποτε τοῦτο δαμῇ εἶναι μὴ ἐόντα·
ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆσδ᾽ ἀφ᾽ ὁδοῦ διζήσιος εἶργε νόημα
μηδέ σ᾽ ἔθος πολύπειρον ὁδὸν κατὰ τήνδε βιάσθω,
νωμᾶν ἄσκοπον ὄμμα καὶ ἠχήεσσαν ἀκουὴν
καὶ γλῶσσαν, κρῖναι δὲ λόγῳ πολύδηριν ἔλεγχον
ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα.

B 8

μόνος δ᾽ ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο
λείπεται ὡς ἔστιν· ταύτῃ δ᾽ ἐπὶ σήματ᾽ ἔασι
πολλὰ μάλ᾽, ὡς ἀγένητον ἐὸν καὶ ἀνωλεθρόν ἐστιν,
ἐστι γὰρ οὐλομελές τε καὶ ἀτρεμὲς ἠδ᾽ ἀτέλεστον·
οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἦν οὐδ᾽ ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν,
ἕν, συνεχές· τίνα γὰρ γένναν διζήσεαι αὐτοῦ;
πῇ πόθεν αὐξηθέν; οὐδ᾽ ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐάσσω
φάσθαι σ᾽ οὐδὲ νοεῖν· οὐ γὰρ φατὸν οὐδὲ νοητόν
ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστι. τί δ᾽ ἄν μιν καὶ χρεὼς ὦρσεν
ὕστερον ἢ πρόσθεν, τοῦ μηδενὸς ἀρξάμενον, φῦν;
οὕτως ἢ πάμπαν πελέναι χρεών ἐστιν ἢ οὐχί.
οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐφήσει πίσιος ἰσχύς
γίγνεσθαί τι παρ᾽ αὐτό· τοῦ εἵνεκεν οὔτε γενέσθαι
οὔτ᾽ ὄλλυσθαι ἀνῆκε Δίκη χαλάσασα πέδῃσιν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἔχει· ἡ δὲ κρίσις περὶ τούτων ἐν τῷδ᾽ ἔστιν·
ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν· κέκριται δ᾽ οὖν, ὥσπερ ἀνάγκη,
τὴν μὲν ἐᾶν ἀνόητον ἀνώνυμον (οὐ γὰρ ἀληθής
ἔστιν ὁδός), τὴν δ᾽ ὥστε πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι.
πῶς δ᾽ ἂν ἔπειτ᾽ ἀπόλοιτο ἐόν; πῶς δ᾽ ἄν κε γένοιτο;
εἰ γὰρ ἔγεντ᾽, οὐκ ἔστ(ι), οὐδ᾽ εἴ ποτε μέλλει ἔσεσθαι.
τὼς γένεσις μὲν ἀπέσβεσται καὶ ἄπυστος ὄλεθρος.
οὐδὲ διαιρετόν ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ὁμοῖον·
οὐδέ τι τῇ μᾶλλον, τό κεν εἴργοι μιν συνέχεσθαι,
οὐδέ τι χειρότερον, πᾶν δ᾽ ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος.
τῷ ξυνεχὲς πᾶν ἐστιν· ἐὸν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει.
αὐτὰρ ἀκίνητον μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν
ἔστιν ἄναρχον ἄπαυστον, ἐπεὶ γένησις καὶ ὄλεθρος
τῆλε μάλ᾽ ἐπλάχθησαν, ἀπῶσε δὲ πίστις ἀληθής.
ταὐτόν τ᾽ ἐν ταὐτῷ τε μένον καθ᾽ ἑαυτό τε κεῖται
χοὕτως ἔμπεδον αὖθι μένει· κρατερὴ γὰρ Ἀνάγκη
πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἔχει, τό μιν ἀμφις ἑέργει,
οὕνεκεν οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον τὸ ἐὸν θέμις εἶναι·
ἔστι γὰρ οὐκ ἐπιδευές· ἐὸν δ᾽ ἂν παντὸς ἐδεῖτο.
ταὐτὸν δ᾽ ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὕνεκεν ἔστι νόημα.
οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ᾧ πεφατισμένον ἐστίν,
εὑρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν· οὐδὲν γὰρ <ἢ> ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται
ἄλλο πάρεξ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐπεὶ τό γε Μοῖρ᾽ ἐπέδησεν
οὖλον ἀκίνητόν τ᾽ ἔμεναι· τῷ πάντ᾽ ὀνόμασται
ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ,
γίγνεσθαί τε καὶ ὄλλυσθαι, εἶναι τε καὶ οὐχί,
καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διά τε χρόα ἀμείβειν.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πεῖρας πύματον, τετελεσμένον ἐστί
πάντοθεν, εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκῳ,
μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντῃ· τὸ γὰρ οὔτε τι μεῖζον
οὔτε τι βαιότερον πελέναι χρεόν ἐστι τῇ ἢ τῇ.

οὔτε γὰρ οὐκ ἐὸν ἔστι, τό κεν παύοι μιν ἱκνεῖσθαι
εἰς ὁμόν, οὔτ᾽ ἐὸν ἔστιν ὅπως εἴη κεν ἐόντος
τῇ μᾶλλον τῇδ᾽ ἧσσον, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ἄσυλον·
οἳ γὰρ πάντοθεν ἶσον, ὁμῶς ἐν πείρασι κύρει.
ἐν τῷ σοι παύω πιστὸν λόγον ἠδὲ νόημα
ἀμφὶς ἀληθείης· δόξας δ᾽ ἀπὸ τοῦδε βροτείας
μάνθανε κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλὸν ἀκούων.
μορφὰς γὰρ κατέθεντο δύο γνώμας ὀνομάζειν·
τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεών ἐστιν—ἐν ᾧ πεπλανημένοι εἰσίν—
τάντία δ᾽ ἐκρίναντο δέμας καὶ σήματ᾽ ἔθεντο
χωρὶς ἀπ᾽ ἀλλήλων, τῇ μὲν φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ,
ἤπιον ὄν, μέγ᾽ ἐλαφρόν, ἑωυτῷ πάντοσε τωὐτόν,
τῷ δ᾽ ἑτέρῳ μὴ τωὐτόν· ἀτὰρ κἀκεῖνο κατ᾽ αὐτό
ταντία νύκτ᾽ ἀδαῆ, πυκινὸν δέμας ἐμβριθές τε.
τόν σοι ἐγὼ διάκοσμον ἐοικότα πάντα φατίζω,
ὡς οὐ μή ποτέ τίς σε βροτῶν γνώμη παρελάσσῃ.

B 9

αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ πάντα Φάος καὶ Νὺξ ὀνόμασται
καὶ τὰ κατὰ σφετέρας δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τοῖσί τε καὶ τοῖς,
πᾶν πλέον ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ Φάεος καὶ Νυκτὸς ἀφάντου
ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων, ἐπεὶ οὐδετέρῳ μέτα μηδέν.

B 10

εἴσῃ δ᾽ αἰθερίαν τε φύσιν τὰ τ᾽ ἐν αἰθέρι πάντα
σήματα καὶ καθαρᾶς εὐαγέος ἠελίοιο
λαμπάδος ἔργ᾽ ἀίδηλα καὶ ὁππόθεν ἐξεγένοντο,
ἔργα τε κύκλωπος περίφοιτα Σελήνης
καὶ φύσιν, εἰδήσεις δὲ καὶ Οὐρανὸν ἀμφὶς ἔχοντα
ἔνθεν ἔφυ τε καὶ ὥς μιν ἄγουσ᾽ ἐπέδησιν Ἀνάγκη
πείρατ᾽ ἔχειν ἄστρων.

B 11

πῶς Γαῖα καὶ Ἥλιος ἠδὲ Σελήνη
αἰθήρ τε ξυνὸς γάλα τ᾽ οὐράνιον καὶ Ὄλυμπος
σχατος ἠδ᾽ ἄστρων θερμὸν μένος ὡρμήθησαν
γίγνεσθαι.

B 14

νυκτιφαὲς περὶ γαῖαν ἀλώμενον ἀλλότριον φῶς.

B 15

αἰεὶ παπταίνουσα πρὸς αὐγὰς Ἠελίοιο.

B 12

αἱ γὰρ στεινότεραι πλῆντο πυρὸς ἀκρήτοιο,
αἱ δ᾽ ἐπὶ ταῖς Νυκτός, μετὰ δὲ φλογὸς ἵεται αἶσα·
ἐν δὲ μέσῳ τούτων Δαίμων ἣ πάντα κυβερνᾷ·
πάντων γὰρ στυγεροῖο τόκου καὶ μίξιος ἄρχει
πέμπουσ᾽ ἄρσενι θῆλυ μιγῆν τότ᾽ ἐναντίον αὖτις
ἄρσεν θηλυτέρῳ.

B 13

πρώτιστον μὲν Ἔρωτα θεῶν μητίσατο πάντων.

B 18

femina virque simul Veneris cum germina miscent,
venis informans diverso ex sanguine virtus
temperiem servans bene condita corpora fingit.
nam si virtutes permixto semine pugnent
nec faciant unam permixto in corpore, dirae
nascentem gemino vexabunt semine sexum.

B 17

δεξιτεροῖσιν μὲν κούρους, λαιοῖσι δὲ κούρας.

B 16

ὡς γὰρ ἕκαστος ἔχει κρᾶσιν μελέων πολυπλάγχτων,
τὼς νόος ἀνθρώποισι παρίσταται· τὸ γὰρ αὐτό
ἔστιν ὅπερ φρονέει μελέων φύσις ἀνθρώποισιν
καὶ πᾶσιν καὶ παντί· τὸ γὰρ πλέον ἐστὶ νόημα.

B 19

οὕτω τοι κατὰ δόξαν ἔφυ τάδε καί νυν ἔασι
καὶ μετέπειτ᾽ ἀπὸ τοῦδε τελευτήσουσι τραφέντα·
τοῖς δ᾽ ὄνομ᾽ ἄνθρωποι κατέθεντ᾽ ἐπίσημον ἑκάστῳ.

9

Commentary to the Greek

FRAGMENT B 1 [1 - 52][1]

Sources: Plutarch (B 1.29 - 30), *Reply to Colotes,* 1114 d - e; Sextus Empiricus (B 1.1 - 30), *Against the Mathematicians,* VII.111 - 114; Simplicius (B 1.28 - 32), *Commentary on Aristotle's De Caelo,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.,* VII, 557.[2] These opening lines of the poem are replete with highly charged dream images of high-speed deep space travel. Lombardo, for instance, suggests that Parmenides' celestial horse-driven chariot represents a spaceship on a voyage to the remote depths of space. And the vivid descriptions of the outer limits of the cosmos seem to suggest that Parmenides himself has made a voyage to the outer reaches of the galaxy. As Parmenides races to the gates of Justice with his chargers and attending maidens we find, in the opening five lines, no less than ten images illustrating the rapidity of flight: φεῤουσιν (B 1.1), ἱκάνοι (B 1.1), πέμπον (B 1.2), βῆσαν (B 1.2), ἄγουσαι (B 1.2), φέρει (B 1.3), φερόμην (B 1.4), φέρον (B 1.4), τιταίνουσαι (B 1.5), ἡγεμόνευον (B 1.5).

Throughout his poem, but especially in Fragment B 1, Parmenides borrows not only the vocabulary and formulae of Homer and Hesiod, but also their distinctive motifs. Parmenides' circuit through the stars on a chariot drawn and stretched by thundering chargers with rumbling hooves resembles the earthly circuit of Achilles in his chariot as he chases Hector three times around Troy's city walls as "champion horses wheeling round the course,/Hooves flying, pouring it on in a race for a prize—/A woman or a tripod—at a hero's funeral games" (*Iliad* 22.162 - 165; Lombardo tr., 184 - 186). Perhaps Parmenides intends to make himself into an Achilles, a tragic hero aided by divine winds in the pursuit of glory and immortality.

Just as Hera and Athena race through the Gates of Heaven to speak with Zeus at *Iliad* 5.719 - 732, so Parmenides' maidens, fleet Heliades, daughters of the Sun, accompany him through the Gates of Justice into the light of well-

rounded Truth within the palace halls of his goddess, riding in a chariot whose axle squeals a high-pitched siren sound, burning under constant friction, aglow within bright flickering hubs. Compare the vignette of Parmenides' chariot B 1.6 - 10 [9 - 17] to this description of Hera's:

> And Hera, queen of heaven, daughter of Cronus,
> Got busy harnessing the horses, gold-frontleted,
> While Hebe slid the bronze, eight-spoked wheels
> Onto the car's iron axle, wheels with pure gold rims
> Fitted with bronze tires, a stunning sight,
> And the hubs spinning on both sides were silver.
> The car's body was made of gold and silver straps
> Stretched tight, and had a double railing.
> From it projected a silver pole, and at its end
> Hebe bound the golden yoke, and on that she hung
> The golden harness. Hera led the quick-hooved horses
> Beneath the yoke, her heart pounding for war.
> (*Iliad* 5.719 - 732; Lombardo tr., 773 - 784)

Compare Parmenides' passage from darkness into the light (through opening doors, shining out with pins of brass in two-way hinges, forcing a great yawning chasm, as those doors, fixed fast with rows of riveted bolts, wheel lazily past) with the strikingly similar image of heaven's "automatic gates" traversed by Hera:

> Hera quickly flicked the horses with the lash,
> And the automatic gates of heaven
> Groaning open, as willed by the Hours,
> Who control access to Olympus and heaven,
> Opening and shutting the dense cloudbanks.
> Through this gate they drove the patient horses
> And found Zeus sitting apart from the other gods
> On the highest peak of ridged Olympus.
> White-armed Hera reined in the horses there
> And put her questions to the Most High.
> (*Iliad* 5.748 - 756; Lombardo tr., 799 - 808)

When Parmenides describes his passage through the Gates of Justice with the words "through opened gates [swift maidens] reined my horse and car to trace their high celestial course" (B 1.20 - 21):

> τῇ ῥά δι᾽ αὐτέων
> ἰθὺς ἔχον κοῦραι κατ᾽ ἁμαξιτὸν ἅρμα καὶ ἵππους

he borrows a distinctly Homeric formula τῇ ῥὰ δι᾽ αὐτάων from *Iliad* 5.752:

τῇ ῥὰ δι᾽ αὐτάων κεντρηνεκέας ἔχον ἵππους

" [Hera] reined her spurred horses through the gates." Parmenides modifies the Homeric line by placing the formula τῇ ῥὰ δι᾽ αὐτέων at the-end of B 1.20 instead of at the beginning, as in Homer, and by splitting up ἔχον ἵππους to occupy different portions of the meter.

The "stony sill" (λάϊνος οὐδος) lying at the threshold of Justice in B 1.12:

καὶ σφας ὑπέρθυρον ἀμφὶς ἔχει καὶ λάϊνος οὐδός

is a formula borrowed directly from *Iliad* 9.404:

οὐδ᾽ ὅσα λάϊνος οὐδὸς ἀφήτορος ἐντὸς ἐέργει.

Painful Justice, Δίκη πολύποινος (B 1.14) to whose threshold no "evil fate" (μοῖρα κακή) sends Parmenides (B 1.26 - 28), echoes Hesiod's description of Justice (Δίκη) and the Fates (Μοῖραι), *Theogony* 902 - 904, as daughters of Zeus and Themis, who oversee and guide the activities of mortals. Perhaps Parmenides' goddess is the source of Justice and Fate in the manner of Hesiod's Zeus.[3] The goddess welcomes Parmenides to her palace halls, ἡμέτερον δῶ (B 1.25), after softly entwining his hand in hers, χεῖρα δὲ χειρί (B 1.22):

καὶ με θεὰ πρόφρων ὑπεδέξατο, χεῖρα δὲ χειρί,

which image has its precedent in *Iliad* 21.286:

χειρὶ δὲ χεῖρα λαβόντες ἐπιστώσαντ᾽ ἐπέεσσι,

as Poseidon and Athena "taking [Achilles'] hand in theirs, consoled him with words."[4]

The formula for " arriving at my palace halls," ἱκάνων ἡμέτερον δῶ, that Parmenides uses to end B 1.25:

ἵπποις ταί σε φέροισιν ἱκάνων ἡμέτερον δῶ,

is exactly the one which Charis uses to welcome Thetis at *Iliad* 18.385:

τίπτε, Θέτι τανύπεπλε, ἱκάνεις ἡμέτερον δῶ.

Hephaestus repeats the same formulaic line to welcome Thetis at *Iliad* 18.424.

Parmenides' high-soaring immortal mares (B 1.24) were anticipated long before by Achilles' immortal stallions, which the gods gave to Peleus when he married Thetis (cf. *Iliad* 16.154). The untrembling heart (ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ) of Truth might, as Coxon suggests, p. 168, be contrasted with Andromache's fluttering heart (πάλλεται ἦτορ) trembling with fear in her chest as she contemplates the death of Hector *(Iliad* 22.452). Parmenides has no fear of Being (τὸ ἐόν), for in Being there is no death. Parmenides has no fear of the gracious goddess who shows him the way, for in her palace he finds the safety and comfort of home. Parmenides contemplates Truth's untrembling seat of life with a heart equally untrembling. The literary contrast is poignant: Homeric gods acquire power on Olympus and on earth by concealing the divine mysteries and disguising their own personal motivations, both from their fellow gods, and from man; Parmenidean deities *reveal* their mysteries, put aside the power hierarchy to *assist* mankind's quest for Truth, to instill trust (not fear) in the hearts of men, and to grant enlightenment and immortality to the rational.

Parmenides speaks of Truth as having a "well-rounded" heart (B 1.29): Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ. Although only a handful of scholars defend the reading of "well-rounded," and most prefer instead a "well-persuading" Truth (an Ἀληθείης εὐπειθέος), the image of roundedness has a rich precedent in the Zoroastrian concept of Truth as associated with roundedness, radiance, and consuming fire: "Ohrmazd fashioned forth the form of His creatures from His own self, from the substance of light—in the form of fire, bright, white, round, and visible afar" (Boyce tr., 1990, p. 47, ch. 1.44). Parmenides, of course, takes issue with the dualistic axiom that all things are divided according to truth and deception, light and darkness, good and evil; in short, there is only one Truth for Parmenides, one cosmic whole, and one right path of thinking inquiry.

FRAGMENT B 2 [53 - 62]

Sources: Proclus[5] (B 2.1 - 8), *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus,* Diehl, vol. I, 345; Simplicius (B 2.3 - 8), *Comm. Arist. Phys.,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.,* IX, 116. Much debate has centered around the two ways of thinking inquiry: the one, *that Being is and is not not to be,* the other, *that there is no Being and must not ever be.* My analysis interprets the immediate presence of Being (τὸ ἐόν) as the focal point of the thrice-occurring verb ἔστι (B 2.3 and 2.5) as well as of the infinitive εἶναι (B 2.5). Greek grammar tells us that ἔστι is used *impersonally* to mean "it is." The irony of the poem is that ἔστι, as third person,

expresses otherness, but, as present indicative, it also implies immediacy of existence in the now. Ἔστι recapitulates itself in the consciousness of every thinking being, from whose point of view the action of the verb is ultimately not distant and other, but present and self-same.

Yet the obviousness of ἔστι has escaped the notice of the Way of Opinion, whose travelers I interpret to be Zoroastrians. G.E.L. Owen claims that "what is declared to exist in B 2 [i.e., ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι] is simply what can be talked or thought about; for the proof of its existence is that, if it did not exist, it could not be talked or thought about."[6] While Parmenides clearly deduces that one is bound by necessity to say and to think that Being is, whenever one makes an utterance or thinks of any thing in particular, he assumes an immediate linkage between Thought and Being in B 3, and does not concern himself with *deductive proof* for the existence of Being (τὸ ἐόν) in the manner that the Schoolmen and Moderns concerned themselves with deductive proofs for the existence of God (ὁ θεός). One will not find any argument in Parmenides resembling the Anselmian or Cartesian ontological proof. Parmenides proves only that one cannot come to know non-being, nor speak of it in any way that makes sense. Being is immediately obvious and present to *thinking* consciousness; deductive proof that it exists would not only be superfluous, but arguably impossible, as one needs then to assume some principle of higher truth and purer immediacy in order to ground the deduction. *Evidence* for the primacy of Being and "is-ness" resides in the conviction and trust instilled by the goddess Πειθώ. Owen's interpretation is valuable here, because it highlights the fact that without the primacy of "is" there would be no discourse and no thought about anything whatsoever; yet there is discourse and thought, therefore, etc.

"Is-ness" (understood as ἔστι) has a significance beyond the conventional impersonal expression "it is" which muddies the waters by injecting redundant pronouns not reflected in the Greek, and by placing Being over against Thought as a mere object, as something other and foreign to consciousness, which stands outside the mind, independently awaiting confirmation by a thinking subject. Ἔστι simply means "is." To ask, therefore, "what does the 'it' mean?" or "What is ἔστι?" is, in a sense, to make a category mistake, i.e., to ask for a specific determination from that which has no specific determination in itself. Such questions not only distance Thought from Being, they miss the fact that *what a thing is* presupposes *that it is;* Parmenides is interested in the "that" which grounds the "what." Notice the phrasing of the Greek at B 2.3 where we find "ὅπως ἔστιν," and "ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι" both expressing the fact *that* Being is—the fact of immediate presence. We are not called to ask what the impersonal "it" means, since

no such impersonal pronoun is found in the Greek. We are asked rather to embrace and to trust the immediacy of the "is." The essence of this "is" lies within the timeless "Now" of cosmic eternity.

Malcolm Schofield identifies the impersonal subject of ἔστι as "any subject of enquiry whatever—in any enquiry you must assume either that your subject is or that it is not."[7] This formulation works better than Owen's because it generalizes the impersonal subject into any thing that exists; but it also thereby limits ἔστι to any and every particular *qualified* subject of enquiry, and thus runs the risk of having us view Being exclusively through the lens filter of departmental science and particular individuality where the brilliance of that which is is filtered. We have seen already that qualified subjects of inquiry are subjects of study for departmental sciences, not for philosophy as such. Ἔστι signifies *unqualified existence,* Being-as-such, not being-such-and-such—being human, being a horse, being a tree, etc. For instance, the Atomists *qualified* existence by limiting it to the being of atoms, which they opposed to the non-being of void; Thales *qualified* existence by reducing it to water; Anaximenes by rendering it into thin air; Heraclitus by consuming all things in a massive cosmic fire, not unlike the Zoroastrians. But Parmenides contemplates unqualified existence in terms of what he simply calls "Being" (τὸ ἐόν), without pegging it to a set of perceptible signs. Substantive participles for "Being" and "non-being" are found throughout the poem: ἐόν at B 4.2 (twice); B 6.1; B 8.3, 8.35, and 8.47—μὴ ἐόν at B 2.7; B 7.1; B 8.12, and 8.46 (οὐκ ἐόν). Contemporary critics avoid talk of fundamental existence because the concept of Being-as-such makes them feel uncomfortable, and remains for them, a nebulous indeterminate cipher, an empty notion; this ontophobia, however, has no grounding in fact. Although their confusion is understandable, as "Being" signifies the least determinate concept among the furniture of mature rationality, any definition of which is problematic because limiting, nevertheless, their confusion is intolerable, because "Being" signifies a highest universal (*conceptum abstractissimum*) which is implicitly assumed in any assertion linking predicate to subject, and thus all-pervasive and richest in transcendence beyond finite predications, since Being is not a predicate of any thing other than itself, and is only reflected imperfectly in finite predications, all verbal ideas presupposing Being and time. While most predicates fall within one of Aristotle's ten original categories by expressing either (a) substance, (b) quantity, (c) quality, (d) relation to something, (e) place where, (f) time when, (g) position, (h) habit, (i) activity, or (j) passivity, Being-as-such does not; for Being is not a category, nor a genus of predication, nor a composite of matter and form,

nor even a *Summum Genus,* as it would then inadmissibly repeat itself in the differentiae which divide it into categories. Thus, an understanding of fundamental existence cannot be got by the Way of Opinion which, by its practice of individualizing the unindividualizable into determinate finite composite entities, reduces all possible predicates to falling under one of the twin categories of its dualism, be it good and evil, light and darkness, or fire and earth.

FRAGMENT B 3 [63]

Sources: Clement of Alexandria,[8] *Miscellanies,* VI.2,23; Plotinus, *Enneads,* V.1.8;Proclus, *Parmenides,* 1152. This fragment gives insight into the identity of the impersonal subject of ἔστι so tenaciously avoided by the poet in B 2. One cannot come to know non-being, nor phrase it clear "for Thinking and Being are one and the same." My translation agrees with Diels' original phrasing *"denn dasselbe ist Denken und Sein*;"[9] but disagrees with virtually everyone else. We have already seen that Schofield relegates this tremendous fragment to a footnote because its sources differ from B 2; and we have argued that difference in sources does not constitute evidence for disconnection between B 2 and B 3. As we noted earlier, Schofield, Coxon, Austin, and Gallop render νοεῖν and εἶναι as dative infinitives; hence there remains obscurity in the *third item,* which presumably exists both *for* and *in reference to* Thinking and Being. I avoid this pitfall by interpreting the infinitives νοεῖν and εἶναι as denoting *the same* fundamental process, i.e., the macrocosm of space and time recapitulating itself in the microcosm of human thought, in the immediacy of a timeless present, and in nature continually absorbing spirit and spirit continually absorbing nature.

FRAGMENT B 4 [64 - 70]

Sources: Clement of Alexandria (B 4.1 - 4), *Miscellanies,* V.2, 15; Proclus (B 4.1), *Parmenides,* 1152; Damascius[10] (B 4.2), *On Principles,* i.67. The goddess instructs Parmenides to "behold those things immediately present to the mind, though far-removed" (B 4.1). The first thing one should notice in reading the opening line of B 4 is the position of the principal caesura(‖):

– ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – –
λεῦσσε δ᾽ ὅμως ἀπεόντα ‖ νόῳ παρεόντα βεβαίως,

which divides this line almost exactly in half, and marks a pause in sense. On the one hand we are bound to phrase the first half of the line as

comprising one sense-making unit, and so must construe ὅμως with ἀπεόντα:

Reading (1)
Behold those things immediately present to the mind, though far-removed.

On the other hand, caesura only tells us about musical phrasing, and does not always indicate what words are to be construed together grammatically. Thus, we may construe ὅμως with παρεόντα:

Reading (2)
Behold those things far-removed, though immediately present to the mind.

In addition, the participles ἀπεόντα and παρεόντα may refer either to (a) *beings* at large, or (b) *truths and principles of human knowledge* about beings at large. Accordingly, there may be at least four possible interpretations of B4.1:

Interpretation (1a)
ὅμως with ἀπεόντα, participles denoting *beings*:
Behold those *beings* immediately present to the mind, though far-removed.

The participles ἀπεόντα and παρεόντα are both compounds involving the verb *to be,* within a context which discusses cosmic diastasis (B 4.2 - 4), so both must refer to "beings" scattered throughout the cosmos, or as the case may be, packed tightly together, i.e., the stars, planets, moon, the multiplicity of beings inhabiting the earth, etc. In the macrocosm these beings are removed from the mind by time and space, remote from the relative perspective of individual observation on earth. But the organic unity of the macrocosm, the oneness of the things that are, recapitulates itself in the oneness of the individual human consciousness, the microcosm of thought. Thought governs human consciousness in the manner that Justice governs the space-time continuum, i.e., by laws enforced through Necessity. Perhaps, then, Parmenides must contemplate beings *psychically* present within the mind (νόῳ παρεόντα βεβαίως), though *physically* absent and far-removed (ὅμως ἀπεόντα) from the point of view of his finite relative perspective. Thus, one must acknowledge the transtemporal, collective, and universal presence of all beings as Being in the now, in order to bring them near the mind in terms of unitary thought.

In another sense, the goddess might be teaching a point of method: to contemplate the being of things you must recognize that its *principles and truths* are present and obvious to the mind (νόῳ παρεόντα βεβαίως); though,

judging by appearances, they stand far-removed (ὅμως ἀπεόντα) and are difficult to discover; thus:

Interpretation (1b)
ὅμως with ἀπεόντα, participles denoting *principles of knowledge:*
Behold those *truths* immediately present to the mind, though far-removed.

Contemplation makes principles which, in the beginning, are abstruse and far-removed from the mind grow to become obvious and ready-to-hand. One must begin one's learning, therefore, by ascending from what is more apparent to sense, but confused to the mind, to what is less apparent to sense but more obvious to the mind; i.e., from familiar particulars of sense toward contemplation of universals. The goddess extols Parmenides to learn the opinions of mortals—to become well acquainted with revelations and signs, the particulars of sense—so that he will be empowered to balance the other-worldly truths he has learned from Her with the opinions upon which all of his previous learning has centered, in order that he may never be outdone in argument (B 8.61).

In another sense, "far-away beings" can be brought "near the mind" through the contemplation of a consciousness focused on the immediacy of the timeless now. The lesson here might be to first recognize the existence of each being, manifested in different ways for each (and so scattered far-removed from each other and so, at first, absent from the mind), and then to peel back their several layers of determinacy in order to ascertain the common Being at their root, i.e., to discover what can be asserted about all beings as beings, regardless of their apparent contexts—to do metaphysics; thus:

Interpretation (2a)
ὅμως with παρεόντα, participles denoting *beings:*
Behold those *beings* far-removed, though immediately present to the mind.

Beings do not sever their unbreakable holds on one another, because they are really manifestations of one and the same Being—the great cosmic adhesive; but more importantly, thought assimilates Being to the mind of man, and so, brings what is apparently external, spatial, and other into the realm of conscious immediacy.

In another sense, the goddess might be saying that, by means of contemplation, those truths and principles which appear far-removed (cf. ἀπεόντα) from our sense-perception and the particulars of worldly experience, nevertheless acquire a steadfast nearness to the mind (cf. παρεόντα . . . βεβαίως)—

once thought realizes that everything that *is* exists in one ubiquitous now; thus:

Interpretation (2b)

ὅμως with παρεόντα, participles denoting *principles of knowledge:*
Behold those *truths* far-removed, though immediately present to the mind.

The "Now" brings all things under one universal principle. Regardless of whether the heavens are scattered far and wide, or packed tightly together, the truth of their collective existence in the ubiquitous now still remains. Thus, if all exists here and now—if time and the relativity of time-consciousness is more or less an illusion of man's opinion, then all that was or will ever be is essentially self-same, instantaneous, and near the mind which collapses all perceptible differences between things into immediate unity. The lines which follow B 4.1 claim that there is an unbreakable force that binds all beings together, regardless of their apparent scatteredness. The lesson seems to be not to let the prevailing diversity and distance between beings fool you into believing in a multiplicity of governing principles based on sense-perception; for in that case, beings would lack a *unitary* cosmic principle at their core, and proper appreciation of this principle (as contemplated in the blueprint of a four-fold synthesis of Being presented in Chapter 6) is the central drift of the poem.

FRAGMENT B 5 [70 - 71]

Source: Proclus, *Parmenides* (Cousin 708). This most uncertain fragment translates: "It is all the same to me where I begin, for there shall I again return self-same." Does the goddess speak these lines, or Parmenides? If the goddess, it appears just as likely that she would avoid using the singular pronoun μοί, as royalty is expressed in the collective plural, and Parmenides emphasizes his one-man Odyssean νόστος throughout. If these are the words of Parmenides, it is not clear where they fit into the poem. Whoever speaks these lines, one thing seems true, the journey referred to is clearly conducted along a circuit; but it is not clear whether this circuit is profound (i.e., belonging to the goddess) or merely self-contradictory (i.e., belonging to mortal opinion and the backward-flowing river Styx in Hesiod's Tartaros). If these words pertain to the mortal route of opinion, then they allude (possibly) to the "backward turning path" mentioned at B 6.9, where one contrary idea feeds into its opposite, and vice versa—Zoroastrian cult-mysteries implied. It is my opinion that we would not find Parmenides speaking of himself in the first person in a fragment condemning mortal opinion, as it is the circular

path of such opinion that he condemns throughout. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suppose that whoever speaks these lines speaks them without reference to self-concealing circularity, but to profoundly infinite cosmic circularity.

Perhaps the speaker of B 5 is saying several possible things: (1) if the Goddess is speaking, then either she is saying (a) that she will return to the same place from which she began her *discourse* with Parmenides, or (b) that she will place Parmenides back in the same place from which he began his cosmic horse-powered flight (i.e., mortal earth); or (2) if Parmenides is speaking, then either he is saying (a) that he will return to the same point from which he began his dream, or (b) that he will come back to earth again from his cosmic flight. There are many other possible interpretations of Fragment B 5.

For instance, if placed after B 4, this fragment suggests a profound cosmic sphericity in which travel in a straight line implies inevitable circular return to the point of departure. But the context of B 5 is uncertain; the goddess may be speaking of a circular path of inquiry in which the fact of fundamental existence remains a central issue no matter what direction an investigation takes. Schofield draws a helpful comparison to Heraclitus (Diels 22 B 103):

ξυνὸν γὰρ ἀρχὴ καὶ πέρας ἐπὶ κύκλοῦ περιφερείας.[11]

"In a revolving circle beginning and end are common." This would resolve an apparent contradiction in Parmenides between the atemporal infinity of Being and the finite sphericity of its presumed outer limit. How can Being be infinite if the cosmos is, or resembles, a well-rounded sphere girded by frontiers? (The question arises especially in B 8, see below.)

In both a circle and an eternally present now there is no distinction between beginning and end. The now is a limit with respect to time. But linear time requires there be a past and a future relative to the present. Linear time is a condition of sensation, not of Thought and Being. If the time continuum circles back upon itself, however, it would no longer be true to say, for instance, that the Peloponnesian War occurred *after* the battle of Marathon, or that the latter occurred *before* the former. Time relativity to the present is dissolved if all of time condenses itself in a ubiquitous now.

Linear time says that what we are now, as a human community, as individuals with shared history, as executors of earthly ends, with earthly motivations, is the sum total of all that has existed to make the present possible. But time does not make the present possible, the present makes time possible, because the present is a limit and a necessary condition for

time. Only what is *now* truly is. If time returns upon itself in the now, (which may actually be the upshot of B 5), then the past turns out to be just as much not yet as no longer, and the future just as much no-longer as not yet.

The common opinion with which Parmenides takes issue is the belief that time moves *dynamically* through a *static* now. And Aristotle, as we have seen, supports this view by calling time a "measure of motion." But the reverse is true with Parmenides: motion is a measure of time; the presumably static now contains the dynamic existence of Being out of itself in terms of the things that are, while past and future remain static, as neither dimension can be altered with respect to the present. This is what Aristotle meant when he used the gnomic imperfect ἦν in his term for "essence" (τὸ τὶ ἦν εἶναι)—literally the "what-it-was-for-a-thing-to-be" that we understand as "what-it-is-now-for-a-thing-to-be." In defining a thing's essence Aristotle focused not on the future possibilities of the thing, but on its past history, the functions it has performed in the past that make it what it is now, these past accomplishments define the thing in terms of its actuality. That which a thing does to become what it is now constitutes its history. But this understanding of essence is limited to temporal beings, for it is only the temporal item that has a past of which it used to be a part; but it does not apply to the universe understood as one whole subsisting in an eternal present. Just as Parmenides sphere-like universe cannot be contemplated as a Euclidean sphere, so too it cannot be contemplated as a item existing in time. To say otherwise is to falsely transfer what is true of the part to the whole of which it is the part. The tension is obvious: what holds for the part does not hold for the whole, but the whole is, nonetheless, reflected to some degree in each part.

How can it be that for any individual being "to exist" is "to stand out of oneself" in the now, to become other with respect to what one was, all the while remaining self-same in the now?—How can an existing item such as γ change, as it certainly appears to do over time, if γ remains locked into a changeless now? Parmenides' answer arrives in the voice of a goddess: γ′s continual change of color, size, and shape is not a change in its Being, but only a change in its appearance, for the Being of γ underlies all its appearances to sensibility; cosmic oneness repeats itself in the microcosmic unity of the individual. That which changes in γ is a collection of attributes determined by sensibility along the Way of Opinion—that which is *thought* in γ (along the Way of Truth), independently of sensible determination, is its underlying source-Being, the same across time and species, the same for γ regardless of its individual development through history.

Parmenidean Being is literally "anarchical without cessation" (ἔστιν ἄναρχον ἄπαυστον, B 8.27), without *a beginning or end* in space-time. What

is limited in space-time are items in the visible universe, which we can see, measure, and quantify. When mortals reduce the Being of the universe to observable rings of heavenly fire (as they do in B 12), they fall into the error of attributing finite space-time parameters to the unlimited. The All is unlimited because of its collective presence in the Now—that which makes time possible.

FRAGMENT B 6 [71 - 85]

Source: Simplicius (B 6.1 - 9), *Comm. Arist. Phys.,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.* IX, 117; (B 6.8 - 9), *Comm. Arist. Phys.,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.* IX, 78. Here the goddess places nothingness in antithesis to Being. Just as one must necessarily say and think that Being is, the prospect that nothing is is impossible. Being involves absolute necessity (its probability of existence=1). Nothingness involves absolute impossibility (its probability of existence=0). If nothingness existed, presumably beyond what there is, it would negate the infinity and cosmic unity of Being.

In addition, the goddess defines contingency in terms of the two-headedness of mortals who judge "to be" and "not to be" the same, yet not the same (B 6.8). Contingency, understood conceptually, occupies any place on the continuum of probability between absolute necessity (the modality of Being) and absolute impossibility (the modality of Nothing). Mortals see things and events as contingent through-and-through, as existing or happening independently of necessity and by happenstance (due perhaps to the belief in a cosmic war between good and evil, in which either side takes the upper hand from time to time). The belief that the universe constitutes a "mixture" of both good and evil, light and darkness, etc. entails the further belief that an unpredictable cosmic flux drives on the chain of events, and that humans are prey to the vicissitudes of chance. Under this view all events, things, and propositions are merely contingent. Let x be the probability value of a given string of events determinable in space-time: mortals believe that $0<x<1$. The danger here, from a Parmenidean standpoint, is that if all that is now is contingent through-and-through, then there would be no basis of cosmic permanence, because there would be no such thing as impossibility and necessity on a cosmically determinable level. The dangers of mortal opinion are obvious to Parmenides. Morals are two-headed; their judgments ambiguous. They waver in confusion and indifference, ultimately succumbing to the verdict that "is" and "is not" are possibilities equally open to all things.

FRAGMENT B 7 [85 - 93]

Sources: Plato (B 7.1 - 2), *Sophist,* 237a and 258d; Aristotle (B 7.1), *Metaphysics,* 1089a2; Sextus Empiricus (B 7.2 - 6), *Against the Mathematicians,* VII, 114; Diogenes Laertius (B 7.3 - 5), *The Lives of the Philosophers,* IX, 22; Simplicius (B 7.1 - 2), *Comm. Arist. Phys.,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.* IX, 78, 650. The goddess instructs Parmenides to shut out the sensible world so that he might open his intellect to the mysteries of the cosmos. He must cover his eyes, block off his ears, and close his mouth (B 7.4 - 5), so that he can reach a plane of spiritual abstraction sufficient to understand the meaning of her words. His reason (λόγος, B 7.5) must be the judge. He must block out all interference from his senses. Thus, the split between the usefulness of reason and the hindrance of sensation to the attainment of Truth is obvious here. Being does not manifest its universality in sensible manifolds; it releases its meaning through the intelligible whole, which can only be approached once the "habit of experience" is jettisoned. Sensations camouflage the unity of Being in confused pluralities which make it to appear as something which it essentially is not, e.g., divisible, generable, movable, temporal, just as likely to be as not to be, etc.

FRAGMENT 8 [94 -196]

Sources: Plato (B 8.38), *Sophist,* 244e, and (B 8.43 - 45), *Theaetetus* 180d; Aristotle (B 8.44), *Physics,* 207a17; Eudemus[12] (B 8.43 - 44), fragment 45 in Wehrli; Pseudo-Plutarch[13] (B 8.4), *Miscellanies* 5; Sextus Empiricus (B 8.1 - 2), *Against the Mathematicians,* VII.111-112; Clement of Alexandria (B 8.3 - 4), *Miscellanies* V.112; Plotinus (B 8.25, 8.43), *Enneads,* VI.4.4 and V.1.8; Proclus (B 8.4 - 5; 25 - 26; 29 - 32; 35 - 36; 43 - 45), *Parmenides* 1152; 665, 708, 1080; 1134; 1152; 1084, 1129); Damascius (B 8.24), *On Principles* II.146; Ammonius[14] (B 8.5), *Commentary on Aristotle's De Interpretatione,* 136; Simplicius (B 8.1 - 52), *Comm. Arist. Phys.,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.* IX, 144; (B 8.1 - 14), *Comm. Arist. Phys.,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr. IX,* 78; (B 8.50 - 61), *Comm. Arist. Phys.,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.* IX, 38; and (B 8.53 - 59), *Comm. Arist. Phys.,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.* IX, 179).

Parmenides' description of an "outermost limit" (πεῖρας πύματον) to the vault of the heavens as resembling the mass of a well-rounded sphere (εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκῳ, B 8.42 - 45), presents us with a cosmological paradox (Ch.5). How can Being possess atemporal and infinite existence (B 8.19 - 21), if its outer reaches appear to be limited in the shape of a spheroid (B 8.42 - 45)? That is, how does Being's atemporal eternity square with its (apparent) spatial frontiers imposed by a spherical shape?

G.E.L. Owen, as we have seen, regards the paradox as inescapable, and says that it took the later development of Melissus to correct the seeming contradiction inherent to Parmenides' view. David Gallop, by contrast, tries to rescue Parmenides from contradiction by claiming that the comparison might be similar to the way we describe a non-spatial object (like an argument) as circular, and that there need not be implied in the context any reference to an actual 3-space object.[15]

There are two ways of resolving the paradox. First, continuing Gallop's line of reasoning, the supposed spherical limit is really no limit at all, but an analogy designed to account for balance, truth, and infinite cosmic expanse in all directions. The universe stretches infinitely outward in the shape of a perfect sphere, but does not constitute an Euclidean sphere submerged in space the way a beach ball is submerged in a pool of water. Obviously, asserting that the cosmos is a spbere, as opposed to merely resembling one, and that it is therefore a finite 3-space object, would inevitably imply the existence of nothing outside of Being (just as the pool's water exists outside the spherical limit of the beach ball. The visible bodies of the heavens are ranged in spherical pattern, yet they continue outward ad infinitum in such a way that there is no region in space-time for nothingness to preponderate. Spherical cosmic expanse suggests growth from a center, a starting-point. But being has no starting point; it is "anarchical" (B 8.27). Furthermore, how could such a starting point mark an origin of generation for the universe, if the universe, as such, is ungenerable, indestructible, one whole in every limb and part?

An answer appears once we begin to connect the spatial metaphor of sphericity and circularity to Parmenides concept of time. We know, for instance, that only the now *is,* that the past and future *are not,* and that there is evidence for a circular (as opposed to a linear) model of time in Parmenides. We cannot go looking for a beginning to time the way we would look for the beginning to the road leading from Corinth to Athens. There is no beginning to time for Parmenides, for all that was or will ever be is already now. The now is an extensionless limit (a πεῖρας) to time. But ironically this limit gives time an eternity, an unlimitledness. Perhaps the now functions much as a center point would function in a spherical universe; namely, as that to which all time refers as necessary condition, just as location in space requires reference to some abiding point.

It seems that Parmenides' assertion of a sphere-like outer limit to the cosmos is an assertion about the constitution of space and time as such, not an assertion of 3-space limitation to the cosmos as a whole. Space is bent around a center point, much as the course of time is bent back in upon the

now. Thus, one must avoid the temptation of thinking the cosmos in terms of a spheroid submerged in Euclidean 3-space. Parmenides' sphere-like cosmos is not *in* space-time, it *is* space-time.

Another way of assessing the paradox between spatial finitude and atemporal infinity lies in appreciating the rich significance of the poet's many circle-metaphors. The circle is the only geometrical figure where beginning and end are common (cf. Heraclitus, Diels 22 B103). A spheroid is a 3-space solid containing an infinity of circles of infinitely variable size describable both upon its periphery and within its mass, resting upon an equally infinite number of planes twisted around an axis whose midpoint is the center of every circle composing the sphere. On this score, straight-line motion from any point in the cosmos would involve an inevitable circuitous return to the original point of departure. Every place in the galaxy lies on some point of a circle, and any direction of straight-line travel one chooses from that point involves an inevitable return to the same. If one accepts the sphere as defining the parameters of space, as opposed to being a Euclidean 3-space object, then one is always bound to begin straight-line motion in a circle resting on a specific plane.

It is crucial to notice that in speaking of the πεῖρας πύματον, the goddess draws an analogy to Being (B 8.47), rather than making a direct statement about Being. From lines 42 - 46 the grammatical subject of discussion is πεῖρας πύματον. Being is *just like* the apparent outer limit to deep space because both possess perfect symmetry, unity, and sameness; both are infinitely determinable; just as straight-line travel from any point can take an infinity of determinable directions to reach the original point of departure. There is, in other words, no natural limit to Being's determinacy—its modalities are endless and infinitely variable; though it discloses itself to us in terms of a world full of specific and (therefore) limited essences. Likewise, there is no mathematical limit to the number of circles circumscribing the surface of a sphere; though the sphere discloses itself in terms of 3-space limitation.

The two premises supporting the outer limit's perfect symmetry are (1) that it contains no bulges or indentures (B 8.45), and (2) that there is no non-being to prevent it from attaining self-same unity (B 8.46). The two premises supporting the symmetry of Being are (a) that it is all-inviolate (B 8.48), and (b) that it equals itself in every direction (B 8.49). The key to discovering the analogy lies in a flexible reading of πεῖρας as both a *geometrical* limit (the surface as πεῖρας to a solid), and an *ontological* limit (any given finite entity as a πεῖρας to Being).

Finally, let us focus upon B 53 - 61, which may be paraphrased as follows: *mortals made up their minds to name two primary shapes for all things, and distin-*

guished them as opposite in appearance; the first is aetherial fire, gentle, smooth, in every direction equal to itself, the other, the opposite of fire, dark night, a dense and weighty mass; I (the goddess) am telling you (Parmenides) this, so that no mortal will ever outdo you in argument. The goddess's words here seem to coach the boy on how to effectively counter any opponent in argument. He needs to be acquainted with fire-worship, needs to know how and why the followers of fire split cosmic energy into two fundamentally opposed forces, Ahura Mazda (the force of goodness and truth, manifested in fire, light, and radiant energy) and Ahriman (the force of evil and deception, manifested through darkness, night, and void space). The only first-hand accounts we have from *Greek* sources on the Zoroastrians comes from the geographer Strabo (c. 60 BC - AD 24) and Pausanias (fl.175 AD), a writer on topography and art who lived several centuries after Parmenides, observing a more open, relaxed, and less threatening Persian culture during the Parthian era (BC 250 - AD 226). Both writers provide us with accounts of Zoroastrian religious practices that remained rigidly defined by an orally transmitted orthodoxy for centuries before Parmenides. Thus, the accounts we have from these sources give us the clearest picture of what Parmenides might have witnessed himself. From Strabo we have the following passage:

In Cappadocia (for there the sect of the Magi, who are also called Pyraethi, is large, and in that country are also many temples of the Persian gods), the people do not sacrifice victims with a sword either, but with a kind of tree-trunk, beating them to death as with a cudgel. They also have Pyraetheia, noteworthy enclosures; and in the midst of these there is an altar, on which there is a large quantity of ashes and where the Magi keep the fire ever burning. And there, entering daily, they make incantations for about an hour, holding before the fire their bundle of rods and wearing round their heads high turbans of felt, which reach down over their cheeks far enough to cover their lips. The same customs are observed in the temples of Anaïtis and Omanus; and these temples also have sacred enclosures; and the people carry in procession a wooden statue of Omanus. (H. L. Jones tr., *Geographia,* 15.3.15)

From Pausanias we have the following passage:

The Lydians surnamed Persian have sanctuaries in the city named Hierocaesareia and at Hypaepa. In each sanctuary is a chamber, and in the chamber are ashes upon an altar. But the colour of these ashes is not the usual colour of ashes. Entering the chamber a magician piles dry wood upon the altar; he first places a tiara upon his head and then sings to some god or other an invocation in a foreign tongue unintelligible to Greeks, reciting the invocation from a book. So it is without fire that the wood must catch, and bright flames dart from it (W. H. S. Jones tr., *Periegeta,* I. 27. 4 - 5).

These two passages place us inside the fire-temples, where non-believers are not permitted. They allow us to understand that Persian thinking had long been established by the time of Parmenides, that it represented a status quo, an established set of beliefs about nature, the examination of which animates Parmenides' poem.

FRAGMENT B 9 [196 - 201]

Source: Simplicius, *Comm. Arist. Phys.,* in Comm. Arist. Gr. IX, 180. Fragment B 9 begins the second part of the poem known as "the Way of Opinion." From B 8.52 onward the goddess speaks *in a deceptive ordering of words*—even her phrasing is sly—δόξας δ᾽ ἀπὸ τοῦδε βροτείας/μάνθανε κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλὸν ἀκούων. B 9 falls in a context where the goddess illustrates the way things dissemble their unitary cosmic connectedness by means of appearing for what they are not. Seeming-things appear manifold, independent, and split between contrary proclivities. Simplicius quotes B 9 to show that Parmenides made Light and Night the principles of all things; it is more likely, however, that given B 8.52's *deceptive ordering of words,* the Fragment represents a reaction against popular Zoroastrian beliefs. It might even be the case that B 8.52's "deceptive ordering of words" is a veiled reference to the deceptive sounding foreign language of the cult-master celebrating the fire-rituals of his many followers. Perhaps we are to imagine the Magi's shrill incantations at time of prayer.

If B 9 really follows the last lines of B 8, then we cannot regard its contents as positive doctrine at all, but rather as warning against false perceptions. B 9's opening phrase "since all things were named for Light and Night," seems to flow from B 8.53, "Men set their minds two shapes to name, but one/of these must not be voiced—and here they've gone/astray"—one ought not give voice to the forces of Ahriman and evil, since there is no ontological basis for the absence of Being and the Good, even though the existence of darkness and evil *appears* to permeate the cosmic order. Mortals have gone astray because they set Night in opposition to Light, without realizing that there is a third and higher notion, a pathway to Being and Truth in which void, non-being, and evil do not factor, because non-existent in the larger picture. In other words, mortals fail to reach the threshold of the Gates of Justice where all distinction between Light and Night vanishes. Further, they posit sensible shapes (μορφαί) as principles. But shapes merely instantiate the intelligible concept, by means of which the mind grasps a diversity of things under one idea. Mortal understanding of the world is thus prey to the vicissitudes of hylo-morphic fluctuation. Things change

shape without ever changing their essence. Thought grasps the essence of things; sensibility sees only restless and fleeting images. Parmenides' early use of "shapes" (μορφαί) to describe the way things *appear* to mortals might have motivated later thinkers, e.g., Plato and Aristotle, to distinguish between the true essence or form of a thing (εἶδος), and its tangible outer shape (μορφή), which constitutes no part of a thing's essence (cf. Aristotle's subtle distinction between εἶδος and μορφή in *Metaphysics* Z 3).

FRAGMENTS B 10 AND 11 [202 - 216]

Sources: (B 10) Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* V.14, 138; (B 11) Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Caelo,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.,* 559. In Fragment 10 the goddess instructs Parmenides to investigate the origins of solar and lunar phenomena. Far from spurning physical inquiry as useless or false, the goddess extols Parmenides to investigate the heavens with a view to finding the necessary truths which govern their regular movements. These truths might require discovery of primitive laws of motion and gravitation; cf. B 8.25 all exists together whole, since "being draws to being" as if by mutually attractive force.

Fragment B 10 serves as a warning that when mortals inquire, they fail to observe the workings of Necessity (᾽Ανάγκη). Once Necessity is recognized in her proper role, Parmenides will come to know (cf. εἴσῃ B 10.1, and εἰδήσεις B 10.5) the source which roused the earth, sun, moon, and milky-way, to come-to-be (B 11).

FRAGMENTS B 14 AND 15 [216 - 219]

Source: (B 14) Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes,* 1116a; (B 15) *On the Face of the Moon,* 929a, *Quaestiones Romanae,* 282b. Both fragments preserve poetic continuity only when placed after B10 and 11. They cannot, in their scantily preserved state, make much sense after B13, because B13, along with B 16, B 17, and B 18, speak of the origin of sexual intercourse and painful birth. Whereas B10 and 11 discuss the nature of the moon, planets, and stars of the milky way. Coxon notes that "Fragment 15 is cited twice by Plutarch, in the first passage to illustrate the virtue of voluntary obedience to a superior."[16] Presumably the moon's inferiority to the sun is found in the fact it constitutes a foreign or borrowed light constantly facing the sun in order to acquire its distinctive flare. For Plutarch, human obedience to a superior imitates the cosmic process of lunar eclipse, validating ancient social stratifications of superiority and inferiority as if ordained by nature.

FRAGMENTS B 12 AND 13 [219 - 231]

Sources: (B 12.1 - 3 and 12.2 - 6) Simplicius, *Comm. Arist. Phys.,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.* IX, 39 and 31; (B 13) Plato, *Symposium* 178b; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 984b23; Plutarch, *Amatorius* 756f; Simplicius, *Comm. Arist. Phys.,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.* IX, 39. Fragment 12 marks a shift in theme from descriptions of planetary phenomena and cosmic rings of fire to the origin of love between the sexes. Sexual tension recalls the tension between contrary forces in nature: generation and decay, past and future, light and night, permanence and change, etc. But Eros, the god of erotic love, releases sexual tension by underlying the passion between man and woman, in the same manner that the permanence of Being mediates generation and destruction by underlying both processes, or the way the now mediates the difference between past and future by underlying time, or the way the threshold of the Gates of Justice mediates the split between night and day by underlying both paths.

In the midst of the heaven's starry rings dwells a goddess (δαίμων), whom I have chosen to personify as "Destiny" because of her uniquely majestic power of governing the birth and growth of human offspring. In Homer (e.g., *Iliad,* 1.222, 3.420) δαίμων is a generic term used for gods and goddesses already mentioned by proper name and defining epithet. In Parmenides B 12.3 the δαίμων has her own uniquely defined role. She is not generic the way the δαίμονες mentioned in B 1.3 appear to be. In fragment B 12 Destiny has been given a cosmic function, which bestows upon her an identity reserved only for deities such as ' Ανάγκη, Πειθώ, and Μοῖρα. If we take B 13 as following B 12, then Destiny is the one who contrived Eros to begin the lineage of the gods.

Thus, Parmenides posits his own genealogy of the gods beginning not, as for Hesiod, with profound psychological dysfunction, violence, coercion, incest, rape, and terrible offspring, but with compassion and Love between the sexes. Clearly the poem presents its own unique mythology. Parmenides' instructress says that "only one path's myth (μῦθος) remains" for contemplation (B 8.1), the myth of the Way of Being. Thus, I allow more gods into Parmenides' pantheon than Diels and subsequent commentators. I personify the Heliades, daughters of the sun (B 1.9), Night and Day (B 1.11), Light and darkening Night (B 9.3), Justice (B 1.14, 8.14), Fate (B 1.26), Truth (B 1.29), Persuasion (B 2.4), Necessity (B 8.30, 10.6), Heaven (B 10.5), Earth (B11.1), Sun (B11.1), Moon (B 11.1), Olympus (B 11.2), and Destiny (B 12.2).[17] Some of these deities even receive special epithets: "painful Justice" (Δίκη πολύποινος, B 1.14), "well-rounded Truth" (' Αληθείης εὐκυκλέος, B 1.29), and "cyclopean Moon" (κύκλωπος Σελήνης, B 11.4). Parmenides uses

mythology not only to describe the Way of Truth, but also to characterize the Way of Opinion.

FRAGMENT B 18 [231 - 240]

Latin source: Caelius Aurelianus, *On Chronic Diseases* IV.9. In this fragment Parmenides affirms the idea that at conception both parents contribute reproductive material to form an embryo. This embryo constitutes a mixture of male and female power. The lesson seems to be that, in cases where male and female life-giving forces clash in strife within the womb, the child born will be of indeterminate sex, because no single sex, in this case, predominates during gestation. It is difficult to determine whether this clash of forces happens in every gestation process, such that all human sexuality is ranged on a continuum between male and female, one's specific gender being always a matter of degree, and falling somewhere on the continuum. If the clash between male and female reproductive material occurs with every fetal development, then all of us are somewhat male *and* somewhat female. If the clash occurs only in rare cases, then what happens in most cases of fetal development is that the mother's or the father's reproductive material wins out in the development of the fetus, such that it determines the sex of the child. In cases where there is no clear winner, a child of indeterminate sex (harassed *gemino semine,* "by a double-seed") will be born with both male and female characteristics.

The Latin verses of B 18 were preserved by Soranus, a stoic-influenced teacher at Rome and Alexandria living under the principate of Hadrian. Soranus quotes the verses to illustrate a view about homosexuality. Many contemporary scholars (e.g., Austin, and Sider and Johnstone) follow Soranus and believe that Parmenides attempts to account for the birth of homosexuals. Does Parmenides believe that homosexuality is more of an inborn genetically driven phenomenon than a socially developed one?—He would have to believe the former, if B 18 is really an account of the origin of homosexuality. Is sexual orientation an innate feature of the human psyche, as if one either possessed or lacked from the beginning what some call the "gay gene." Being gay would then be far less a matter of life-experiences, of inter-action with friends and relatives, and of socially and culturally driven choices, all of which we must consider when considering the sum of an individual's character. While curses (*dirae*) are said to harass the growing foetus with a painful "double-seed" B 185 - 6, this "double-seed" most likely signifies a fetus of ambiguous (or double) *gender,* and far less likely a specifically *homosexual* fetus.

The goddess argues that: when a woman and man conceive a child both contribute reproductive material, the various proportions of which determine the sex of the offspring, for, *nam* B 18.4, if both life-giving forces clash in strife during conception, they will not produce a child of any determine sex, but a painful double-seed shall vex the growing child.

The Latin text here was cited by Soranus to account for the origin of homosexuality "held by numerous theorists who *'genuinam dicunt esse passionem et propterea in posterns venire cum semine"* (Coxon, p. 254). This view is shared by Austin, p. 6, who speaks of "the generation of gay men" as well as by Sider and Johnstone, p. 23. The passage however is probably meant to account for children of indeterminate sex; those who are born with both male and female characteristics. Coxon gives the more plausible interpretation of Diels who "argued that [Soranus] had transferred the passage from a different context and that P. was concerned simply to explain the origin of either *'harmlos weibliche Manner* (γὐνανδροι [i.e., feminine men]) *und männliche Weiber* (*viragines* [i.e., masculine women]),'" *Parmenides Lehrgedicht,* p. 116, (cf. Coxon, p. 254)." Diels' interpretation is much more consistent with the goddess' emphasis on the origin of contrary forces in nature.

FRAGMENT B 17 [241 - 244]

Source: Galen, *Commentary on Sixth Book of Hippocrates' Epidemics* II. 46 (Kuhn, 1002; Wenkebach-Pfaff, 119). The full context of B 17 would probably read:" [The goddess Destiny produces] boys on the right hand [parts of the mother's womb], but girls on the left hand [parts]." Gallop interpolates κτίσε, gnomic aorist, meaning "she produces" or perhaps "she implants" and has us supply in thought, by reference to B 12.3, the δαίμων who is the goddess of childbirth and sexual bonding. This would require reading B 17 after B 12. But I place B 17 after B 18, since 18 already expounds a theory about how sex is determined in newborns. However, B 17 seems to conflict with B 18. In B 18 sexual determination in humans rests on which parent's reproductive material predominates at conception and gestation. Strife occurs in abnormal cases where the child produced contains an equal tension of opposites between male and female. When no clear winner emerges from the mix of male and female materials, fetuses of indeterminate sex are born. In 17, however, the sex of a child simply rests upon which side of the womb the fetus grows. Coxon argues for a slightly different interpretation than my own:

According to the report of Censorius (who drew on Varro, who made use of the *Vetusta Placita*) P. originated the view that the sex of the child is determined by the issue of a conflict between the seed from the father and that from the mother (t. 51). Aristotle ascribes this theory to Democritus (ib. 764a7 sq.), and P.'s own words in [B 18] show that he envisaged a conflict only in abnormal cases, the embryo being formed normally by the union of the δυνάμεις of the two kinds of seed. Censorius' derivation of Democritus' view from P. must therefore be rejected, and [B 17] may be understood, as it was in Galen, as implying that the sex of the embryo is determined according to whether it lies on the right or left of the womb.[18]

Under my interpretation, which follows Censorius but rejects Galen, and by extension Coxon, all cases of fetal development involve a mixture of reproductive material; i.e., everyone is some part of their father and some part of their mother. The abnormal cases involve conflict between male and female seeds in which neither parents' seed prevails. With the conflict undecided, the fetus turns out ambiguously half male, half female; as opposed to mostly female or mostly male. Parmenides thus emphasizes "strife" (*nam si virtutes permixto semine pugnet*) in the abnormal cases to illustrate an equal tension of opposite forces having no clear resolution. Hence the lesson of B 17 is operable only in the majority of cases, not in cases of indeterminate sex described in B 18.

FRAGMENT B 16 [244 - 250]

Sources: Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 1009b21; Theophrastus, *On Sense* 1 - 4 (in *Doxographi Graeci* 499 - 500). Parmenides says that each person holds concealed in his limbs a mixture (κρᾶσιν, B 16.1) that determines the quality of his mind (νόος, B 16.2). Presumably, the obscure clause "the greater is thought" (B 16.4) means "the greater the nature of the mixture, the nearer one approaches thought." But the constitution of this mixture is controversial. Gregory Vlastos says argues that:

Parmenides frag. 16 has been taken for a general statement of his theory of knowledge. I argue that it is no more than his doctrine of sense-perception, since it views thought as a passive record of the "much-wandering" ratio of light to darkness in the frame. Theophrastus' report that Parmenides explains "better and purer" thinking by the preponderance of light must refer to the active phases of thought, memory, and judgment. When these are perfect, the ratio of light to darkness must be one to zero, and the knowledge of Being must represent a state of unmixed light.[19]

My translation interpolates that the mixture consists "of Light with darkest Night," and, following Vlastos, the greater the preponderance of Light in

the ratio, the greater will be Thought in the individual frame. The fragment is consistent with the mortal opposition of Light and Night in all things, the subject of the Way of Opinion. But we must also consider the opinion of Diels, who interpolates in the last words of B 16: *nämlich das Mehr (vom Licht- oder Nachtelement) ist der Gedanke*[20]—implying perhaps that the more thoroughly light and darkness are mixed in an individual, the greater will be the thought.

Aristotle gives no information as to what constitutes this mixture. If we follow the doxographical tradition in Theophrastus, we must conclude that the mixture involves the warm and the cold. According to Theophrastus, "most views generally about sense-perception are of two kinds. Some say it occurs by what is like [the perceived object], some by the opposite: Parmenides and Empedocles by what is like, the followers of Anaxagoras and Heraclitus by the opposite. As for Parmenides, he has given no full account of it, but has simply said that cognition depends upon the dominant of the two existing elements. According as the hot or the cold predominates, so the understanding varies, that one being better and purer which is due to the hot—although even that understanding needs a certain proportion" (Gallop translation).[21] This ancient view leaves out of account the influences of Zoroastrianism and the emphasis upon a cosmic Mixture of light and darkness (of good and evil) existing in all things and events. By the time of Theophrastus the Zoroastrian influence had diminished dramatically. To go theorizing about the mixture of warm and cold in the limbs simply misses the mark.

There is, in addition, no mention in the poem of warm and cold as opposing elements. Theophrastus may have been privy to fragments now lost, and, as Coxon puts it, he "clearly has [Aristotle's] argument and citation before him, but quotes the lines [of B 16] for a different purpose and from an independent text."[22]

The meaning of the last clause ("the greater is thought") still remains unclear. τὸ πλέον ("the greater") might refer to φύσις (the "nature" growing in the limbs) mentioned in the line immediately preceding. On this reading, the greater the nature or growth of the mixture, the greater the power of that which thinks, and the nearer one approaches thought (νόημα).

The argument runs as follows: since each person holds within his limbs a mixture of Light and Night, so too might exist the mind of man, for that which contemplates is the same for everyone: the [mixed] nature of the limbs, for the greater is thought. Sider and Johnstone (p. 22), along with Vlastos, differ from my reading by construing ὅπερ B 16.3, "that which," as object, but not subject, of "contemplates" (φρονέει B 16.3)—thus the Sider and

Johnstone translation "that which one contemplates is the same for everyone, the nature of the limbs." On either account, however, the proportion of Light and Night present in the limbs accounts for the different minds (or thoughts) present in different individuals. But one must be aware that Light and Darkness are vestiges of Good (Ahura Mazda) and Evil (Ahriman) present in every animate and inanimate being. We are all good and evil to varying degrees; we each sin in our own way, and each contributes some measure of good to our fellow man. Perhaps by saying that "the greater is thought" B 16.4, Parmenides is really saying that the greater the Light or the Good in an individual, the greater the power of their Mind or Thought. This reading not only makes clear sense of the text, but would also be consistent with Zoroastrian teaching, the tenets of which Parmenides must learn, so that he may never be outmatched in argument.

FRAGMENT B 19 [250 - 254]

Source: Simplicius, *Comm. Arist. De Caelo,* in *Comm. Arist. Gr.* VII, 558. "Simplicius quotes these three lines," says Coxon, "along with [B 1.28 - 32 and B 8.50 - 52] to show that P. distinguished sensible from intelligible reality. He states that they occurred at the end of the account of the sensible world … they may therefore be the concluding verses of the poem." This fragment emphasizes how the objects of opinion, i.e., sense impressions and appearances, are essentially transitory and fleeting. Their names are but signs affixed by man, not by Necessity. These verses reinforce the theme of the entire poem: in order to truly appreciate the essence of things in this world, one must raise ones awareness to the contemplation of the supersensible where the tension between opposite forces in nature is arrested in contemplative oneness with nature.

NOTES

1. Line numbers to my translation are given in brackets next to the Diels B-fragment.

2. Plutarch (c. 46 - c. 120 AD) was a bigrapher, historian, and philosopher. Saint Simplicius (d. 483 AD) was Pope at Rome (468 - 483) and wrote commentaries to Aristotle's major works, his attention to textual detail resulted in the preservation of large tracts of Parmenides drawn from, what was already by his time, an extremely rare edition of the poem. Sextus Empiricus (fl. 200 AD) was a Greek physician and skeptic.

3. Coxon draws a further connection to Homer, p. 10: "The phrase μοῖρα κακή is used by Homer only of Pisander's death at the hands of Menelaus (*Iliad* 13.602). When the goddess assures Parmenides that it is no μοῖρα κακή which has set him on the remote road to the gateway, it is reasonable to suppose that the poet uses Homer's expression in order to convey that the road is normally traveled only at death."

4. Reduplication of χειῥ occurs in Homer only at *Iliad* 21.286, cf. Coxon, p. 10.

5. Proclus (c. 411 - 485 AD), Greek philosopher and theologian, was a neo-platonist who criticized Parmenides' poetic style. His relevant works here are the commentaries on Aristotle's *Physics* and *De Caelo.*

6. G.E.L. Owen, *Logic, Science, and Dialectic,* p. 14, Nussbaum ed.

7. Schofield admits that if we identify the impersonal subject, as I prefer to do, in terms of absolute Being (ἐόν) then "Parmenides' use of estin is simulataneously existential and predicative (as KR held), but not therefore (as KR concluded) confused" Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers,* p. 245.

8. Clement of Alexandria (Titus Flavius Clemens, d. c. 217 AD) was a Greek father of the Church. Plotinus (c. 205 - c. 270) was a Roman neoplatonist philosoopher writing in Greek, and author of the monumental work *Enneads.*

9. Hermann Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* vol. I, p. 231.

10. Damascius was a philosopher who lived in the fourth and fifth centuries AD.

11. Ibid., Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, p. 244.

12. Eudemus (late fourth century BC) was a student of Aristotle who wrote on arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. His fragmentary works were edited by Spengel in *Eudemi Rhodii Fragmenta,* Berlin, 1866, and later by F. Wehrli, *Die Schule des Aristoteles,* vol. VIII, Basel, 1955.

13. "A section from an anonymous history of philosophy in doxographic tradition is preserved by Eusebius in the *Praeparatio Evangelica* 1.7.16ff., who refers to it as the Miscellanies of Plutarch. It is edited separately by Diels in *Doxographi Graeci* pp. 579 - 83" (Gallop, p. 127).

14. Ammonius (fifth century AD) was a Platonist who composed the *Commentary on Aristotle's De Interpretatione,* edited by A. Busse, *Comm. in Arist. Graeca* iv pars v, Berlin, 1897.

15. Ibid., Gallop, p. 20.

16. Ibid., Coxon, p. 244.

17. Diels does not personify Light and Night (B 9.3), Heaven (B 10.5), Earth (B 11.1), Sun (B 11.1), Moon (B 11.1), Olympus (B 11.2), and Destiny (B 12.2). Nor does he provide reasons for doing so in Parmenides Lehrgedicht, but he most likely viewed the latter fragments as statements about the material world. He saw Parmenides speaking about planet earth, the moon, and sun in purely scientific terms. But the division between scientific observation and mythology was not as well delineated in Parmenides' time as it was, say, in Aristotle's. If Parmenides uses myth at the beginning of the poem to describe Truth and Justice, why not throughout the rest of the poem as well?

18. Ibid., Coxon, p. 252.

19. See Vlastos, "Parmenides' Theory of Knowledge," *TAPA 77* (1946): 66 - 77.

20. Diels, *Die Fragmente Der Vorsokratiker,* vol. 1, p. 244.

21. Ibid., Gallop, p. 120.

22. Ibid., Coxon, p. 247.

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