9.

PARTISAN OF THE ONE
Parmenides and the Paradox of Wholeness

Siemen Terpstra

ABSTRACT:
This essay proposes a Musical exegesis of Parmenides' extraordinary poem. In the *Prologue*, we observe the masterful use of imagery that relates him to his predecessors and his contemporaries. His initiatory language links him firmly to Orphism and sets the proper context for the main body of his poem. In the *Way of Truth*, we show that Parmenides is making more explicit the paradoxical implications of *The Whole* already put forward by his teacher Xenophanes. It is here that Parmenides displays the progressive analog tendencies inherited from Anaximander. *The All* is described as a single, continuous, changeless and motionless *plenum*. As in the poetry of Xenophanes, it is limited and has the nature of a sphere (the Orphic Egg). In the later sections of his 'obscure' poem, now called the *Way of Seeming*, we trace his continuity with the Milesian process-philosophy of 'becoming.' Parmenides made comments on a philosophy of *Becoming*, a philosophy of *Being*, and a philosophy of *Not-being*. Within the philosophical movement, Parmenides' thought represents the very apex of Eleatic radicalism in its most explicit and poetical expression. Inevitably, his pupil Zeno put the spotlight even more intently upon the famous paradoxical aspects of the *plenum*. Parmenides is a key figure in the coming growth of scepticism and the eventual demise of the musical paradigm.

'he [the One] *sees as a whole, he thinks as a whole, he hears as a whole'*
-Xenophanes (fr. 24)

'nor is it any more in any way, ...or any less,
but it is all full of what is.
Therefore, it is all continuous, for what is draws near to what is.'
-Parmenides (fr. 8.23-25)

'If there are many things, the things that are are unlimited;
for there are always others between the things that are, and again
others between those.'
-Zeno of Elea (fr. 3)

'You would not discover the limits of the soul
although you travelled every road;
it has so deep a ***logos****.'*
-Heraclitus (fr. 45)

'If there seems to be more truth in what is said
by the partisans of the whole, we'll escape
from those who try to change what's unchanging.'
-Plato, *Theaetetus* (181a)

HIS LIFE

Parmenides, one of the greatest of the philosopher-poets, came from the city of Elea (or Velia, Hyele) on the south-west coast of Italy. The city itself was a colony of the Ionian city of Phocaea, situated somewhat north of Miletus. Hence we can presume that Parmenides was quite familiar with Ionian culture. Very little is known about his life, but what we do know fits into the general pattern seen in all of the early philosophers. Their interests cannot be confined to 'philosophy' in the modern (or even Aristotelian) sense. Parmenides was no ivory-tower intellectual who spent his time inventing only abstruse metaphysics. Rather, he was a wealthy aristocrat who took an active role in the politics of his city. Indeed, he (and his pupil Zeno as well) may even have *ruled* Elea. At any rate he was noted for providing his city with a fine set of laws. Commentary on his legislative skills (according to Diogenes Laertius 9.23) go back to Speusippus, Plato's nephew, who went to Italy with Plato and collected historical information on Magna Graecia. Various late writers commented on the utility of his laws. For example, Plutarch wrote (*Reply to Colotes* 112a): *'Parmenides appointed for his native city the best of laws, so that every year the citizens bind the magistrates by oath to abide by Parmenides' laws.'* Plutarch maintained that his laws were still good five hundred years after Parmenides' time.

The laws of Parmenides were also implied by Strabo (6.1.1). *'On doubling this promontory one comes immediately to another gulf, in which there is a city which was called 'Hyele' by the Phocaeans who founded it, and by others 'Ele,' after a certain spring, but is called by the men of today 'Elea.' This is the native city of Parmenides and Zeno, the Pythagorean philosophers. It is my opinion that not only through the influence of these men but also in still earlier times the city was well governed.'* Elea was indeed quite prosperous, as was its parent city Phocaea, though neither were so grand and wealthy as Miletus or Athens. Note that Strabo called Parmenides and Zeno 'Pythagoreans.' It may seem a little odd to us, but in fact a number of ancient writers classed them with the Pythagoreans. For example, Photius (*Bibiotheca*, chapter 249, 439a): *'Zeno and Parmenides of Elea: they too shared the Pythagorean way of life.'* Again, Proclus (*in Parm*. 1, p.619.4) wrote that both of them were *'not only Eleans but also members of the Pythagorean School, as Nicomachus has recorded.'* Of course, none of these late writers has very much authority. Nevertheless, these testimonies highlight the difficulties in sorting out exactly who was a Pythagorean and who was not. The problem is probably irresolvable, but at any rate the testimony draws connections between the Eleatics and the Pythagoreans. Such relations are understandable, given that Elea was situated in southern Italy where a number of cities had Pythagorean rulers during that time. Strabo also mentioned that the city had 'good influences' even before Parmenides. I take this to be a hint about Xenophanes who, according to all of the ancient evidence, founded the philosophical school at Elea and taught Parmenides. The testimony demonstrates the futility in maintaining the isolation between Eleatics and Pythagoreans, in spite of their differences.

Another side to Parmenides' life was unearthed recently (1963) due to archaeological activity at Elea. His name was found upon an inscription connecting him with a medical school, the ***Ouliades***—healers sacred to ***Apollo***. The inscription also

called him an ***Iatromantis***, a prophetic character practicing 'incubation' and other sorts of 'shamanic' practices associated with magic and the Mysteries. Most modern scholars prefer to ignore such heterodox information, since they want to interpret Parmenides as a sober scientific 'logician' and not as an ecstatic religious figure. In fact, as we will see in the mystical poem, he had strong ties to Orphism—just like Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Xenophanes. This 'collusion' between the scientific, the religious, the medical, and the political is common amongst all of the early philosophers. We are reminded of a famous fragment by Empedocles (fr. 146), in which highly evolved persons reincarnate into certain professions: *'In the end they are prophets and bards and physicians / and chiefs among men on earth, / and from there they arise as gods mightiest in honors.'* Empedocles was (rightly) referring to himself, but it could also apply to Parmenides and his fellow philosophers. Note that these professions: prophets (inspired visionaries), bards (poets and musicians), physicians (healers) and chiefs (leaders, lawgivers) were all activities sacred to the same god of music, ***Apollo***, and closely affiliated with Orphism and the Muses. All of these professions presuppose a common conceptual order that can best be called 'Musical.' Like Heraclitus and Xenophanes, Parmenides was a complex many-sided personality who embodied the highest ideals of his culture.

CONTROVERSIES OVER HIS DATES

Unfortunately, two conflicting accounts for his dates have come down to us. Both of them can be defended and attacked by reasonable arguments so that the choice is problematical. To make matters worse, the dates for Zeno are entirely dependent upon Parmenides. It is worthwhile to review the pros and cons of the evidence, even if the issue will probably never be entirely settled.

The earlier chronology was given by Diogenes Laertius (9.22). *'He flourished in the sixty- ninth Olympiad'* [504-501 B.C.]. He does not say so here but Diogenes based his dates for the early philosophers upon Apollodorus. By '*floruit*' they meant the age of 40. Thus if we assume that Parmenides was 40 in 500 B.C. his birth must have been around 540 and his death around 470. Inevitably, it is easy to attack this dating, and not only by pointing out Diogenes' uneven reliability. As Burnet said (*EGP* 170), *'the date given by Apollodorus depends solely on that of the foundation of Elea (540 B.C.), which he had adopted as the floruit of Xenophanes. Parmenides is born in that year, just as Zeno is born in the year Parmenides "flourished."* The numbers are so neat and tidy that we must be a bit suspicious of them. On the other hand, it is also possible to argue in favor of this chronology. In spite of his deficiences, Apollodorus *is* accepted for practically all of the early philosophers. If we reject his dating for Parmenides, we should by rights reject the rest as well. Because almost all of his datings are judged reasonable, why should we then reject only his dating for Parmenides? The acceptance of this scheme at least has the advantage of consistency with the overall picture. We should note here that the *floruit* of Xenophanes was around 530 rather than 540, but a certain attitude of flexibility is advisable in these matters. Also, there are hints that Xenophanes may have had some sort of involvement in the founding of Elea (conventionally put at 540 by Herodotus). As if this evidence were not confusing enough, the date 540 may actually refer to the founding of the Eleatic School of philosophy by Xenophanes rather than the

founding of the city itself. None of this conjecture makes us feel any more secure over the 540 date for Parmenides' birth.

The later dating for Parmenides is derived from Plato's *Parmenides* (127a-c). In order to evaluate its worth, we must present the context in which it occurs. The character Cephalus of Clazomenae speaks: *'According to Antiphon, then, this was Pythodorus' account. Zeno and Parmenides once came to Athens for the Great Panathenaea. Parmenides was a man of distinguished appearance. By that time he was well advanced in years, with his hair almost white; he may have been sixty-five. Zeno was nearing forty at the time, a tall and attractive figure. It was said that he had been Parmenides' boy-love. They were staying with Pythodorus outside the walls in the Ceramicus. Socrates and quite a number of others came there, anxious to hear a reading of Zeno's treatise, which the two visitors had brought for the first time to Athens. Socrates was then very young.'* This chronology gives a lot of detail. Socrates was just over 70 when he was put to death in 399. Thus Socrates was born in 470/469. If we assume that the words 'very young' indicate that he was around 20, then the meeting must have taken place in 450, an actual year of the Panathenaea. Since Parmenides was then 65, he would be born in 515 B.C. (a good 35 years after the dating of Apollodorus), and died around 435.

Because so much detail is given here, it is easy to argue that this chronology is more reliable than the early dating. Plato is certainly an earlier authority than Apollodorus, and, many would argue, more dependable. Ostensibly he had no reason to give so much exact information unless he knew it to be correct. Yet while these arguments sound quite reasonable, they can also be countered. As we have already seen, Plato cannot always be trusted to 'tell the truth.' Just because he has given exact figures does not mean that the information is necessarily historically accurate. On the contrary, he has implanted various 'hints' in this passage that we should not take it as 'gospel.' To begin with, he has used a very elaborate and complex literary frame for the conversation. The dialogue is reported in no less than three frames: Cephalus got it from Antiphon, who reportedly heard it in his youth from Pythodorus and memorized it. Anyone at all familiar with the Byzantine obscurity of the *Parmenides* knows that this 'memorization' and retelling of the entire document at third hand is extremely unlikely. Plato may have used this device only to emphasize the remoteness of the conversation in time (more than 50 years before the event of the dialogue). But it may also have been used as a reminder that we *should* question the historical accuracy of the passage, indeed, the whole dialogue. Plato could be telling us that the conversation between Socrates, Parmenides, and Zeno never actually took place. At any rate it undermines the authority of the dating. The elaborate frame is likely to be a sign that in this passage Plato is generating 'comedy' rather than 'tragedy.'

Even some of the ancients were suspicious of Plato's chronology. For example, Athenaeus (*The Deipnosophists* 11.515f) wrote: *'The age of Plato's Socrates is hardly consistent with his having joined in discussions with Parmenides, for he couldn't have contributed or listened to such discussions. But the most vile and (false) accusation of all, when there is no pressing need to make it, is that Zeno, Parmenides' fellow-citizen, was his boy-love.'* This passage refers to another reason not to take the Platonic 'evidence' too

seriously. The accusation of homosexuality was a common ancient literary device used to demean a relationship. Although it may actually have been true, it was much more likely to be entirely false and deliberately placed to effect a humorous 'character assassination.' The relationship between them was actually student-teacher and fellow philosopher. By adding this 'underhanded' remark Plato is wontanly corrupting the reputation of two great personalities. Perhaps he is reminding us that the characters in the dialogue will *not* be the real Parmenides and Zeno. The rest of the *Parmenides* composition bears this out, since it subverts and distorts Parmenides in various ways entirely characteristic of Plato's other works. No doubt some form of dark humor was intended in this passage. Perhaps another factor in his 'sexual drollery' can be derived from the speaker's name: Cephalus. It means penis-head! All in all, such a 'purple' passage within a notoroius dialogue does not promote much confidence in the given chronology. In a later section, I will argue that Plato has purposefully committed 'patricide' (*'killing father Parmenides'*) in his problematic composition.

If one must choose between the two alternatives, the early chronology seems preferable to me, although I would not be dogmatic about it. It is also possible to compromise between the two dates, therefore making him a contemporary of Hippasus or Aeschylus. The early date seems more plausible. It has less excess baggage, and the relations between the philosophers 'fit' better. Yet the modern scholarly community has unanimously chosen the later date. Plato has a lot of authority, and most moderns tend to read him with a seriousness not intended by Plato himself. As we will see in an upcoming section, the reasons for the modern choice have less to do with historical accuracy and more to do with affirming the standard 'isolationist' position of Parmenides in the early philosophical movement. An acceptance of the Apollodorean chronology would make Parmenides an exact contemporary of Heraclitus. That would never do! Heraclitus must 'properly' be positioned as a 'pre-Parmenidean' philosopher.

HIS TEACHERS

Philosophies do not arise in a vacuum and Parmenides is no exception. His thought was subject to various influences, the most important being that of Xenophanes. But behind Xenophanes stands Anaximander. These three philosophers are very close in their doctrinal 'trajectory' and represent the progressive 'faction' within the movement. Even if we accept the late dating for Parmenides, he could well have had direct contact with Xenophanes over a long period. Xenophanes lived to be very old. Any contact with Anaximander, of course, would have been indirect through Xenophanes (and potentially Pythagoras). Further influences, though secondary, can also be found from Anaximenes and Pythagoras. On the other hand, if we accept the early dating, then Parmenides could well have had *direct* contact with Pythagoras. After all, both of them lived in southern Italy close to each other. The doctrinal 'echoes' between Parmenides and his predecessors will be abundantly manifest when we examine his poem. Instead, in this section we present only a sampling of the doxographical evidence. In spite of the corrupting influence of Plato and Aristotle who 'remade' Parmenides, we still see a wide recognition of his strong ties with the earlier generations, especially Xenophanes and Anaximander.

The doxographical record is unanimous in making Parmenides a student of Xenophanes. Their relationship is also confirmed by Plato (*Sophist* 242d) and Aristotle (*Metaphysics* A5, 986b22). But he is also associated with others, for example, Pythagoras. Diogenes Laertius (9.21) says this of him: *'Parmenides, a native of Elea, son of Pyres, was a pupil of Xenophanes (Theophrastus in his* Epitome *makes him a pupil of Anaximander). Parmenides, however, though he was instructed by Xenophanes, was no follower of his. According to Sotion he also associated with Ameinias the Pythagorean, who was the son of Diochaetas and a worthy gentleman though poor. This Ameinias he was more inclined to follow, and on Ameinias' death Parmenides built a shrine to him, as he was of illustrious birth and possessed of great wealth; moreover, it was Ameinias and not Xenophanes who led him to adopt the quite life.'*

This passage confirms that Parmenides came from a wealthy family. Ameinias the Pythagorean is otherwise unknown and perhaps fictional. The reference to the 'quiet life' or contemplative life means the 'Pythagorean' life. Cebes (*Tab.* 2) also spoke of a '*Pythagorean and Parmenidean*' way of life. For Diogenes, Parmenides was simply a Pythagorean. However, we should note that practically *every* philosopher after Pythagoras was labelled a Pythagorean by these late writers. Due to his fame (because of Plato and Aristotle), the late commentators saw Pythagoreans everywhere. Nevertheless, considerable ties must have joined Eleatics and Pythagoreans, especially in the fields of medicine and cosmology—even if they inhabited opposite ends of the ideological spectrum. This passage evokes another comment on Parmenides' dating. Since it connects him with a student of Pythagoras rather than Pythagoras himself, it can be construed to support the later chronology. However, this argument carries little weight, and Ameinias may not even have any historical validity. Among the late writers, even Xenophanes was little understood. Moreover, the notion proposed here that Parmenides rejected the teaching of Xenophanes cannot be taken seriously. It flies in the face of the evidence and simply reflects a certain demeaning attitude toward Xenophanes initiated by Aristotle.

The passage above implies that Parmenides was a direct student of Anaximander. This is chronologically impossible, but Theophrastus probably meant that Xenophanes (and not Parmenides) was a direct student of Anaximander. Now this is highly likely. Xenophanes linked Anaximander and Parmenides. The summary on Parmenides given in the *Suda* (*Sv. Parmenides*) echoes Diogenes. *'Parmenides of Elea, son of Pyres, philosopher, who was a student of Xenophanes of Colophon, and, according to Theophrastus, of Anaximander of Miletus. His successors were Empedocles, the philosopher and physician, and Zeno of Elea. He wrote natural philosophy in verse, and some other things in prose, which Plato mentions.'* According to the *Sophist* (237a), Parmenides wrote some prose, but we have no evidence of it. Empedocles is often called a student of Parmenides by the doxographers. The fact that both wrote in verse (like Xenophanes) was one important reason. The superior quality of their writing put them in the highest rank among the early philosophers. Thus Iamblichus (*On the Pythagorean Life* 166) wrote: *'Moreover, all who have made any mention of the natural philosophers do, in fact, give first place to Empedocles and to Parmenides of Elea.'* Others claim that

the versification enabled a deeper insight. For example, Plutarch (*How a Young Man should Study Poetry* 16c) put it so: *'The verses of Empedocles and of Parmenides, the* Theriaca *of Nicander, and the* Maxims *of Theognis are merely compositions which have borrowed from poetic art its meter and lofty style, as a vehicle in order to avoid the prosaic.'* Clearly, the verse form was no impediment to philosophy.

The doxographical connections between Parmenides and Anaximander probably reflect the essential identity of their cosmologies rather than a direct student-teacher relation. This identity can be illustrated in his poem but it also appears in the doxography. For example, Diogenes Laertius (9.21-22) wrote of Parmenides: *'He was the first to declare that the* ***earth*** *is spherical and is situated in the center. He held that there were two* ***elements***, ***fire*** *and* ***earth***, *and that the former performed the function of a craftsman, the latter that of his material. The generation of man proceeded originally from the* ***sun***; *the* ***hot*** *and the* ***cold*** *were causes from which all things were composed.'* It was Anaximander who was credited with saying that the earth lies firmly in the center, equa-distant from the ends due to its balance. He also believed in the Orphic Egg. Moreover, the two *primary elements*, **fire** and **earth**, or *hot* and *cold*, are typically Anaximandrean. Only the function of craftsman and material was a later addition to be explained further on. The sun here is a proxy for **fire**. Indeed, **fire** and **earth**, or *hot* and *cold*, can be related to the MONAD and DYAD, or to the One and the Many. The whole notion of the two primary *elements* generating a '*mixture*' first appears in Anaximander. Aristotle (*On Coming-to be and Passing Away*, 2.3, 330b13) wrote: *'But those who hold from the beginning that there are two (elements)—as Parmenides held that there were* ***fire*** *and* ***earth****—make the intermediates,* ***air*** *and* ***fire*** [he obviously means **water** here], ***mixtures*** *of these.'* The Anaximandrean Musical language of 'hot and cold' permeates not only Parmenidean cosmology, but even his physiology. For example, Theophrastus (*On Sense* 1-4) wrote of Parmenides: *'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.'* Clearly, the whole structure of the '*Way of Seeming*' is taken over from Anaximander's '*opposites*.'

Such a clear debt to Anaximander means that Parmenides' thought must have had solid connections to Anaximenes and Pythagoras. As we have seen elsewhere, these two philosophers were also heavily influenced by Anaximander. In short, none of these philosophers can be meaningfully understood in isolation from each other. All of them spoke the same Musical language, the language of '*opposites*' and *elements*.

If we consider Parmenides' astronomy, again we witness close ties to the great Milesians. Aetius (2.20.8a), who reported his astronomy, used the language of Anaximenes as well as Anaximander. *'According to Parmenides the sun and moon were separated off from the circle of the Milky Way, the former from the* ***rarer*** *part of the mixture or "hot," the latter from the* ***denser*** *or "cold."* The term 'separated off' (***apokrisis***) is common to all of the early philosophers, but it first appears in Anaximander and Anaximenes. Other aspects of Parmenides' very Musical astronomy also echo doctrines associated with these two influential Milesians. At 2.7.1 Aetius gives a whole

philosophy was located, and they will answer 'Athens,' and not Miletus or Elea. The authority of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle overrides all. During the fifth century, Athens tried to form an empire, resulting in fierce rivalries between Athens, Elea, and other places. Since Athens was successful (for awhile at least), we still tend to read philosophical history from an Athenocentric (or fourth century) standpoint. It has had profound, distorting effects upon our understanding of early philosophy. The mutation is seen very well in the treatment of Xenophanes and Pythagoras. They were exact contemporaries, representing the progressive and conservative tendencies of their generation. Both of them were great philosophers, but due to the fourth century, Pythagoras was promoted to become 'the star' and Xenophanes was belittled. Yet, in terms of the early philosophical movement itself, Xenophanes was probably a more important figure. His influence had greater consequences (i.e. the rise of scepticism). The modern scholarly community still follows the line of Aristotle to an astonishing degree. Hence, Xenophanes continues to be marginalized and his importance underrated. Parmenides survived a similar fate, partly due to the elaborate treatment afforded him by Plato. Yet this treatment is also problematic, since Plato purposefully mutilated Parmenides—almost lampooning him in complex ways. The later section of his *Parmenides* indulges in the ultimate 'roasting.' Meanwhile, the modern scholarly community wants to believe Plato's Parmenides as the 'real thing.' The historical Parmenides (and Xenophanes) is certainly not transparent in Plato or Aristotle. As I have already demonstrated in Chapter 6, Xenophanes is probably the most mishandled of all the great early philosophers. Yet only with a proper understanding of Xenophanes can we come to a realistic assessment of Parmenides (and Heraclitus).

The modern treatment of Parmenides is noted above all for its absolute absence of any musical perspective whatsoever. The term ***harmonia*** happens not to be present in the surviving fragments; consequently he is interpreted as if it is entirely *irrelevant*. Even though his near contemporaries Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Pythagoras used the term ***harmonia*** explicitly and made it central to their philosophy, it is assumed that it has no bearing on Parmenides *at all*. Of course, modern interpreters see little relevance for ***harmonia*** with the other philosophers as well. But even more than the others, Parmenides has been surgically removed from his cultural milieu and projected into a stratosphere of abstract 'ontological logic.' Reading modern commentaries on Parmenides, we would think that he came from some contemporary academic philosophical establishment rather than the intensely musical cultural surroundings of ancient Greece. The fact that he was a poet counts for nothing. To the moderns it is only a 'literary device.' His explicit use of other highly musical terms, such as ***logos***, is removed as far as possible from its original musical associations. The modern Parmenides is treated as a cold, abstract logician in a way that would have been entirely unrecognizable to his contemporaries. In fact, this is the modern appeal of Parmenides. His 'conceptual difficulties' are judged to be highly contemporary and still relevant to the community of philosophers who tie their identity to a certain specialized terminology. But none of this has much to do with the highly Musical and mystical Parmenides himself.

In short, Parmenides has been entirely separated from his Musical milieu and transformed into something totally different, by eliminating every last shred of Musical

sense from his writing. The modern interpretations of '*what is*' and '*what is not*' are entirely abstract and 'metaphysical.' They no longer have anything whatsoever remaining of the ancient musical associations. We'll take an example. The supposedly plausible subject of '*it is*' (***esti***) given by Gallop[1] amounts to *'what is there for speaking and thinking of.'* Yet in the context of the fragments it is clear that '*it is*' refers to *the All* (the *plenum*) or ***harmonia***. The referent is musical and Musical. Modern interpreters have preferred to believe that *no subject* is made explicit. Good, let's have fun with the differing intentions of the word 'being' (existent, copulative, veridical). The music is totally gone!

THE MUSICAL PARMENIDES

Having given a short precis of the modern 'take' on Parmenides, now we will look at a concise overview of the Musical perspective. Instead of isolating Parmenides from everyone, we will integrate him with his fellow philosophers. The Musical concepts of ***harmonia***, ***logos***, and ***kosmos*** are just as relevant to him as everyone else. His poetic language of metaphors and images is closely related to that of Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Xenophanes. He cannot be separated from his followers, contemporaries, or predecessors. In order to understand Parmenides, we must also understand his teachers, indeed, the movement as a whole.

Before reading this essay, I would strongly advise a reading of Chapter 6 (on Xenophanes) and Chapter 4 (on Anaximander). As additional essential background, here is a brief summary of Parmenides' philosophical environment.

The early philosophers assumed a musical perspective concerning the world at large. The universe is a ***kosmos*** with the characteristics of ***harmonia*** and ***logos***. All 'things' emerge from the One through the Musical agency of primal *opposites* and the primary *Elements* (the vibratory powers). Movement is universal, periodic and cyclical, in other words, musical. Various alternative ***harmoniai*** are possible within the 'house' of harmony (the octave, the 'space' between **heaven** and **earth**). ***Harmoniai*** are characterized by hierarchical structures, modes, or differing degrees of 'rank.' ***Harmoniai*** are measured through simple number sequences and demonstrated using a monochord. Such sequences use discreet, *discontinuous* composites of the Elements. This whole complex of associations can best be called the *digital perspective* on ***harmonia***. It is the traditionalist or conservative standpoint, linked with Pythagoras (though not invented by him). This Musical philosophy can accurately be summarized in the phrase: *'numbers and the void.'* It is the background out of which the radical perspective arose. Along came Anaximander and spoke of *'innumerable worlds.'* It is possible to conceive of the union of all ***harmoniai***—*the All*. This stance results from the possibility of infinite divisibility and/or the inclusion of irrational numbers within the ***harmoniai***. It is an effort to comprehend the notion of *Real Numbers* in the context of harmony. Such a perspective banishes the void and replaces it with a continuum, a *plenum*—*'full of what is.'* With every possible 'seed' present, the *opposites* between **heaven** (**fire**, ***aither***) and **earth** now

[1] David Gallop: *Parmenides of Elea: Fragments, A text and translation with an introduction*; (University of Toronto Press, 1984), page 8.

integrate a *continuum* in which discreet, digital Elements are 'generalized' into analog 'elements'—a flow described in such terms as: hot and cold, dry and wet, light and dark, rare and dense. While in the digital perspective ***harmonia*** is generated by an additive process (increasing field complexity out of the One), it is also possible to generate a ***harmonia*** by 'separating off' aspects from the *whole*—what might instead be called a subtractive process (a foreground extracted from a background or omni-matrix). This whole complex of notions surrounding the continuum is aptly called the *analog perspective* on ***harmonia***.

From Anaximander Xenophanes inherited the analog perspective encapsulated in the terms: *The All*, the *Whole*, the One, meaning: the unity of all possibilities at once, the 'super-harmony' of all possible ***harmoniai***. He then concentrated upon various paradoxical implications of *wholeness*. Normally, the concept ***harmonia*** is intimately linked to motion, change, and time. In a word, it is an appropriate model for the realm of *Becoming*. On the other hand, the concept of the *Whole* introduces a perspective that is outside of time, unchanging, and motionless. It is lacking nothing. Everything is there. Hence it is a continuum without any mixture of the *void* (non-being). All of the 'families' are present. Being absolutely 'compact,' it is described as spherical, yet it is also limited because it is (metaphorically) bound by the bridges of the music wire. Again, all of this material is demonstrable with a monochord. This essentially a-temporal perspective can conveniently be called the realm of *Being* (what is) rather than *Becoming* (what changes in Time).

Aristotle (*Metaphysics* A5.986b21) called Xenophanes *'the first partisan of the One,'* meaning *the One as the Whole*. It is the basis of the Eleatic viewpoint that Parmenides also shared. In Parmenides' famous fragment 8, he proceeded to defend the implications of the Whole by deductive arguments that have a musical basis. These arguments form the earliest extended sequence of such deductions to survive. For this reason the moderns contend that he *invented* such deductions. The ancients, however, also accused Xenophanes of these practices. This 'strange logic' is endemic to Eleatics. Moreover, it is not logic at all in the modern (or even Aristotelian) sense of the word. Rather, it is a sort of 'crypto-logic' used to defend the paradoxical. For it makes no sense to describe ***harmonia*** as motionless, unchanging, and timeless. Its very nature is the opposite. The Eleatic perspective is rather a poetic expression of a mystical 'truth' transcending the temporal (ordinarily musical) realm. It is an effort to describe *the ineffable beyond Time*. We must also bear in mind that Xenophanes saw no incompatibility between the realms of Being and Becoming. He was quite happy and comfortable within the Milesian world of Becoming. Hence the two realms of Being and Becoming have a relation with each other that can be described as '*both-and*' rather than 'either-or.' It is important to keep this relation in mind as we explore Parmenides' poem. The realm of Being became his *Way of Truth* and the realm of Becoming his *Way of Seeming*. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Parmenides added some commentary on a 'third way,' the realm of *Non-being*. In his poem he shows it to be entirely incompatible with Being. Yet in the bulk of the poem his is quite content with the realm of Becoming.

Parmenides' distinction between *Truth* (***Alethiea***) and *Seeming* (***Doxa*** or opinion, appearances, belief) has its roots in Xenophanes. The earlier philosopher spoke about the differences between divine knowledge and human knowledge. His fragment 34 was justly famous and worthy of the writings of his students Parmenides and Heraclitus. *'No one has seen or will ever know / the truth about the gods and all the things of which I speak. / For even if a person should in fact say what is absolutely the case / nevertheless, he himself does not know / but belief* [***doxa***] *is fashioned over all things.'* The separation between divine and human realms of knowing is not confined to Xenophanes and Parmenides alone. It was also found in Alcmaeon, Pythagoras, and Heraclitus. For example, Heraclitus' fragment 123 goes: *'the real constitution of the world is accustomed to hide itself.'* Also fragment 78: *'Human disposition does not have true judgement, divine disposition does.'* Obviously divine knowledge has more validity than human knowledge, but there is no indication in Xenophanes (or Parmenides) that the realm of Becoming is *totally false*. Rather, it is only the realm of Non-being that is false or unthinkable. Modern commentators confuse the realms of Becoming and Non-being (a tactic consciously employed by Plato). In addition, they assume an 'either-or' condition between Being and Becoming that was not intended by the early philosophers. Again, it was Plato who made this 'progress' for the sake of a stimulating dialogue. In his Musical poem, Parmenides only indicates the incompatibility of Being and Non-being.

Modern commentators on Parmenides' poem fixate upon his *Way of Truth*, which is based upon the Xenophanean a-temporal characteristics of the Whole. They largely ignore his *Way of Seeming* as problematical, not really important, or patently false and invalidated by the *Way of Truth*. Thus they take an 'either-or' stand between Being and Becoming. But in actuality the bulk of his poem concerns the *Way of Seeming* and it proves to be another positive statement of the typically Milesian process-philosophy of Becoming (the musical paradigm). In the same manner as Xenophanes, Parmenides held both views *at the same time* and assumed no incompatibility between them. Both are salient features of the ***harmonia*** of the world. The modern, post-sophist position (heavily influenced by Plato) pits the one *against* the other and makes the Being of Parmenides mutually exclusive with the Becoming of Heraclitus. Thus we have another example of the way in which the later sophists destroyed the unity of the musical perspective in the early philosophers, replacing it with 'competing systems' that negate each other. Plato added another 'slant' on Parmenides that has forever been confused with the real 'thing.' He confined the realm of ***doxa*** to sense perception and the material world, while ***alethiea*** is confined to the immaterial realm of Ideas. These associations are actually Platonic, but most modern commentators want to project them onto Parmenides and claim that Plato learned it from him. Yet for the early philosophers, the relations between the material and immaterial worlds were not so simplistic.

The Musical Parmenides is thus a protégé of the Musical Xenophanes. Moreover, Parmenides can be favorably related to his near contemporaries like Heraclitus, Hippasus, and Alcmaeon. This list includes contemporary poet-musicians like Pindar and the dramatist Aeschylus. Both the philosophers and the poets shared a common conception of the musical nature of the world. Parmenides has always been treated as if his 'poetic style' is entirely irrelevant. In the modern exegesis, only the obscure deductions of

Fragment 8 (the *Way of Truth*) are important. The rest consists only of 'literary devices' and 'physiology' that proved to be of no lasting philosophical significance. The entire reputation of Parmenides is based upon his *Way of Truth* alone. This essay paints a radically different portrait. We are interested in (excuse the pun) the whole of Parmenides.

HIS POEM

We have about 160 lines of his poem extant, if we include the more dubious fragment 18 (which was found translated into Latin) and the single line of 'Cornford's fragment.' This amounts to perhaps one third of the original composition. Most scholars estimate that the poem is probably about 500 lines long. A minority would diminish the number to 300 but such speculation must remain forever unprovable. The fragments differ radically in their sizes. The largest is a stupendous passage of 61 lines (fragment 8 or the *Way of Truth*) preserved by Simplicius. The next largest fragment is the *Prologue* (fragment 1) at 32 lines. This literary gem was preserved in its entirety mainly through Sextus Empiricus. These two are the only long passages. The other seventeen fragments run to no more than 9 lines each. Some of them consist of only a single line.

The organization of the fragments is a controversial issue, but a standard sequence is generally used by most scholars. The passages fall into four main groups: the *Prologue*, a group of 'transitional' short fragments (fr. 2 to 7) that generally leads into the *Way of Truth* (fragment 8), and then the *Way of Seeming* (fr. 8.51-61 and fr. 9-19). Looking at the very uneven distribution of the fragments, the *Prologue* is preserved intact at 32 lines. The transitional fragments amount to 30 lines and the *Way of Truth* 50 lines. It is assumed that the *Way of Truth* is almost all present, according to Diels nine-tenths. Many people include the transitional fragments with the main body of the *Way of Truth* so that it makes one large section of 80 lines. The rest of the fragments, some 51 lines, form the highly scattered remains of the *Way of Seeming*. Due to the nature of its contents (cosmogony, cosmology, astronomy, physiology, perception and more), this last section must have been much larger than the *Way of Truth*. It is estimated that perhaps one-tenth of it is extant. If the poem was (say) 500 lines long, then this last section must have approached 400 lines and amounted to *most* of the poem. Yet this section of the composition is relatively neglected in comparison to the smaller *Way of Truth*.

By the way, the titles *Way of Truth* and *Way of Seeming* are not supported by the poem itself or by other ancient writers. They represent only later constructs used by modern interpreters. I am using them too, out of convenience, but we must not put too much authority on the present arrangement of the fragments. Various scholars have argued that parts of *Seeming* (for example, fragment 16) should belong in *Truth*, and so on. In other words, the neat and tight compartmentalization of Parmenides' composition into two mutually exclusive and complimentary sections (with a prologue) is a purely artificial modern construct. They are handy labels but do not necessarily reflect an accurate picture of Parmenides' intentions. The two main sections are not so sharply distinct as many believe. I have preferred to organize the material from the standpoint of Being and Becoming, finding these respective angles in all sections. Nevertheless, the

labels *Truth* and *Seeming* are convenient and generally correspond to a real distinction in the Eleatic universe.

The disproportionate size of the original *Way of Seeming* over the *Way of Truth* makes us suspicious that this dualistic organization lacks credibility. Most of the poem consists of *Seeming*! This overbalance has created a major problem for the modern interpreters. If the *Way of Truth* gives the 'goods' about 'reality,' then why write a long intricate section that is patently false? Why make up a cosmogony and an entire cosmic system if it has no validity? Various explanations have been given by different scholars, but none of them have much credibility. For example, he composed it only to show it up. Or again, he was doing his best for the sensible world just to be practical, although he knew that it is ultimately an illusion. Or again, he was making it as a pointed criticism of particular philosophers (usually Heraclitus and/or Pythagoras). The relations between the sections on *Seeming* and on *Truth* have always been baffling to everyone. Scholars love to discuss these matters but it has never distracted them very much from their main interest: the obscure deductions in fragment 8. Most interpreters assume that the *Way of Truth* is the main event and that the rest of the poem is secondary.

If the integration of the *Way of Seeming* with the *Way of Truth* has always been problematic, similar difficulties arise concerning the *Prologue*, or 'Proem' as some prefer to call it. Its contents just do not easily tally with the 'logical' material of the *Way of Truth*. In the *Prologue*, the poet describes his mystical-initiatic journey by horse-drawn chariot, escorted by the Daughters of the Sun, into the presence of an unnamed goddess. She greets him and promises to impart a revelation—the divine truth as well as the fallible beliefs of mortal men. In the rest of the poem she expounds her teaching. Hence the deductions of the *Way of Truth* are nominally spoken by a goddess! Why create such an elaborate introduction and frame for some deductions that can stand on their own? The purpose of the *Prologue* has never been clear. Some scholars stretch their rhetorical skills to the limit in an effort to relate the imagery of the *Prologue* to the motionless spherical One. The task is not easy. In fact, the language of the *Prologue* is heavily infused with descriptions of movement, sound, travel, and transformation. It seems quite the opposite to the 'static' material of the *Way of Truth*, and purposefully so. Yet the *Prologue* also appears to be quite sincere, a real experience that brought him to his revelation. The modern scholarly community has always found it difficult to reconcile these two sides of Parmenides: his 'logical rationalism' and his prophetic 'irrationality.' The common approach is generally to explain his religiosity away as 'literary license' or else largely to ignore it.

Thus Parmenides' poem is a masterpiece of multiple ambiguities. The *Way of Truth* leads us 'logically' to what seems to be an impossibility—the elimination of all motion and time. Meanwhile, the *Way of Seeming* (that we presume must be false) presents a cosmology that is 'true' to his predecessors and more like 'common sense.' The true seems false and the false true. To top it all off, the *Prologue* reminds us that the doctrine actually belongs to the goddess and not necessarily Parmenides himself. By 'distancing' himself in this manner he may be hinting to us that a satirical level of interpretation is also permissible. After all, his teacher Xenophanes was also a satirist. All

in all, Parmenides' poem contains a wonderful collection of intentional paradoxes and multiple meanings. Things are not what they seem to be. Like Heraclitus, Parmenides is the very prophet of Musical paradox honed to a high art.

HIS WRITING STYLE

The ambiguities of the overall form are also reflected in the details of his writing style. He deliberately throws up obstacles that cloud certainty. The poem does not make easy reading. The diction is at times austere, so that the meanings are difficult to construe. His syntax has intentional multiple ambiguities that seem to 'tease' the reader in an almost perverse manner. He has been accused of willful obscurantism. Rather than writing for clear communication, Parmenides gives us '*signs*' in the manner of Heraclitus' Delphic Oracle. Some lines require several different translations in order to bring out the variety of possible intentions. In its density of Musical imagery and capacity for multiple interpretation it compares with Heraclitus. In fact, these two philosophers form a natural 'pair' famous for the obscurity of their expression. They must have inherited this trait from Xenophanes. Indeed, these three philosophers form a particularly tight group famous in antiquity for their obscurity.

Even in the ancient world he was criticized because his verses are 'obscure and dry.' Proclus remarked in his *Commentary on Parmenides* (Cousin, 665): *'Parmenides himself in his poem: and yet although obliged, because of the poetic form itself, to use metaphorical terms, figures, and turns of phrase, he nevertheless embraced the most unbecoming, dry, and austere form of expression. He exhibits this characteristic in such places* [citing parts of fragment 8], *and every other feature of the same kind; so that his discourse reads more like prose than poetry.'* These judgements are somewhat unfair, since they apply almost exclusively to his *Way of Truth* and not the poem as a whole. The late writers no longer understood him very well, thereby clouding their assessment. Yet Proclus was right when he said in his *Commentary on Timaeus* (Diehl, vol. 1, 345) that *'he is unclear because of his poetic style.'* Such criticisms are nevertheless beside the point. They miss the integral connection between his mode of expression and his Musical message. At any rate, parts of the poem are also extremely beautiful and the general literary quality is high. True, it is somewhat uneven, but this patchiness may only indicate that the original poem was quite large. In the coming generation, Empedocles (whose literary skills are quite good) valued Parmenides' book highly. The fact that his poem was copied for the next thousand years so that Simplicius had access to a version indicates to me that his manner of writing could not be so bad.

Modern interpreters are mostly irritated by his oracular style. Like Aristotle, they contend that a 'proper' philosopher should say what he means and mean what he says. They have no sympathy for the prophetic mind-set of Parmenides (or Heraclitus). It is unbecoming of a 'rational logician.' Consequently, many scholars simply conclude that he was just a bad writer, not suspecting that his ambiguities could actually be intentional. The widespread modern attitude to Parmenides is well illustrated by Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (*TPP* 241). *'Ancients and moderns alike are agreed upon a low estimation of Parmenides' gifts as a writer. He has little facility in diction, and the struggle to force*

novel, difficult and highly abstract philosophical ideas into metrical form frequently results in ineradicable obscurity, especially syntactical obscurity. On the other hand, in the less argumentative passages of the poem he achieves a kind of clumsy grandeur.' Such judgements about his style are inevitably influenced by the 'highly abstract' philosophical ideas that Parmenides supposedly expounds. They presume that he *was* trying to write 'properly' but struggling because the ideas themselves are so difficult. Such misconceptions only illustrate the vast gulf between the early philosophers and the moderns. The real reason that he wrote in such an 'abnormal' style has much more to do with his inspiration from the Muses rather than a serious effort to properly discuss the 'ontological principle.'

Parmenides wrote in the archaic dactylic hexameter verse also used by Homer, Hesiod, the Orphic poets, and Xenophanes. By embracing the antique forms of epic tradition he was giving his work a certain lofty authority, but also insuring a certain freedom from that very authority. Xenophanes had already used such verse forms in order to satirize various 'sacred cows.' The musical medium itself tolerated a certain 'latitude' for the sake of the Muses' expression. All of the inspired writers put the Muses first and well ahead of 'rational discourse.' In what is perhaps the most famous two lines that Hesiod ever wrote (*Theog.* 27-8), he had the Muses say directly that *'we say many false things resembling the truth and utter true things when we wish.'* This statement amounts to an accurate description of Parmenides' poem! The poet must demonstrate that he *can* write the truth, but he is also 'spinning a yarn,' a seeming. The entire band of poets had their Muses. Homer began by invoking his in the beginning of the *Iliad*: *'Sing, goddess, for the wrath.'* In a later invocation (*Iliad* 2.485) he added: *'for you are goddesses, and are present and know all things.'* Hesiod related in detail how the Muses came and taught him his song as he was pasturing his flock beneath Helicon. The Orphic poets did the same. Everyone believed that genuine inspiration granted the poet a deeper insight into the truth than other people who lacked this 'madness.' It is entirely feasible to regard the *Prologue* as itself an extended invocation to his Muse (the goddess in the midst).

The poem contains numerous thematic and stylistic echoes of Homer's *Odyssey* and other mythological material. Understandably, one can also recognize indications that he was aware of Orphic poetry. Moreover, similar images are found in the famous poet-musicians of his time: Pindar, Simonides, Bacchylides. It was common for poets to *sing* their poem. Parmenides should also be compared to the semi-legendary religious figures like Aithalides, Aristeas, Abaris, Epimenides and Hermotimus. They also spoke of an initiation-journey or mystical experience of the *psyche*, now descending to Hades, now flying above the earth. Epimenides (fr. 1) encountered the goddess of Truth and Justice while his body slept—an experience quite close to that of Parmenides. All of the poets and early philosophers talked about '*the road*,' the 'right path' and the 'indiscernible track' that leads from ignorance to enlightenment. The road or 'way' can be a spiritual odyssey, the quest for knowledge, or the narrative conveying the results of the quest. By consciously using the same imagery as the other poets, Parmenides was grounding himself within the same tradition. In the *Odyssey* (22.347) the bard Phemius says of his Muse: *'I am self-taught and the goddess* [the Muse] *has implanted in my mind* ***song paths*** *of every kind.'* Parmenides' poem is his song path. It was never intended to be construed

as 'rational philosophy.' Such notions arose during the era of Athenian dominance with Plato and Aristotle.

The ambiguous syntax of his poem necessitates alternative translations in order to better illuminate the Musical implications. In some key passages the alternatives are crucial for a decent understanding. I have decided to use the translation of McKirahan (*PBS* 151-157) as a 'base camp,' partly because he preserved the verse-line format and partly because his translation is quite readable. However, this does not mean that his version is always the best. A handful of others are also accessed. More than any other philosopher (except perhaps Heraclitus) Parmenides requires multiple translations. In addition, for the sake of continuity, I have decided to follow the conventional order of the fragments in my exegesis. Unfortunately, this practice results in a certain measure of arbitrariness in the 'flow' of the commentaries. But it has the advantage of familiarity for the reader who is accustomed to the standard order. The commentaries thus move from fragment 1 to 19. Difficult issues, such as Plato's treatment of Parmenides, will be placed late in the essay after the commentaries on the fragments.

THE PROLOGUE: THE RENOWNED PATHWAY

Before we begin the exegesis itself we must say a few words about the *Prologue* as a whole. Parmenides' journey of transformation has much in common with the whole literature of the mystical experience. It should not be artificially removed from this sphere. For example, compare his introduction with that of *Poimandres* in the *Corpus Hermeticum*. The writer is transported beyond a barrier that stops ordinary men. As 'one who knows' he is carried 'through all the cities' into the magical region. The imagery of the horse-drawn chariot has often been used in the literature (both in the east and west) to mean the directing impulses of the *soul*. Like ***Orpheus*** or ***Odysseus***, Parmenides metaphorically descends into the Underworld there to meet his teacher. On one level the goddess is his *Muse* who gives him his song; indeed, she sings it for him. On another level the goddess is ***Kore*** or ***Persephone***, queen of the Underworld. As seen in the paintings upon the ancient vases, when ***Orpheus*** meets her she is always flanked by the figures of *Justice* and *Necessity*, important characters in the poem. Parmenides tells us more about her in fragment 12.3-6: *'and in the middle of these is the goddess who governs* [or steers] *all things. / For she rules over hateful birth and union of all things, / sending the female to unite with male and in opposite fashion, / male to female.'* It is obvious from this passage that the goddess also has solidly Musical credentials. She is the DYAD, the *mese* goddess, the Gateway between the One and the Many.

Parmenides's shamanic journey functions partly to lay claim in support of a divine knowledge (Musical truth) not attained by ordinary mortals. It is an allegory of his path to enlightenment. An obstacle must be passed, resulting in the ability to leave the world of ordinary experience behind. Once he has passed through the '*Gates of the Paths of Night and Day*' he approaches that magical place, the 'Isle of the Blest.' In his 'labors,' he is escorted by the '*Daughters of the Sun*' who guide him over the right path.

Some of the elements and personalities in this allegory are derived from a traditional mythological story. ***Phaethon***, the son of ***Helios*** (the *Sun*) and ***Clymene***, drove his father's chariot: the '*Chariot of the Sun*.' But the horses bolted. To prevent the **earth** from being burnt up, ***Zeus*** hurled a thunderbolt at ***Phaethon*** and he fell into the *river* Eridanus (Po). There his wounded body still smoulders and sends up *clouds* of steam so hot that the birds cannot fly through it. His sisters, the *Daughters of the Sun* (***Heliades***) who accompanied him, were turned into poplars and sing a sad song. Their falling tears were turned into *amber* when they were dried by the *sun*. Periodically, the tears that collected in the sand were swept away by the river. This story contains a lot of familiar Musical imagery. It also follows a widespread Musical-mythological motif in which **fire** (the Sun, the amber, the unchanging One) descends (or is divided) into **water** (the river, the Many, the movement of Time). What is implied here is the eternal contrasting theme of the unchanging MONAD and the changing DYAD, the realms of Being and Becoming. In Parmenides' poem the story is altered. His own fortunes are more auspicious than those of ***Phaethon***. He isn't blasted by ***Zeus***; rather, his journey reaches its mystical destination. By traversing 'all the way' through the realm of Becoming, he has 'arrived' at the realm of Being. For the Whole is One.

From here on, the rest of my exposition follows the translation of the *Prologue*. As usual, it is divided into 'bite-sized' segments with commentary.

(1.1-5) *'The mares which carry me as far as my spirit ever aspired*
were escorting me, when they brought me and proceeded along the renowned road
of the goddess, which [or who] *brings a knowing mortal to all cities one by one.*
On this path I was being brought, on it wise mares were bringing me,
Straining the chariot, and maidens were guiding the way.'

Notice that all the characters in his poem are female: the *goddess*, the *Daughters of the Sun*, *Justice* and *Necessity* (two proxies of the goddess), even the horses that pull the chariot. The emphasis upon the DYAD and the female 'element' hints that his revelation concerns the Many, indeed, *the All*. The DYAD holds the power to 'spin out' complexity. She is the gateway to 'all the cities.' The reference to cities confirms the Musical context very well and links him firmly with the metaphorical language of Heraclitus and Xenophanes. A city is a ***harmonia***. In order to arrive at *the Whole*, he must traverse all the cities. The road or '*way*' so emphasized in the *Prologue* is the same road stressed by Heraclitus and Anaximenes—the pathway of the *soul* 'up and down.' Its description is variously translated. As well as '*renowned road*' seen above, we have alternatives in the '*far-famed road*,' the '*famous pathway*,' the '*resounding way*,' and the '*much-speaking route*.' The implication is not only that it is auspicious but also that it has *sonic* associations. Similar descriptions are found in other poets, for example Pindar (*Isthm*. 8.64) where it is sometimes translated the '*sagacious road*.'

Translations vary according to whether the mystical path brings him through the cities or whether it is the goddess who does it. In either case the image is intensely Musical and musical. The road through all possible ***harmoniai*** is the goddess-dominated arithmetic of the monochord. The pathway (the place of sacrifice) is the monochord

string itself. Yet it is the 'vortex-inspiring' power of the DYAD that makes possible the alternative ***harmoniai***. She has more than enough power to lead him '*as far as his spirit ever aspires*.' The poet uses a present (and active) tense here, implying that such 'shamanistic' journeys occur more than once. By implication they are a regular experience. Thus he is the '*knowing mortal*,' sometimes translated as '*one who knows*' the '*man of knowledge*' and '*the knowing man*.' He is the *initiated one* who is familiar with the territory of the Musical road. He already possesses wisdom even before this particular journey. The maidens are also wise, and, interestingly enough, even the horses have wisdom. Such an unusual image confirms the traditional connection between the horses and the *soul*. The flying *sun-chariot* itself (or its passenger) is the *spirit* or self.

Some modern scholars, seeing nothing of particular importance in the image of the 'cities,' translate the passage more generally. He was '*carried everywhere*.' Sometimes it is put '*carried over all the cities*' because the chariot is flying in the air. Such translations are fine as long as the sense is preserved. The poet is an 'expert' who has transcended all of the particular cities in the quest for *the Whole*. Although the Musical image of the 'city' has a digital slant, Parmenides is also interested in the analog *continuum* that is the union of all the cities. Thus he must metaphorically travel through every city in order to reach his destination. Of course, a number of modern scholars take the passage in a crudely fundamentalist or literalist sense. For example, Burnet (*EGP* 172) concluded rather prosaically that Parmenides must have been an itinerant sophist! His real purpose in this matter is to make it '*more natural*' that Parmenides visited Athens, thereby shoring up the late chronology. But in truth, none of the early philosophers had problems with travel. It was widespread amongst them; hence, it does not need such justification. Parmenides' use of the 'travel' motif should not be taken literally but rather as the poets took it—metaphorically.

In addition, most scholars try to play down the religious element in the *Prologue*. This is done by interpreting the allegory in as shallow a fashion as possible. It is *only* an allegory akin to a mystical experience (and not a genuine experience) that is purposefully used solely as a literary device. Parmenides implied divinity because his 'discovery' of deductive logic was so astounding to him (like Pythagoras' supposed discovery of ratio-numbers) that he described it in religious terms. The discovery of 'the potency of logic' is the central issue and the mystical language is only a literary side-show. For example, McKirahan (*PBS* 159) suggested that *'this* [mystical] *experience was the discovery of the power of logic, which is perhaps represented by the unnamed goddess.'* A 'goddess of logic' may be attractive to some moderns but it is entirely a fantasy. Parmenides' goddess was no eccentric intellectual construction; rather, she was the '*power spinning around the double*' common to all the early philosophers. She rules the '*hateful birth*' (strife induced) of the Many from the One. Being the power inherent in the DYAD, she commands divine authority. The modern desire to remove the goddess from her classical locus demonstrates the modern bias away from the ancient musical mind-set toward the abstract, logical, visual and irreligious mode. Hence the tendency to portray the goddess in the most abstract tones possible. By distorting his goddess, modern interpreters try to paint Parmenides as a 'rational logician' somewhat removed from the religious milieu.

(1.6-10) *'The axle in the center of the wheel was shrilling forth the bright sound*
of a musical pipe,
ablaze, for it was being driven forward by two rounded
wheels at either end, as the daughters of the Sun
were hastening to escort (me) after leaving the house of Night
for the light, having pushed back the veils from their heads with their hands.'

Images of movement and sound dominate the *Prologue*, entirely appropriate for the Musical context. In this case, rapid movement causes the axle to buzz like an *aulos*. This picture also conjures up the Musical astronomy of '*fiery wheels*' portrayed later in fragment 12. As we have seen earlier, this astronomy is heavily indebted to Anaximander. It also reminds us of the *vortex* and the still point in the center where the goddess resides. Sextus Empiricus, to whom we owe the preservation of the *Prologue*, gave his own allegorical interpretation of the composition. He claimed (*Adv. Math.* 7.3-14) that the maidens who lead him are the senses: the two rounded wheels are the ears (sense of hearing) and the movement of the Daughters toward the light is the sense of sight. Although we cannot put too much credence in this neoplatonically influenced interpretation, it shows that the late ancient writers were not hampered by literalist interpretations. Modern writers have a narrower vision.

The image of the Daughters throwing off their veils as they approach the light is quite beautiful and memorable. It represents the path of enlightenment as the transformation of darkness into light. However, this passage has provoked a lot of comment. The guides leave the House of Night in order to pick him up (in the light) and bring him back down to the House of Night where the goddess lives. The direction of the initiate's journey seems intuitively wrong. However, it can be explained. To begin with, the poet is already a '*knowing mortal*' who lives 'in the light.' Moreover, the journey descends into the Underworld, like that of Odysseus. In addition, the DYAD goddess is associated with Night and the Many, the realm of *strife* to be transcended by the Whole. The poet's revelation concerns the '*strife-encompassed*' region ruled by the goddess. In order to reach the goal of his journey, he must traverse 'all the cities.'

(1.11-14) *'There are the gates of the roads of Night and Day*
and a lintel and a stone threshold contain them.
High in the sky they are filled by huge doors
of which avenging Justice holds the keys that fit them.'

The barriers that the poet must cross in order to 'traverse all the cities' consist of the '*Gates of the ways of Night and Day*,' a poetic image he borrowed from Hesiod (*Theog.* 748). These gates must have symbolic importance, since their structure and machinery takes up much of ten lines (1.11-20). It is here that Parmenides comes perilously close to a direct description of the sacred monochord—the instrument by which one 'crosses the cities.' The realm of '*Night and Day*' is the same as that of darkness and light; that is, it signifies the regions of dissonance and consonance, complexity and simplicity, strife and love—the world of ***harmonia***. Their '*paths*' are found upon the monochord wire and the '*gates*' or barriers are the various positions (of

fret placement). The '*lintel and stone threshold*' image stands for the two immovable end-bridges that limit or bind the music wire and contain their 'love and strife.' In the above translation, the '*gates*' are described as '*high in the sky*,' but the line is also translated '*high in the air*.' Gallop (PE 51) has translated the entire line 13 as: '*And the aitherial gates themselves are filled with great doors.*' The implication is that the '*gates*' are made of ***aither***, which stands for **fire** (*sky*) and/or **air**. Both alternatives have strong Musical associations. It is clear that Parmenides is poetically divulging the practical canonical foundations of his transcendent Musical revelation.

The female Orphic figures of *Justice* (***Dike***) and *Necessity* (***Anangke***) are prominent in Parmenides' poem and occur in each section of the composition. To a large extent, they act as agents or aspects of the great DYAD goddess '*of the middle path*.' They serve as patrons or guarantors of the inevitability of monochord arithmetic and architecture. Thus they can lock or unlock every door—every instance of ***harmonia***. The Greek is purposefully ambiguous here, so that the above translation '*the keys that fit them*' has also been rendered '*the double-bolts*' and '*the keys of retribution*' and '*the rewarding keys*' and '*the alternate keys*.' The Greek word stands for both locks and bolts. The language implies a dual function derived from the literal Greek: '*alternating*' or '*in exchange for*.' The musical implication is clear. The goddess holds the means of 'unlocking' every conceivable ***harmonia*** and exchanging it for another. The monochord principle allows this ability.

The goddesses *Justice* and *Necessity* have prominence in the writings of all the early philosophers. This is not surprising, since all of them share the same Musical assumptions. Note their importance, for example, in the profoundly Musical surviving fragment of Anaximander. There they display the same functions and symbolic meaning found in Parmenides (and Heraclitus and Empedocles). The patterns of '*Justice and Injustice*' that characterize ***harmonia*** have an inevitability personified (or protected) by *Necessity*. On the Orphic vases, these two goddesses regularly accompany the central goddess ***Persephone***.

(1.15-21) '*The maidens beguiled her with soft words*
and skillfully persuaded her to push back the bar for them
quickly from the gates. They made
a gaping gap of the doors when they opened them,
swinging in turn in their sockets the bronze posts
fastened with bolts and rivets. There, straight through them then,
the maidens held the chariot and horses on the broad road.'

The goddess *Justice* is a more complex personality than *Necessity*, though they always work together. In the *Prologue*, *Justice* is the active gatekeeper and understandably so. She must be persuaded to reveal her secrets, the '*innumerable worlds*' at her disposal. The *Daughters of the Sun* do have the power to persuade her because they are capable of 'spinning out' all possibilities. These alternative ***harmoniai*** embody varying degrees of 'Justice and Injustice' in compensatory structures as maintained by Anaximander's fragment. Some modern scholars want to replace the '*soft words*' of line

1.15 with '*gentle argument*.' In this way they can contend that the persuasion was accomplished through logic. However, the sense is forced or at least artificial. The goddess is persuaded because it is her very nature to 'complexify.' Only the imposition of some Pythagorean-style numerical limit can prevent her from generating the infinite expansion.

The central image in this passage pictures *all* the doors opening quickly so that the road becomes '*broad*.' In effect, every road is available and all lead to *the Whole*. Instead of tarrying in this or that city, the charioteer makes straight for the 'finish line.' When all of the gates are opened, a '*yawning gulf*' appears in order to emphasize the vastness of the possibilities; for the number of alternative 'cities' is infinite. The image of the doors '*swinging*' on their fixed '*bronze posts*' is another highly musical picture derived from the monochord. The vibrating music wire '*swings*' between its fixed end-bridges that were traditionally described as '*bronze*' in the poetic literature. Last but not least, the chariot that travels the '*broad road*' here can be musically connected with the moveable bridge that 'traverses the highway' of the music wire. '*Pushing the bar*' and manipulating the keys have similar associations. In short, the entire passage is infused with the symbolic 'machinery' of musical canonics, from which the poet receives his revelation.

THE PROLOGUE: THE GIFT OF THE GODDESS

(1.22-28) *'And the goddess received me kindly, took my*
right hand in hers, and addressed me with these words:
Young man, accompanied by immortal charioteers,
who reach my house by the horses which bring you,
welcome—since it was not an evil destiny that sent you forth to travel
this road (for indeed it is far from the beaten path of humans),
but Right and Justice. There is need for you to learn all things—

The gatekeeper *Justice* opens all the doors for the poet and he is led to the goddess. In Hesiod's image, the great bronze threshold is located were Night and Day greet each other, the one entering as the other emerges. Thus the picture implies that the *Gates of the Paths of Night and Day* occupy the middle, the place of the goddess. She takes his right hand in hers, a convention shown on vase-paintings when ***Orpheus*** meets the Underworld goddess. She assures him that his journey is auspicious and sanctioned not only by *Justice* but also *Right* (***Themis***), another goddess 'companion.' Being an initiate, the poet is privileged among men and permitted to explore far beyond the reach of ordinary humans. They are content with only a superficial knowledge of canonics and other spiritual matters. The goddess calls the poet '*young man*' but age is not implied; rather, it means that she is the teacher and he is the student. She will give him supernatural directions like those given to mortal adventurers in the *Odyssey*. He will be counselled over which road to travel.

Many modern scholars have tried to find pre-echoes of the *Way of Truth* in the *Prologue*. For example, the road goes '*straight*' through the gates foreshadowing the

'direct' nature of logic. Again, the paradoxical doctrine is unfamiliar to normal experience and thus '*far from the beaten track of men.*' Moreover, the *Gates of the Paths of Night and Day* supposedly represent the point where all opposites are undivided and all is resolved into an undifferentiated unity. In short, the *Prologue* somehow offers an appropriate setting for a series of logical arguments about the plenum. I am not convinced. Other modern scholars also feel a certain uneasiness about the 'inventor of logic' being so mystical. Some, for example Guthrie (2.12), are willing to concede that his '*residue of irrationality*' is real and probably due to his Italian origins. Thus he wrote: *'Parmenides was not a rationalist of the Ionian type, and it is extraordinarily difficult, at the immense spiritual distance from which we contemplate his remains, to know how much weight should be given to the non-rational element in his writings. Like other figures of archaic Greece, he achieved an outstanding intellectual advance within a framework of almost primitive irrationality.'* Guthrie would prefer that Parmenides were 'fully rational' like the Milesians and he does his best to separate the 'residues of irrationality' from his 'intellectual advances.' Similar viewpoints are widespread among modern interpreters of his poem.

The *Prologue* ends (at least, according to the remaining evidence) with a few lines of great difficulty and importance. The syntax is so ambiguous in the last two lines that many alternative translations have been made.

(1.28-32) *'but Right and Justice. There is need for you to learn all things—*
both the unshaken heart of persuasive [or well-rounded] *Truth*
and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true reliance.
But nevertheless you will learn these too—that the things that appear
Must genuinely be, being always, indeed, all things.'

In this passage the teaching of the goddess begins in earnest. It will occupy the entire remainder of the poem. The writing is charged with an atmosphere of expectation, of promise. Similar moments can be found in Empedocles (fr. 17 or 111), Heraclitus (fr. 1) or Xenophanes (fr. 34). Some coin of impending wisdom is about to be revealed. The goddess will now impart the very core of both divine truth (***alethiea***) and mortal opinion (***doxa***). Surely here we find the justification for the clean separation of the *Way of Truth* from the *Way of Seeming*. Or do we not find it?

The two categories of knowledge, divine and human, occur not only in Parmenides but also in Heraclitus, Xenophanes, and Empedocles. For example, Empedocles (fr. 133) wrote: *'It is not possible to reach and approach (the divine) with the eyes / or grasp (it) with our hands, by which the most powerful / highway of persuasion strikes the minds of men.'* Note that he has used imagery in homage to Parmenides with his *'highway of persuasion.'* The verb 'to persuade' (***peithein***) and its cognate noun 'persuasion' (***peitho***) are much used in the Eleatic poem. We have already seen it at 1.16 where *Justice* was persuaded to open the gates. It is personified at 2.4 and it is always closely aligned to the *Way of Truth*. References appear at 8.12, 8.28, 8.39 and 8.50. The term strongly implies *trust*, as at 8.50 where the goddess calls her discourse '*trustworthy*' (***piston***). In contrast, at line 1.30 above mortal beliefs have '*no true trust*'

(***pistis***). Similarly, at 8.52 her '*deceitful*' presentation of mortal appearances leads us to believe that her account may not be trustworthy. ***Pistis*** is commonly translated as '*belief*' or '*conviction*,' having close associations with ***doxa*** (*belief, opinion, appearance, seeming*). But the relations between ***doxa*** and (2.4) *'the path of Persuasion (for it attends upon Truth)'* are not simplistically 'either/or' or mutually exclusive. The *Way of Seeming* is itself deemed to be a '*plausible arrangement*' at 8.60. It is likely, even probable, and it has at least *some* value. On the other hand the 'persuasive path' is not necessarily entirely reliable. This ambivalence was also brought out in the fragment of Empedocles above. The *'highway of persuasion'* is here associated with the normal methods of men (***doxa***) rather than the divine ***alethiea***. In lines 1.31-32 Parmenides brings out the complexity of the relations between ***doxa*** and ***alethiea***.

The distinction between divine and human knowledge reminds us of the traditional musical distinction between divine and human *numbers*. They have different characters within ***harmonia***, but one cannot be deemed a simple negation of the other. In other words, ***doxa*** does not mean 'false' as a direct reversal of 'true.' Philosophers from Xenophanes to Plato have used ***doxa*** to signify an account put forward as true even though it cannot be known with complete certainty. Meanwhile, the Parmenidean path of ***alethiea*** is justified by a 'certainty' of logic and yet it yields the impossible. This uncomfortable and ironic situation (no movement, no time) is not very 'persuasive,' even though the epithet is always attached to it. The ambivalence between the two sides is intentional and exploited in the poem. For this reason I have abandoned the dominance of the simplistic categories *'truth and falsehood'* for his poem and replaced them by the categories of Being, Non-being, and Becoming. ***Alethiea*** is *the All* as Being and ***doxa*** is *the All* as Becoming. Non-being is dismissed as unknowable.

The two descriptions for ***alethiea***—'*persuasive*' and '*well-rounded*,' are derived from divergent manuscript sources, respectively Sextus Empiricus and Simplicius. '*Well-rounded*' refers naturally to the motionless spherical One. It is also described as '*unshaken*,' also translated '*steadfast*' or '*unwavering*.' Such descriptions are suitable for the ubiquitous One, but the image here is purposefully used in an intensely anti-musical manner, seemingly the very opposite of 'vibratory' or '*in motion*.' The *Way of Truth* will 'prove' the impossibility of motion, an idea almost inconceivable for the musical Greeks to whom being alive and being in motion are practically the same. Indeed, the verb ***pelein***, ***pelenai*** is apparently used in the poem simply as a synonym for ***einai*** (*to be*) at 6.8, 8.11, 8.18-19, and 8.45, but its original meaning is '*to be in motion*.' Motion and change are practically synonymous with being itself. Of course, this belief entails a hierarchical equivalence between Being and Becoming. We are now in the mainstream. Ancient musical models always took into account both the changing and the unchanging. The true fault-line in Parmenides runs between Being and Non-being rather than Being and Becoming. His paradoxical composition plays with all of these distinctions in order to bring out precious Musical nuggets in the manner of Heraclitus and Empedocles.

Lines 1.31-32 have much importance because we expect vital information about ***doxa***. We are not disappointed, but the teaching is exquisitely ambivalent in its expression. These lines are notorious for their syntactical ambiguity and counted among

the most difficult in the whole poem. Their significance is further enhanced by the strategic placement. McKirahan's translation given above (*'that the things that appear must genuinely be, being always, indeed, all things'*) is vague, but it captures well the problematic atmosphere of the statement. This oracular utterance certainly concerns the realm of Becoming, Time, or ***doxa*** and implicates '*all things*.' But what does it say? It is so auspicious both in meaning and position that I have decided to lay out alternative translations that I have encountered. Many scholars have tried their hand at it. The proposals (a decent sample) are organized into two groups: The first group (which is less fortunate) tends to remove any implication of motion. The second group emphasizes motion and is (perhaps) closer to the original sense. The two groups are separated by the uniquely quirky and original translation of Reale. Note how many variant translations are possible and the atmosphere of sheer perplexity pervading the lot.

Taran: *'how the appearances which pervade all things, had to be acceptable.'*
Mourelatos: *'how it would be right for things deemed acceptable to be acceptably: just being all of them together.'*
Guthrie: *'namely that what seems had assuredly to exist, being indeed everything.'*
Owen, Long: *'how the things-that-seem had to have genuine existence, being indeed the whole of things.'*
Reale: *'how one should go through all the things-that-appear, without exception, and test them.'*
Kirk, Raven: *'how the things that seem as they pass through everything, must gain the semblence of being.*
Gallop: *'how the things which seem had to have genuine existence, permeating all things completely.'*
Kirk, Raven, and Schofield: *'how what is believed would have to be assuredly, pervading all things throughout.'*
Lesher: *'how the things thought to be had to certifiably be, all pervading all.'*
Barnes: *'how what seems had reliably to be, forever traversing everything.'*
Kingsley: *'how beliefs based on appearance ought to be believable as they travel all through all there is.'*
Burnet: *'how passing right through all things one should judge the things that seem to be.'*

In spite of the uncertainty surrounding this passage, modern interpreters mostly follow a consistent line. The statement refers back to the beliefs of mortals which have '*no true trust*' and are therefore false, but Parmenides will learn about them as well. Mortals are obliged to accept appearances as genuinely existing because of their all-pervading character. The assertion made by the goddess is then merely (or mainly) a report about what humans believe and not an ultimate endorsement of its status. Actually, it is *false*. Universal human illusions must also be accounted for. Therefore, the *Way of Seeming* is intended to provide a (reasonable) explanation of human beliefs, even if they are actually entirely false. This explanation is glib and unconvincing. Such a project hardly needs an elaborate cosmology with commentary on astronomical, biological and theological matters that have little to do with 'mortal illusions.' The status of the *Way of Seeming* is decidedly not one of simple falsity.

that ***truth*** *is in the words / I will speak. But very difficult for men and exceedingly jealous / is the invasion of* ***belief*** *into their minds.'* Such lines of exhortation are naturally associated with the beginning of a composition.

Many scholars assume that line 2.1 must be the beginning of the section now called the *Way of Truth*. They may be right. On the other hand, this judgement is uncertain. It may instead occur somewhere 'in the middle.' An example can be cited in Empedocles' large fragment 17. Around the middle he stops and says (17.14): *'But come, listen to my words, for learning increases wisdom.'* The exhortation emphasizes the musical context of the wisdom. We cannot be sure that the Parmenidean passage is the actual beginning of the *Way of Truth*. Nor can we be dogmatic over its proper placement within the poem as a whole. The only certainty we have is that it comments on the realm of Being rather than Becoming; hence it does belong to the portion conveniently called the *Way of Truth*.

The second line is also controversial. The verb ***noein*** is generally translated '*to think*,' but its associations are at variance to the modern '*think*.' It is better translated '*to know*' or '*to ascertain*' or '*to realize*' because it tends to guarantee a validity beyond mere 'thinking about' something or intellectualizing. It is closer to 'direct' apprehension. Also, it is nearly always paired with verbs of saying or sonically manifesting. ***Noein*** is prominent in the Eleatic poem, not only here at 2.2, but also at 3, 6.1, 8.8, 8.34, and 8.36. Moreover, it is cognate with ***noema***, the noun '*thought*' and closely associated with ***nous***, translated '*mind, intelligence, the higher mental faculties*.' All of these terms are often used in the poem. They have many Musical associations that will be further examined in the next section on fragment 3.

The following lines lay out two '*paths of inquiry*,' cryptically named '*it is*' and '*it is not*.' In fact, even '*it*' is not explicitly stated. The verb ***esti*** (the third person singular form of the present indicative of the verb '*to be*') does not require a subject in the ancient Greek when the subject can be understood from the context. This may well be the case, especially if this passage is not the beginning of the section. Fragment 8 also begins with '*it is*' and proceeds to specify various '*signs*' or characteristics of '*it*.' We should presume that fragments 2 and 8 are closely related and that both refer to the same '*it*.' To what does '*it*' refer? It points to the One as the Whole, the All, the continuum, the well-compacted Sphere, the omni-harmonia, the '*all things at once*.' This passage affirms its existence and states that its non-existence is absolutely impossible. It cannot *not be* (at 2.3). The passage is an ecstatic affirmation of the vibratory All. At 2.7 he dismisses '*not-being*' as '*unlearnable*' (***gignoskein***), also translated '*unknowable*,' or '*unthinkable*,' or '*a path from which no tidings ever come*.' It is a path that none can learn of at all. In short, the fragment refers to the philosophy of Being (the Xenophanean a-temporal Whole) rather than the realm of Becoming. It is the path of ***alethiea***. The path is here paired and contrasted with its *negation*, Non-being (or Not-being, for the purposes of this essay they have the same meaning). The path of Non-being (2.5) '*needs must not be*' because, if it were to exist, we would have no ***kosmos***, no ***harmonia***. In the final line the poet reminds us that one could not even '*declare*' it, or '*express*' it, or '*utter*' it, or '*point*

it out;' in other words, the very act of 'sounding' it affirms it. Its negation is simply nonexistent.

Being and Non-being are contraries, logically exclusive. If you take one you fail to take the other. In fact, they are contradictories, as Parmenides makes clear later at 8.15-18: *'But the decision about these matters lies in this: / **it is** or **it is not**. But it has been decided, as is necessary, / to let go the one way as unthinkable and nameless (for it is not / a true way) and that the other is and is real.'* The path of Non-being is '*nameless*' because the Musical act of giving a name makes it 'existent' or actual (having vibratory reality). To name it is to say it and affirm it—to actualize its sonorous being.

The reader should realize here that the realm of Being is paired with Non-being and *not* with Becoming. The mutually exclusive choice does not lie between Being and Becoming; rather, it concerns Being and Non-being. The modern confusion or confluence between Non-being and Becoming is a carry-over from Plato's 'analysis.' The present orthodox position assumes that the 'logical alternatives' lie between ***alethiea*** and ***doxa***. These terms also carry more excess Platonic baggage to be discussed in due course. For now it is enough to note that the 'hard' relation between Being and Non-being is not necessarily transferable to Being and Becoming. Indeed, their relation in Parmenides is 'soft,' as in Heraclitus and Empedocles.

The modern 'take' on Parmenides is fundamentally dependent upon the '*only two ways of inquiry*' of fragment 2 being equated with the paths of divine and human knowledge given at the end of the *Prologue*. This conflation is fraudulent and has disastrous consequences for our understanding. We cannot appreciate Parmenides' own stand and save his *Way of Seeming* until we 'get behind' Plato and Aristotle. The modern position, following Plato, associates Becoming (***doxa***) with unreality and the senses, while Being goes with reality and reason or logic. These categories are projected onto Parmenides who supposedly 'taught' them to Plato. But in actuality it is a sophistic aberration invented for the sake of rhetoric. Among the early philosophers, no 'mutually exclusive' relation holds between ***alethiea*** and ***doxa***. The terms only describe *different* sorts of knowledge not necessarily incompatible at all. In the modern position, the exclusivity between ***alethiea*** and ***doxa*** is a cornerstone, the true Parmenides. This is probably one reason that fragment 2 is placed directly after the *Prologue* rather than at some other position in the *Way of Truth*. The juxtaposition bolsters the fatal transfer. Moderns have inherited this confusion from the source manuscript of Proclus, who quotes 1.29-30, and then immediately after that 2.1-8, following the 'improvements' of Plato. Without a realistic understanding of the Musical relations between Being, Non-being, and Becoming, Parmenides' poem is entirely unrecognizable and internally inconsistent.

The second cornerstone of the modern Parmenides involves the interpretation of '*it is*.' It is acceptable to translate it as '*what is*' or '*being*' as long as the implied Musical associations of ***kosmos*** and ***harmonia*** are maintained. But the modern approach removes every shred of musicality. Indeed, it tears out the very soul of Parmenides and replaces it with a cold, dry, and abstract discussion—removing him from his culture and his fellow

philosophers. Not understanding the spirit or the letter of the Parmenidean discourse, they claim that *no subject* is implied, not even the spherical One defended later in fragment 8 (since, according to the orthodoxy, fragment 2 comes early in the poem). The subject of '*it is*' is rather '*any subject of inquiry that can be spoken or thought of.*' Its abstraction is total. The scholarly attention then turns to '*is*' for an interminable discussion over the different senses of the verb '*to be.*' Is Parmenides using it existentially (eg. The sky exists), or in a predicative manner (eg. The sky is blue) or a combination of both (the second statement implying the first)? Further, is he intending yet some other usage, for example, the veridical (eg. It is the case)? These arguments are not decisive, nor can they ever be, and, in fact, they are entirely meaningless from the standpoint of Parmenides himself. His intention is always existential. Yet the 'ontological cunundrum' has spawned a 'growth industry' attracting philosophers from Plato to Russell. I will not pursue the issue very far in this essay. The reader interested in these abstruse mental gymnastics can consult innumerable books and articles continuing to inflate the situation. The modern fixation on the variant meanings of '*to be*' at the expense of Parmenides has added one final insult to the Eleatic poet: It assumes that Parmenides himself could not have known the distinctions between the different senses of '*to be*' because he was still 'too primitive.' Rather, Plato and Aristotle initiated such discoveries. Indeed, it was they (especially Plato) who set out to 'explain' Parmenides. Again we see how early philosophy was high-jacked by fourth century Athenocentric intellectualism.

Not all of the twentieth century scholars have jumped onto the ontological bandwagon. Verdenius (in Guthrie 2.14) suggested *'all that exists, the total of things.'* This statement potentially preserves the old Musical associations. Burnet (*EGP* 178) was brave enough to state that '*what is*' refers to the *plenum*. So far so good. But then he goes on to equate the continuum with '*body*' and '*corporeality.*' He too was heavily influenced by Aristotle, who thought that all of the Presocratics were simple materialists interested only in the 'material cause.' According to Burnet, Parmenides (or anyone else of his time) was as yet *incapable* of distinguishing the material from the immaterial. Moreover, Burnet's conception of the plenum is entirely spacial and has no musical associations whatsoever. It is totally foreign to the ancient mind-set and allows him to make such essentually meaningless statements as this: *'Instead of endowing the One with an impulse to change, as Heraclitus had done, and thus making it capable of explaining the world, Parmenides dismissed change as an illusion. He showed once and for all that if you take the One seriously you are bound to deny everything else.'* He can only conceive of the One in crudely spacial and abstract terms and he has no sympathy for the ancient musical way. He then goes on to further justify the incompatibility of Parmenides and Heraclitus, a common characteristic of the modern 'understanding.' Like Heraclitus, Parmenides has been buried under a revisionism that began with the Sophists.

We must emphasize the significance of fragment 2 for the proper understanding of Parmenides' intentions. It is here that the modern treatment goes seriously awry. On the other hand, a Musical exegesis here not only integrates the two Ways of his poem but also relates his poem to the other philosophers. The fragment also sets the tone and introduces some of the most important terms in the entire composition. The most prominent are: ***esti*** *'(it) is'* at 2.3 and 2.5 and ***eon*** '*being*' or '*what is*' at 2.7—both of

them grammatical forms of ***einai*** '*to be*.' We should also include ***noein*** '*to think*' at 2.2 and ***gignoskein*** '*to know*' at 2.7. Fragment 2 not only gives important terms, it also epitomizes a writing style endemic to the whole poem. That style can best be described as ambiguous, ironic, paradoxical and 'veiled' or indirect. We have here the same oracular style as Heraclitus, although Heraclitus used prose rather than verse. It is reasonable to assume that both of them inherited this style from Xenophanes.

A good example of Parmenides' intentional irony is found in this very fragment. Both at line 2.6 and 2.8 we witness the use of ***phrazein*** '*to point out*.' Its root concept is likely to be '*to call attention to*' and '*to attend to*.' The basic idea is selective attention and focus, another concept peculiarly suited to the context of canonics. At line 2.6 the goddess '*points out*' that Non-being is unknowable. Then at line 2.8 she says that '*you cannot point it out*,' an alternative translation of '*you cannot declare it*.' We have here the intentional irony or paradox that the goddess can point out what cannot be pointed out, but her student cannot. Some would call this a 'gratuitous contradiction,' but he revels in such things. Parmenides used ***phrazein*** again to good effect at 6.2. Another example can also be found here. At 2.2 two avenues of inquiry can be '*thought of*,' but at line 2.8 one path is '*unthinkable*.' Even the notion of two paths is problematic, since he has already given us three, and later in fragment 6 he will give us yet another! Such ambiguities irritated Aristotle and led him to complain that the Eleatics '*make nothing clear*.' By the criteria of 'transparent rationalism' Parmenides (and Heraclitus) are 'bad' philosophers. But it is obvious that their intention was not really 'rational discourse' at all. Rather, these philosophers were essentially religious figures with a message that has little to do with intellectual rationalism. The ironies, ambiguities, and paradoxes point to something 'higher' than that.

FRAGMENT 3: THINKING AND BEING

The third fragment consists of only one line; indeed, it is but half a line, yet its brevity belies its significance. The perennially contentious passage was preserved by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom*. 6.2.23) and Plotinus (5.1.8) who both interpreted it as a straightforward identity statement. The syntax is ambiguous and hence several representative translations are given:

Clement and many others: *'for Thinking and Being are the same thing.'*
Robinson: *'for ascertaining and being real are one and the same.'*
Burnet: *'for it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be.'*
Taran: *'for the same thing can be thought and can exist.'*
McKirahan: *'for the same thing is* [or is there] *for thinking and for being.'*

Historically, most interpreters have assumed it to be a simple identity statement between thinking (***noein***) and being (***einai***). In that case it is evidently mistaken. Obviously one can think about what does not exist, for example the proverbial unicorn. Some scholars have accused Parmenides of being too primitive to know this, but we would be wise to credit him with greater intelligence. One way around the problem is to assume that the object of thought is (or can be) at the same time the subject of being, but

the solution is actually just a verbal 'fudge.' We are confronted with a question: If an identity relation is *not* intended, then what alternative relation is? The problem is not helped by an additional controversy over the relation between fragment 3 and fragment 2. It is a perfect metrical fit completing line 2.8, giving us (for example): *'nor may you speak it, for Thinking and Being are the same thing.'* Many scholars make fragment 3 an appendage of fragment 2, and they may well be right. On the other hand, we cannot prove that it actually belongs there; hence some scholars prefer caution and want to give it more independence. Either way, the terminology ties it closely to fragment 2. We should judge the two fragments entirely compatible and particularly significant for the poem as a whole.

We can salvage an identity relation if we adopt a Musical perspective on the statement. The subject (as usual) is the All and it is fully existent not only in '*thinking*' or '*ascertaining*' but also in actuality, in '*being*.' In other words, the statement concerns matters of '*theoria*' and '*practica*.' The continuum is not only a 'theoretical' mental construct, it can also be demonstrated (to exist) using a monochord. In order to justify this interpretation we need a little more background. Although he has not yet said it directly, the *Way of Truth* argues for a '*full*' plenum and against the *void*. The stand against '*what is not*' is motivated by an 'omni-harmonia' in which all possibilities are present. Hence the void is '*banished*.' The conservative philosopher, on the other hand, preferred the more traditional '*numbers and the void*.' He would argue that an infinite division is not practical or desirable and that any representative division 'imports' the void as well as some *limit* into ***harmonia***. The radical Eleatics answer that the continuum is not only conceivable but demonstrable. The void *can* be eliminated by taking an analog perspective on the nature of ***harmonia***. The All or the Whole is there for both thinking (or realizing) and for being. In this way we have a functional identity between the '*theoria*' and the '*practica*.'

The Musical interpretation offered here is further corroborated by two separate passages in the *Way of Truth*. The first one (6.1-3) says: *'That which is there to be spoken and thought of must be. / For it is possible for it to be, / but not possible for nothing to be. I bid you consider this.'* Again we see a pairing that suggests a coupling of '*practica*' and '*theoria*.' In this case it is ***legein*** '*to speak*' and ***noein*** '*to think*' that ensure the existence of the vibratory All. The path of Non-being is again rejected, implying that there is no void in the Whole. From the perspective of Being, the Whole is a true continuum without 'gaps.' Empedocles also expressed the same thing in his fragment 13: *'None of the whole is either empty or over-full.'*

Line 6.1 uses two terms that have strong Musical associations. ***Legein*** '*to speak*' or '*to say*' is the verbal root from which ***logos*** is derived. It has many meanings, discussed in the chapter on Heraclitus. The implication of ***legein*** involves '*practica*' or actually 'sounding' something. Its sense is traceable to a primitive use of the verb in which it means '*to pick out*.' Thus it is also related to ***phrazein*** '*to point out*.' In the old musical sensibility to 'sound it out' is to make it existent. The other term ***noein*** '*to think of*' also has interesting implications. We have already observed in the last section that it implies an act of direct recognition, perhaps better translated '*to know*' or '*to realize*.' It

accompanies the substitution of a true for a false impression, not so much a process of reasoning as a sudden illumination, a perceiving with the mind. The faculty for doing this is called ***nous***, usually translated '*mind*,' but a particularly special aspect of 'mind.' Practically all of the early philosophers used this term. Its special status is well expressed by Euripides (fr. 1018): *The **nous** in each of us is god.'* Its standing is emphasized by the belief that it is something external to the other faculties and not dependent upon the senses. It can be paralysed or put out of action but not deceived. Only in Hesiod is deception involved, but it accompanies very special circumstances. Usually ***nous*** assumes infallibility, something that comes in from the outside (but not through the senses) and is divine. It is mysterious and has little to do with discursive reasoning. Many philosophers and poets equated it with ***psyche*** (*soul*) or the highest aspect of ***psyche***. Even Aristotle, who was contemptuous of Orphic religious doctrines of immortality and reincarnation, admitted that the ***psyche*** perhaps survived the dissolution of the body (*An. Post.* 100b5) *'not all of it, but the **nous**.'* Its proper function then, is to grasp universal truths immediately and intuitively, as an inductive leap. The identity of ***noein*** and ***legein*** at 6.1 supports the old magical-musical identification of a name and an object. Hence it is not possible to speak of what is not. The poet also links 'speaking' and 'thinking' at 1.15 and at 8.50.

In short, line 6.1 firmly ties together thinking and being through speaking, a highly musical-magical concept. The other corroborating passage, 8.34-36, says in a similar vein that what can be thought of is embedded in being—both '*theoria*' and '*practica*' have a basis in the existent. *'Thinking and the thought that it is are the same. / For not without **what is**, in which it is expressed, / will you find thinking.'* Any high realization (***noein***) or the resultant thought (***noema***) must be real and existent. Its very expression is an affirmation of its being.

Fragment 3 and its ally 6.1 are also important to the standard modern treatment of Parmenides. After deciding that the subject of *'it is'* can vaguely be '*any legitimate subject of inquiry*,' the statement is quickly expanded (eg. By Owen) into '*what is decided to exist is simply what can be talked or thought about*.' The modern tendency is to use fragment 6.1 as a justification for the modern stand: '*he says so himself*,' as Guthrie stated (2.16). But the justification is only a sleight-of-hand. Many scholars concoct elaborate schemes that combine fragments 2, 3, and 6. Typical is this one by Gallop (*PE* 9): *'The gist of the argument will then be as follows: since what is there for speaking and thinking of is—unlike nothing—available to exist, it cannot be equated with nothing, and therefore **must** exist.'* He goes on to discuss the *'contemporary problem of understanding negative existential statements.'* While such topics may interest modern philosophers they belong to essentially a different intellectual world from that of Parmenides.

Even if we restrict the subject of '*it is*' to '*what is*' and '*being*' we are headed for problems. The statement then becomes '*what is, is*' or '*being is*.' Such statements are tautologies and everyone knows that tautologies cannot be proved. Why would Parmenides present elaborate proofs in fragment 8? One common answer is that he was yet unaware of the nature of tautologies. Often the easiest method for moderns to

'understand' an ancient philosopher is to attack his intelligence. We should be suspicious of such tactics. Instead, the answer is straightforward. He was not referring to a tautology. His subject was the Whole, the All.

Some may argue that Parmenides should be quite capable of arguing for a tautology because, at the end of the fifth century, we have evidence that Sophist philosophers did just that. Specifically, Gorgias wrote a book lampooning Parmenides and his pupil Melissus. Appropriately he entitled it *On the Non-existent or On Nature* in reversal to Melissus' title *On Nature or the Existent*. There Gorgias used forms of Eleatic 'logic' to 'prove' that all knowledge is absurd and impossible, defending his thesis that '*it is not*.' His momentous thesis that nothing exists has two proven consequences: if anything exists we can have no knowledge of it and if anyone chanced to know it he cannot communicate his knowledge. Gorgias is surely guilty of a sort of 'black humor' that colored Plato as well. The roots of the satirical mode go back to Xenophanes and all of the Eleatics are likely touched by it in varying degrees. However, we should not assume that Gorgias' 'standards' be those of Parmenides. The modern fashion projects the Sophists and Plato back onto Parmenides as a counterfeit. Gorgias may be accused of arguing for a tautology (indeed, a negation or contradiction of a tautology) but we would be wise not to assume that Parmenides himself was similarly motivated. His thesis is no mere tautology. It praises the infinite.

FRAGMENT 4: SCATTERING AND GATHERING

(4) *'But gaze upon things which although absent are securely present in thought.*
For you will not cut off ***what is*** *from clinging to* ***what is****,*
neither being scattered everywhere in every way throughout the ***kosmos***
nor being brought together.'

The fourth fragment was preserved by Clement (*Strom*. 5.15.5). It has been mostly neglected by modern scholars, perhaps because it fits preconceived schemes rather poorly. One cannot decide whether it belongs to the *Way of Truth* or the *Way of Seeming*. In fact, the first two lines concern the a-temporal continuum of Being, while the other two lines describe the temporal ***harmonia*** of Becoming. So where does it belong? This fragment is one of a group that demonstrates the difficulties in pigeon-holing everything into neat and mutually exclusive categories of *Truth* and *Opinion*. Parmenides moves quite comfortably between the two realms that, for him, interpenetrate each other. Moderns, of course, separate the two realms absolutely and assume incompatibility. Various arguments have raged over the 'proper' placement of this fragment. Some urge that it should be interpolated into fragment 8, usually just before 8.26 or 8.42. But Simplicius, who gave us fragment 8, insisted that the whole passage is continuous. Consequently, the interpolated option is out. Other scholars contend that it belongs to the scattered remains of the *Way of Seeming*. A small group (including Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *TPP* 262) would place it at the very end of the whole poem after fragment 19. The passage then becomes a form of epilogue *'with the obscure exhortation to contemplate the truth.'* As this quote shows, problems in placing the passage result partly

from the inability of modern interpreters to understand the contents. Given this situation, the best option has been largely to marginalize the fragment.

This wonderfully concentrated passage presents a clear contrast or comparison between the realms of Being and Becoming. The lines work very well together. In order to enhance the flavor of the fragment, here is an alternative (and more rigorous) translation of the first two lines. This translation by Gallop (*PE* 57) compliments the one by McKirahan above: *'Look upon things which, though far off, are yet firmly present to the mind. / For you shall not cut off* ***what-is*** *from holding fast to* ***what-is.****'* Sometimes '*what is*' is translated '*Being*,' while '*you*' may be translated '*it*' due to characteristic ambiguities of syntax. Whatever the variant, the sense is quite clear and somewhat polemical. It refers to the *plenum* or continuum defended in the *Way of Truth*. These lines can be very closely related to 8.22-25: *'Nor is it divided, since it is all alike; / nor is it any more in any way, which would keep it from holding together, / or any less, but it is full of* ***what is****. / Therefore, it is all continuous, for* ***what is*** *draws near to* ***what is****.'* He refers to the analog perspective on ***harmonia*** that combines all possible ***harmoniai*** into a continuous and very 'undigital' Whole. From this viewpoint, ***harmonia*** (quite paradoxically) is not *divided*, not '*cut off*,' not '*separated out*' into an 'in crowd' and outsiders. All the possibilities are present at once, a-temporally, the monochord wire conceived as a 'solid' whole including every position. Certainly there is no room for the void.

The polemical element is evident in the first line. A conservative philosopher defending some traditional ***harmonia*** (such as 36:72 or 360:720) feels uncomfortable with an *infinite* division and its equation with *no division*—the One as the All. Parmenides argues that the infinite division is yet the One indivisible—'*nor is it divided*.' The All may be *far off* from the practicalities of traditional usage, yet it is conceivable, demonstrable, and hence existent. It is realizable and thus '*present to the mind*.' Again he appeals to the ***nous***, which evidently has great prominence in his poem. Traditionally, *mind* or *insight* has the capacity (unlike the senses) to make far-off things present. Homer used it to summon up things that are distant in space and time, as in magic. For example, in the *Iliad* (15.80) he describes ***nous*** (or ***noos***) as a much-travelled man '*darting swiftly*' over the lands he has seen. We are reminded of the *Prologue* where the poet travels over all the cities. ***Nous***, Musically associated with the DYAD goddess, permeates the entire poem. Even line 1.29 of the *Prologue*, generally translated *'the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth'* can also be translated *'the unshaken mind.'* ***Nous*** is consistently connected to the goddess and the realm of the unchanging in ***harmonia***. The 'house' of harmony is fixed and constant, only the contents (the 'children') are mutable.

The two complimentary lines make a wonderful contrast by emphasizing core characteristics of Becoming. We are back into the temporal realm of ***harmonia*** in motion. The opposites, hot and cold, rare and dense, the vortex, cyclicity, the mixture of elements, up and down, Love and Strife, One and Many—the whole panoply of Milesian Musical concepts are relevant to the *Way of Seeming*. This significant fragment draws attention to the relation between the One and the Many through time. The ongoing process of 'complexification' and resolution, the changing patterns of Love and Strife,

are well described as *'scattering'* (towards dissonance) and *'gathering'* or *'coming together'* (towards consonance). The ***kosmos*** (temporal order) embodies a rich variety of simplicity and complexity shifting in the musical stream. Compare an alternative translation, that by Gallop (*PE* 57): *'For it neither disperses itself in every way everywhere in order, / Nor gathers itself together.'* The realm of ongoing ***harmonia*** is contrasted with the subject *'it,'* referring back to the first line *'Look upon things...firmly present to the mind'*—the a-temporal Whole. Some translations prefer to avoid using the word ***kosmos*** and replace it by *'in order'* because they want (as much as possible) to confine ***kosmos*** to Pythagoras. Yet the explicit use of ***kosmos*** in the poem confirms his Musical intentions. In the profound tradition of the early philosophers, Parmenides expounds a Musical truth concerning the nature of the (very musical) world.

His insight is not isolated but shared by fellow philosophers. Parmenides' colorful image can be closely compared to Heraclitus' fr. 91: *(It is not possible to step twice into the same river)...it scatters and again comes together, it forms and dissolves, it approaches and recedes.'* Both fragments say much the same thing about the nature of the world as ***harmonia***. The language is well suited to the relation between the One and the Many: alternatives in motion form a ***kosmos*** in which varying degrees of consonance and dissonance are displayed. The same message is conveyed by Heraclitus' fr. 10, a brilliant landmark in the history of ancient philosophy: *'Things taken together are whole and not whole, (something which is) being brought together and brought apart, in tune and out of tune; out of all things there comes a unity, and out of a unity all things.'* The whole is *'things taken together,'* the entire spectrum between 'peace and war.' In spite of its changeable nature it nevertheless remains *one whole*. It does not matter whether one uses the traditional vibratory Elements or rather some group of tempered components that simulate the continuum. The resultant 'field' is none-the-less a *'mixture'* of 'Love and Strife,' an inter-relational family of ***harmoniai***. Perhaps the most aesthetically advanced expression of the philosophy was given by Empedocles in fr. 26, arguably one of his most beautiful:

'They [the four Elements] *dominate in turn as the cycle revolves,*
and they decrease into one another and grow in their turn, as destined.
For there are just these things, and running through one another
they come to be both humans and the tribes of other beasts
at one time coming together into a single ***kosmos*** *by Love*
and at another each being borne apart by the hatred of Strife,
until they grow together into one, the whole, and become subordinate.'

Due to its profundity, the final line of Empedocles' monumental fragment calls for some comment. In terms of ***harmonia*** the Many revert back to the One, but the line intimates wider implications. It marks a summing up of the entire philosophical movement. In celebrating the implications of the Whole, the *'partisans of the One'* represented the very peak in awareness of the Musical model. In the coming generation Empedocles showed his suave appreciation in lovely poetry, but in later generations the canonical model itself would be increasingly devalued and less understood—*'subordinated.'* Truly the sixth and fifth centuries formed the apex of the ancient Greek musical culture. Parmenides and Heraclitus sit right in the middle of the philosophical movement, unpacking the ramifications of Anaximander's musical problematic.

FRAGMENT 5: CIRCLE AND SPHERE

Fragment 5 has been preserved through Proclus' *Commentary on Parmenides* (Cousin 708). The neoplatonist sandwiched it between fr. 8.25 *'For what is approaches what is'* and fr. 8.43 *'equal from the middle.'* This context suggests some connection between the circle (and/or sphere) and the continuum. The fragment has consistently been described as puzzling or cryptic. Moderns have tended to marginalize it due to the uncertainty of its placement in the poem. One group represented by Jameson (*Phronesis*, 1958, 20) even argued that it is not an authentic fragment at all; but Proclus had no doubts about its origin. Some scholars think that it belongs to the *Way of Seeming*, but Proclus grouped it with bits of fr. 8. Consequently, the majority of modern scholars attempt to explain it through some association with the 'ontological arguments' of *Truth*. Given its mysterious reputation several translations are advisable:

McKirahan: *'For me, where I am to begin from is the same* [literally, common],
For to there I will come back again.'
Kirk, Raven, Schofield: *'It is a common point from which I start;*
For there again and again I shall return.'
Sedley: *'It is all the same to me where I start from / for I shall come back there again.'*
Gallop: *'And it is all one to me / where I am to begin; for I shall return there again.'*

The fragment clearly refers to a circular path that leads back to some starting point. Most modern scholars connect the circle with the series of arguments in fr. 8. A typical exposition goes like this: Wherever you may start all arguments bring you back to *'what is'* or *'being'* because that is the only possible subject of 'rational discourse.' A minority camp would counter that movement along a circular path should belong with the *'back-turning'* path of mortals appropriate to *Seeming*, but most interpreters prefer some commentary on *'what is'* specified in fr. 2 and fr. 8. Sedley, Kirk, Bicknell, and others would like to place the fragment between the *Prologue* and fr. 2. According to Kirk and friends (*KRS* 244) *'its point is that all proofs of (fr. 8) take the choice specified in (fr. 2) as their common foundation.'* All roads come back to *'it is.'* In this interpretation *'there'* does not refer to the chosen starting point on the circle but to *'what is.'* If Parmenides' arguments are themselves circular then their validity is undermined. As a result, many scholars have tried to steer clear of the notion that his discourse was self-consciously circular. Instead, some reference to *logic* is preferable. Kirk and Raven (268) take it to mean that *'every attribute of reality can be derived from every other,'* but this explanation also implies an ordered pattern of circular reasoning. Bicknell denies any connection with circularity, placing the passage before fr. 2 and using a rather 'liberal' translation: *'It is a basic point from which I shall begin: / I shall come back to it repeatedly.'* The 'basic point' to which the goddess returns repeatedly is the 'master argument' (the choice *'is/is not'*). Many further scholars try to deny the presence of circularity in the fragment or else neutralize it in some way. Such arguments usually place the fragment solidly within the 'logic' of the *Way of Truth*.

The reader may already appreciate how contrived this material is. One reason that moderns feel so uncomfortable about this fragment is that it ties Parmenides to his fellow philosophers. Hence it counters the orthodox position that Parmenides was an isolated thinker 'refuting' all earlier philosophers. Statements in support of circularity, sphericity, and cyclicity are common to the entire movement. Modern sensibilities demand that Parmenides' concept of circularity must be peculiarly unique and 'logical,' in no way related to the others. As a result recent commentators have rendered the passage into something cryptic and difficult.

By contrast, a Musical interpretation stresses the essential unity of the movement. The fragment can be closely related in its language and its meaning to fr. 103 of Heraclitus: *'The beginning and the end are common on the circumference of a circle.'* What is *'common'* is what is universal. Circularity and cyclicity are fundamental cornerstones of the Musical model. The concept is applied to every context and yields many Musical truths. The musical octave (the DYAD) is circular in character—no matter where you start on the scale you come back to the same 'place' due to octave equivalence. All periodic cycles, such as calendar rounds and the like, are (understandably) described as circular and musical. The theme was already present in Anaximander. The cycles of the planets, the Great Year, and even the 'progress' of the *soul* follow a circular route (Heraclitus' *'path up and down'*). The ***daimon*** suffers a 'fall' in which the One becomes the Many, but the right initiation returns the soul to the One after it has completed the Orphic cycle of expiation. Parmenides' statement probably also refers to the Whole in the analog musical perspective. Whatever ***harmonia*** is *'separated out'* from the Whole will inevitably be returned back into it. The Whole is One and hence the Many 'return' to the One.

We must stress the importance of the circle (and sphere) not only in Parmenides and Heraclitus but *all* the early philosophers. Xenophanes connected the circle with divinity and with the immovable sphere of the Whole. By tradition, Pythagoras venerated the sphere. Moreover, the ***psyche*** and/or ***nous*** were metaphorically circular or spherical. According to Aristotle, the medical philosopher Alcmaeon (another near contemporary of Parmenides and Heraclitus) believed that *'human life is a circle'* and that the *soul* (***psyche***) is an immortal self-moving circle analogous to the heavenly bodies (whose orbits are circular and eternal). In *Problemata* (916a24) Aristotle wrote: *'Alcmaeon says that the reason why men die is that they cannot join the beginning to the end.'* The attainment of ***gnosis*** implies the realization that the beginning and the end meet as a circle or cycle—the essential musical insight. The elaborate cosmic cycle of Empedocles is but a poetic expansion of this esoteric doctrine. Circular references suffuse his writing, for example fr. 24: *'joining high points of my story one to another, / not to complete a single path.'* The status and character of the circle (and sphere) were commonly summed up in the epithet *'perfect'* or *'complete'* (***teleion***). The perfection of their shape was also assumed by Plato and Aristotle who nevertheless increasingly removed them from the musical context of early philosophy. Their form has no 'corners' and thus no beginning or end in its 'pathway.' Moreover, the sphere is the only shape whose motion (revolution) can occur without requiring any space outside itself. Hence it is highly appropriate as a metaphor for unity, wholeness, and the All. It is the immovable god of Xenophanes. This

is the manner in which Parmenides also used the sphere in fr. 8.43. He had already referred to it in the *Prologue* (1.29): *'the well-rounded truth'* and indicated it later in fr. 12 as well. As is often the case, it was Empedocles who gave us the most telling statement of the doctrine. His fr. 27.3-4 makes the connection between ***harmonia***, the sphere, oneness and motionlessness. *'Thus by the dense concealment of* ***Harmonia*** *is made fast / a rounded sphere, exulting in its circular* [or, joyous] *solitude* [or, motionlessness].'

Cyclicity, circularity, and sphericity are such charged concepts and metaphors among the early philosophers that we are directed back to *'the seed,'* Anaximander's ***gonimon***, and the Orphic Egg. Among the late ancient writers, Simplicius still recognized the many Orphic elements in Parmenides' poem (including the characters Necessity, Justice, and the goddess herself). In his commentary on Physics (*Comm. Arist.* 9.146-7 or DKA20) he wrote: *'Do not be surprised if he* [Parmenides] *says that the one existent is* [fr. 8.43] *"like the bulk of a well-rounded sphere:" it is because of his poetic style that he fastens upon a sort of fanciful fiction. Indeed, how does saying this differ from saying, with* ***Orpheus****, "a silver-white egg?"* The cosmic egg (variously golden, silver, etc.) is the source of all vibratory 'being.' It is the One, the Many, even the All. It is the circle placed around the goddess of the center, the circle drawn around the cosmic monochord wire, the resonance paradigm. Parmenides' fragment doesn't refer to some abstract defense of the 'logic of ontology.' Rather, it affirms the *'common'* canonical model of universal cyclicity centered round the goddess.

FRAGMENT 6: MORTALS AND IMMORTALS

The sixth fragment is relatively long (nine lines) and exceedingly rich in Musical imagery. It was preserved by Simplicius in his commentaries on Physics (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* 9.117). Simplicius more than anyone else was responsible for transmitting quotes from Parmenides. This fragment is famous for its difficulty and the last two lines are among the most problematic in the whole of early Greek philosophy. The following translation (by McKirahan) will occasionally be supplemented by alternative renderings:

(6.1-9) *'That which is there to be spoken and thought of must be, for it is possible for it to be,*
but not possible for nothing to be. I bid you consider this.
For I bar your way from this first way of inquiry,
but next from the way on which mortals, knowing nothing,
two-headed, wander. For helplessness
in their breasts guides their wandering mind. But they are carried on
equally deaf and blind, amazed, hordes without judgement,
for whom both to be and not to be are judged the same and
not the same, and the path of all is backward-turning.'

The first three lines have already been discussed in relation to fragment 2. The poet defends the existence of the plenum (*'what is'* or Being) and denies the void (*'what is not'* or Non-being) in both theory and practice. This stand is radical and paradoxical

because the void is an integral aspect of the traditional digital conception of ***harmonia***. As Aristotle said of the Pythagoreans (*Physics* 4.6 213b25): *'For void is that which separates and distinguishes things that are next to each other. This happens first in numbers; the void divides their nature.'* Take as an example our sample tetrachord harmony 15:16:18:20 (C B A G). The numbers define exact fret positions on a music wire divided arithmetically into 30 units. Neighboring fret positions (such as 15 and 16 or again 16 and 18) are separated by a space of 'non-being.' Instead, Parmenides posits a *continuum* in which the tetrachord frame C G becomes 'solid' and embodies an infinite number of fret positions (the All). This analog perspective can be demonstrated on the monochord by sliding the moveable bridge. In banishing the void Parmenides is forcing a rethink of the traditional digital model of ***harmonia***.

McKirahan's translation of line 6.3 is somewhat liberal. A more rigorous translation is that of Gallop (*PE* 61): *'For (I restrain) you from that first route of inquiry.'* The bracket is provided because the original manuscript had a metrical gap. Diels supplied the missing verb and most modern editors have assumed its correctness. Although we cannot be certain of the exact wording, the sense is surely accurate. Whether we use *'restrain'* or *'bar,'* the line takes us back to the *Prologue* (1.16-17) in which the goddess Justice unbars the gates that allow us access to *'all the cities.'* Maintenance of the void renders the continuum impossible while elimination of the void ensures the acceptance of the analog Whole. It allows us to open all the gates.

Lines 6.4-9 are more complex and provide the main focus for this section of my essay. It appears at first glance that Parmenides has introduced yet another pathway for consideration. Most modern scholars are embarrassed by this turn of events and do their best to explain it away. For them, only two mutually exclusive paths are possible, namely 'is' and 'is not.' This third alternative must somehow be aborted. For example, Guthrie (2.22) wrote: *'The 'third way' is, after all, not independent of the other two, but an illegitimate fusion of them both. For Parmenides of all people there is no third possibility distinct from 'it is' and 'it is not.'* For Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (*KRS* 247) the third way is for those 'mortals' who cannot handle the rigors of Parmenidean logic. It is *'simply the path you will find yourself following, like the generality of mortals, if you do not take that decision* [is/is not] *through failure to use your critical powers.'* Your confusion will result in such baffling contradictions as that given in lines 6.8-9. According to McKirahan (*PBS* 165) the third way is *'hopelessly confused and represents an incoherent view of reality. In particular they* [mortals] *are infected with nonbeing, which has already been proved unthinkable and unutterable, so that any Way that makes any use of it is unintelligible.'* The gist of the modern argument is that only Being and Non-being are legitimate 'logical' subjects of discourse. Even the later is rejected, leaving only Being with its attendant characteristics. Becoming (following Plato) is confused with Non-being and does not enter into the picture at all. Hence the third way is not a 'rational' avenue of inquiry.

Even if we set aside this rigid orthodox framework we are left with problems. Is the 'third way' the realm of Becoming or yet some other path? It is apparent that the imagery he uses *does* tie the road to Becoming. If this is indeed the case, then why does

he appear to denigrate it? In this remarkable passage, Parmenides achieves a supreme level of obscurity that rivals moments in Heraclitus and Xenophanes. However, appreciation for his masterful artistry should not blind us to the real possibility of a Musical explanation. His language of imagery and his overall message can be closely related to that of his near contemporaries.

The key to understanding the entire passage lies in the Musical associations surrounding the term *'mortals.'* This metaphorical image was used by many of the early philosophers and in a consistent manner—most prominently in Xenophanes, Heraclitus, and Empedocles. *'Mortals'* should be contrasted or paired with *'immortals,'* the two being brought together explicitly in Heraclitus' fr. 62. Their Musical associations are straightforward and understandable. *'Mortals'* are those 'things' (***harmoniai***) that *'come-to-be'* (***gignesthai***) and *'perish'* (***ollusthai***), and generally transmute into each other. Hence they *do* belong to the realm of Becoming which includes not only a double referent (**a** becomes **b**) but also a single referent (**a** comes to be or ceases to be). It is in this sense that Empedocles used *'mortals'* when discussing the changing compounds formed by the vibratory Roots in his fr. 22.1-3: *'For all these things—shining sun* [**fire**] *and* ***earth*** *and heaven* [**air**] */ and sea* [**water**]*—have links with their own parts, / all that are split off and have* ***come to be*** *in mortal things.'* Becoming is characterized by cyclical movement and change through time. The pair *'mortal-immortal'* is thus allied with 'changing-unchanging' and with 'Becoming-Being.' The presence of a cycle assures an element of the 'unchanging' within every apparent process of change. Being and Becoming are happily coexistent in the Musical model. The Milesians and Heraclitus made many commentaries on the musical nature of Becoming but Parmenides (like Xenophanes) set his sights firmly on Being. He wanted paradoxically to separate Being and Becoming in order to comment upon the ineffable—that which is transcendent of Time.

The metaphor *'mortals'* is one of those efficient Musical images that can work in a number of contexts. It ties itself to the notion of divine and human knowledge evident in Xenophanes and Heraclitus. It orients itself to the *Unchanging* (MONAD), the *Changing* (TRIAD, PENTAD, et al.) and the divine gateway between them (DYAD). Even the realm of Change (the Medial Elements 3 and 5) was traditionally divided into divine (3) and human (5) aspects. In its most fundamental sense Becoming is *Changing* (3,5) and Being is *Unchanging* (1,2). Thus the term *'mortals'* is used to describe those *souls* who have 'fallen' into the *vortex* of reincarnations. In the Orphic doctrine, the fallen soul must pass through the realm of Becoming in order to learn some lessons. Having learned them, immortality is achieved. Empedocles used the term in this sense in his fr. 115.6-8 describing the fate of the ***daimon***: *'he* ***wanders*** *away from the blessed ones for thrice ten thousand seasons, / growing to be through* ***time*** *all different kinds of* ***mortals*** */ taking the difficult* ***paths*** *of life one after another.'* Hence the term *'mortals'* is always associated with the realm of Becoming.

In addition to this canonical sense, the metaphor *'mortals'* was also used to distinguish those *'immortals'* who had experienced the Mysteries and possessed secret knowledge from those deprived souls (the vast majority) who had not. In fr. 14

Xenophanes mocked the general public for not understanding the true nature of the gods: *'Mortals believe that the gods are born / and have human clothing, voice and form.'* Heraclitus was contemptuous of people that did not share his profound understanding of canonics, as in fr. 1: *'This **logos** holds always but humans* [mortals] *always prove unable to understand it, both before hearing it and when they have first heard it.'* He was in no doubt of his own immortality but recognized that most people were not ready for the deepest insights. Thus we have fr. 34: *'Uncomprehending when they have heard, they are like the deaf. The saying describes them: though present they are absent.'* They have not yet 'woken up' from their 'sleep.' Empedocles made similar statements and he also had no mistrust in his own divinity (fr. 112.4-6): *'I go about among you, an immortal god, no longer mortal, / honored among all, as it seems, / wreathed with headbands and blooming garlands.'* The insights afforded by philosophy were closely allied with religious matters.

The doctrine explaining this notion of divinity must be tied to Orphic practices and initiations. For we find the same imagery and language concerning *'mortal'* outsiders and *'immortal'* insiders within the Orphic fragments. For example, fr. 227 (preserved by Clement of Alexandria): *'Of all the springing herbs with which **mortals** have to do on the **earth**, none has an unchanging **destiny** laid upon it, but all must go full **circle**, and it is not **lawful** to stop in any part, but each bough holds to a **just** share of the **course**, even as it **began** it.'* Note the many Musical associations in this passage and the essential similarity to philosophical concerns. The fragment refers to young branches held by worshippers of ***Dionysus***. They signify *birth and death* (Becoming) and the Orphic Wheel of Existence. *'Mortals'* are the 'fallen branches' who must complete the purgatorial cycle of incarnations, the cosmic cycle described by Empedocles. In Orphic fr. 233 the *'mortals'* are poetically described: *'Beasts and birds and sinful tribes of **mortals**, burdens to the **earth**.'* Empedocles painted them in much the same way. They must 'serve their time' in the prison of the body—servants to Time and Change. Heraclitus commented on the process in one of his most brilliant passages, fr. 62: *'Immortal mortals, mortal immortals, living the death of the others and dying their life.'*

This brand of Orphic religiosity also permeates Parmenides' passage, indeed, the entire poem. Only with this background in mind can we approach it with any respect for its intentionality. Parmenides (like Heraclitus, Xenophanes and Pythagoras) was essentially a religious figure whose philosophical poem cannot be abstracted from his cultural milieu. Like all of the early philosophers, he wanted to teach us something about the *sacred*. The *'mortals'* in fragment 6 are 'fallen' *souls* who must learn how to make the two ends of the circle meet. They are lost in the spinning realm of Becoming because they *'know nothing'* of the divine or human spheres of esoteric knowledge. Consequently, they *'wander, two-headed'* because Becoming is characterized by movement and by the play of *opposites*. More specifically, the realm of Becoming always posits a field of cyclical relatedness, a ***logos*** between unlike entities, a ***harmonia***, a matrix of interactive possibilities, a ***kosmos***.

The uncomprehending masses are incapable of controlling the great cycle or of knowing where they are in the strife-ridden path. Thus *'helplessness in their breasts*

guides their wandering mind.' This image is particularly strong because *mind* (***nous***) is ubiquitously unerring in the ancient literature. The statement implies that knowledge of ***nous*** is imperative for gaining the liberating mystical understanding. ***Nous*** holds a prominent place in Parmenides' poem and affords even more comment from his younger contemporary Anaxagoras. Appropriately enough, ***nous*** is commonly associated with the DYAD and the goddess who dictates the teaching of the poem. The uncomprehending *'mortals'* are *'carried on'* through the river of Becoming, *'equally deaf and blind.'* In other words, they do not understand both the theory and the practice of sacred knowledge, accessed canonically through hearing and seeing on the monochord. They are *'amazed'* in their incredulity. *'Amazed'* is sometimes translated *'dazed'* or *'mazed,'* lost in the labyrinth or maze of Becoming. In a sense, the DYAD (***nous***) *'wanders'* in the spiralled meadows of the Many.

Significantly, *'mortals'* are pictured as *'hordes without judgement.'* Inability to make a critical assessment is the key issue surrounding canonics. The *'mortals'* are those who have no familiarity with vibratory principles and hence cannot find their way into the deepest insights about the nature of the world. The phrase is more rigorously translated *'uncritical tribes,'* a description used by various poets. The term *uncritical* (***akrita***) in line 6.7 is related to ***krisis*** (*separation*), ***ekkrisis*** (*separating out*) and ***apokrisis*** (*separating off*), all of them important terms in the philosophical movement. The implication is that the inexperienced have no ability to discriminate between 'things.' In the words of Heraclitus, fr. 1: *'mortals are like the inexperienced when they experience such words and deeds as I set out, distinguishing each in accordance with its nature and saying how it is. But other people fail to notice what they do when awake, just as they forget what they do while asleep.'* The ability to make a judgement (as every tuner knows) lies at the heart of canonical practices and it is no accident that Parmenides was renowned as a lawmaker, a judge. Indeed, the earliest surviving fragment of Greek philosophy, that of Anaximander, used a legalistic metaphor. The reference to judgement and ability to discriminate confirms the canonical context of this passage.

And so we arrive at the final two famous (or rather, notorious) lines. Three reasons propel us to connect them with Becoming. Firstly, the preceding four lines used the appropriate imagery of change. Secondly, line 6.8 also concerns judgement (or the lack thereof by unskilled mortals). Matters of judgement or discrimination generally belong to the musical realm of Becoming. Hence we would assume that lines 6.8-9 continue this same theme. The third reason involves the employment in the last line of a classic image from the world of Becoming: *'the path of all is backward-turning.'* This highly effective description supports the reciprocal and cyclical nature of the musical model. Related representations go back to the Milesians, but the exact wording is also found in Heraclitus' magnificent fr. 51: *'They* [untutored mortals] *do not understand how, though at variance with itself, it agrees with itself. It is a backward-turning* ***harmonia*** *like that of the bow and lyre.'* This fragment emphasizes the 'stress' between *opposites* in the realm of Becoming and yet their higher unity through ***logos*** and ***harmonia***. The image is specifically musical and ties itself to a canonical context. Parmenides' statement does the same and hence it would appear to concern Becoming.

But wait. The content of line 6.8 concerns *'to be'* (***einia***) and its attendant negation. The term is (as usual) also translated *'Being'* or *'what is.'* Hence it ties itself to Being (and not Becoming!) and to the first three lines of the fragment. Herein lies the difficulty of this passage. It tends to mix together Being and Becoming when we expect them to be neatly separated. In order to make sense of it, we must remember that Being and Becoming are entirely compatible in the Presocratic model. This is not the only passage in which Parmenides shifts comfortably between the realms. Yet lines 6.8-9 are still problematical. It is clear that Being and Non-being can be judged *'not the same'* as he has already shown in fr. 2. How are they judged *'the same'* and even worse, *'the same **and** not the same?'* Parmenides has written something that rivals the obscurity of his master Xenophanes, who reportedly claimed that *'it is neither finite nor infinite, neither in motion nor at rest.'* In the case of the Xenophanean puzzle, interpretation is difficult because we no longer possess the surrounding context of the statement. With Parmenides we *do* have a context but it is so obscure that it still isn't much help! There is little doubt that Parmenides (like Xenophanes and Heraclitus) *intended* to make things difficult for us. We are being forced to think more deeply about Being, Non-being, and Becoming.

One reasonable solution is to conclude that the 'incomprehending mortals' simply cannot reliably distinguish between Being, Non-being, and Becoming. This answer also explains why the passage as a whole seems to denigrate Becoming. It is not the realm of Becoming itself that is being criticized, rather, the lack of understanding of it by *'mortals.'* He is writing of *'mortals'* in the same manner as did Heraclitus. Most modern scholars interpret the fragment as a straightforward attack on Heraclitus who represents Becoming, but the preceding paragraphs have shown that this solution is simplistic. In fact, Parmenides and Heraclitus take much the same stand, denouncing the 'untutored' for not comprehending Becoming. Both of them show their deep understanding not only of Becoming but also Being (Heraclitus through the *unity of opposites*). Thus the passage is about the shortcomings of *'mortals'* rather than the failings of Becoming.

Another solution entirely compatible with this one presents itself. Many scholars have recognized a hint of polemic here, which they usually direct against Heraclitus (the supposed 'enemy' of Parmenides). However, it is more likely targeted at conservative cosmologists (specifically Pythagoras). While Parmenides associates Being with the analog Whole, a more limited and traditional stand equates *'what is'* with ***harmonia*** in the old digital sense: numbers and the void that separates them. From the perspective of hierarchical harmonic structure, a given number can represent both Being or Non-being depending on the context (the layout of the particular sequence). Set in motion through Becoming, a given 'entity' is both *'the same and not the same'* as the meaning shifts with the context. It can act as both Being (part of the 'in crowd') and Non-being (the unsounded void). In this traditional sense, the two lines also relate to the realm of Becoming. Parmenides seeks to transcend this hierarchical realm by emphasizing the paradoxical *All-at-once* nature of Being rather than identifying Being with this or that *'city'* as a 'snapshot' of Becoming.

In closing, Parmenides has given us what is arguably his single most memorable statement, his most obscure puzzle concerning Being, Non-being and Becoming. His

impassioned language is oracular, like that of Heraclitus. Various layers of meaning (not yet exhausted) can be unloaded from his words. Along with the next fragment, which also concerns judgement, fragment 6 must represent some important climactic moment in his poem, some high mountain peak in his Musical inspiration. In these two fragments, which are closely related, the profundity of his writing matches moments in Heraclitus and Empedocles.

FRAGMENT 7: SENSE AND REASON

The six lines of fragment 7 embody the same Musical concerns and the same Heraclitus-like canonical language as fragment 6. Commentators generally pair the two passages, and with good reason. In fact, most modern scholars assume that fr. 7 is a direct continuation of fr. 6. They may well be right. However, it cannot be proven and fr. 7 has a more chequered source history than fr. 6. Plato (*Sophist* 237a) quoted 7.1-2 and Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 2.1089a2) cited 7.1. Later, Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* 7.114) quoted 7.3-6. One could make an argument that 7.1-2 and 7.3-6 are actually separate fragments. The situation is further complicated by Sextus (7.111) when he quoted the entire *Prologue* up to 1.30 directly followed by 7.2-6 and then 8.1-2 as if they are continuous. Ancient writers had no qualms about 'patching together' disparate sections of a long poem. But we will assume that fr. 7 is integral in this translation:

(7.1-6) *'For in no way may this prevail, that things that are not, are.*
But you, bar your thought from this way of inquiry,
and do not let habit born from much experience compel you along this way
to direct your sightless eye and sounding ear and tongue,
but judge by reason the heavily contested refutation
spoken by me.'

The first two lines reiterate the ban on exploring *'what is not'* already familiar from fr. 6 and fr. 2. We detect the same polemical tone directed against conservatives who follow *'habit'* in affirming the void. However, the main target of his criticism is not so much Pythagoras but rather those *'mortals'* who lack understanding and are unable to conceive of the All. Both the conservatives and the uninitiated populace are shackled by custom and tradition in affirming certain ***harmoniai*** and rejecting others. They are restricted by the numerical hierarchical priorities of age-old canonics. Ambiguities in the syntax of this fragment result in the phrase *'born from much experience'* referring either to *'habit'* or to *'this way.'* Thus Gallop (*PE* 63) translated line 7.3: *'Nor let habit force you, along this route of much-experience.'* Both referents convey the same Musical message. Certain traditional ***harmoniai*** have status due to the *'habit'* of prolonged use and they also generate customary *'song-paths'* born of long experience. Such esteemed and time-honored tunings and melodies by Terpander or Alcman and even the contemporary 'new colors' by Pindar and Pratinas should be no impediment to the radical analog conception of the Whole. The old digital language of ***harmonia*** with its inherent inclusion of *'what is not'* is not adequate for the integration of the irrational and the resulting continuous Whole.

Line 7.4 draws our attention to what happens when habit and tradition rule. Expression becomes mindless, automatic and cliché-ridden. We are again reminded of those *'mortals'* criticized in Heraclitus' fr. 34: *'Though present they are absent.'* The reference to the *eye* (sight), *ear* (hearing), and *tongue* (speech) again confirms the context of canonics—other senses, like taste or smell, are irrelevant. Speech and hearing are practically always paired in the Musical literature, for example in Heraclitus' writing. When sight is also implicated the reference to monochord work is further enhanced. The fragment says that when habit alone *'directs'* our investigation of ***harmonia*** we become blind to its deeper implications, inferences of great interest to the philosophers.

The last two lines are even more Heraclitean in language. The translation above (by McKirahan) reflects the general approach of modern scholars in separating Parmenides and Heraclitus as much as possible. But *'reason'* translates ***logos*** and the *'heavily contested'* refutation is more literally *'strife-encompassed.'* The reference to judgement and speech again confirms the canonical context. Modern interpreters assume or try to prove that Parmenides' use of ***logos*** is entirely unrelated to that of Heraclitus, even (in Kranz) that Parmenides posited a 'true' ***logos*** to prove the other false. Nowhere do we see *any* recognition of the intensely musical implications of the term (discussed in the chapter on Heraclitus). Since the time of Aristotle, ***logos*** has been increasingly removed from the musical associations it embodied in the Presocratic era. But Parmenides' use of it along with *'judgement'* and *'speech'* shows that his intentions are quite Musical—concerned with the parameters of a sonic sense of order. He wants to contrast his own ability to *'judge by **logos**'* with that of the *'hordes without judgement'* who are led by blind *'habit.'* His own poem (his *'song-path'*) will demonstrate, in the words of Heraclitus (fr. 41) that he is *'skilled in true judgement, how all things are steered through all things.'* He is not like the uninitiated masses who , again in the words of Heraclitus (fr. 19), *'know neither how to hear nor how to speak.'* Fragments 6 and 7 together show us that Parmenides' attitude toward the *'uncritical tribes'* is the same as that of Heraclitus. They are *'mortals'* because they do not yet possess the liberating 'divine knowledge' granted the lucky few. They are creatures of blind habit.

Now we must consider what this talk of *'mortals and immortals'* can teach us about the elusive and complex relation between ***doxa*** and ***aletheia***. On one level ***doxa*** refers to 'mortal' Becoming and ***aletheia*** to 'immortal' Being. But the relation is more complex than that. Both Becoming and Being have status in the early Greek mind-set. Both are valid but differentiated. Fragment 7 hints that ***doxa*** can be associated with knowledge gained through the (outer) senses, while ***aletheia*** relates to knowledge derived from reasoning or the 'inner senses.' We should not be surprised at a distinction between the *perceptible* (***aistheton***) and the *intelligible* (***noeton***) since it also existed elsewhere in ancient Indian philosophy. However, we must guard against the anachronistic Platonic notion that the later is 'valid' and the former is only an 'imperfect copy' or otherwise 'false.' ***Noeton***, derived from ***nous***, may indeed have higher status, but the two 'paths' of knowledge are *not* necessarily contradictory and mutually exclusive. In the early Greek perspective, both avenues have something to teach, as we can demonstrate in the fragments of Heraclitus and Empedocles, among others. Unfortunately, the modern interpretation (following fourth century Aristotelian fashions) pits the one *against* the

other. The senses are totally negated, worthless and false while *logic* (the Aristotelian mutation of ***logos***) alone is valid. For example, Guthrie (2.25) wrote: *'Here for the first time sense and reason are contrasted, and we are told that the senses deceive and that reason alone is to be trusted. It is a decisive moment in the history of European philosophy, which can never be the same again.'* Thus fragment 7 is presumably only an attack on the senses and nothing more. ***Doxa*** becomes simply the negation of ***aletheia***.

As an alternative to this simplistic dichotomy, which surely insults the intelligence of the early philosophers, I propose a scheme naturally derived from the sequence of the vibratory hypostases. Echoes of this 'progression' can still be found in Neoplatonism, but it is also consistent with the evidence of early philosophy. It goes as follows: MONAD (*Spirit*, the One), DYAD (*Mind*, ***Nous***), TRIAD (*Soul*), PENTAD (*Body*, *Senses*). In this scheme, the Senses are not the *opposite* of Mind, only different. According to various doxographers (considered later) Parmenides tended to coalesce Mind and Soul. The 'divine knowledge' of ***aletheia*** relates to the Mind (and possibly Soul), the realm ruled by the goddess of the 'middle.' The 'mortal knowledge' of ***doxa*** comes from the Senses and has a somewhat lower status. This scheme does better justice to the complex relation between ***aletheia*** and ***doxa*** evident in the early philosophers.

We can argue that fragments 6 and 7 belong just as much to the *Way of Seeming* as the *Way of Truth*. Like fr. 4, these two passages bring ***aletheia*** and ***doxa*** together, pointing out differences between them. These differences concern the relations between Being and Becoming. Parmenides, desiring to bring out paradoxical aspects of Being, aims to *separate* Being and Becoming although they are inseparable in the old canonical model. He *knows* that they are inseparable and hence the effectiveness of his ironical discourse. Unfortunately, the Sophists and Plato interpreted his 'puzzle' all too literally as a way of setting the early philosophers against each other. The unity of the philosophical movement was henceforth splintered into competing 'ideologies.'

Parmenides is not writing 'rational discourse' but rather religiously inspired poetry dictated by his Muse (the goddess of ***Nous***). He never makes his underlying 'scheme' clear and his intentions have nothing to do with 'philosophical progress.' Like Heraclitus, he is quite willing to put roadblocks in the path of our understanding. One of the most confusing things (for us) in his poem is the 'divided' reference to *'mortals.'* Sometimes it refers to the characteristics of Becoming, the changing realm of 'birth and death.' But sometimes (and simultaneously) it refers to those not yet liberated by 'divine knowledge.' Parmenides is not alone in the use of such 'unphilosophical' methods. The many quotations I've made from Heraclitus (and Empedocles) are intended to show that such an 'intentional confusion' was common in the movement. Of course, they also demonstrate how very close the doctrines of Parmenides and Heraclitus actually are. This more reasonable interpretation counters the entrenched fashion of utter 'isolationism.' From a Musical perspective, the two philosophers do *not* belong to different, mutually exclusive worlds. Clearly, both of them are 'children' of Xenophanes and the Milesians.

The *'heavily contested refutation'* at the end of fr. 7 is also translated *'the much disputed proof,'* or *'the very contentious challenge,'* or *'the strife-encompassed*

argument.' In the original imagery, the use of ***logos*** and *strife* is a reminder that the conception of ***harmonia*** (always closely related to ***logos***) concerns *'love and strife.'* Since at least the time of the doxographical writers, everyone has assumed that the ***logos*** as *'argument'* refers to the 'logical' material of fr. 8 (which follows) and that fr. 8 is a direct continuation of fr. 7. However, there is no sure proof for this assumption. Such references to ***logos*** and *strife* imply the realm of Becoming rather than Being. Moreover, we have no assurance that fr. 7 should come *before* fr. 8. We stand on safer ground if we treat fr. 6 and 7 as an autonomous entity (or entities) apart from fr. 8. The line may well mean that he will demonstrate aspects of ***harmonia*** beyond those of general *'habit.'* These aspects must embody a high degree of *'strife'* (complexity) in their ***logos*** (relations). In other words, the line can be interpreted to refer back to the previous few lines.

On the other hand, it could also refer to the first two lines, where *'things that are not'* (i.e. the attendant void) have no place in ***harmonia***. Given the known architecture of ***harmonia***, this doctrine is quite paradoxical and it is consistent with other sections of his poem. In this way fr. 7 does indeed lead us into fr. 8. For fr. 8 focuses upon the One-Whole as the 'full' plenum. The void is (8.28) *'banished far away'* from the (8.5-6) *'now, all together, one, continuous.'* Being is defended against Non-being using language paradoxically opposed to Becoming.

FRAGMENT 8.1-6: SIGNS ALONG THE TIMELESS WAY OF TRUTH

Fragment 8 is the longest continuous passage in the entire Presocratic literature—61 lines of poetry. It forms the very heart of the *Way of Truth* and has always been the main focus for commentary on Parmenides' poem. As usual, Simplicius was mainly responsible for its transmission. In his commentary on Physics (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* 9.144) he quoted 8.1-52 and earlier at 9.38 he cited 8.50-61. In several more places portions of the famous passage were given. Plato, Aristotle, and Clement of Alexandria also quoted parts. It is clear that this section of his poem had a major impact on later writers. Simplicius' testimony at 9.144 is revealing: *'Without wishing to seem pedantic, I should like to transcribe in this commentary Parmenides' verses concerning the one existent, which are, in fact, of no great number, both for the sake of credence in the things I say, and because of the rarity of Parmenides' treatise.'* It is not so surprising that Parmenides' book had become rare in Simplicius' time, a full millennium after Parmenides' own era. It must have had great value to be copied for a thousand years. The testimony also demonstrates that the *Way of Truth* only formed a small segment of his poem as a whole. It probably constituted less than a quarter of the entire book.

We will divide the long passage into 'bite-sized' pieces for commentary. The first six lines form a little precis of the subjects covered and also set the context of the entire *Way of Truth.*

(8.1-6) *'There is still left a single story*
of a way, that ***it is****. On this way there are signs*
exceedingly many—that being ungenerated it is also imperisable,

whole and of a single kind and unshaken and complete.
Nor was it ever nor will it be, since it is now, all together,
One, continuous.'

The first two lines set the context. Fragment 2 had indicated that the path of Non-being is impossible, unknowable and inexpressible. The *'single route'* indicated here is to be contrasted with Non-being and not with Becoming. *'It is'* (***esti***) is defended against *'it is not.'* Yet the language problematically separates Being and Becoming. This 'transposition' is the potent source for his ability to maximize irony and paradox.

The goddess sets forth a group of attributes that she calls *'signs'* (***semata***) or *'marks'* along the route of Being. These marks enable the 'traveller' to recognize the characteristic features of the path of Being. The navigation metaphor is also employed elsewhere in the poem. At 10.2 the word *'signs'* is used of the stars in reference to their role as markers in navigation. ***Semata*** also appears with a more complex meaning at 8.55 and its cognate adjective at 19.3. In the latter fragment: *'for each of these things* [***harmoniai***] *did men establish a name as a sign for it.'* In this context *'sign'* is practically equivalent to *'name.'* The act of 'naming' is a highly charged process in Music whereby 'something' has its essence clarified as well as its existence confirmed. By implication, Parmenides will reveal the core characteristics of Being. Yet we also suspect that the argument will not be a straightforward 'rational' exposition, because the use of *'signs'* also implies some hidden dimension of meaning not immediately apparent. Parmenides' employment of *'signs'* may well have the esoteric associations also found in Heraclitus' fr. 93: *'The god whose oracle is at Delphi neither speaks nor conceals, but gives a sign.'* The paradoxical and difficult nature of what follows in fr. 8 suits the Heraclitean sense of *'sign.'*

The characteristics that follow are already familiar through Xenophanes. The One-whole is ungenerated, unmoving, and so forth. The *Way of Truth* is the most explicitly Xenophanean segment of Parmenides' poem. Even the arguments themselves may actually have been original to Xenophanes. Although the direct evidence in Xenophanes' fragments is lost, he was known to present 'logical' arguments of the sort later found in his student Parmenides. Modern fashion wants to give all the glory to Parmenides alone, but even the doxographers still recognized that Parmenides and Xenophanes were kindred spirits. The arguments that make up fr. 8 are quite similar to those that Simplicius attributed to Xenophanes concerning the 'One existent.' (See the section: *Simplicius on the Xenophanean One* at 6.44).

Textual difficulties in line 8.4 have made the exact wording uncertain. Gallop translated it: *'whole, single-limbed, steadfast, and complete.'* Burnet (with Diels) rendered it: *'complete, immovable and without end.'* Schofield gave: *'whole and unique and changeless and in equipoise.'* In spite of the differences the overall picture is the same. Being is contrasted with Non-being but it is paradoxically given characteristics that separate it from Becoming.

The list of *'signs'* just given corresponds reasonably well with the subjects to be 'proven' in what follows. Thus 8.6 to 8.21 concerns *'ungenerated and imperishable.'* 8.22-25 discusses *'indivisible'* or *'whole'* or *'single-limbed'* (an image used later by Empedocles). 8.26-31 covers *'steadfast'* or *'unshaken'* meaning changeless and motionless. Then 8.32-33 deals with *'complete.'* At this point the subjects of lines 8.3-4 are largely covered. 8.34-41 may be intended as a resume of the arguments thus far, although this exegesis is far from clear. The rest of the *Way of Truth* (8.42-49) introduces new characteristics not yet considered. If ***atalanton*** in line 8.4 is translated *'in equipoise'* (or *'balanced'*) then 8.42-49 can be interpreted as covering the last item of 8.4 This correspondence is one reason that some scholars prefer this translation. However, the approach renders 8.34-41 as an 'intrusion' better placed after 8.49. It is probably best not to insist on too close a co-relation between the 'agenda' of 8.3-4 and the rest of the long passage of the *Way of Truth*. At any rate, these early lines *do* summarize the dominant themes of the entire *Way of Truth*.

Lines 8.5-6 are generally described as notoriously difficult. Surely they point to the a-temporal heart of the philosophy of Being. Past and future are irrelevant (collapsed, devoid of meaning) to the *'now, all together, one, continuous'* which transcends the rule of Time itself. Parmenides conceives of the Whole in parameters that paradoxically negate the traditional characteristics of temporal phenomena (motion, change, cyclicity, divisibility, order, generation and destruction). He proceeds to describe Being as the very antithesis of Becoming. His discourse is paradoxical because Being and Becoming are entire co-operative or interactive and inseparable in the old Musical model, and he knew it. They merge through cyclicity—the ubiquitous aspects of change and constancy in the resonance paradigm. Parmenides' philosophical milieu had long affirmed the 'compatibility' between Being and Becoming. In driving a metaphorical 'wedge' between them he strove to express a mystical insight concerning the ***harmonia*** of the world—an insight so lofty that it steps outside of Time itself (Time, the highest ruler of Necessity and Justice). It is eternal or timeless, not only because its duration has no end but also because it has sidestepped the entire vortex of temporal 'happening.' His insight imagines the One-whole as the *'now, all together.'* No temporal distinctions can be meaningfully drawn.

His purpose in this delicate exercise is not to 'prove' that Becoming does not exist or that it has no 'reality.' Rather, it is to affirm Being in the face of Non-being. Being includes all forms of 'beings' (***harmoniai***) from the simplest to the most strife-ridden as a *'full'* continuum—the field of all possibilities. The All must not be lacking any of its members. No gaps are permitted. The ***harmonia*** has become the analog plenum.

Modern interpreters have always felt uncomfortable about lines 8.5-6. If the doctrine is meant to be timeless or a-temporal, then why does the goddess use temporal terms such as *'now'* and *'continuous'* in the argument? Moreover, an affirmation of *'now'* does not prove the lack of past or future existence. Consequently, some scholars prefer to deny timelessness and contend that Parmenides intended only the less controversial doctrine of infinite duration. His follower Melissus affirmed this lesser sense in his fr. 2: *'it is and always was and always will be.'* Heraclitus also supported it in fr. 30: *'This*

***kosmos**...none of the gods or men did make but it always was and is and shall be an ever-living **fire**.'* The Milesians too conceived of their sacred principle as *'everlasting.'* Yet it is difficult to deny, given what follows in the passage, that Parmenides *did* mean timelessness and a-temporality. The *'now, all together'* transcends the temporal dimension entirely and exists in an eternal present not subject to temporal distinctions of any sort.

A-temporality is the most fundamental *'sign'* of Parmenides' paradoxical Being. All the other *'signs'* can be derived from it as corollaries. The entire *Way of Truth* is a commentary on the consequences of the denial of Time. One of the reasons that modern interpreters have so much trouble with this passage is the lack of appreciation for the importance of Time (the ruler of ***harmonia***) in early philosophy. To deny the relevance of Time is the ultimate paradox in a Musical context. But moderns have removed *'it is'* entirely from the canonical model of ***harmonia*** and made it an intellectual abstraction devoid of any musical sense. For example, consider the commentary of KRS (249) on the passage in question. *'The argument that what is available to be thought of must exist makes it look like the range of possible subjects of investigation is enormous...But Parmenides succeeds in reducing this infinity of possibilities to exactly one. For the 'signs' programmatically listed* [in the passage] *in fact constitute further formal requirements which any subject of inquiry must satisfy.'* Instead of pursuing this modern amusical tack we will return Parmenides to his Musical milieu and look at the *'signs'* in relation to the ubiquitous musical model of the world-order. Like the Milesians and Heraclitus, his philosophy concerns itself primarily with a treatment of Time.

Lines 8.5-6 have always been ranked among the most obscure in the entire poem. We are mistaken to impose any conventional form of logic upon it. The statement *'it never was nor will be, since it is now, altogether'* strongly implies that both the past and the future are being rejected due to an eternal present. *'What is'* will not come to exist out of some preexistent state of Non-being, nor will it exist *at all* in the future. In effect, he says that Amsterdam did not exist yesterday and will not exist tomorrow because it exists only *now*. As 'reasonable discourse' this thesis approaches absurdity, but that is beside the point. It surely was not to be interpreted in some intellectual manner as 'logical argument.' Rather, it confronts our reason with an oracular outburst designed to propel us paradoxically right out of the temporal paradigm. In the coming passage he 'proves' that *'what is'* could dot *'come-to-be'* (through Time) out of *'what is not.'* Later, in lines 8.19-20, he affirms that it cannot be in the future either. The status of *'what is'* must remain problematic from the standpoint of 'philosophical argument.' No doubt Parmenides intended these perplexities, as he strove to express some ineffable Musical revelation that transcends the characteristics of Time.

The impossibility of *'coming-to-be'* (***genesis***) largely dominates the following fifteen lines of 'logical' discourse, culminating in 8.21: *'Thus coming-to-be is extinguished and perishing unheard of.'* The lordship of Time itself is transcended as the culminating Musical revelation. In order to get the paradoxical flavor of Parmenides' 'logical' argument about Being as the All-at-once, consider the parody (the defense of Non-being) put forward by the Sophist philosopher Gorgias. His fr. 3 gives us: *'What is*

cannot have come into being. If it did, it came either from what is or what is not. But it did not come from what is, since if it is existent it did not come to be but already is; nor from what is not, for the non-existent cannot generate anything.' Is this passage logical? No doubt satirical humor is intended here, as the sceptical philosopher lampoons the Eleatic style. Indeed, an element of humor (a homage to Xenophanes?) may even have been present in Parmenides' poem. Yet in the *Way of Truth* we also sense something serious as well—a supreme effort to step beyond core characteristics of the temporal paradigm.

FRAGMENT 8.5-11: NEED AND GROWTH

(8.5-11) *'Nor was it ever nor will it be, since it is now, all together,*
one, continuous. For what birth will you seek for it?
How and from where did it grow? I will not permit you to say
or to think (that it grew) from ***what is not****; for it is not to be said or thought*
that it is not. What necessity would have stirred it up
To grow later rather than earlier, beginning from nothing?
Thus it must either fully be or not.'

Lines 8.5-6 make more sense if we connect them with what follows immediately—a paradoxical rejection of ***genesis***. The goddess (8.11) insists that *'what is'* must either exist completely or not at all. The latter alternative is ruled out in the very act of 'sounding' the poem. Non-being is just not an option. Hence *'it'* exists *'now, all together.'* Since it is one and continuous, we presume that it must have unbroken existence not only now but also in the past and future. Thus lines 8.5-6 seemingly form an appropriate preface to the section that 'proves' ***genesis*** irrelevant to the mysterious plenum. Yet the difficulties remain. The lines do *not* strictly or clearly say that Being lacks temporal succession; but rather it says that it has no past or future at all. It is here that interpreters have always stumbled in their efforts to convert Parmenides' mystical outburst into 'logical argument.'

The goddess offers two arguments against the *'coming-to-be'* of the One-whole. The first (8.7-9) repeats the prohibition (from fr. 2) against saying or thinking anything concerning Non-being. Since *'what is not'* is unknowable and inexpressible, it cannot form the platform for *'coming-to-be.'* The very act of saying and thinking something (anything) negates it and confirms Being (and Becoming for that matter). Thus Being can have no *'birth'* from Non-being. The argument is based upon the strict separation and 'logical' incompatibility of Non-being and Being.

In order to understand how paradoxical this doctrine is, we must be clear about the characteristics of the Musical paradigm. ***Harmonia*** is understood to exhibit change, ***genesis*** and destruction (*coming-to-be* and Becoming) and to *'birth'* itself from the 'surrounding' Non-being (Silence). Although Non-being is mysterious and (perhaps) unknowable, it is affirmed to have existence and even descriptive or symbolic attributes. For example, it is sometimes called *'the primordial waters.'* ***Harmonia*** exhibits not only *'birth and death'* but also the attendant *'growth'* and cyclical change. Parmenides is

denying all this and, in effect, segregating Non-being, Being, and Becoming from each other. His aim, however, is not the destruction of the Musical paradigm. Rather, he is groping for a way of describing the problematic characteristics of the analog conception of ***harmonia***. He wants to contrast it with the digital model of ***harmonia***. Hence he ironically negates all the known qualities of ***harmonia***, which are resultants of the movement of Time.

The second argument (8.9-10) continues in the same vein. In the mainstream perspective, ***harmonia*** arises due to *'necessity'* or *'need'* (***chreos***), often traditionally described as 'heat' or sexual drive (***Eros***) that impels 'unlike entities' to form marriages. Such expressions of ***logos*** *'stir up'* the vortex of relations, generating a ***kosmos***. Parmenides counters all this with a rhetorical question. Why should *'it'* arise from *'what is not'* later rather than sooner in Time? There is no reason for it arising at any particular time at all. Anything that *'comes-to-be'* must embody within it some principle of development, some tendency or will to be (*'need'*) sufficient to explain its generation. By definition, *'nothing'* does not have such attributes or any attributes at all. Hence it cannot generate Being. Modern interpreters hail this argument as an early instance of the principle of Sufficient Reason.

However 'logical' the argument may seem, the 'proof' affirms an utter impossibility, and Parmenides knew it. ***Harmonia*** *does* arise out of the primordial Silence of Non-being through the agency of Time. Being and Becoming are *'born'* directly out of Non-being in the Musical paradigm. The 'logic' of the goddess is not meant to be 'rational' like the discourse of Aristotle. By that criterion it fails completely. Indeed, Parmenides' 'logic' is uncomfortably like that of Gorgias quoted in the last section. Gorgias used such arguments to 'prove' that *nothing exists*. The crypto-logic of Parmenides' poem is only a powerful literary device intended to bring the reader to a difficult and paradoxical revelation.

FRAGMENT 8.12-21: JUSTICE AND GENERATION

(8.12-21) *'Nor will the force of conviction ever permit anything to come to be*
from ***what is not****, besides it* [i.e. what is not]. *For this reason Justice has permitted it*
[i.e. what is]
neither to come to be nor to perish, relaxing her shackles,
but holds (it) fast. But the decision about these matters lies in this:
it is *or* ***it is not****. But it has been decided, as is necessary,*
to let go the one way as unthinkable and nameless (for it is not
a true way) and that the other ***is*** *and is real.*
How could ***what is*** *be in the future? How could it come to be?*
For if it came into being, it is not, nor (is it) if it is ever going to be.
In this way, coming to be has been extinguished and destruction is unheard of.'

The poem continues in its paradoxical denial of *'coming-to-be.'* Lines 8.12-13 predictably re-inforce the notion that *'what is'* cannot arise from *'what is not.'* Only nothing can come from nothing. The doctrine is guaranteed by the tight grip of Justice,

who *'holds it fast.'* The Orphic figure of Justice, ally to Necessity and 'friend' of the central DYAD goddess, takes a commanding role just as she did in the *Prologue*. There she controlled the keys to the Gates and, opening them, permitted the poet to proceed through all the cities. Here she holds Being in her chains so that it cannot move or change. The image is derived from the exquisitely Musical Orphic fragment 165-6. ***Zeus*** asks **Night** (another goddess): *'How may I have all things one and each one separate?'* **Night** answers: *'When thou shalt stretch a strong bond about all things, fitting a golden chain from the aither.'* When she loosens her shackles, patterns of Justice-and-Injustice (***harmonia***) come into being and compensate each other for their mutual shortcomings, as stated by Anaximander. In the case of the All-at-once, she *'holds it fast'* because the give and take of harmonic movement no longer applies to it. ***Harmonia*** becomes immovable and chained by its fixed limits (the end bridges of the monochord). It is transformed into an analog 'solid' Whole in which all possibilities are already present. Since everything is there in the radical conception, *'coming-to-be'* does not apply to it. Thus we have the paradoxical conclusion that it 'rests' without motion or birth from *'what is not'*—the very antithesis of what ***harmonia*** normally is.

The goddess defends her position through the use of strange 'logic' that purposefully flies in the face of all common sense and all the Musical norms familiar to her audience. It is a *crypto-logic* fashioned to remove us from the *'chains'* of logic itself. Aristotle, who was not sympathetic to the Eleatic mystical stance, summarized it very well in his *Physics* (191a30): *'**What is** does not come into being, for it is already; and nothing could come into being from **what is not**.'* Like Gorgias, Aristotle was sceptical about the Orphic-inspired doctrine and its attendant pseudo-logic. He claimed that a philosopher should say what he means and mean what he says. Parmenides, like his enigmatic poetic teacher Xenophanes, does not play the game 'properly.'

Lines 8.15-18 have already been discussed in relation to fr. 2 (page 32). Again, he wants to emphasize the gulf between Being and Non-being. As usual, there is an undercurrent of polemic against the cosmological conservatives who not only claim that Non-being exists but even bring Non-being into ***harmonia*** itself. The void is integral to the digital perspective on harmony. In denying it Parmenides is defending the analog continuum.

Lines 8.19-21 use characteristic 'logic' to argue that *'what is'* cannot be in the future any more than the past. A notion of *'what-is-not'* in relation to any temporal context is denied as irrelevant to the One-whole. Thus *'coming-to-be'* is *'extinguished'* or transcended. Although Parmenides did not give an explicit argument against *'perishing'* in the passage, it can be inferred by similar 'logic.' After all, birth and death are two sides of a coin and thus an isomorphic argument can be assumed. Many modern scholars have delighted in the glib fabrication of the missing argument.

Looking at passage 8.5-21 as a whole, the goddess has 'proved' that Being cannot come from Non-being. However, she has not demonstrated that *'what is'* cannot come from *'what is.'* This lacuna is a source of irritation for many modern scholars who want Parmenides to be consistently logical. The symmetrical argument *is* found in the satirical

passage by Gorgias; hence it should also be present in Parmenides' text at hand. One group of modern interpreters, led by Reinhardt, recommended the 'amendment' of lines 8.12-13 to read *'what is'* rather than *'what is not.'* This convenient 'rewording' yields a symmetrical argument like that found in the passage of Gorgias. Gallop (*PE* 67), for example, translated it: *'Nor will the strength of trust ever allow anything to come-to-be from* ***what is*** */ besides it.'* The amendment allows modern interpreters to impose a dilemmatic logical structure over the entire passage. If **p** (***genesis***), then either **q** (***genesis*** from what-is-not) or **r** (***genesis*** from what-is). But not-**q** and not-**r**; therefore, not-**p**. Gallop (*PE* 15) claims that the amendment is *'not universally accepted. It is, however, a plausible one, and a strong case for it can be made.'* The alteration shows just how far many modern scholars are willing to go in twisting the evidence in order to make Parmenides fit into preconceived notions of what should be.

Even those scholars who do not go along with the 'improvement' nevertheless apologize for it. They cannot bring themselves to manipulate the text in such a blatant manner, but they are entirely sympathetic to the aims of the 'adjustment.' For example, Guthrie (2.28) expressed the feeling well. *'If one would wish the negative away, it is because it scarcely seems consistent with the dialecticcal power elsewhere displayed by Parmenides that he should first rebut the generation of* ***what is*** *out of* ***what is not*** *by the vigorous assertion that* ***'what is not'*** *cannot even be mentioned, and then follow this with an unnecessary and much feebler argument that* ***'what is not'*** *can generate nothing but itself. The reason may be that Parmenides enjoys casting in the teeth of the cosmogonists something that they themselves had all accepted as obvious.* ***Ex nihilo nihil fit*** *was an axiom of Greek thought, as Aristotle remarked. "Generation from the non-existent is impossible; in this opinion all the natural philosophers concur" (Phys. 187a34).'* Since Parmenides is the paragon of logic, his arguments should be deserving of (at least) Aristotelian standards. The statement that generation from the non-existent is universal among early cosmogonists is only partly true. For the *'primordial waters,'* or the *'infinite breath surrounding,'* or the *'void that separates'* was not equated with *nothing*. It embodies the 'will to be' or the 'heat' that generates all Being and Becoming. Moreover, for many philosophers the One as Being-Becoming always was and will be, an *'ever-living fire'* birthing the ***kosmos***. Hence Parmenides is not countering the cosmogonists in some vindictive manner due to his superior logic. Rather, he is reinterpreting the traditional doctrine to suit his problematic goddess-inspired revelation.

The passage as it stands cannot honestly be manipulated into a dilemmatic logic structure. However, it *is* possible that the other leg of the argument may have appeared elsewhere in a segment lost to us. This would explain why both '**q** and **r**' were known to Gorgias. In addition, Simplicius (*Phys.* 78.24) interpreted the text as if both arguments were present. *'This he clearly demonstrates about true being, that it is not generated; neither from something existing, for no existing thing preceded it, nor from the non-existent, for the non-existent is nothing.'* Even if it is not present in the existing passage, the type of argument is typically Eleatic. If *'what is'* comes from *'what is,'* then we are affirming Becoming or the transmutation of the Elements. But later Parmenides denies all motion and change entirely. Consequently, he is consistent in denying transmutation. We could reasonably conjecture that the argument *was* stated elsewhere in the poem. Yet

even if this is the case, the imposition of a strictly dilemmatic logic structure over the passage is inappropriate. It entirely misconstrues Parmenides' aim. He was no 'rational intellectual' demonstrating the superior inevitability of complex logic structures. Rather, he was a mystical poet using crypto-logic to express a religious revelation.

The source and subject of that revelation is the goddess herself, the Muse who directs his song-path. She is called many names in the poem—Necessity (or Fate), Justice, the Daughters of the Sun who guide the chariot, the goddess in the midst who *'steers all things.'* Aetius (1.25.3) wrote: *'According to Parmenides and Democritus everything is of necessity; and fate, justice, providence, and the maker of the universe are the same thing.'* She is the sacred Spring who pours forth the holy waters of Becoming. She is the mysterious Muse who inspires the 'madness' of poetry. Parmenides is not alone in his reverence for the Muse. Empedocles displays the same attitude in his extra-ordinary fr. 3: *'But, gods, avert madness from my tongue, / and lead a pure stream from holy mouths. / And you, much-remembering maiden Muse with white arms, / I entreat—bring (to me) the things it is right for creatures of a day / to hear, driving your easily-steered chariot from the halls of Reverence.'*

FRAGMENT 8.22-25: INDIVISIBLE AND CONTINUOUS

(8.22-25) *'Nor is it divided, since it all is alike;*
nor is it any more in any way, which would keep it from holding together,
or any less, but it is all full of ***what is****.*
Therefore, it is all continuous, for ***what is*** *draws near to* ***what is****.'*

The statement that *'it'* is indivisible is doubly paradoxical. It runs counter to the Musical model of Becoming in which the One is divided to generate the Many. Division of the One is fundamental to the old paradigm. But it also seems to oppose the analog perspective. The main avenue for establishing the plenum of the Whole is the ability to affect *infinite divisibility*. The process was already implicit in Anaximander and it is made quite explicit in Parmenides' pupil Zeno. Infinite divisibility results in the All-at-once. Parmenides is saying that such a division is the same as no division. The All is nevertheless still One. Hence, paradoxically, the One is not divided.

The enigmatic doctrine is justified (in 8.22) by the statement '*since it all is alike.'* A more rigorous translation yields *'since (it) all alike is.'* In the first sense it is also translated *'since it is all alike'* and implies homogeneity. However, being homogeneous does not necessarily render it indivisible. The notion of homogeneity is also paradoxical in relation to traditional ***harmonia*** that is inherently hierarchical. In the second sense, *'alike'* is taken adverbially. *'It'* exists alike at every point. In other words, there are no 'gaps' in which *'it'* is not. This second sense is confirmed by the following lines (8.23-24). *'It'* exists at every point on the cosmic monochord wire. *'It'* is an unbroken continuum with no 'holes' (the void) to separate one region from another. Such lacunae would (ironically) *'keep it from holding together.'* This statement is also paradoxical, since the 'gaps' are integral to traditional ***harmonia*** which certainly 'hangs together.' Parmenides is reminding us that the Whole is not characterized by a separation between

the 'in crowd' and the 'out crowd.' Hence we cannot say that there is more of *'it'* here and less there. *'It is all full of **what is**.'* The word for *'continuous'* (***suneches***) is closely related in meaning and form to *'holds together'* (***sunechesthai***). The conception of a whole is associated with the analog continuum rather than the discreet ***harmonia***.

Infinite division results in the frets of the monochord becoming ever closer and closer together until they 'touch' or become a 'solid' plenum. Hence *'**what is** draws near to **what is**.'* The statement reaffirms fr. 4: *'For you will not cut off **what is** from clinging to **what is**.'* The process of 'cutting off' is the very core of monochord work. By making an infinite division, the musical string is ironically no longer 'cut off.' All the 'cities' have been traversed. No ***harmonia***, no matter how strife-ridden, is excluded. The statement *'it is all full of **what is**'* is the very epitome of the radical Eleatic perspective on ***harmonia***.

Modern reaction to this passage is characterized by a total lack of Musical insight. The continuum is something wholly abstract, visual, or logical. Burnet insisted that the plenum must be purely *'corporeal.'* KRS (251) claimed that the continuum says *'simply that any subject of enquiry must be characterized by internal continuity.'* Various scholars argue over the continuum being temporal or spacial or both. Some are uncomfortable about Parmenides' rigidly 'ontological' thought being translated into physical or spacial terms. Most do their best to fit the plenum into the prevailing standard neo-Aristotelian notion of early philosophy. The Milesians (and Pythagoras) were supposedly primitive materialist monists with no clear conception of space apart from 'body.' Parmenides came along, pointed out their inadequacies and made 'progess.' An example of the orthodox approach is found in Guthrie (2.33). *'It is evident that earlier and contemporary thinkers were still far from grasping the notion of empty space or vacuum. Parmenides faced them with it, and showed that on their own monistic premises it was an impossible conception. Since being was still imagined as something physical and tangible, empty space could only be found where being was not. But where being is not, there can only be non-being, i.e. empty space is non-existent.'* Guthrie and his colleagues have no inkling at all that the plenum has a poetic-musical referent. Consequently, their commentaries are narrow, literalistic, confused, intellectual, and ultimately beside the point. I will not pursue the erudite but tortured arguments here. They can be found in abundance in practically all of the modern writings on Parmenides.

The issue of the *void* is one of main 'fault-lines' separating the radical progressive wing of early philosophy from the more traditional perspective. 'Space' is integral to the digital model of ***harmonia***. In addition, it is acceptable to that mainstream of progressive cosmologists who were willing to replace the traditional Elements with more abstract or irrational elements in the scale. I am thinking of, for example, Anaximenes and the Atomists. Democritus in his fr. 156 stated with as much paradox as he could muster: *'**what is not** exists, just as much as **what is**.'* He means that 'reality' consists of *'atoms and the void.'* This position is a compromise of radicalism not so far removed from the traditional Pythagoreans who believed that 'reality' is *'numbers and the void.'* Both groups were taking their model from the discontinuous or discreet nature of ***harmonia***. The difference between them (perhaps) arises from the Atomistic acceptance of irrational

elements that could replace the old digital Elements, as well as the high resolution of the field into many components. On the other hand, the Eleatic philosophers represent an even more 'left wing' group who do not only 'simulate' the analog continuum in a practical manner as the Atomists did. Rather, the Eleatics bring out the most extreme and paradoxical characteristics of ***harmonia*** as a complete plenum. These features allow them to uncover aspects of ***harmonia*** that are problematic and 'contrary' to common sense. However, we should not assume that they were trying to negate the importance of ***harmonia*** itself. That came later with scepticism in the fourth century. Parmenides wanted only to uncover mystical features of the Musical paradigm. He could not know that his 'inspired ravings' would one day undermine the whole paradigm, when the philosophers were increasingly interpreted as competing and mutually exclusive ideologies.

The assertion that the One is undivided emphasizes that the One is a Whole. The radical conception of wholeness equates it with the All. Yet even the traditional ***harmonia***, no matter how simple, is also an architectonic whole. Parmenides is redefining wholeness as an analog state of ***harmonia*** in which the void is eliminated. Nevertheless, the old concept of wholeness is not negated, only expanded to promote the possibility of the plenum.

FRAGMENT 8.26-33: MOTIONLESS WITHIN LIMITS

(8.26-33) *'But unchanging in the limits of great bonds,*
it is, without start or finish, since coming to be and destruction
were banished far away and true conviction drove them off.
Remaining the same in the same and by itself it lies
and so stays there fixed; for mighty Necessity
holds it in the bonds of a limit, which pens it in all round,
since it is right for ***what is*** *to be not incomplete;*
for it is not lacking; if it were (lacking), it would lack everything.'

In this passage and the following one the diction achieves the utmost epic and religious solemnity. The goddesses Necessity (***Ananke***) and later Fate (***Moira***) are reverently invoked. Allusions are made to Homer, Hesiod, and the Orphic poets. It is clear that Parmenides intended this section to be the climax of his *Way of Truth*. The grandeur of his poetry supports his most audacious paradox—that the analog ***harmonia*** is absolutely changeless and motionless. The image of invincible Necessity holding *'what is'* in great chains reminds us strongly of fr. 26.1 by Xenophanes. There the spherical, limited cosmic One *'always remains in the same place, moving not at all.'* Immobility is the very antithesis of traditional ***harmonia***, whose essence is movement through time. The All-at-once transcends both Time and motion. The image of *'enchainment'* or bondage (***desmoi***) in line 8.26 and 8.31 reminds us of the earlier usage in 8.14, expressing total invariance of both locomotion and qualitative alteration. The subject is entirely 'tied up.'

Two arguments support *'changelessness'* (***akineton***). The first one (8.26-28) invokes the elimination of coming-to-be and perishing. If nothing can be generated or destroyed, then change must also be negated. Many modern scholars have pointed out that this argument is weak. Just because beginning and ceasing are banished, it does not prove that change is also impossible. The argument can perhaps justify a lack of qualitative change but not a lack of locomotion. Some would argue that Parmenides intended only to negate qualitative change here while locomotion is disproved a little later. However, it is clear that the concept of change (***kinesis***) involves both qualitative alteration and locomotion. Plato (*Theaetetus* 181c-d) combined both features in his notion of ***kinesis***. It is clear that Parmenides did as well, as shown later in line 8.41 where the goddess rules out *'shift of place and exchange of bright color.'* Aristotle had an even wider concept of ***kinesis***, including a four-fold division: locomotion, growth and diminution, qualitative alteration, and generation and destruction. Thus it is highly unlikely that Parmenides separated these components of ***kinesis***. The problems of interpretation arise mainly because of the separation of ***kinesis*** from the Presocratic musical referent. The post-Aristotelian fixation upon an exclusively visual context where 'something' moves hides the original musical meaning. If the ***harmonia*** has become a 'solid' plenum, then no movement or qualitative shift is possible because all possibilities are already present.

The second argument (8.29-33) is more complex and obscure. The immobility of the All is tied to its self-identity or definition and its completeness. It cannot move because the plenum allows no place for a shift to occur. Thus it remains *'the same in the same (place) and by itself.'* If it changed its position then it must no longer be the conceptual all-inclusive Whole. Its very nature by definition eliminates movement and all variation or qualitative change. Again, this argument is based upon the elimination of the void as the space in which the ***harmonia*** could have room to move. Parmenides does not use the term void (***kenon***) directly in his poem, but we can assume that he supported it. The argument was later made more explicit by his pupil Melissus (fr. 7.7). The negation of the void is a hallmark of the Eleatic philosophers. Lines 32-33 are more difficult and obscure. By definition, the All is complete. However, it is not clear that it would lack *'everything'* if it were lacking just some aspects. In practical terms most ***harmoniai*** are conditioned more by what they lack than what they include. The lines remind us of line 8.11: *'it must either fully be or not.'* The obscurity is intentional and meant to reinforce the notion of perfection or completeness. If it were not complete then it would not be the All. A simple ***harmonia*** is also a whole, but Parmenides wants to tie the whole to the union of all possible ***harmoniai***.

The goddess supports the static state of the All by making it held by Necessity *'in the chains of a limit, which fences it all about.'* The term for *limit* (***peirar***), plural ***peirata***, is a variant of ***peras-perata*** and used in epic poetry. ***Ananke*** was a mighty personal goddess of great importance to Orphism. In an Orphic theogony known to the neoplatonists (fr. 54), she is *'stretched over the whole **kosmos**, reaching to its limits (**perata**).'* Later in the poem (fr. 10.6-7) Parmenides says that she compels the heaven to hold the ***peirata*** of the stars. She is the guarantor of the cosmic order and its limits or boundaries. Aeschylus (*P.V.* 105) and Euripides (*Alc.* 965) both wrote: *'The might of*

***Ananke** is invincible'* and no charm or spell can prevail against her. Plato (*Rep.* 616c) used her to hold the spindle on which all the circles of the stars revolve. She is a religious figure of the highest prominence and also implicated in the musical fragment of Anaximander. Her inclusion shows that Parmenides is not appealing only to 'logical argument' alone in his poem but also to religious sentiment.

Necessity is always connected to the important musical-philosophical issue of ***peirar*** or ***peiras***. We are already familiar with the terms ***peras-apeiron*** (limit-unlimited) through Pythagoras, Anaximander, and indeed, the whole of early philosophy. As usual, modern interpreters try to isolate the use of *limit* in Parmenides from its use by other early philosophers. Its strong musical associations are totally denied, transforming it into something obscure and 'metaphysical.' For example, KRS (252) says: *'Perhaps rather 'within limits' is a metaphorical way of talking about determinacy. Parmenides will then be saying that **what is** has no potentiality for being different—at any time or in any respect—from what it is at present.'* Limit here refers to something vaguely abstract and perhaps logical. Yet the musical referent is quite straightforward. The cosmic ***harmonia*** is metaphorically pictured as a giant monochord string bounded by its limits—the two end-bridges that stand symbolically for **Heaven** (the One) and ***Tartaros*** (the opposite end of the spectrum). In the middle is **Earth**, the goddess who *'stretches'* her power over the whole ***kosmos***. The world of ***harmonia*** is impossible without these limits that *'pen it in all around.'* The image of confinement is borrowed from Homer (*Il.* 13.706).

Various allusions to the epic tradition are evident here. Line 8.26 *'unchanging in the limits of great bonds'* is reminiscent of Homeric Hymn 129. In the hymn, the divine infant ***Apollo*** (god of music) soon bursts his swaddling bonds: *'No longer did the bonds (**desmoi**) hold thee back, and all the **peirata** were loosed.'* Bonds and limits were used interchangeably by Parmenides and by the epic poets. When the companions of Odysseus bound him to the mast (*Od.* 12.179) so that he could listen to the Siren's song in safety, they fastened ***peirata*** around it. In Hesiod (*Th.* 335) ***peirata*** represents the coils of the serpent (of Time) surrounding and guarding the golden apples of the Hesperides. ***Peirata*** are always associated with *encirclement*, the circle around the monochord shown in the cosmic monochord diagrams of chapter one. Thus ***Okeanos***, the cosmic river encircling the ***kosmos***, is called ***peirar*** in the *Iliad.* Theognis (140) said that, by flowing around the earth, it *binds* it. ***Peirar*** was additionally related to a chain or rope, a material bond. All of these associations are quite musical.

Peirar was also connected to *'complete,'* since what is ***apeiron*** is essentially unfinished, perhaps incapable of being completed, and thus not yet *'perfect.'* If *'what is'* contains no residues of *'what is not,'* then it is complete and bounded. Hence the All must be limited. Aristotle interpreted Parmenides in this manner in his *Physics* (3.6.207a9). *'For we define a whole precisely as that from which nothing is absent, for example, a 'whole man' or a 'whole chest.' And as with a particular whole, so when the word is used in the strict sense* [i.e. for the entire universe]*: the **Whole** is that outside which there is nothing whatsoever; whereas that from which something, no matter what, is missing and left outside is not '**All**.' And 'whole' and 'complete' if not absolutely the same, are very closely akin, and nothing is complete unless it has an end; but an end is a limit. So*

Parmenides was nearer the mark than Melissus; for Melissus speaks of 'the Whole' as unlimited, whereas Parmenides sets boundaries to his 'whole,' that is 'equipoised on the centre.' Of course, the All is both limited and unlimited, as Xenophanes pointed out. It is limited in its boundaries (the end bridges that 'confine' the vibrating string), but it is unlimited in its potential for infinite divisibility. Thus Parmenides' use of ***peirar*** in his poem can be directly compared to the traditional use by other poets and philosophers.

Practically every early philosopher had something to say about the limited and unlimited. Parmenides is no exception. After the time of the Sophists when the philosophers were increasingly set against each other, the issue was used to classify competing schools. Parmenides was grouped with the 'limited' camp along with Xenophanes and some others. However, it is quite likely that Parmenides judged the world-***harmonia*** to be limited in some respects and unlimited in others. Simplicius reported that Xenophanes took such a stand, although the actual Xenophanean fragment is lost to us. Apparently the Pythagoreans also combined both sides in their conception of ***harmonia***. Anaximander stressed the possibility of infinite divisibility, generating *'innumerable worlds,'* but the modern notion that he had no conception of limit is most improbable. Limit and the unlimited are terms that cannot be neatly isolated from each other. If Anaximander had a conception of the unlimited then he must also have contemplated limit. Anaximander and Parmenides may have been much closer to each other than modern interpreters assume.

The orthodox modern view, of course, assumes that they are entirely incompatible and that Parmenides made 'progress' over Anaximander. This assumption can be found in practically every modern commentator. For example, here is Guthrie (2.38) commenting on the passage in question. *'In this short passage Parmenides has further advanced his intellectual revolution on two fronts. The denial of change and motion condemns all human experience as illusory and once again excludes the possibility of any cosmogony; and the insistence that reality is totally confined within* ***peirata*** *destroys specifically the basis of Anaximander's system.'* Yet this bluntly positivistic statement is quite suspect. In the first place, it is not entirely clear that *all* human experience is entirely illusory in the realm of ***doxa***. Moreover, the poem of Parmenides does provide a cosmogony, as is fitting for the realm of Becoming. Above all, Parmenides' acceptance of ***peirar*** is entirely compatible with Anaximander. For Anaximander's ***apeiron*** refers to the possibility of infinite divisibility and not to a lack of limited boundaries. The theme was carried forward by Parmenides' student Zeno, who examined the paradoxes that can be derived from infinite divisibility. As Xenophanes had already indicated, both characteristics (limited and unlimited) can be applied to the ***harmonia*** of the world. The modern 'either-or' stance is derived from the divorce of their exegesis from any connection to ***harmonia*** and the monochord that served as the 'ground' for musical conceptions and symbols. The modern outlook is essentially sophist in its drive to isolate the philosophers from each other and undermine the essential unity that was present within the movement.

As we will see in upcoming sections of Parmenides' poem, the modern drive to isolate Parmenides from Anaximander is entirely misguided. Parmenides is making more

explicit the implications of the All-at-once. This radical conception of the Whole was already implicit in Anaximander's *'innumerable worlds.'* When Parmenides turns his attention from this paradoxical Being to the evident Becoming, his debts to Anaximander become more transparent.

FRAGMENT 8.34-41: PLACE AND COLOR

(8.34-41) *'Thinking and the thought that it is are the same.*
For not without ***what is****, in which it is expressed,*
will you find thinking; for nothing else either is or will be
except that which is, since Fate shackled it
to be whole and unchanging; wherefore it has been named all names [or, all things]
mortals have established, persuaded that they are true—
to come to be and to perish, to be and not (to be),
and to change place and alter bright color.'

Like Empedocles, Parmenides repeated himself in order to drive home his point. In this passage, practically everything is a reiteration of a statement made earlier either in fragment 8 or some other fragment. However, the repetitions are not exact. We could describe his poetic technique as 'theme and variations.' Empedocles did the same; for example, his extensive fr. 17 begins with *'I will tell a double tale.'* Then at line 16 he stops and restarts again with *'I will tell a double tale.'* The two sections cover similar but not identical territory. Such a poetic technique is reminiscent of musical forms in which a theme has a development, a return to a slightly altered form of the theme, another development, and so on. In the passage above, line 8.37 provides a good illustration. Here it is the goddess Fate (***Moira***) who *'shackles'* or holds the whole, an image borrowed from Homer (*Il.* 22.5). Previously in 8.30-31 Necessity (***Ananke***) provided the same function, whereas in the *Prologue* (1.14) and in 8.13-14 the goddess Justice (***Dike***) held the keys to ***harmonia***. The variant names of the goddess should remind us that the poetic form encourages alternative descriptions that are not meant to be taken literally. Later (fr. 12) she is also described as the *'goddess in the midst'* who *'steers all things.'* The names themselves are less important than the theme—the DYAD goddess who acts as the Gateway to the All and holds it in her grip. Empedocles used the same technique when he called the Roots (Elements) of ***harmonia*** alternative poetic names. Any narrow and literal interpretation of such poetry is inappropriate.

The first few lines of the passage are notoriously difficult and take us back to fr. 3: *'The same thing is for thinking and for being'* and fr. 6.1: *'That which is there to be spoken and thought of must be.'* The implied meaning has already been discussed earlier in relation to fr. 3. We need not repeat it here, only to note that similar difficulties also occur in this passage. Using ambiguous syntax, Parmenides does not make things easy for his readers. Simplicius (*Phys.* 87.17) paraphrased the first line to mean: *'What can be thought is the same as that which is the cause or condition of thought'* i.e. *'what is.'* Modern interpretations tend to fall into two camps: Thought (***noema***) is identical to Being (***eon***), and there is no thought without an existing object. Both of these statements are problematic from the standpoint of common sense. The perennial confusion over

Parmenides' intentions is reflected in the variety of translations of 8.34-36. Here is a sample of the alternative renderings of the problematic verse.

Burnet: *'The thing that can be thought and that for the sake of which the thought exists is the same; for you cannot find thought without something that is, as to which it is uttered.'*
Taran: *'It is the same to think and the thought that (the object of thought) exists, for without Being, in what has been expressed, you will not find thought.'*
Gallop: *'The same thing is for thinking and (is) that there is thought; for not without what-is, on which (it) depends, having been declared, will you find thinking.'*
Mourelatos: *'And the same is to think of and wherefore is the thinking. For not without what-is, to which it stands committed, will you find thinking.'*
Kirk and Raven: *'What can be thought is only the thought that it is. For you will not find thought without what is, in relation to which it is uttered.'*

Parmenides' thesis that thought (or realization) cannot be separated from Being (or *'what is'*) and from speech or 'sounding' (***logos***, ***legein***) is one of those profound mystical statements firmly rooted in a musical concept of the ***kosmos***. Everything that vibrates shares in *'what is.'* The All is a vast pool of possibilities out of which comes every conceivable ***harmonia***, including both love and strife. The term ***noema*** has a wider meaning than mere thought. It also implies recognition, knowledge, apprehension, the faculty of the ***nous***. The realization of the All (the analog ***harmonia***) assures its very existence. Since ***harmonia*** is architectonically wholistic (wholes within wholes), one can 'see' the Whole reflected in every ***harmonia***, no matter how simple or complex. The Whole is One and the One is a Whole. Such is the mystical relation between the One and the All.

Line 8.36-37 is also controversial. The text may be corrupt, since Simplicius quoted it in two versions. The first version (*Phys.* 86.31) is much like the translation given: *'For nothing else either is or will be except that which is.'* However, the original Greek lacks a syllable metrically. The other version (*Phys.* 146.9) includes ***Chronos*** (Time), but leaves a conditional clause hanging in the air. Coxon rather dubiously translated it: *'There is not and will not be any Time outside Being.'* Either way, the meaning is clear: the special state of Being-as-the-Whole transcends Time.

Line 8.38-39 reiterates the important Musical theme of 'naming.' That motif has already appeared at 8.17 and 2.6-8. It also points forward to fr. 19. Not surprisingly, 8.38-39 is also controversial in its translation and its interpretation. The issue will be discussed in the section on fr. 19. Additionally, 8.38-39 was misquoted by Plato (*Theaetetus* 180e); but many have doubts that it actually refers to 8.38 and rather that it is an independent fragment. In this regard it has acquired the name 'Cornford's fragment.' Discussion of this issue follows the section on fr. 19. Suffice it to say here that both Non-being and Being are (paradoxically) nameless and that naming is reserved for and identified with the realm of Becoming. The standard modern treatment, of course, simply claims that all names have no reality.

Our passage in question is fraught with many controversies, compounded by Parmenides' ecstatic ambiguous syntax. It also ties together many of the central themes of the entire poem: thinking, being and non-being, naming, wholeness, unchanging, mortals, persuasion, coming-to-be and perishing—all central motifs found elsewhere in the poem.

Take the example of 8.39 *'to be persuaded'* from the verb *'to persuade'* (***peithein***). It first makes its appearance in the *Prologue* (1.15-16) where *'the maidens beguiled her* [the goddess] *with soft words* [***logos***] *and skillfully persuaded her to push back the bar.'* The cognate noun ***peitho*** is later personified at 2.4: *'the path of Persuasion, for she attends upon Truth.'* Persuasion is consciously associated with ***aletheia*** and the immortals at 2.4, yet at 8.39 it is solidly tied to mortals—the realm of Becoming and naming. It is mortals who are persuaded by their 'naming.' At 8.50 the goddess judges her account (***logos***) as reliable or trustworthy (***piston***). We can safely associate it with persuasion here. Again it is tied to the *Way of Truth*. As if to emphasize these ties, at 8.52 the effort of mortals is judged *'deceitful, untrustworthy'* (***pistis***). On the other hand, at 8.60 the *Way of Seeming* is described as *'plausible'* (also persuasive) and related to *'mortal opinion.'* Last but not least, the goddess at 1.29-30 promises to teach *'both the unshaken heart* [***nous***] *of persuasive Truth* [***aletheia***] *and the opinions* [***doxa***] *of mortals, in which there is no true alliance.'* Thus we see in Parmenides' poem a complex web in which 'persuasion' is associated both with Being *and* Becoming. Being is statistically dominant, yet also paradoxical. For the path of ***aletheia*** is an impossibility (being timeless and motionless) and thus not very 'persuasive.' The use at 8.39 and 8.60 is at least plausible or more matter-of-factly persuasive, yet it is tied to the judgement of mortals who surely have less 'clout' than the immortals championed by the goddess. Intuitively we want 'persuasion' to attend Truth and not Opinion. Perhaps Parmenides wants to 'attract' us toward ***aletheia*** in order to heighten the attendant paradox. At any rate, he (like Empedocles) referred 'persuasion' both to Being and Becoming.

Line 8.41 is rightfully judged the only entirely new point in the whole passage. *'To change place and alter bright color'* are characteristics of Becoming, coupled with coming-to-be in the judgement of mortals. *'Changing place'* is properly tied to motion, a fundamental attribute of ***doxa***. Hence it should be related to the *Way of Seeming* and has confirmation elsewhere in the poem. On the other hand, *'bright color'* is found only here in the extant poem. Of course, it may also have occurred in a segment lost to us. At any rate, it is certainly a condition of Becoming. A few modern scholars have wanted to interpret the image literally, but most recognize that it likely stands for qualitative change in general. It is, after all, a special case of Becoming. What modern interpreters universally ignore is the strong association between *'color'* (***chroma***) and the language of the contemporary music culture. In the time of Parmenides the *enharmonic genus* was still dominant, but progressive musicians were increasingly turning to the *chromatic genus* in their compositions. In the terminology of the time, musicians were adding more *'color'* to their tunings; indeed, chromatic means 'colored.' In the course of the fifth century, chromatic tunings gained ascendancy over the enharmonic alternatives (see the section: *Some Famous Greek Musicians* in Chapter 8). The musical associations of

'color' would not have been lost to the readers of Parmenides' time, although it is obviously not transparent to the modern a-musical treatment of Parmenides.

The employment of such a stock musical term also ties *'color'* to the realm of Becoming. For Becoming has above all the nature of ***harmonia***: coming-to-be, the transmutation of its vibratory Elements (to be and then not to be), movement through time, and *'change of place.'* The various ***harmoniai*** that mortals have defined or 'named' can be classified according to degrees of *'color'* and the 'placement' of the monochord fret positions. All ***harmoniai*** can be named by the number sequences involved, as well as by other complex factors like melodic patterning and so on. The passage implies that the analog All (the paradoxical realm of Being) is no longer characterized by *'change of place and bright color'* because all possibilities are already present. It is beyond all such attributes and hence mystically 'nameless.'

Parmenides was not alone in tying the musical imagery of *'color'* to the realm of Becoming. His follower Empedocles related color to the transmutation (mixing) of the vibratory Roots (Elements). In his fr. 71 we read: *'When* ***water, earth, aither*** [**air**] *and* ***sun*** [**fire**] */ are mixed, as many shapes and colors of mortals came to be / as now have come to be, fitted together by Aphrodite.'* Fr. 23 offers a poetically beautiful description of what happens in the art of musical tuning: *'When they take the many colored pigments in their hands, / mixing in harmony more of these and less of those* [Elements], */ out of them they produced shapes similar to all things.'* We should not be surprised that Parmenides and Empedocles used musical imagery. After all, they were poets. Yet they were not exceptions. All of the early philosophers modelled the nature of the changing world on the characteristics of ***harmonia***. In other words, they universalized the features of ***harmonia*** and projected them onto the 'big picture.'

FRAGMENT 8.42-49: THE SPHERICAL PLENUM

(8.42-49) *'But since there is a furthest limit, it is complete*
on all sides, like the bulk of a well-rounded ball,
evenly balanced in every way from the middle; for it must be not at all greater
or smaller here than there.
For neither (is it the case that) ***what is not*** *is—which would stop it from reaching*
its like—nor (is it the case that) ***what is*** *is in such a way that there could be more of*
what is
here and less there, since it is all inviolate;
for equal to itself on all sides, it meets with its limits uniformly.'

The *Way of Truth* concludes with a defense of the continuum recalling lines 8.22-24 and introducing the stunning image of the plenum as a *'well-rounded ball'* (***sphaira***) or sphere. Needless to say, this passage is enormously controversial. How can an ungenerated, motionless, indivisible continuum be like a sphere? It just isn't logical.

Modern commentary on the passage tends to fall into two camps according to whether or not the sphere actually occupies space. Does it embody real spacial extension

or is the metaphor only conceptual? The language of the passage certainly implies normal spacial extension. The sphere has a *'furthest limit'* or boundary. Moreover, it is *'evenly balanced in every way from the middle,'* also translated *'everywhere from the center equally matched.'* This language clearly refers to the standard geometrical properties of a sphere, in which equal radii fan out in every direction from the common center. This symmetry does not allow *'more here and less there.'* Such a description is more applicable to a sphere than any other shape. Among modern commentators who favor a literalistic interpretation, Burnet stands out. In a strongly neo-Aristotelian manner, he insisted that the sphere is 'corporeal' because Parmenides was not yet capable of imagining any reality other than the 'sensible' (after Aristotle, *De Caelo* 1.298b21). According to the Aristotelian schema, the early philosophers were only materialistic monists. Parmenides supposedly demonstrated the logical difficulties in positing a monistic 'primary substance.' Many modern scholars follow this convenient Aristotelian explanation. According to this standpoint, the sphere is straightforwardly *physical* or 'cosmological.' It is only a 'body' and thus it has real extension in space. Moreover, as Burnet wrote (*EGP* 181) *'it is equally real in every direction, and the sphere is the only form that meets this condition. Any other would be in one direction more than in another.'*

Inevitably, many scholars have pointed out the logical inconsistencies in affirming physical extension. If the spacial limit is the surface of a sphere, then what lies outside it? Any boundary implies *'what is not'* and that is not allowed in the continuum. Moreover, a spherical shape does have a uniform surface, but there are also alternative spacial distinctions within the overall form: center, surface, hemisphere, and so on. It is thus quite divisible into portions. The spherical shape, indeed any other shape as well, is virtually impossible to reconcile with the goddess' basic argument for an indivisible plenum. Some modern commentators sidestep these problems by maintaining that Parmenides was not yet capable of understanding the inconsistencies. Since he was the very first philosopher to have *any* conception of logical argument at all, his logic was still primitive enough to allow for such contradictions. This dubious judgement of Parmenides (reminiscent of the primitivism attributed to Pythagoras in knowing only the first four ratios) is implicit in the commentary of KRS (253). *'Pursuit of the way 'is' thus leads to a conclusion as astonishing as the result of consideration of 'is not.' Parmenides' final position* [in the *Way of Truth*] *is in fact doubly paradoxical. He not only denies the logical coherence of everything we believe about the world, but in making all reality a finite sphere introduces a notion whose own logical coherence must in turn be doubted.'* Without underestimating Parmenides' ability to generate intentional paradoxes, we must question whether he was really so unintelligent as some moderns assume. The accusation of primitivism has often been made by interpreters when they themselves cannot comprehend the import of the ancient writer.

One way around the problems of spacial extension is simply to deny that the sphere is anything other than conceptual or metaphorical. After all, the passage says that the plenum is *'like a ball,'* not that it *is* a ball. The reality is then 'sphere-like' but not necessarily material or spacial at all. Given the high esteem for the circle and sphere demonstrated by the ancients (already discussed under fragment 5), he may be using the

image poetically only to assert that the plenum is absolutely complete, perfect, or finished with no room for further development of any kind. It then exhibits perfect symmetry and has no deficiency from any perspective. The sphere is the only shape with no 'corners' and thus displays a uniform shape from every angle. Consequently, it is an appropriate metaphor for absolute invariancy. Just as Parmenides had earlier abolished temporal distinctions, perhaps he is here abolishing spacial distinctions as well. His universe is then not only timeless but also spaceless.

Even if we do not take the argument to this extreme conclusion, the image may at least support spacial *uniformity*, as believed by McKirahan. Yet this argument sits uncomfortably with the highly spacial language actually used in the poem. McKirahan skirts this difficulty (*PBS* 172) by claiming that Parmenides purposefully used inappropriate language that progressively negates itself. *'To eliminate virtually all our language and concepts he must begin in the world of our language and concepts and finish in another world where practically none of our language and concepts apply. In moving from the one world to the other, he uses and then discards words and concepts. At the end, he is left with only one expressible thought* [i.e. 'it is'], *but on the way there, and even afterwards in communicating to mortals who are not yet there, he must use many technically illegitimate words and concepts.'* His dubious 'logical' thesis is based on the premise that Parmenides maintained only one intelligible thought: 'it is.' All subject-predicate propositions that mortals have used in 'naming' are only incorrect variants of one single proposition that alone is real. This highly reductionist conclusion naturally results from the modern abstract a-musical interpretation of Parmenides' subject matter. Again, it insults Parmenides' intelligence.

Like McKirahan, Owen, and others, Guthrie takes the sphere metaphorically to stand for spacial invariancy. However, it must have some spacial 'reality' or it would not exist at all. He skirts the problem of boundaries by arguing that the Parmenidean void refers *only* to physical space. According to his analysis, not even this empty space lies beyond the spherical cosmos. Aristotle put it thus (*Phys.* 207a7 and elsewhere): *'There is neither place nor void nor time outside the heaven.'* The question of what lies beyond the sphere is irrelevant because the cosmos includes everything to the ultimate limits. Plato implied the same (*Theaetetus* 180e): *'your thinkers like Melissus and Parmenides assert that everything is one and stands still within its own boundaries because it has no room in which it moves.'* The cosmos is a sphere containing everything. For Pythagoreans, it also included the void (space) both inside and outside it, but Parmenides rejected the reality of physical space. In Guthrie's judgement, Pythagoreans used numbers and geometrical forms as 'substance' for the moving perceptible world. Parmenides refused the connection between geometry and the real world. For Guthrie, the Parmenidean sphere is only geometrical (2.49): *'His reality is the spherical solid of the geometer, now for the first time separated from its physical manifestation, an object of thought, not sense.'* It is extended in space no more or less than Euclid's figures. Thus Guthrie presents a rather confused picture in which the ***sphaira*** is only 'geometrical' or conceptual and yet somehow applies to the whole physical cosmos.

This sample of modern interpretations of the Parmenidean sphere is intended to illustrate the general perplexity surrounding the subject. We witness a struggle to fit the image into some logical framework consistent with the abstract attributes of the continuum. The common thread in all of the commentaries is the absolute lack of any musical context. The sphere and the plenum refer to something purely abstract and/or visual. When the context of Musical symbolism is restored, the image again makes sense and is self-consistent. However, in classic Parmenidean fashion, the image still maintains elements of paradox.

The music wire symbolizes the entire ***kosmos*** with its infinite variety of Being and Becoming. Although it houses the *'innumerable worlds'* of alternative ***harmoniai***, it is also strictly bounded by the two end bridges and the unalterable laws of arithmetic that hold it in a firm grip. In the elementary monochord diagrams of chapter one, we drew a circle around the music wire, a circle centered on the *mese*, the place of the DYAD goddess who commands all musical arithmetic through the power of cyclical identity. However, that circle can also be imagined to be a sphere; indeed, it is the entire edifice of the *Orphic egg* whereby the One gives birth to the All. In the analog perspective, the All is One, *'complete on all sides,'* since all possible ***harmoniai*** are present. The ***kosmos*** is a circle, a cycle and a sphere on every level because periodic motion ruled by Time pervades the whole world. However, Time and motion are paradoxically transcended in the All as the Whole or the 'All-at-once.' In this analog situation, there cannot be *'greater or smaller here than there,'* which is the normal condition and architecture of ***harmonia***. Such metrical and hierarchical features are intrinsic to the realm of Becoming. In negating them Parmenides aims to paradoxically separate Being and Becoming. He has a vision of Being utterly transcendent of Becoming. Yet they are not ultimately separable. Their inter-penetration is hinted at in the passage by the use of the term *'equally balanced'* or *'poised'* (***isophales***). During the fifth century, this term was used to mean *'equally matched'* opposing forces in battle (Herodotus 1.82.4), *'equal strength'* (Herodotus 5.49.8), *'equal numbers'* (Thucydides 4.94) or simply *'equal.'* Parmenides will argue for Becoming as well as Being in the poem. It takes us back to the *mese*, the middle, the center of the sphere where the goddess resides. She represents the aspect of unchanging Being within the vortex of Becoming. Both Being and Becoming are integral aspects of the Whole. Moreover, the Whole is *'inviolate'* (***asylon***) which strictly means protected from violent attack or robbery (the root of the English word *asylum*). Although the source of all 'love and strife,' the DYAD is nevertheless One inviolate or unconquerable.

Parmenides may have taken his image of the ***sphaira*** from Homer (*Od.* 6.100) where the goddess ***Nausicaa*** and her maidens play with a cosmic ball. However, the spherical One is not confined to Parmenides. As the Orphic egg it is implicit in Anaximander's ***gonimon***. It is the unmoving spherical Whole of Xenophanes, that power that (fr. 25) *'without effort shakes all things by the thought* [***phren***] *of his mind* [***nous***].' Some modern scholars maintain that the concept of the sphere was 'discovered' by Pythagoras and was entirely unknown to Anaximander, but such notions approach the absurd. One finds a confluence between *mind* (***nous***), the DYAD goddess, and the center of the cosmic vortex permeating all of early philosophy. For example, Anaxagoras (fr.

12.9) wrote: *'And Mind knew all the things that are being mixed together and separated off and separated out.'* As is often the case, Empedocles expressed the doctrine with brilliant clarity, making the musical context explicit in fr. 27: *'There* [in the All-at-once] *neither the swift limbs of the* ***sun*** *are discerned, / nor the shaggy force of* ***earth*** *nor the* ***sea*** [i.e. none of the traditional Elements]. */ Thus by the dense concealment of* ***Harmonia*** *is made fast / a rounded sphere, exulting in its joyous solitude.'* In his fr. 28 he even quoted line 8.49 of Parmenides: *'But equal to itself on all sides, and wholly without limit / a rounded sphere, exulting in its circular motionlessness.'* Here the sphere is described as unlimited, echoing the enigmatic statement of Xenophanes that it is *both* limited and unlimited, both in motion and at rest. The modern effort to isolate the concept of the sphere between Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedoces is entirely misguided. All of them used the same poetic image to describe the problematic analog conception of ***harmonia***. In the unity of the One and the All, the digital Elements were transformed into an analog vortex generally pictured as circular or spherical.

SUMMARY: LOGICAL ARGUMENTS IN THE *WAY OF TRUTH*

Our commentary has now covered the entire text of the *Way of Truth*. Before we continue with a consideration of the *Way of Seeming*, we must look at a few issues surrounding the use of logic in the poem. Surely the *Way of Truth* is among the most perplexing texts in the entire history of early Greek philosophy. Although moderns attempt to interpret is as 'rational argument,' the use of logic in the poem is, to say the least, obscure.

The goddess promised to reveal *'exceedingly many signs'* or characteristics concerning Being, *'what is.'* These *'marks'* affirm certain attributes—unchanging aspects of ***harmonia*** in contrast to Non-being, *'what is not.'* The realm of Non-being is *'nameless'* or inexpressible. The very act of naming (choosing, judging) and/or speaking (***logos***) negates Non-being and affirms the 'One existent.' Saying (singing) or 'sounding' integrates Being and Becoming together, as is evident in the traditional sonic orientation to the sensorium. Being and Becoming are always found in collusion, through the ubiquitous concept of cyclicity or 'the unchanging within the changing.' Periodicity rules the ancient concept of order (***kosmos***). The goddess revealed *'signs'* of Being that contrast with and even negate Non-being, as is appropriate. However, in accomplishing this aim, she also employed certain features that additionally contrast Being with Becoming. This problematical and unconventional split between Being and Becoming is the principal means by which she can maximize a sense of paradox in the *'song-path.'* In all common sense and Musical reality, *'what is'* changes, moves, and is subject to birth and death. But the goddess has a vision of Being that stands utterly outside the realm of Time (***exstasis***—standing outside). The use of paradox is an impassioned literary device intended to intensify the impact of the revelation. Certain attributes of Becoming are consciously negated in order to heighten the 'incompatibility' between Being and Non-being. This paradoxical separation and transfer between Non-being, Being, and Becoming provides the literary means whereby an inspired conception of the One-whole is expressed.

The relation between Being and Non-being is generally described as 'logical' because they are mutually exclusive contradictories—the one negates the other. In other words, they are 'either-or:' it is or it is not, but not both. However, the prevailing Musical conception of his time was *not* 'either-or' but rather 'both-and.' Non-being and Being are mutually interactive. For Pythagoreans, Non-being as the *void* was an inescapable aspect of the ***harmonia*** of the world. The traditional digital approach to ***harmonia*** is entirely dependent upon it. Parmenides, in banishing the void and Non-being, was visualizing a radical conception of ***harmonia*** as the All-at-once (the analog plenum). He was extending the new vision already revealed in Anaximander. The traditional relation between Being and Non-being was thus mutated into an 'either-or' relation in order to emphasize special paradoxical aspects of Being. Although this process may appear logical to moderns, it has essentially nothing to do with logic. The appearance (seeming) of logic has been 'co-opted' in the service of the Muse who is *'capable of making up lies which are convincing but also capable of speaking the truth.'* The 'either-or' relation between Being and Becoming only *seems* to be based upon logic, but it is a peculiar 'crypto-logic' defending the impossible or paradoxical. The path of ***aletheia*** is purposefully improbable, even though it is described as *'persuasive.'*

Similarly, the relation between Being and Becoming, ***aletheia*** and ***doxa***, is not straightforward. It is not one of simple negation. Yet it became so for some sophists and Plato, who wanted to 'fuse' Non-being and Becoming. Parmenides invited this confusion by transferring antinomies from Becoming into the realm of unchanging Being. If it changes it is no longer that special transcendental aspect of Being that he is contemplating. This confluence between negative attributes of Becoming and Non-being was a powerful and effective avenue through which the goddess could maximize irony and paradox for her Musically literate audience. Unfortunately, it later became the broad pathway for confusion and identification between Becoming and Non-being. In spite of the entrenched modern orthodoxy to treat Being and Becoming logically as exclusively 'either-or,' much of Parmenides' poem assumes the reality of Becoming and assumes some relation between Becoming and Being. This relation has little to do with abstract logic in a modern or even Aristotelian sense. Again, the poem has been remade into some primitive form of logical discourse that 'proves' by rational argument. Wherever possible, logical nets are superimposed over it in order to justify the modern abstract exegesis. It is often pointed out that Parmenides made copious use of such 'connector' words as *'since, for, because, thus, therefore'* and so on. These terms supposedly show that Parmenides was expounding logical arguments in a rational manner. But another much more likely scenario is also possible. The inclusion of such supposedly reasonable arguments only serves as an effective literary device that intensifies the desired paradox. After all, the 'logic' was offered in support of a problematic, impossible and anti-intuitive thesis that he *knew* to be entirely 'illogical.' His arguments in favor of the characteristics of Being make no sense from a logical perspective. It was not intended that they make sense. Parmenides was rather submitting to the 'madness' inspired by his Muse.

The many *'signs'* or attributes of Being can be classified into seven broad categories. The first group concerns *time*: it is timeless and a-temporal, ungenerated and imperishable. The second group concerns *motion*: it is motionless, steadfast, changeless

and unshaken. The third group concerns *continuity*: it is continuous, all together, uniform and all alike, a plenum. The fourth group concerns *divisibility*: it is indivisible, complete and full. The fifth group concerns *unity*: it is one, whole, unique, of a single kind and inviolate. The sixth group stresses its definite *boundaries*: it is penned in by limits, shackled, enchained, ruled by Necessity and Justice. Finally, the last group concerns its metaphorical *form*: it is spherical, poised or balanced, and equal it itself on all sides. The first four groups: *time, motion, continuity, divisibility* display the 'contrary' nature that seem to set it apart from 'sensible' ***harmonia***. Here paradox is maximized and placed in the most significant positions in the poem. The remaining three groups: *unity, boundaries and form* do not stress the antinomies but rather they maintain common characteristics of ***harmonia*** without negation. Thus the apparent separation between Being and Becoming in Parmenides is not comprehensive or even logically consistent.

As a consequence we cannot reject Becoming in Parmenides as entirely false and impossible. Unfortunately, the modern fashion has deemed the relation between Becoming and Becoming as simplistically antinomic, either-or, and exclusive only to these two paths alone—a third path is rejected as impermissible. In this way they have underestimated the intelligence and the aesthetic sophistication of the poet's art. Parmenides has been comprehensively 'chopped down' and 'rationalized' from his original status as an ecstatic, essentially Orphic religious figure (like Xenophanes, Pythagoras, Heraclitus and Empedocles) and reduced to the status of 'logician.' For most of the English-speaking modern scholars (after Burnet, Cornford and others) he is an obscure but radical cosmologist. For many of the German-speaking scholars (after Heidegger and others) he is an obscure but radical metaphysician of ontology. Both schools have lost the essential Parmenides in a cloud of 'logical inferences' derived fixedly from fragment 8. He has become the iconic father of logic itself. His concept of Being has shrunken into the most abstract notion of the 'ontological principle,' utterly devoid of its Musical roots. His *Prologue* and his *Way of Seeming* (most of the actual poem) have been sidelined, demeaned and neglected. The only important feature has been his original 'discovery' and devastating implementation of logical argument. No effort is spared in the demonstration that his poem is logical, even if the logic is sometimes admitted to be flawed.

Yet when we examine the poem itself, no such logic is evident at all. The various arguments for timelessness, motionlessness and so on are none of them strictly logical. All of them are seriously flawed by the most basic standards we can imagine. He argues by tautology. Moreover, he sometimes simply states a position with no supporting reason. Granted, the supporting arguments are relentless in fr. 8, but do they make sense in that context? In his 'rational' arguments he even uses blatant circularity. For example, at 8.36-38 the uniqueness of his subject is derived from its being *'whole and changeless.'* Changelessness in turn was derived from the disproof of ***genesis*** (8.26-28). But generation also required that *'what is'* is unique, so that the argument can be made that *'it'* came neither from *'what is not'* or potentially from *'what is'* (8.12). In other words, he invoked changelessness so as to affirm uniqueness; but earlier he needed uniqueness to disprove ***genesis*** and thus change. Such procedures are firmly 'against the rules' of logic.

Various modern scholars try to apologize for his evident shortcomings. Some maintain that he was still somewhat primitive and 'irrational.' Others contend that the 'vicious circle' was deliberate in order to emphasize the divine 'sphere-like' nature of the goddess' speech, opposing it to the wayward path of mortals. Fragment 5 is often implicated here. For many, the path of 'circular reasoning' leads inevitably back to the one legitimate statement of the ontological principle: *'it is.'* Thus for most moderns his logic may be flawed but his enterprise was nevertheless genuinely intended to be 'rational discourse' about matters of abstract ontology. They do their utmost to defend Parmenides as a logician who was sincerely doing his best to explain the mysterious 'Truth.' Inevitably, they ignore the many Orphic elements in his poem. They also isolate him from his poetic teacher Xenophanes, who was also famous for obscure and sometimes satirical outbursts about the spherical One-whole. According to the ancient writers, these revelations were also accompanied by a 'strange logic' that makes no reasonable sense. Parmenides is consistently divorced from *all* of his predecessors so that only he is capable of 'logic' and 'ontology.' Above all, his poem apparently has no connection with Music, even though it is narrated by his Muse, the Orphic goddess of the middle path.

FRAGMENT 8.50-56: TRANSITION TO THE *WAY OF SEEMING*

(8.50-56) *'At this point I stop for you my reliable account and thought*
concerning Truth; from here on, learn mortal opinions,
listening to the deceitful ordering of my words.
For they made up their minds to name two forms,
of which it is not right to name one—in this they have gone astray –
and they distinguished things opposite in body, and established signs
apart from one another'

At this point the goddess pauses to refocus her attention away from problematic Being and toward the familiar realm of Becoming. The rest of the poem, indeed most of it, presents a reasonable account of the Musical 'process philosophy' already familiar through the Milesians, Pythagoras and Heraclitus. The same appropriate symbolic language of *opposites*, *Elements*, *mixtures* and so on will be used and applied to the same corresponding fields of astronomy, cosmogony, religion, medicine and the rest. Evidently, the *Way of Truth* was only a highly Xenophanean interlude within a much larger poem. From the standpoint of the *Way of Truth* all becoming is impossible; hence we would expect the *Way of Seeming* to further discredit change in some consistent manner. But such is not the case. Rather, an entirely *positive* defense is made for the realm of Becoming. Later in the fragment (8.60) it is even described as *'plausible'* or *'likely.'* Evidently Becoming is just as real as Being.

Here in this transitional segment of fr. 8 we get a glimpse of what may be a satirical element in Parmenides' poem. It is at least highly ironic that the foregoing *Way of Truth* is described as a *'reliable account'* or *'trustworthy speech'* (***piston logon***) as it was at 1.29, when it actually presents an obscure paradoxical impossibility that is not at

all *'persuasive.'* Meanwhile, the path of *'mortal opinions'* (***doxas***) is accounted to be a *'deceitful ordering'* (***kosmon apatelon***) when it turns out to be the entirely reasonable doctrine perfectly suited to the old canonical (musical) view of the world. This peculiar reversal is not likely to be subconscious; rather, it was most probably intentional and aimed at a poetic intensification of the doctrine of paradoxical Being. Empedocles was also prone to describing his own poetry as deceitful or undeceitful, for example at 17.26: *'But listen to the undeceitful course of my account (**logos**).'* Again we are reminded of Hesiod's remark that the Muses are just as capable of deception as genuine revelation. Both sides can be present in the same *'song-path.'*

Note also the use of terms (***kosmos***, ***logos***, *listening*, *mortals*) that tie the passage firmly to canonical issues. The *Way of Seeming* will be just as musical as the *Way of Truth*. Most of *Seeming* has not survived, but the extant fragments consistently perpetuate the very musical Milesian cosmos. Moreover, the poet continues to use quotes or allusions from earlier poets. For example, the description *'deceitful ordering'* is borrowed from Solon (fr. 2.2) or from a scrap of Orphic verse quoted by Plato (*Philebus* 66c). It was later used by Democritus (fr. 21). Even the term ***doxa*** has prior use and not only in Xenophanes. The range of its associations are quite wide (like ***logos***) and exceed any one particular translation. They include what seems real by appearance to the senses, beliefs or what seems true, and what seems right. Hence it has been translated *'seeming'* or *'opinion.'* However, we must keep in mind that it embodies a certain degree of ambiguity regarding its epistemological value. What seems is not necessarily false. Thus it is a good term to use if one wants to maximize irony, uncertainty, paradox and satire.

Lines 8.53-54 have great importance for interpreting the status of ***doxa*** in the poem. The two *'forms'* (***morpha***) turn out to be the *opposites* that enable the process of *'naming,'* a defining characteristic of Becoming. Gallop (*PE* 75) translated the lines: *'For they established two forms in their minds for naming, / of which it is not right to name one—wherein they have gone astray.'* Like so much in Parmenides, these lines are enormously controversial. The modern scholarly community is roughly divided into three groups. The first camp can be represented by Cornford who translated: *'of which it is not right to name (so much as) one.'* The implication is that neither of the *opposites* (**Fire** and **Night**) have any epistemological or ontological status. Only Being (*'what is'*) can be named and the whole edifice of *Seeming* is entirely false. This stand is very popular because it neatly separates *Truth* and *Seeming* and dismisses the latter entirely.

The second camp holds that one form should not be named and the other should. The most famous adherent of this interpretation was Aristotle. For example, in *Metaphysics* (986b31) he said that Parmenides believed in *'one thing'* and that only *'one thing exists.'* He continues: *'but being compelled to follow appearances, and supposing that what existed was one by definition* [***logos***] *but more than one according to sensation, he restores two causes and two principles, **hot** and **cold**, meaning **fire** and **earth**. Of these he ranks the hot with **what is** and the cold with **what is not**.'* This interpretation appears to be an attempt to bridge the supposed gulf between the two 'official' parts of the poem. However, it is evidently a major distortion, since it implies that the prior Element **Fire** exists while **Earth** does not. This eccentric theory is not at all supported by the poem

itself. We will have more to say on Aristotle's sorry treatment of Parmenides later. Here we only note that his authority has ensured a modern following. Some interpreters would argue that **Light** (or **Fire**) is analogous to *Truth* and **Night** (or **Earth**) to *falsehood*. The realm of ***doxa*** is then false because *'mortals'* base it on a *duality* of principles rather than the one principle (*'what is'*) that is somehow like **Fire**. **Earth** is entirely illicit (*'what is not'*). Sedley (*EGP* 124) claims that the entire range of cosmic phenomena is generated *'by allowing the intrusion of just one additional item—by starting out with two instead of one.'* Karl Popper (*CQ* 42, 12-19) managed to make this absurd a-musical theory even worse by insisting that **Night** is the 'rational' element and **Light** is the intruder that *'informs the senses'*—citing as evidence the metaphorical journey from Day to Night in the *Prologue*. Either way, dualism is the problem that makes *Seeming* illicit.

The third camp claims that the error of mortals lay in failing to see that it is impossible to posit one of a pair of *opposites* without the other. The most famous supporter of this interpretation was Simplicius (*Phys.* 31.8) who wrote: *'it is not right to name **only** one.'* At last we have an interpretation that makes good sense from a Musical perspective. **Fire** and **Earth**, or MONAD and DYAD, are as interdependent as the circumference of a circle and its center. It takes two to generate the vortex and these two Elements have a special relation entirely different (more fundamental) than the intermediate Elements (**air** and **water**). Predictably, this camp is not at all popular among moderns, but it still has some followers. Kirk and Raven translated: *'of which they must not name one only.'* Needless to say, their explanation is entirely unrelated to Music; rather, it is based on the separation of reason and sense. The former rather arbitrarily allows only one of a pair of *opposites* while the latter demands both. As usual, the *opposites* are restricted only to the material world.

All of the above scholarly interpretations assume that the realm of ***doxa*** applies *only* to the physical world and has nothing whatsoever to do with Musical symbolism. In other words, modern interpreters are still perpetuating the agenda of Aristotle concerning 'material monists.' The *Way of Truth* is judged to be patently metaphysical and ontological, using metaphor in the struggle against the inadequacies of their 'primitive' language. But the *Way of Seeming* is one-dimensionally 'cosmological' and metaphors are inappropriate here. According to Aristotle, Parmenides wrote some physics about the material world, but he also wrote verses that (*De Caelo* 298b14) *'belong rather to another and higher study.'* That study was dominated by *'mistaken logic'* that came from inexperience and a lack of practice with the techniques of reasoning. With a condescending attitude Aristotle neatly separated ***aletheia*** from ***doxa*** and scholars have been doing so ever since his time.

The three camps summarized above have reflections in the three main groups of interpretations regarding the overall status of ***doxa***. The first group is widespread and probably dominant among modern scholars. They hold that ***doxa*** is entirely false and that Parmenides presented it as a form of 'inoculation' against the appeal of any such cosmology. It serves to 'kill off' any attempt at a cosmology with dualistic principles. Any type of dualism is suspect because at least two mutually exclusive forms of existent can be distinguished. At best ***doxa*** has only a *'dialectical'* aim (Owen), showing that all

theories of ***genesis*** are false and the physical world illusory. This theory is popular for several reasons: It maintains a neat separation between the true ***aletheia*** and the entirely false ***doxa***. It disassociates Parmenides from earlier philosophers. As a bonus it allows Parmenides' cosmology to be seen as entirely original to him, thus bolstering his status as a lone revolutionary genius forcing philosophical progress on the more primitive Pythagoreans and Milesians.

Of course, this theory must face the problem of explaining away the many parallels between Parmenides' ***doxa*** and the doctrine of the Milesians. However, many moderns rise to the challenge; indeed, even wilder absurdities have been argued in the defense of the isolationist orthodoxy. As an example of the many writers in this camp, here is Guthrie (2.52-53) commenting on the motives of Parmenides. *'His account of appearances will excel those of others. To ask 'but if it is unreal, what is the point of trying to give an account of it at all?' is to put a question that is not likely to have occurred to him. Men must obviously come to terms with appearances, and for all the divine favour which he enjoys, Parmenides is not a god. This is not to water down his logic. There is all the difference in the world between living and thinking as if the phenomena were real and studying phenomena in the full consciousness of the impassable gulf that separates them from reality.'* Parmenides is pictured as a sort of 'phenomenologist' of the world of seeming who knows that it is a cosmic illusion. Many variants of this approach are to be seen in modern writings on Parmenides.

The second camp can be derived from the Peripatetic followers of Aristotle. Theophrastus (*Phys. Op.* fr. 6) wrote that ***doxa*** was meant to give the belief of *'the many.'* According to Alexander, Parmenides believed the cosmology to be entirely false—a refutation of all earlier philosophy. This group puts less stress on the originality of Parmenides' ***doxa***. Some would go so far as to contend that it is only an amalgam of the views of previous philosophers. Others insist that there was also a modicum of creativity in the formulation. Similarly, the cosmology may be seen as entirely false, but some others leave a little room for truth-value in it. Hence this group does not write off ***doxa*** completely, rather following Aristotle's aim in attempting to treat Parmenides as (almost) a conventional Presocratic 'physical' cosmologist. Modern followers of this tack have tended to restrict the scope of *'the many.'* Instead, they see ***doxa*** as a criticism of particular philosophers, generally Heraclitus and/or Pythagoras. An influential modern proponent is, for example, Burnet. He interpreted Parmenides as (*EGP* 184) *'a dissident Pythagorean'* who founded his own school and wanted to 'show up' or renounce former beliefs. Burnet pointed out the many parallels between ***doxa*** and the Pythagorean tradition. No doubt such parallels can be found, but the argument is weak. Behind Pythagoras stood the giants Anaximander and Anaximenes. ***Doxa*** is just as Milesian as it is Pythagorean. The other weakness in Burnet's approach is the assumption that his ***doxa*** is a 'put down' of his forebears when the evidence of the poem indicates a positive presentation. This camp thus allows more recognition of Parmenides' debts to his predecessors but struggles to prove that ***doxa*** is an attempt to 'nix' earlier cosmologies.

The third camp can be derived from the Neoplatonist Simplicius. He regarded the *Way of Truth* as an account of the intelligible world and the *Way of Seeming* as a

description of the sensible world. Consequently ***doxa*** has some truth-value, though not so great as ***aletheia***. For example, here is Simplicius' commentary on *Physics* (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* 9.39) defending the doctrine that he derived from Plato: *'He calls this discourse (a way of) 'seeming' and 'deceitful,' not as outright false, but because the sensible world has fallen from the intelligible reality into the domain of appearing and seeming.'* The two paths simply refer to different spheres of 'reality.' At 9.30 he declared the doctrine in the context of our Parmenidean passage: *'Proceeding from intelligible to sensible things, or from truth to seeming, as he himself says where he declares:* [here he quotes 8.50-52]. *Parmenides himself too put forward the elemental principles of generated things as the primary opposition, which he calls light and darkness, or* ***fire*** *and* ***earth****, or dense and rare* [he means rare and dense here], *or the same and (the) other, declaring in the verses following upon those preceding:* [here he quotes 8.53-59).' His approach reflects the Platonic doctrine that relates ***doxa*** with Becoming and opinion, Non-being with ignorance, and Being with certain knowledge. Simplicius summarized the doctrine in his commentary on *De Caelo* (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* 7.557). *'Those men* [Eleatics] *posited two levels: that of what truly is, the intelligible; and that of what comes-to-be, the sensible, which they thought one should not speak of as 'being' simpliciter, but as 'apparent being.' Hence they say that truth concerns what-is, whereas opinion concerns what comes-to-be. Parmenides at any rate says:* [here he quotes 1.28-32].'

Very few modern scholars buy this interpretation, pointing out that it is highly anachronistic. This is true, but nevertheless this stand is the closest of the three to the world of early Greek philosophy. As we have seen, ***doxa*** in Xenophanes (as in Pythagoras and Heraclitus) stood for 'human' knowledge as distinct from 'divine' knowledge. The distinction came to be associated with knowledge gained from the 'inside' (through reasoning, ***nous***) and knowledge gained from the 'outside' (through the senses or 'body'). Ultimately the *intelligible realm* was derived from the Musical DYAD (or the union of the MONAD and DYAD) while the *sensible realm* came from the PENTAD (or the union of the TRIAD and PENTAD). In other words, the classification came from the grouping of the 'contrary elements' as distinct from the grouping of the 'intermediate elements.' We could say that it represented the differentiation between the 'unchanging' or *fixed* in Music and the 'changing' or *mutable*. These musical elements were reworked in Plato, who separated them from each other in ways foreign to the early philosophers. Nevertheless, they have their roots there. Such a classification, though anachronistic when overlaid with various Platonic associations, can still be tied to Music and related to Being and Becoming. For the early philosophers, ***doxa*** referred to the realm of Becoming that is firmly held in the lap of Being.

FRAGMENT 8.55-61: FIRE AND NIGHT

(8.55-61) *'and they distinguished things opposite in body, and established signs*
apart from one another—for one, the aetherial ***fire*** *of flame,*
mild, very light, the same as itself in every direction,
but not the same as the other; but that other one, in itself
is opposite—dark ***night****, a dense and heavy body.*
I declare to you all the ordering as it appears,

So that no mortal opinion may ever overtake you.'

The final extant passage of fragment 8 gives essential *'signs'* or characteristics of the *opposites*. But before we delve into Parmenides' Musical cosmology, we need to consider the last two lines (8.60-61). They stand apart and concern issues presented in the last section. The translation itself is not particularly controversial. Gallop (*PE* 75) rendered it: *'All this arrangement I proclaim to you as plausible; / thus no opinion of mortals shall ever overtake you.'* Burnet (*EGP* 176) gave: *'Of these I tell thee the whole arrangement as it seems likely; / for so no thought of mortals will ever outstrip thee.'* This passage has always been troubling to modern commentators because it endorses the *'whole arrangement'* (***diakosmon***) as *'plausible'* (***eoikota***). The goddess will impart enough wisdom concerning Becoming to her student so that he can match any rival. But it is difficult to square these lines with the modern notion that ***doxa*** is meant to be entirely *implausible*. Hence elaborate explanations have been concocted in order to account for Parmenides 'doing his best' at the same time that he is judging the entire process worthless. Most scholars follow some form of 'immunization' theory, claiming that a 'plausible arrangement' that is false will show up inferior rival theories as even worse. Yet according to the strict criteria of the *Way of Truth*, all theories are equally false, so why bother? The commentary of KRS (*TPP* 254) is typical. *'Parmenides' object* [in writing the *Way of Seeming*], *as we shall see, is to present mortal opinions not as they actually are, but as they might be at best. But that makes the account deceitful in a further sense: in effect it provides a deceptively plausible (although not genuinely convincing) representation of reality.'* One cannot avoid the suspicion that the explanation is entirely artificial and misrepresents Parmenides' intentions.

The Parmenidean passage seems to be a straightforward endorsement at first glance, but a closer examination (as usual) reveals that the poet is a master of ambiguity. For the term ***eoikota*** (*probable, plausible, likely*) has built-in uncertainties and an illustrious history. The same term was used in a highly ambivalent passage of Xenophanes (fr. 35) that arguably anticipates the entire flavor of Parmenides' poem. The mysterious line of hexameter verse is usually translated: *'Let these things be believed* [***doxa***] *as resembling* [***eoikota***] *the truth.'* Surely Parmenides was himself aware of the Xenophanean usage. Nor does it stop there. Xenophanes (and/or Parmenides) may have borrowed it from the famous passage of Hesiod (*Theog.* 27). The Muses *'know how to tell many false things like to the true* [***eoikota***], *and how to tell the truth when we wish.'* Indeed, Hesiod may himself have adapted it from Homer (*Od.* 19.203). None of this evidence makes us confident that Parmenides is actually telling the truth or even something like the truth. On the other hand, philosophers from Xenophanes to Plato (e.g. ***eoikota mython*** = *likely story* in *Timaeus* 29d) used it for what is true even though it cannot be known with complete certainty. In other words, the meanings of ***eoikota*** and ***doxa*** are not straightforward.

At this point it is helpful to review the various passages in which ***doxa*** is assessed. At 8.60 it is *'plausible.'* At 8.52 it is a *'deceitful ordering.'* At 1.30 it has *'no true reliance.'* Finally, at 1.32 it is mysteriously described as the process whereby *'the all is steered through the all.'* Of these four assessments, the first and last could be described

as positive, the other two as negative. If the positive wins out, we attribute it mostly to the consistent usage in other early philosophers (such as Xenophanes, Pythagoras and Heraclitus) as well as the overall continuity of the movement. Since Parmenides' ***doxa*** is generally true but 'less plausible' than ***aletheia*** while ***aletheia*** is 'very persuasive' but highly problematic or patently 'untrue,' it is entirely reasonable to suspect a conscious use of the poetic art in his composition. Like his near contemporary Heraclitus, Parmenides revelled in the world of riddle, paradox and enigma. And these two were not exceptions among the early philosophers and poets. Indeed, such practices were not confined to Greek philosophers alone. The *Rig Veda* of India is suffused in it. The ancient sages (east and west) claimed that the gods love riddles and that those who would speak with or know the gods must not only learn to live with riddles but even to thrive upon them.

The relation between ***aletheia*** and ***doxa*** may be the poet's central riddle—do not expect easy or 'logical' transparency. Perhaps ambiguity can never be entirely excised from Parmenides' song-path. The late ancient writers interpreted the two 'halves' as an effort to distinguish distinct forms of knowledge: that 'a priori' knowledge derived from propositions proven by logical argument (***aletheia***) and that 'empirical' knowledge about the nature of things derived through sense experience (***doxa***). Although this thesis is to a large extent anachronistic, it still has an element of truth in it. For the early philosophers the two forms of knowledge were called 'divine' and 'human.' The extent to which these two terms reflected the late Neoplatonic associations is another matter not so easy to decide. At any rate it seems reasonable to treat ***doxa*** in Parmenides in continuity with Xenophanes and Empedocles as the realm of Becoming—with all of its evident Musical traits.

Aletheia and ***doxa*** form a counterfeit pair of *opposites*, for only Non-being (and not Becoming) can be 'opposed' to Being. Parmenides' ***aletheia*** paradoxically did not allow *opposites* at all, but as he considers ***doxa*** he moves back into the mainstream of Musical symbolism. His poetic descriptions of the *opposites* are entirely consistent with the movement as a whole. If we collect together the various *'signs'* given in the fragments as well as a few mentioned by ancient commentators who had access to his book, we get this list: **Fire** (or flame) and **Night** (who is yet another Orphic goddess), light (or bright) and dark, light (in weight) and heavy, rare and dense, hot and cold, dry and wet, sky (or ***aither***, **heaven**) and **earth**, soft and hard, Sun and Moon, day and night. Many of these metaphorical images for the Musical MONAD and DYAD have already been associated with other sources: for example, **sky** and **earth** (various poets), day and night (Hesiod), light and dark (Persia), hot and cold (Anaximander), rare and dense (Anaximenes), **fire** and **earth** (Xenophanes), dry and wet (Heraclitus). Into this list we must also include the MONAD and DYAD of the Pythagoreans.

Modern isolationism tries to disassociate all of these descriptions from each other, as if they form competing 'systems.' However, it is clear that all point poetically to the same thing—the Elements or *Roots* of ***harmonia***. Specifically, they refer to the 'prior' Elements that set the stage for mediation and the proliferation of the Many. The 'medial' Elements may be traditionally digital or esoteric and geometrical—it does not matter.

Both approaches employ the same MONAD and DYAD—the circumference and the center of the monochord circle—the 'unchanging' in the architecture of ***harmonia***. The alignment of the attributes given above is not at all arbitrary and mutually disconnected. We get a good integrated description of the *opposites* in Hippolytus' account of Anaxagoras (DKA42): *'The dense, moist, dark and cold, and all heavy bodies came together to the centre, solidified, and formed the* ***earth****; but the opposites of these, the hot, the bright, the dry and the light projected themselves to the furthest parts of the* ***aither****.'* After Aristotle, writers restricted this symbolism exclusively to the physical world, but we must keep in mind that the intent of the early philosophers was much wider. The physical world *also* exhibited the characteristics of ***harmonia*** and it is that architecture itself that acts as the source for the colorful metaphorical descriptions.

Aristotle excised many canonical factors from his austere 'scientific' conception of the Elements as merely 'corporeal bodies.' Due to the flow of history, Aristotelian frameworks are still being projected over the early cosmologists. The Elements have become vague 'world-stuffs' rather than the archaic roots of vibratory being. Modern discourse on early philosophy is still fixated upon 'substances' or 'things' monistic and pluralistic. This 'physicality' is often reflected in the translations. In the passage above rendered by McKirahan, a subliminal Aristotelianism is implied by the usage *'things opposite in body'* and *'a dense and heavy body.'* Some others translate *'form'* rather than *'body.'* Right away the stranglehold of 'substance' is ameliorated. Guthrie (2.50) translated line 8.55-56: *'and they adjudged them contrary in form and assigned marks apart from each other.'* Burnet (*EGP* 176) gave: *'they have distinguished them as opposite in form, and have assigned to them marks distinct from one another.'* In fact there is nothing in Parmenides' poem that restricts his Elements to 'body' alone. Indeed, ancient philosophy recognized not only a gross body but also a subtle body (or several in Egyptian religion). The Aristotelian scientific system is not always appropriate for the early philosophers. When the Elements are restored to the auditory perspective, they gain in the consistency of the metaphorical imagery as well as the power of the conceptual frame. The ancients were not discussing vague 'world-stuffs.' Moreover, the 'contrary' relation between the first two Elements is not trivial and numerological.

The *opposites* as the primal Elements or 'house of harmony' should not be confused with the *Forces* that have their own metaphorical descriptions. *Love* and *Strife* (Empedocles) or *Peace* and *War* (Heraclitus) refer to the conditions of consonance and dissonance, simplicity and complexity inherent in harmonic architecture and do not refer to the *Roots* themselves. Similarly, the pair *Limited* and *Unlimited* refers to separate and unique parameters of Music, not Elements or (even worse) substances. Most modern interpreters tend to confuse all of these functions and they see post-Aristotelian 'stuffs' everywhere.

Parmenides' characteristics for the *opposites* can be arranged into a *Table of Opposites* reminding us of the *Table of Opposites* attributed to the Pythagoreans. There is considerable overlap, but also a number of glaring differences. These divergences reflect the late and corrupted nature of the Pythagorean Table, which was probably compiled at the end of the fifth century when Musical symbolism was already being reworked. Most

notably, the Pythagorean Table (if it concerns Elements) inappropriately includes Limited and Unlimited, active and passive, male and female, odd and even, and right and left. These issues will be discussed at length in the commentary on fragment 17. Here we only note that the DYAD is universally female but the MONAD is *not* male in Musical symbolism. Rather, the MONAD (**fire**) is 'male-and-female' or androgynous—the high god beyond gender. The first male archetype is the TRIAD and thence all prime numbers. Moreover, the DYAD is passive in relation to the TRIAD because the higher primes add new Elements to ***harmonia*** while 'octave displacements' do not. On the other hand, the DYAD is active in relation to the MONAD because the DYAD introduces the possibility of 'otherness' within cyclical identity. She is the gateway to change and multiplicity, even though she remains 'unmoved' through her octave relation to the One. The MONAD, of course, is absolutely 'unmoved' and present within all ***harmoniai***—the architectonic *unity* within all forms of multiplicity. This is the meaning of line 8.57 (an echo of 8.44): *'the same as itself in every direction.'* Hence it is strictly passive although its sacrifice generates all 'activity.' The Pythagorean Table exhibits the tendency increasingly seen in later ancient history to assign maleness to the One and further to demean the Musical role of the female. This confusion arose out of the growing distance between the symbolism and its canonical base.

Most modern interpreters assume that Parmenides' ***doxa*** is strictly *dualistic* and that this is the source of its 'error.' Moreover, the dualism is incompatible with monism. They are absolutely mutually exclusive. Many commentators would say that the Parmenidean cosmology *begins* with dualistic principles and thus that it 'overthew' the monism of the Milesians. Only with two entirely incompatible principles in opposition can the multiplicity of the world of appearances arise. Consequently, Parmenides negated the old monistic principle of Orphic Musaeus (pupil of Orpheus): *'All things came into being out of One, and are resolved into One.'* The world needs a minimum of 'two forms.' But Parmenides has already proven in the *Way of Truth* that reality is one; therefore, the world is illusory.

All of this is just nonsense and illustrates how little most moderns understand about the special relation between the MONAD and DYAD. The two harmonic archetypes are inseparable, interdependent. The academics treat them as if they are 'two solitudes' that can be neatly isolated from each other. The usual approach is crudely 'numerological' rather than Musical. The numbers become mutally exclusive abstract 'entities' that need a third one in order to affect a 'relation.' Any understanding of the special characteristics of the octave relation is negated or ignored in favor of a simple ('logical') incompatibility between the One and the Two. On the other hand, the subtle Musical perspective is well illustrated by Hesiod (*Theog.* 124) where, paradoxically, the DYAD goddess gives birth to the MONAD. The center of the circle generated its circumference. *'And* ***Earth*** [DYAD] *first of all brought forth starry Ouranos* [sky, **fire**, MONAD] *equal to herself* [cyclical identity] *to cover her completely round about* [the circle] *to be a firm seat* [the unchanging 'house'] *for the blessed gods* [***harmonia***] *forever.'* Moderns treat this material as but a 'primitive' cosmogony of the physical world, not suspecting that it embodies great poetic sophistication and consistency with its Musical basis. Parmenides is given a similar a-musical treatment.

Some modern commentators (e.g. McKirahan) offer **fire** and **night** as precursors of Empedocles' 'discovery' of the Elements. Thus (*PBS* 176) *'now for the first time we have* [two] *true elements, distinct basic forms of matter that always preserve their own identity; they may intermingle with each other and form other substances, but under no circumstances can they be transformed into each other.'* This quote illustrates the great extent to which the Musical *Roots* were highjacked by Aristotle to become exclusively physical 'substances.' Burnet tried to explain away the *opposites* **fire** and **earth** in Parmenides. He claimed that the poet, a 'dissident Pythagorean,' originally meant **fire** and **air** ('what is' and 'what is not') which (he claimed) is a primitive description of the Pythagorean 'proto-substances' *Limit* and *Unlimited*. After the invention of the 'true' Elements by Empedocles late Pythagoreans and Plato changed the *opposites* to **fire** and **earth**, for example in *Timaeus* 54c. Thus **fire** and **earth** are anachronisms foreign to Parmenides. On the other hand (he argued), *light* and *dark* are legitimate because they accord better with **fire** and **air**. The reader will appreciate how twisted this argument is, ignoring the evidence of other early philosophers and maintaining the almost absurd orthodoxy that the Elements were first invented by Empedocles. Still other writers, for example Kirk, manage to avoid the topic of Elements by the assertion that *light* and *night* are purely arbitrary terms that represent (*TPP* 256) the *'conventions elaborated by the human mind.'* They ultimately have *'no rational justification'* and are absolutely unconnected to the related imagery of other philosophers and poets. He suggests, however, that they may have been taken from the primitive cosmogony of Hesiod.

In fact, the mysterious goddess **Night** occurred in Homer (*Il.* 14.258), in Hesiod (*Theog.* 122) and in various Orphic poets who wrote musical cosmogonies. Such stories of creation out of the One were assigned to Orpheus, Musaeus, Empimenides and others. We have already discussed this goddess in the first chapter. Suffice it to say here that she is another proxy for the *mese* goddess of the DYAD. In terms of function she is identical to **earth**. She joins the list of poetic images (including Justice and Necessity) for the goddess who *'steers all things.'* In the context of poetry, the specific names are less important than the overall picture. Surely we are not meant to read the poem in a literalist or fundamentalist sense. It is obvious that Parmenides writes allegorically. Yet his cosmology is generally interpreted in the most narrow sense possible.

Even Aristotle was more aware than the contemporary academics that the various descriptions are not to be taken at face value. In *Metaphysics* (986b34) he wrote of Parmenides as positing *'hot and cold, meaning **fire** and **earth**.'* Of course, he added his own twist. The Anaximandrean *'hot'* became the efficient (active) cause and *'cold'* the material (passive) cause. As a result Theophrastus (DKA7) spoke of *'two principles, **fire** and **earth**, one serving as matter, the other as cause and maker.'* Aristotle foisted the same categories over the Pythagorean MONAD and DYAD. Some modern scholars still interpret MONAD and DYAD a-musically as 'form and matter.' Yet at least Aristotle still recognized **fire** and **earth** as the 'prior' Elements, while **air** and **water** are mediates or mixtures. In *On Coming-to-be- and Perishing* (330b13) he wrote: *'those who start with two things, as Parmenides did with **fire** and **earth**, make the intermediates mixtures of*

these.' Whether these results of mediation were the traditional digital Elements or some irrational substitutes (as in the Milesians) is another matter.

FRAGMENT 9: ASSIGNING POWERS

The four extra-ordinary lines of fragment 9 were preserved by Simplicius (*Phys.* 9.180). The subject matter is closely allied to the last passage; indeed, Simplicius quoted it after 8.59, saying that it occured *'a few lines later.'* The present translation is by McKirahan:

(9) *'But since all things have been named* ***light*** *and* ***night***
and the things which accord with their powers have been assigned
to these things and those,
all is full of ***light*** *and obscure* ***night*** *together,*
of both equally, since neither has no share.'

This passage is possibly the most balanced, elegant, profound, and aesthetically pleasing fragment of the whole collection. The style is similar to that of Empedocles and it causes us to suspect that much of the poem may have been written in a similarly lofty Empedoclean style. The lines are revelations, 'truth statements' about the nature of ***harmonia***, reminiscent of passages in Heraclitus. Sadly, the fragment has been largely glossed over by modern commentators.

The final line has attracted controversies in its translation. Gallop (*PE* 77) rendered it: *'both equally, since neither (is it the case that) nothing shares in them.'* KRS (*TPP* 256) gave: *'since neither has any share of nothing.'* Burnet (*EGP* 177) wrote: *'since neither has aught to do with the other.'* Cornford gave: *'for neither has any part in the other.'* The latter two translations bolster the prevalent modern theory that the *opposites* are absolutely mutually exclusive. A more Musically sensitive translation is that of Guthrie and Barnes: *'since there is nothing that shares in neither.'* In fact, the overall translation of Guthrie (2.57) is superior because it eliminates some of the 'things' found in McKirahan:

'Then since all things have been named ***Light*** *and* ***Night****,*
and the names appropriate to their powers assigned to these and those,
everything is full alike of ***Light*** *and obscure* ***Night****,*
both equal, since there is nothing that shares in neither.'

The gist of the last two lines are clear from a musical perspective. All 'things' (***harmonia***) are full of *Light* and *Night*, **fire** and **earth**, MONAD and DYAD, One and Many. These fundamental archetypes are present in *all* manifestations of ***harmonia***. Most definitely *'there is nothing that shares in neither'* and almost all patterns share in both. The MONAD, of course, is shared by all, omnipresent because all factors are divisible by one. The DYAD is not necessarily present in every member of a series but always most; moreover, it is always present overall. For example, take the sample *mese*-tetrachord ***harmonia*** 15:16:18:20 (C B A G). We recognize no factor of 2 in the first item (15), but

the others do have factors of 2. The overall division is ruled by the *double* 15:30 (C C). The division number 30 thus stands for the open string (the One). A division number is always an even number, double the *mese* number—a child of the DYAD. Indeed, the numbers 1 and 2 are *by far* the most important and ubiquitous of harmonic numbers. The octave (1:2) is a paramount relation within any system of harmony. The DYAD also acts as the gateway to complexity through her ability to increase 'numerosity' and hence to catch more elements into her *'weave,'* her net, her matrix or *'vortex.'* The poetic images of *Light* and *'obscure Night'* can also be related to central Presocratic concerns: the One and the Many, the One and the All, Unity and Multiplicity. No ***harmonia*** is devoid of these elements and both factors are to all practical purposes *'equally'* present. The two lines form a classic truth statement about the ***physis*** of harmony.

The first line is somewhat mysterious and supports the rest of the passage. *'All things have been named **light** and **night**'*—sometimes the *opposites* are capitalized as in Guthrie, sometimes not. In the context of poetry it is surely optional. The statement suggests that the medial elements have been reworked. No longer are they the traditional digital **air** and **water**, but analog surrogates. In other words, the statement implies a progressive stand concerning ***harmonia***. As in Anaximander, the description points to something like a continuum between what is *'hot and cold.'* In an irrational (tempered) division of the octave, it is *literally true* that all the elements of the scale are formed and named after the MONAD and DYAD. This is so because all elements are defined as multiple roots (or surds) of the ratio 1:2. Hence the description admirably suits a progressive interpretation of ***harmonia***. Of course, this does not deny that he also understood the traditional medial elements of **air** and **water**—the *mixture*. His stand concerning ***harmonia*** may have been closer to that of Anaximenes than is now appreciated. The same is true for Heraclitus and even the more conservative Empedocles.

The standard modern understanding of the first line is entirely mechanical. *Light* and *Night* are two irreducibly different elements in the physical universe. Sometimes they form the head of a double list of qualities, like the Pythagorean Table. In this case everything in the physical world is ranged under one head or the other. Every *thing* in the world is some combination or mixture of these two forms—like the multiple shades of grey formed my mixing white and black paint. In spite of the possibility of mixture they are presumed to be entirely 'self-identical,' essentially atomic. They define distinct forms of 'matter.' Thus they cannot be 'reduced' to a unity; rather, they constitute a strict 'numerological' duality, a juxtaposition. Above all, these *opposites* are confined to the 'sensible' (especially visual or possibly logical) world. The innate musicality of the original poetry is denied, indeed entirely uncomprehended.

The second line of this exquisite passage forms another of those Musical 'truth statements' that shows the poet to be quite knowledgeable about the common musical paradigm. The *'assignment of powers'* is the essential process of choosing one ***harmonia*** over another. The Greek term *'powers'* (***dynameis***) refers to the inherent *qualities* that have an active force and define the mood or 'mode' of the harmony. In traditional terms, alternative ***harmoniai*** have a particular *'ethos'* or 'color' according to the predominent 'powers' of the inherent components (elements). Ultimately, the *'powers'* refer to the

Roots of harmony (the MONAD, DYAD, and further elements) that form compounds with specific characteristics that can be *'named.'* The tuner, through a judicial act of discrimination, assigns certain powers to *'these and those'* scale components. The qualities themselves are determined by the verifiable character of harmonic arithmetic (the domaine of Necessity), but the tuner who understands this arithmetic has the means to control the assignment. The powers are distributed through a ***logos*** or pattern of relatedness. The main point of the fragment is that, no matter how the powers are assigned, the MONAD and DYAD will still be present. In essence, they form the backbone of the 'unchanging' component of ***harmonia***, more fundamental even than the tetrachord (3:4). As so much of Parmenides' poem has already demonstrated, this passage is also a reflection on the nature of the DYAD goddess.

FRAGMENT 10: THE GRIP OF NECESSITY

This fragment and the next few passages concern Parmenides' cosmology, cosmogony, theogony and related matters. The seven lines of fr. 10 were preserved by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom*. 5.14.138). As usual, this translation is by McKirahan:

(10) *'You shall know the nature of the* ***aither*** *and all the signs in the* ***aither***
and the destructive deeds of the shining sun's pure
torch and whence they came to be,
and you shall learn the wandering deeds of the round-faced moon
and its nature, and you shall know also the surrounding ***heaven,***
from what it grew and how Necessity led and shackled it
to hold the limits of the stars.'

Again, the writing style is lofty and a lot like that of Empedocles. This passage may have been part of an introduction to his very detailed and wide-ranging account of astronomy and related Musical issues. On the other hand, the fragment may have occurred somewhere 'in the middle' of that account—we cannot say for sure. Bicknell (*Hermes* 96, 629-31) suggested that the passage belongs not to the *Way of Seeming* but to the *Prologue*. He would attach it to the end of the 'Proem' following line 1.32. Bicknell interpreted it as part of the synopsis of topics that the goddess promised to cover in the *Way of Seeming*. As evidence he noted the second-person future-tensed verbs in lines 1, 4, and 5 that match *'you shall learn'* at 1.31. His theory may be right, but it is uncertain and not very likely. At any rate, the fragment follows a pattern also seen in other poets and philosophers: the promissary exhortation *'I shall teach you about...'* Another good example is found in Empedocles (fr. 11.1-2): *'You will learn all the drugs there are for evils and a safeguard against old age, / since for you alone I am bringing all these things to pass.'* The poet promises to impart enough secret knowledge to his student that no one can *'overtake'* him.

The vast majority of modern commentators apologize that the few brief 'scraps' of fragments, even with the secondary ancient sources, do not allow us to reconstruct an overall picture of his cosmology. However, they work under several assumptions that must be questioned. In the first place, we have the working attitude that Parmenides'

cosmology must be unique, individualistic and 'competitive' in relation to other philosophers. Yet the material indicates that his cosmology is essentially the same as that of everyone else. When the isolationist paradigm is descarded the evidence of the various writers bolster each other, pointing to the same canonical model—a scheme based on concentric circles and/or spheres with **earth** in the center surrounded by the planets and stars on the periphery (**fire**, ***aither***, **heaven**). Parmenides' cosmology is not an 'individualistic creation' but rather the same Musical ***kosmos*** that we have seen in all the early Greek philosophers.

The second assumption is that his cosmology concerns itself *only* with the visible planets and the physical world. We see little appreciation that the philosophers based their model of the physical world on a common canonical basis that (they assumed) was universally applicable. Just as in Pythagoras, Heraclitus and the Milesians, the Parmenidean 'meteorology' also formed a symbolic geography of the *soul* and more. Hints of this universality could still be found in the late doxographical writers. For example, Macrobius (*Commentary on Scipio's Dream* 1.14.20) wrote: *'According to Parmenides it* [the soul] *consists of* ***earth*** *and* ***fire****.'* The elemental *opposites* have equally relevant applications to astronomy, music, psychology and medicine. Once the prevalent post-Aristotelian constriction to the 'material cause' is lifted, the depth of the musical model and its wide applicability can be appreciated.

The third assumption that moderns hold concerning Parmenides' cosmology is that it really isn't very important. Being part of the *Way of Seeming*, its value is at least questionable. By emphasizing the lack of evidence it is easier to justify its dismissal, neglect, or outright negation. The same tactic is also used to sideline the cosmology of Xenophanes and Heraclitus: few fragments have survived, therefore the topic must not have been a major interest for the philosopher. This approach also allows 'discoveries' to be postponed, thereby shoring up the assumption of 'scientific progress' among the early philosophers. Once this distorting assumption is set aside, the cosmology of Parmenides can be understood in relation to the movement as a whole. His orientation only confirms the ***kosmos*** of Anaximenes, Heraclitus, and Empedocles.

According to the doxographical evidence, Parmenides' cosmology was quite wide-ranging and actually took up much of his poem—more than the *Way of Truth*. One good indication of the vast scope of his work can be gained from a comment by Plutarch (*Against Colotes* 1114b,c). *'But Parmenides did not abolish* ***fire*** *or* ***water*** *or precipices or—pace Colotes—the cities of Europe and Asia. After all, he composed a cosmology* [an 'ordering'], *and by mixing the* ***bright*** *and the* ***dark*** *as elements he produces from them and by them all the phenomena. He has much to say about the* ***earth*** *and* ***heaven*** *and the sun moon and the stars, and he has an account of the origins of men: like an old natural philosopher, who is composing a book of his own and not criticising a book of someone else, he has left nothing of any importance unsaid.'* One struck right away with the wealth of common Musical images in this testimony. Plutarch lived during a time (before the era of book-burnings) when copies of Parmenides' book were still available, though rare. His impression of the book places it alongside the works of Anaximenes and Empedocles in the cosmological mainstream.

The testimony deserves some comment. In the first sentence, the pair **fire** and **water** are sometimes poetic replacements for **fire** and **earth**, emphasizing *'dry and wet.'* We also see such 'substitutes' in Heraclitus and Empedocles. *'Precipices'* or *'the gulf'* (***chaos***) separates primal *opposites* as in Hesiod. The *'cities of Europe and Asia'* reiterate a common political metaphor for ***harmonia*** found in various philosophers, most notably Heraclitus. The production of 'what is' by the mixture of the *'bright and dark'* (or *'hot and cold'* or **fire** and elements) is a theme central to the entire movement. He includes the poetic themes of **heaven** and **earth**, *sun* and *moon*, ***aither*** (the stars or *'surrounding'*) and presumably the whole metaphorical language that we have called 'Musical meteorology.' The account of the quasi-evolutionary *'origins of men'* reiterates similar metaphors of the 'process philosophy' also evident in Anaximander and Xenophanes. The *'origins of men'* were customarily presented alongside the *'origins of the gods.'* Parmenides is properly grouped with the *'old philosophers'* who each wrote a book *'On Nature'* or *'Growth'* (birth and death). The Sophists and further sceptical writers no longer wrote a book but rather *'criticized a book of someone else.'* Plutarch's statement that *'he has left nothing of any importance unsaid'* emphasizes that the poem covers a very wide range of subject matter. Like the other early philosophical efforts, Parmenides' book concerned politics, astronomy, religion and medicine—all from an integrated canonical perspective.

Modern unease concerning fr. 10 in particular has centered round its many echoes of material from the *Way of Truth*. Most scholars would prefer that *Truth* and *Seeming* be neatly separated from each other. Yet we meet again the great goddess Necessity (***Ananke***) who confines the *'surrounding heaven'* and fetters it *'to hold the limits of the stars.'* We are taken back to line 8.30-31: *'for mighty Necessity / holds it* [Being] *in the bonds of a limit, which pens it in all round.'* The *'limits of the stars'* echo 8.26: *'unchanging in the limits of great bonds'* and 8.49: *'equal to itself on all sides, it meets with its limits uniformly.'* Apparently the spherical nature of Being at 8.42-43 is also echoed in the Becoming of fr. 10, for *'since there is a furthest limit, it is complete / on all sides, like the bulk of a well-rounded ball.'* At 8.14 it was Justice rather than Necessity who *'holds it fast.'* Necessity has just as much dominion over Becoming as Being. Fr. 10 shows that both Being and Becoming concern the same ***kosmos***. Hence it is rather suspicious to name one 'real' and the other 'unreal,' an anachronism we should blame on Plato rather than Parmenides.

Nor is the goddess Necessity the only 'carry over' between *Truth* and *Seeming*. Justice (***Nike***) appears in all three sections: in the *Prologue* she is the keyholder of the Gates of Night and Day where she and her cognate ***Themis*** sponsor the journey through them. In the *Way of Truth* Justice *'holds'* being and 'prevents' becoming or perishing. In the *Way of Seeming* (fr. 12) Justice is one of the names of the central goddess who *'directs all things.'* The poetic *opposites* of the *Way of Seeming* parallel the Gates of Day and Night in the *Prologue*. The poet's very journey from Light to the house of Night, there to visit the goddess, is inevitably tied to the *opposites* of the *Way of Seeming*.

The parallels between *Light* and *Night* in the different sections of the poem naturally compelled Aristotle to connect *Light* with Being and *Night* with Non-being (or

Becoming). Within the world of Becoming, **fire** is nearer to Being than **earth**. Apparently in the realm of 'seeming' **fire** acts as a 'counterfeit' of Being in the 'real' world of *Truth*. Thus we witness the Aristotelian equation of **fire** and **earth** with Being and Non-being. In order to understand the roots of Aristotle's distortion of Parmenides, we need to take a closer look at Plato's damaging 'explanation' of the great philosopher. For now it is enough to say that Plato was responsible for the 'clean break' between Being and Becoming. Fragment 10 shows that the 'cosmic machinery' of Being and Becoming are the same and that both Being and Becoming are compatible aspects of the same Musical whole. In spite of the mystical and problematic interlude of the *Way of Truth* in his poem, the overall picture is identical to that of the other early philosophers: Being and Becoming are interactive, indeed interdependent. Their divorce occured when philosophical writers no longer *'wrote a book'* (another inspired statement of the Orphic-Musical ***kosmos***) but rather directed their energies toward criticizing, reworking, or tearing down the old Musical paradigm. Later philosophical writings mostly argued over what the early philosophers meant. Plato cannot be pinned down to any one consistent viewpoint. Aristotle sought to put science on a new footing less tied to Musical assumptions. But the *'old philosophers'* gave positive expressions of the canonical paradigm.

The goddess Necessity is an important figure in early philosophy, and not only in Parmenides. In one of the most important of all the fragments of Empedocles (fr. 115), *'there is an oracle of Necessity'* who sets in motion the cosmic process whereby ***diamones*** fall from unity into multiplicity and undergo a series of reincarnations through the Elements. The Orphic goddess was also prominent among the poets and Pythagoreans. Perhaps her most famous philosophical appearance occured in Plato's Myth of Er (*Republic* 617-18). There she sits in the center of the universe controlling the movements of the heavenly bodies symbolized by a weaving spindle (the Spindle of Necessity) which she turns in her lap. The eight *'whorls'* of the spindle denote the celestial circles and/or spheres (the vortex), each varying in *'color'* (a musical term). The positions of the concentric circles are likened to a musical monochord scale produced by the varying distances of the planetary orbits. Naturally they also connect to the Empedoclean cycle of lives (Great Year) ruled by Necessity. Plato is here recycling an old canonical conception of the universe that had long roots in early Greek philosophy—and not only in Pythagoras. Perhaps the first and most important appearance of Necessity is found in the seminal fragment of Anaximander. There the patterns of *'justice and retribution'* in the movement of Becoming happen *'according to Necessity'* and the rulership of Time. A more fundamental and profount 'truth statement' about the nature of the musical ***kosmos*** can hardly be imagined. Parmenides and Empedocles are merely carrying forward the tradition of Anaximander.

We have been emphasizing the importance of fr. 10 in knitting together the supposedly separate worlds of *Truth* and *Seeming*. However, it also has a place in delineating the musicality of the early Greek astronomy. It supports a widespread picture in which the ***aither*** and the sphere of the fixed stars form the circumference (**fire**). Many of the poets and philosophers called it ***Olympus***. Then comes the region of the wandering planets, represented here by the *sun* and *moon*. These two bodies have strong Musical

associations with the primal *opposites* **fire** and **earth**, since the *moon* is often a poetic substitute for **earth**—both are female, rulers of time and change. The *sun*, of course, poetically relates to **fire**, even though it is normally situated in the middle of **air** or the rarified upper air (also called ***aither***). The *moon* usually forms the boundary between **air** and **water**. Later Greeks divided the cosmos into 'sublunar' and 'supralunar' regions. The **earth** is in the center, the place of the goddess, although **fire** (***Hestia***) also sits inside the **earth**. In this way, the geophysical language supports the special musical relation between the MONAD and the DYAD—**fire** and **earth**. For **fire** is found both on the periphery and in the center, even though they are *opposites*. Thus they demonstrate the *unity of opposites*.

FRAGMENT 11: MUSICAL ASTRONOMY

This brief passage was saved from oblivion by Simplicius in his commentary on Aristotle's *De Caelo* (*Comm. Arist.* Gr. 7.559). It probably was typical of Parmenides' cosmological writing. We certainly cannot accuse him of having a narrow focus in his cosmology, as the context of Simplicius' remarks well indicate. *'Parmenides says that he is beginning to speak on sensible things:* [here he quotes fr. 11] *and he gives an account of the genesis of things that come-to-be and pass-away, going as far as the parts of living things* [or *the limbs of animals*]. ' Parmenide's poem also embodied a medical and biological perspective.

(11) *'...how the **earth** and sun and moon*
*and the **aither** which is common to all and the Milky Way and*
*furthest **Olympus** and the hot force of the stars surged forth*
to come to be.'

Early Greek documents on astronomy were dominated by the canonical model of concentric circles and the symbolic language of *Forces* and *Roots* (or Elements, as Aristotle later called them). The more progressive among the early philosophers no longer emphasized the medial Elements (**air** and **water**) but rather the prior Elements (**fire** and **earth**). In this way they sought to 'step beyond' the traditional digital *Roots* and include irrational components within the ***harmonia***. This drive ironically put even greater focus on the prior Elements, since irrational components (simulating a continuum) were derived from multiple roots of 2. These 'quasi-elements' or 'geometrical surrogates' could be ranged between the initial *opposites* of the primal Elements (MONAD and DYAD) and described in a poetic manner as a continuum between *'hot and cold,'* or *'dry and wet,'* or *'rare and dense.'* The fragment above demonstrates Parmenides' progressivism by its fixation on the two 'contrary' Elements. All the poetic imagery in the fragment can be associated either with the DYAD (**earth**, *moon*) or the MONAD (*sun*, ***aither***, Milky Way, outermost ***Olympus*** or **heaven**, *hot* strength of the stars). The *'surging forth'* or thrusting forward refers to the *Forces* that are always implicated in creation (coming-to-be). Generation requires heat or friction (movement).

Apparently Parmenides' astronomy was not quoted very often by the late writers, perhaps because it was so *typical* of early Greek cosmology. The most famous

philosophers (especially Pythagoras) tended to get most of the credits. For some, Pythagoras did it all. At any rate, the sundry attributions of 'discoveries' were wildly various and essentially without any historical validity. Here is an example from Diogenes Laertius (8.48): *'Further, we are told that he* [Pythagoras] *was the first to call the* ***heaven kosmos*** *and the* ***earth*** *spherical; though Theophrastus says it was Parmenides, and Zeno* [the Stoic] *that it was Hesiod.'* Yet the use of the term ***kosmos*** was also attributed to Anaximander by Aristotle. We are left without any clear indication of who actually coined the term '***kosmos***,' but it certainly predated the entire philosophical movement.

Knowledge of the sphericity and position of the **earth** is another such issue. Diogenes connected it with Parmenides elsewhere (9.21): *'He was the first to declare that the* ***earth*** *is spherical and is situated in the center.'* Many moderns would rather believe that Pythagoras discovered sphericity. The argument that the central **earth** remains in equipoise because it has no reason to move in one direction rather than another was attributed to Anaximander by Aristotle (*De Caelo* 259b10-296a23). Diogenes (2.1) also assigned sphericity to Anaximander. However, Aetius (3.15.7) assigned it to Parmenides and Democritus: *'According to Parmenides and Democritus, because it is equidistant in every direction, it remains in equipoise, having no reason why it should incline in one direction rather than another; this accounts for the fact that it only trembles, and does not move.'* A few modern writers have liked the idea that Parmenides discovered it because the argument is supposedly based upon the Principle of Sufficient Reason; hence it bolsters his status as a logician. However, the Neoplatonist Iamblichus (*Theologoumena Arithmeticae* 6) reporting the views of Anatolius, attributed it to Homer and *'the broad majority of early thinkers.'* As an added touch, he connected the doctrine to some rather esoteric 'Pythagorean' lore. *'In addition they* [the Pythagoreans] *said that around the center of the four elements there lies a kind of unified fiery cube, whose central position was known to Homer, when he says "so far beneath* ***Hades*** *as* ***heaven*** *is from* ***earth****" (Iliad 8.16). On this point, at least, the followers of Empedocles and Parmenides, and the broad majority of early thinkers, seem to have followed the Pythagoreans, maintaining that the unified nature is situated in the center like a* ***hearth****, and keeps the same position because of equipoise.'* The mysterious 'fiery cube' that symbolically takes the place of **earth** in the center is derived from the association of the five so-called 'Platonic Solids' with the five Elements in later Pythagorean lore (see the diagram in Chapter 3). The cube stands for **earth**, the DYAD. It is fiery in its interior, the *hearth* (***Hestia***) of the ***kosmos***.

The point in all of this is that the central position of the **earth** cannot be attributed to any one 'discoverer' rather than another. It predated the philosophers and even Homer. In fact, the doctrine was very widespread and not confined to Greek speaking lands. The Chinese, Indians, and Persians also saw the universe as a central stationary **earth** surrounded by the spinning cycles of the **sky**. Similarly, the discovery of the **earth**'s spherical shape cannot be pinned down. Late writers may have associated it with Parmenides only because of an inference from lines 8.42-49. Some scholars try to postpone the discovery until *later*, but this approach is entirely misguided. It is highly likely that the discovery of the **earth**'s sphericity happened *before* the era of the Greek philosophers. Perhaps the earliest recorded historical event that could test the hypothesis

(in the west) occured when the Egyptian pharoah Necho (around 600 B.C.) ordered the circumnavigation of Africa (then called Libya). According to Herodotus' account (4.42) the long voyage was successful. Moreover, the early Greeks imagined that the universe was like an egg, essentially spherical. If the **earth** is the 'yolk,' it too would ostensibly be round. The notion that the **earth** is flat came rather from the parochialism of the Dark Ages in the west. Many ancients knew that it is round.

Two attributions to Parmenides are dependent upon his knowledge of the spherical **earth**. Aetius (3.11.4) wrote: *'Parmenides was the first to mark off the inhabited regions of the **earth** by two zones, the tropics.'* Strabo (2.2.2) expanded on it: *'Poseidonius, then, says that Parmenides was the originator of the division into five zones, but that he represents the torrid zone as almost double its real breadth, falling beyond both the tropics and extending into the two temperate zones.'* Needless to say, the historical validity of all this is questionable or at least unknowable. In truth, we just do not know how much Parmenides actually knew or believed about geography.

Parmenides was also credited with the identification of the Morning and Evening Star (Venus). Diogenes Laertius (9.23) wrote: *'He is believed to have been the first to detect the identity of **Hesperus**, the evening star, and **Phosphorus**, the morning star; thus Favorinus in the fifth book of his* Memorabilia. *But others attribute this to Pythagoras. And Callimachus holds that the poem was not the work of Parmenides.'* Elsewhere (8.14) he said: *'It was he* [Pythagoras] *who first declared that the evening and the morning stars are the same, as Parmenides asserts.'* It seems that Diogenes was himself ambivalent in assigning it to Parmenides and/or Pythagoras. But of course, the Greek discovery has no historical validity. The Babylonians recognized the identity long before the Greek era. In fact, several hundred years before Parmenides' time Assyrian astrologers had already tabulated decently accurate ephemeride tables for the planet Venus. Most of the so-called astronomical discoveries of the Greeks were really just transfers of knowledge from the Near East, where the planet Venus always had a special place since at least the Bronze Age. Aetius (2.15.4) put Venus in the general context of Parmenides' ***kosmos***. *'First in the **aither** Parmenides places the morning star, which he believed to be the same as the evening star; after that he places the **sun**, beneath which he places the **stars** in the fiery region that he calles **heaven**.'* In this schema, the planets occupy the ***aither*** with the sun higher than Venus (lower on the monochord wire—a larger number) and the stars highest (lowest position, the largest number, the open music wire). The pattern conforms to the standard norm. Only the extent and the symbolism of the ***aither***, its association with **fire** and/or **air**, was controversial. Everywhere in Greek cosmology the cosmic ***harmonia*** formed an ogdoad of circles around the central **earth**.

Sometimes the ancient citations were wildly anachronistic. For example, here is a Byzantine scholiast on counting the stars (Anonymous Byzantinus, *On Heavenly Phenomena* 14): *'Of the fixed stars that revolve with the universe, some cannot be named nor grasped by us, as Parmenides the natural philosopher has also said, while according to Aratus there are a thousand that have been named as far as the sixth magnitude.'* It's quite unlikely that Parmenides spent his time 'counting stars.' All we can say with reasonable certainty is that he had an interest in astronomy, like his fellow philosophers.

Any anachronistic doctrine from Hellenistic times could be credited to Parmenides as it was also credited to Heraclitus, Pythagoras or Empedocles. Nevertheless, such citations may still have had source points in Parmenides' poem. In this instance, the notion that the innumerable stars cannot be *'named or grasped'* ties into Parmenides' doctrine that the All (the Whole) cannot be *'named.'* Naming refers to the realm of Becoming. The late writer may have had no idea of the contextual meaning of the old poem, only using the citation as an ancient hallowed authority for some issue of interest to him.

Much of the time doctrines were assigned to Parmenides that could also belong to *any* Presocratic cosmologist. Here are a few examples, all from Aetius. (2.1.2): *'According to Parmenides and Melissus...the universe is one.'* (2.11.4): *'According to Parmenides, Heraclitus, Strato, and Zeno, the **heaven** is fiery.'* (2.13.8): *'According to Parmenides and Heraclitus, the **stars** are compressed masses of **fire**.'* (2.20.8): *'According to Parmenides and Metrodorus the **sun** is fiery.'* (2.25.3): *'According to Parmenides the **moon** is fiery.'* The association of the **heaven** (***Olympus***) with **fire** and the MONAD was common to the Musical symbolism of all the philosophers. We can conclude that, though some attributions were anachronistic, others were at least appropriate if not specific to Parmenides alone.

The early Greek astronomical doctrines were held more for their Musical associative metaphorical value than for any commitment to 'empirical science.' If Parmenides believed in the spherical ***kosmos*** it was more because the sphere denotes *the whole* than any systematic drive for scientific 'progress.' Sometimes a comment by a late writer betrays salient features of the Musical poetic language, even when the writer himself has little sympathy or even understanding of the language itself. Here is an example in Aetius (3.1.4): *'According to Parmenides the mixture of the **dense** and the **rare** gave rise to the milk-like colour'* [of the Milky Way]. Whatever the original context, the mixture of the *rare* and *dense* (re MONAD and DYAD) was central to Musical symbolism. Here is another example that groups images into these two primal Musical categories. Aetius (2.20.8a): *'According to Parmenides the **sun** and **moon** were **separated off** from the **circle** of the Milky Way, the former from the **rarer** part of the **mixture** or "**hot**," the latter from the **denser** or "**cold**."* It is remarkable that so many Musical themes (here in bold) are present in such a brief passage. Not only did the doxographers apply such key terms as *'separating off'* and *'mixture'* to Parmenides' poem, but even *'felting'* and *'condensation.'* We must acknowledge the essential unity between this cosmology and that of the Milesians. Aetius however, following Aristotle, confined the context of the language only to physical space. Like most of the late writers, he was heavily influenced by the Aristotelian literalism of Theophrastus. His offerings may at times be garbled, but the common symbolism of the early philosophers shines through the confusion. In the next section we will examine a longer and more valuable testimony by Aetius concerning Parmenides' Musical astronomy.

Modern reactions to Parmenides' astronomy are even more confused than those of the later doxographers. Since the entire status of the *Way of Seeming* is problematic, many assume that Parmenides actually had no actual commitment to these doctrines. Moreover, they want to believe that his cosmology is largely an individualistic creation—

the best antidote for 'cosmology in general.' Above all, they take it *literally* at face value, ignoring that he was a poet. Some are even willing to accept that he actually *did* discover the identity of the Morning and Evening Star or the sphericity of the **earth**. A prominent nay-sayer, Burnet (*EGP* 188) argued that no one had *any* conception of a spherical cosmos before Eudoxus at the time of Aristotle. Scholars discuss very seriously the pros and cons of Parmenides' striking discoveries. Perhaps the most telling comment that I have seen is in Guthrie (2.65), where he is contemplating whether Parmenides actually discovered the sphericity of the **earth**. *'If it is accepted, it is a strange freak of history that so fundamental a discovery should have been made by one for whom the whole physical world was an unreal show.'* This comment demonstrates very well the modern confusion over Parmenides. Guthrie (2.61) also expressed with precision the modern dismissal of his cosmology. *'Although it may contain some novel features, it is in its author's eyes a deliberate concession to human weakness; his contribution to philosophy lay elsewhere.'* For modern interpreters, only the 'logic' of the *Way of Truth* holds any interest.

FRAGMENT 12: THE CENTRAL GODDESS

The most important of Parmenides' cosmological fragments was preserved by Simplicius. In his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* 9.39) he cited lines 12.1-3 and at 9.31 he quoted lines 12.26. The following translation is by McKirahan. Like so much of Parmenides' work, this passage is quite controversial.

(12) *'For the narrower (wreaths) were filled with unmixed* ***fire.***
The ones next to them with ***night****, but a due amount of* ***fire*** *is inserted among it,*
and in the middle of these is the goddess who governs all things.
For she rules over hateful birth and union of all things,
sending the female to unite with male and in opposite fashion,
male to female.'

The later part of the passage is more straightforward, but the first two lines are anything but clear. The reference to the *'unmixed fire'* ties it to the MONAD. In the second line, *'night'* with a *'portion of flame inserted'* or *'injected'* unmistakably points to the DYAD which holds **fire** in its interior. So far so good. What is not clear in these lines is the relation between these archetypes and the *'wreaths'* or *'rings.'* Fortunately, we have an extensive paraphrase of the passage preserved by Aetius (2.7.1 or DKA37). The paraphrase is itself garbled in places; nevertheless it throws light on the enigmatic poem. The fragment above should be read in conjunction with this testimony:

'Parmenides (says that) there are circular bands, woven around one another, one made of the ***rare****, the other of the* ***dense****; and between these are others* ***mixed*** *(of)* ***light*** *and* ***darkness****. What surrounds them all is solid like a wall, and beneath this is a fiery band, and what is in the very middle of them all (is solid), around which again there is a fiery band. The midmost of the mixed bands is the (origin) and (cause) of movement and coming-to-be for all of them, and it is this that he calls "the goddess who steers," "holder of the keys," "Justice," and "Necessity." The* ***air*** *is separated from the* ***earth****, vaporized because of the* ***earth****'s more violent compression, and the* ***sun*** *is an exhalation*

*of **fire**, as is the **circle** of the Milky Way. The **moon**, however, is a **mixture** of both, of **air*** [he means **earth** here] *and **fire**. Surrounding these at the uppermost level of all is the **aither**, with that fiery region which we call **heaven** ranged beneath it; and beneath this come the regions about the **earth**.'*

The paraphrase makes it clear that the *'circular bands'* refer to the paths of the planetary orbits. In a poetic manner, Parmenides is presenting the standard (by now familiar) monochord-based model of concentric circles around the central **earth**. Yet the testimony is itself rather confused. According to the traditional scheme, the circle of the *rare* (and *light*) refers to the outer circumference (**heaven**, *stars*). The 'circle' of the *dense* (and *darkness*) refers to the central **earth**, which is not a circle at all but a solid sphere. Between them are the *'mixed bands'* of the planets that contain portions of both *light* and *darkness*. This much is straightforwardly consistent with the Musical model. Yet the testimony and the poem can also be taken in another way. It could refer to a series of narrow bands of **fire** surrounded by wider bands of **night** that each have a portion of **fire** rushing in their midst. In other words, **fire** and **night** could be displaced from their normative function as the primal *opposites* (the circumference and center of the monochord circle) and placed in the context of the medial rings. In a way, this usage is still consistent with the Musical model. The *'mixed'* orbits of the planets exhibit or embody **fire** because the MONAD is omnipresent in the harmonic ***kosmos***. Between these *'wheels of **fire**'* are much wider bands of **night**, refering to the portion of the All excluded from this ogdoad ***harmonia***. Thus both interpretations can support the canonical model of the planetary ***kosmos***.

The rest of the testimony also confirms the Musical pattern already familiar through the Milesians. *'What surrounds them all is solid like a wall'* because the immovable end-bridges hold the limits of the ***harmonia*** like the boundary wall of a city. Anaximenes and Heraclitus used the same metaphor. Contained within these fixed boundaries are the various circles, beginning with the *'fiery band'* of **heaven** or ***aither***. The very middle (**earth**) is also *'solid'* because it too does not move. The *'fiery band'* around the **earth** is unclear; perhaps it emphasizes the omnipresence of the MONAD. The descriptions of the central goddess are consistent with Parmenides' poem and will evoke more comment later. **Air** is separated from **earth** by *'exhalation'* (emanation) as the TRIAD is derived from the DYAD by mediation (the taking of the musical means). The **sun** is an *'exhalation'* of **fire** because it generally occupies the medial place of **air** in the ***kosmos***, mediating between **heaven** and **earth**. In other words, the **sun** (generally masculine) is a representative of the cosmic **fire** in the 'place of **air**.' Apparently, so is the Milky Way—itself a *'band'* among the stars and suspected by some scholars as the original inspiration for the entire system of *'bands.'* The **moon**, like the other planets, possesses a mixture of both **fire** and **earth** because the MONAD and DYAD underly all further differentiations of the musical ***kosmos***. In this version of the scheme, ***aither*** sits even higher than **heaven**, or rather it represents the highest region of **heaven**. All in all, Aetius' testimony confirms that Parmenides' ***kosmos*** has essentially the same architecture as that of the Milesians and their successors.

Parmenides used the colorful term '***stephanai***,' which literally means *'wreaths'* or *'garlands'* and hence *'brims'* or *'rings'* or *'bands.'* He probably borrowed the term from Hesiod (*Theog.* 382) who described *'the shining stars with which the* ***heaven*** *is garlanded.'* Homer (*Il.* 5.597) used it for a golden band in the hair and elsewhere (7.12) for the brim of a helmet. The term was later used in a technical sense for the mathematical figure contained between two concentric circles (Proclus, *in Eucl.* 1.12). Technically it was always something annular or ring-like. Parmenides' use of the term is obviously poetical, referring to the circles of the planetary orbits. We must also recognize that it is practically identical to Anaximander's *'wheels of* ***fire****'* and Plato's *'lips'* or *'rims'* of concentric whorls fitted into each other like nested boxes in the *Myth of Er*. In all of these instances we see a poetic expression that is not meant to be taken *literally* at face value. In the case of Plato, the reference to circles does *not* mean that spheres are impossible or specifically excluded or 'unthinkable.' Yet most modern scholars have interpreted these texts in the most narrow and fundamentalist manner possible, especially concerning Anaximander and Parmenides. Burnet (*EGP* 187-89) used several pages trying to deny that Parmenides (and even Plato!) could have *any* conception of a spherical ***kosmos***. Perhaps Burnet was driven by a desire to separate the *Way of Truth* (with its spherical All) from the erroneous *Way of Seeming*. At any rate, the standard modern verdict on Parmenides' ***kosmos*** is that it is 'obscure' and possibly reminiscent of the equally obscure 'system' of Anaximander. Although Parmenides is allowed metaphorical expressions in the *Prologue*, they are forbidden in the *Way of Seeming*. Moreover, they are unthinkable in Anaximander, even though Simplicius noted (*Phys.* 24.17) that Anaximander wrote *'in a rather poetical style.'* As much as possible, Anaximander and Parmenides are treated as 'hard-nosed scientists' who resorted to poetical expressions only when their language was inadequate for scientific accuracy. Such literalism supports an isolationist model in which Anaximander and Parmenides are unrelated individualists who expound 'competing systems.'

The second segment of fr. 12 directs us back to the central goddess. Indeed, practically every fragment of Parmenides' poem implicates the DYAD in some manner. Even fr. 8 is essentially only a commentary on paradoxical *'marks'* of the DYAD as the problematic *Whole*. The goddess of many names is abundantly evident in every corner of the poem. We could say that the *'signs'* of the goddess even form the overall theme of his composition. This thesis contrasts starkly with the standard modern 'take' on Parmenides. Most contemporary interpreters treat him as an obscure physical cosmologist who (perhaps inadvertently) invented logic and a difficult metaphysic of ontology. In my thesis, the goddess (the Muse) is more important to Parmenides than any one particular description of her. The poem consists of a whole series of 'truth statements' about the nature of the goddess and how she can be related to (or reflected in) astronomy, medicine, psychology, and so on. The impulse is essentially religious. The Musical goddess is both the subject and the object of his writing.

Since the goddess is the very speaker of the composition, she is here revealing her own position in the scheme of things. She *'governs all,'* literally *'steers all things,'* an old Ionian expression tied to Anaximander by the doxographers and Aristotle. She is the creative power spinning around the *double*, generating multiplicity through mediation. As

the octave she is the miracle interval of music. She anchors the matrix, the vortex, spreads her net, weaves her cloth, sings her poem. All musical arithmetic is entirely dependent on her, directed by her as she controls all numerosity. She makes possible the birth of all ***harmoniai***, all forms of Becoming. *'She rules over hateful birth and union'*—strife and love. Birth is *'hateful'* because the DYAD generates complexity out of simplicity—dissonance as well as consonance. All movement proceeds either toward her or away from her. She is the creative *root* that allows all generation and dissolution within cyclical identity. Thus she directs the marriage of male and female elements in the fabric of ***harmonia***. In the traditional digital conception, numbers are male or female. Their relations are governed by arithmetical necessity and described as 'family sets.' Even in the more progressive geometrical harmonies, sexual associations would pervade scalar elements. These associations were old and very widespread culturally. One can also recognize 'family ties' in the description of scalar elements in ancient India and Persia. Gods beget gods and 'reside' with gods. The fertility metaphor is ideally suited to a musical conception of order. The nature of traditional monochord arithmetic underpins and supports the poetic framework.

Aeschylus (a famous contemporary of Parmenides and Heraclitus) brilliantly called her (*P.V.* 209) *'one form with many names,'* thereby acknowledging her peculiar ability to become all things within the stasis of cyclical identity. He has his Prometheus call her ***Themis***, closely related to Justice in Parmenides. Aeschylus also associated together **earth** and Justice in the *Cheophori* (148). The connections between **earth**, Justice and Necessity were always close, witness the goddess ***Persephone*** who dispenses justice in *Hades* (inside the **earth**). Hesiod called her the Mother of all life and paradoxically made her give birth even to the **heaven** (MONAD) by magically drawing a *circle* around herself. She was the *hearth* (***Hestia***) because the hearth was the *center* of the Greek home. The hearth always had religious connotations—as the place of sacrifice, homely ritual, the cooking of food, the fostering of all life. For Pythagoreans, the ***kosmos*** 'grew' (***physis***) as a 'seed' from a central point. ***Hestia*** was connected with **earth** throughout the Greek writings; for example, witness the reference by Plato in *Phaedrus* (247a). Many more corroborating instances could be cited.

The goddess embodies the *universal active creative power*, a function that Empedocles and the others ascribed to the hot center of the **earth** (the *hearth* **fire**). The goddess is both hot and cold. Although **heaven** and **earth** were *opposites* as *'hot and cold,'* the **earth** has both sides. It is not the cold element alone in the **earth** but its union with the central **fire** that generates life. According to Empedocles, all life arose out of the **earth**, but essentially because (fr. 52) *'many **fires** burn beneath the ground.'* Life arises because (fr. 62.6) *'these the **fire** sent up, desiring to come to its like.'* Life arises as some *'mixture'* of *'hot and cold'* as well as (in a supporting role) *'dry and wet.'* The goddess is the crucible where everything happens. She forms the 'mansion' of harmony.

The testimony of Aetius given above is essentially accurate. *'The midmost of the mixed bands is the (origin) and (cause) of movement and coming-to-be for all of them, and it is this that he calls "the goddess who steers," "holder of the keys," "Justice," and "Necessity."* The words in brackets indicate that the text was corrupt here. The words

(inserted by Diels) may themselves be uncertain but the meaning is clear. The goddess is the enabler of cyclical motion. The manuscript of Stobaeus said *'holder of lots'* rather than *'holder of the keys'*—both versions are Musically appropriate. The only place where Aetius shows some confusion is the position of the goddess. According to his testimony, she resides in the middle of the *'mixed bands'* (the place of **air**, monochord 2:**3**:4) rather than the true center of the ***kosmos***. But Parmenides' poem was also unclear, saying only *'in the midst of these is the goddess.'* Some scholars have been led astray by this evidence, claiming that the goddess must be housed midway between **fire** and **night** or **heaven** and **earth**. For them, the goddess lives in the place of the *sun*. However, *'in the middle of these (rings)'* is more reasonably the middle of the whole cosmic pattern, the *'house of Night.'* She has closer 'neighbourhood ties' with the *moon* than the *sun*.

Simplicius also appreciated the importance of the goddess for Parmenides. In his commentary on the *Physics* (9.34) he wrote: *'And he* [Parmenides] *posits a single common active agent as responsible, the goddess situated "in the midst of all things," and responsible for all coming-to-be.'* Elsewhere, while citing fragment 12, he said (9.39): *'And again, a few lines later* [after line 8.61], *he continues speaking of the two elements and refers to the active agent as follows:'* [here he quotes 12.1-3]. Simplicius also stated that Parmenides gave the goddess to generate both physical and non-physical coming-to-be. She is responsible for both the sensory realm and the subtle realm (soul, mind)—both the phenomenal world and its reciprocal. Thus he wrote (9.31): *'And Parmenides has clearly indicated the active agent responsible not only for corporeal things in the world of coming-to-be, but also for incorporeal things which complete that world, when he says:'* [here he quotes 12.2-6]. Simplicius was unequivocal in maintaining that the goddess is the *active creative agent* of all Becoming.

The active nature of the mysterious goddess is the cause of considerable controversy among modern interpreters. For the female ideal was normatively passive and the male active in Greek psychology. The mother provides the material place or 'matter' in which new life grows, while the father provides the 'seed' that animates it. The father is thus the agent or active cause. In Aristotelian terms we could call them the material and efficient causes. How then are we to account for Parmenides' apparent reversal of roles? The answer is not difficult, but it highlights the corruption of the Presocratic Musical model in the fourth century. The DYAD goddess is active in relation to the MONAD and *this is the context of Parmenides' poem.'* His composition (what we have of it) says little about the TRIAD (which is the first archetype of maleness) or any further odd numbers. It is certainly a normative truth that the DYAD is passive in relation to the TRIAD, for obvious musical reasons. But it is the relation of the DYAD to the MONAD that interests Parmenides; consequently his statements are absolutely consistent with the Musical model. Aristotle and his many followers (both ancient and modern) confused the issue when they assumed that MONAD-DYAD equals *male-female* and *active-passive*. The same subtle but serious distortion is seen in the 'Pythagorean Table'—also probably a fourth century construction. The early Greek perspective was at once more sophisticated and more integrated with musical realities. This subject will be discussed more extensively in the commentary on fragment 17.

FRAGMENT 13: LOVE AND STRIFE

Fragment 13 consists of only a single line and Parmenides may have been paraphrasing Hesiod here:

(13) *'First of all gods she contrived Love.'*

The poet could have taken over sections of Hesiod's *Theogony*, where Love or Desire (***Eros***) played a conspicuous role. However, it is more likely that he produced his own variant of the genre, describing the birth and death of gods (*theogony*) and the world (*cosmogony*). His follower Empedocles did the same in his poetry. This practice puts the two philosophers in the mainstream of the Orphic (and Pythagorean) poets—the revered ***theologiai***, who generated similar accounts attributed to or inspired by Orpheus, Musaeus, and other prominent Musical icons. Unfortunately, fr. 13 is the only direct theogonical passage to have survived, but doxographical evidence also indicates that Parmenides was concerned about such sacred matters. For example, Clement (*Protrepticus* 5.64) wrote: *'Parmenides of Elea introduced **fire** and **earth** as gods.'* Aetius (1.7.26) gave: *'According to Parmenides the changeless and perfect spherical being (is god).'* No doubt both what changes and what does not change were both divine, in line with the Milesians and their followers. The book of Parmenides, like the books of Empedocles and Heraclitus, should be classed as Orphic literature. The fact that this Orphic affiliation is rarely acknowledged by the modern interpretive community indicates the strength of the orthodox picture of Parmenides as a 'rational logician.' His religious perspective is consistently downplayed or ignored.

Fragment 13 was quoted by a number of ancient writers. The fragment contexts are interesting and sometimes give information on the poem. We begin with Plato, who wrote (*Symposium* 178b): *'Parmenides says of birth: "she devised Love first of all the gods."* ***Eros*** has an important role in Plato's *Symposium*, and the dialogue indicates that Plato was familiar with Parmenides' theogony. At 195c he referred casually to *'the ancient stories of the gods which Hesiod and Parmenides relate.'* Here Hesiod and Parmenides are coupled, the speaker Agathon complaining that they recounted the assaults of the gods against each other. Agathon states (perhaps tongue in cheek) that this violence must be the work of ***Ananke*** rather than ***Eros***. Like so much of Plato's writing, the *Symposium* recycles a lot of Presocratic themes in contexts at times satirical and at times serious. Meanwhile, he feels free to distort the doctrines in whatever way is conducive to his purposes. Plato's relation to Parmenides is complex and cannot be fully explored here.

Plutarch (*Amatorius* 756f) wrote: *'Hence Parmenides declares Love to be the oldest of the works of **Aphrodite**, writing in his cosmogony: "she devised Love first of all the gods."* While the *'she'* of the fragment is usually taken to be Necessity (of fr. 12), here she is ***Aphrodite***, goddess of love and sexual union—a fitting figure to *'mingle male and female.'* ***Aphrodite*** was always closely affiliated with ***Eros***. Here we have yet another poetic name for the central goddess who generates all. Empedocles also named his goddess ***Aphrodite***—as well as ***Cypris*** and other names. We should not get attached

to any one particular name, rather remembering her Musical function as 'midwife' of all creation. Interestingly enough, ***Aphrodite*** was also the Greek name for the planet *Venus* (the Roman name). We have already seen the association of Parmenides with the Morning and Evening Star. Perhaps ***Aphrodite*** was an important figure in his poem, as she certainly was in Empedocles' work.

Aristotle also coupled Parmenides and Hesiod. In his *Metaphysics* (4.984b23) he wrote: *'One might suspect that Hesiod was the first to look for such a thing—or someone else who put love or desire among existing things as a principle* [***arche***], *as Parmenides* [and Empedocles] *also does; for in constructing the* ***genesis*** *of the universe, he says: "she devised Love first of all the gods."* ***Eros*** is indeed important for the Musical conception of order—the 'glue' that holds together the harmonic numbers. ***Eros*** is the force of attraction that drives the numbers 1 and 2 to form the 'marriage' 1:2. He represents the tendency for *like to attract like* and for like to assimulate unlike. He is very prominent in Orphic circles where he assists the central goddess in her creative work. ***Eros*** was also traditionally associated with **fire**, friction, and 'creative heat,' as outlined in Chapter One. Variant names for the Musical function of ***Eros*** can be found (implicit or explicit) in most of the early philosophers.

The last of the fragment contexts comes from Simplicius. In his commentary on *Physics* (9.39) he connected fr. 13 with a prominent Orphic theme. *'And he says that she* [the goddess] *is also the cause of the gods, when he asserts: "first of all gods she devised* ***Eros,*** *" and he says that at one time she sends souls from the visible to the invisible world, and at another time back again.'* In Plato's *Myth of Er*, the presiding goddess Necessity (***Ananke***) also sends *souls* in the two directions. This *'pathway up and down'* has been discussed in relation to Heraclitus and Anaximenes. Not surprisingly, it surfaces again in Empedocles. The *'visible world'* refers to the aitherial realm of Light from which ***diamones*** fall, while the *'unseen world'* is **earth** and/or ***Hades***, the land of Darkness. The term ***Hades*** itself means *'the unseen.'* We cannot here avoid the characteristic doctrine of immortality and palingenesis of the *soul* so prominent in Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and the Milesians. Although most scholars would prefer to ignore it, this testimony (from a reputable source) ties Parmenides to the elaborate doctrines of reincarnation, a cycle of lives, transformation of the Elements in the *soul*, and further Orphica that we have examined in relation to Heraclitus. Later, the poetry of Empedocles will make it more explicit. The lesson in all of this is that the 'systems' of Anaximenes, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides and Empedocles have much more in common than is generally believed. Although the individual personalities differ, the philosophical norms are common.

The many commonalities between Parmenides and Heraclitus (later echoed in Empedocles) figure well in a testimony by Cicero (*De Nature Deorum* 1.28). Incidently, this passage also mentions *Love* or *Desire*. Cicero, inhabiting an entirely different intellectual milieu than the early philosophers, did not have much sympathy for or understanding of the Presocratic mind-set. Nevertheless, he reported themes that resonate Parmenides with the work of Heraclitus. *'For Parmenides invents a fanciful sort of thing; he makes up an unbroken* ***circle*** *of lights, like a crown (his word is* ***stephanai****), which*

*encircles the **heavens**, and this he calls "**god**." But no one can suppose that such a thing possesses a divine form or sensation. This philosopher produces other freakish entities—for he deifies **war**, **discord**, **desire**, and similar notions, which can be destroyed by illness or sleep or forgetfulness or old age. He treats **stars** in the same way, but let us pass over that point here, for it has been criticised in connection with another philosopher.'*

Cicero confirmed that the cosmic planetary system of *'rings'* inherited from Anaximander was also sacred to Parmenides. Moreover, he deified not only *Love* but also *Strife* ('*war, discord*'). He is now firmly in Heraclitean territory, where *'peace and war'* or *'concord and discord'* are central issues. Empedocles made all of this more explicit, although it may even have been entirely explicit in Parmenides' poem as well—we have only a fraction of it extant. Most significant is the relation of *'love and strife'* to *'illness, sleep, forgetfulness and old age.'* Heraclitus connected the *opposites* (hot-cold, dry-wet, rare-dense, light-dark) with the states of consciousness of the *soul*. 'Hot' is alive, advanced or evolved; 'cold' is less conscious, dead, or unevolved. The Heraclitean confluence between transformations of the Elements and states of consciousness is also intact in Parmenides and Empedocles. Further doxographical evidence confirms it. For example, Tertullian (*De Anima* 43.2): *'Sleep, according to Empedocles and Parmenides, is a cooling.'* Again, Aetius (5.30.4): *'Parmenides says that old age develops along with a decrease of the hot.'* Both of these statements could just as well have been made by Heraclitus, who encouraged *souls* to wake up out of their sleep and claimed that a dry (hot) or fiery *soul* is the most evolved. The statement that Parmenides *'treats stars in the same way'* refers to the doctrine (later made explicit by Empedocles) that every *soul* is a 'star' or fragment of the ***aither*** that has 'fallen' in order to cycle through a sequence of lives and return to its source. This theme is central to Orphism. Cicero made his comments in relation to an unnamed philosopher who said something quite similar. The philosopher may well have been Heraclitus, but it could also have been Anaximenes.

Such parallels between Parmenides and Heraclitus are largely ignored by modern commentators because they follow the orthodoxy that the two philosophers expound mutually exclusive and incompatible systems. They see Parmenides' philosophy as a progressive reaction *against* an older, more inchaote Heraclitus. Sometimes this incompatibility is combined with the 'falsity' of the *Way of Seeming*, contending that Parmenides' *Seeming* is intended to be a denial of Heraclitus (along with Pythagoras and everybody else!). The many parallels and common features are explained away by devious intellectual arguments. For example, the *opposites* in Heraclitus are deemed to be entirely different from *opposites* in Parmenides. For Heraclitus supports a *unity of opposites* based on a common 'power struggle;' meanwhile, no such unity exists for Parmenides whose *opposites* are strictly dualistic. Such distinctions are artificial distortions and only illustrate that the prevailing orthodoxy does not allow a decent understanding of either philosopher. Only when the *opposites* are comprehended in Anaximander does it become possible to appreciate the *opposites* in his followers. In this essay, I have included many quotes from Heraclitus and Empedocles in order to demonstrate the close relations between this potent triad of philosophers.

One more piece of doxographical evidence implicates *desire*, but this one is not very transparent. Aetius (4.19.4) wrote: *'According to Parmenides and Empedocles, desire (arises) owing to lack of nourishment.'* The context is missing, but Aetius made commentaries largely on ancient astronomy. Perhaps the image refers to the *'nourishment'* provided by the ***apeiron*** surrounding the birth of the ***kosmos***. The 'food' impels the baby ***kosmos*** to 'grow' or assimulate complexity within itself. The image was associated with the Musical cosmogony of Anaximander and taken over by the Pythagoreans. Perhaps it also relates to Parmenides and Empedocles, whose allegorical astronomy owed so much to Anaximander.

FRAGMENTS 14 AND 15: SUN AND MOON

These short fragments about the moon were quoted by Plutarch (*Reply to Colotes* 1116a and *On the face of the moon* 929a). Fragment 15a is a one-word fragment derived from Scholion 25 on St. Basil (*Homiliae 9 in Hexameron*).

(14) *'**Night**-shining foreign **light** wandering round **earth**.'*
(15) *'Always looking towards the rays of the **sun**.'*
(15a) *'(Parmenides in his verse called the **earth**) rooted-in-**water**.'*

In fragment 14 Parmenides makes a (satirical?) pun on a phrase in Homer (*Iliad* 5.214) where a word similar to *'light'* means *'man.'* The Homeric phrase originally meant simply *'a foreigner.'* A more literal translation is, for example, that of Gallop (*PE* 85): *'**Night**-shiner, wandering around the **earth**, an alien **light**.'* Burnet translated it (*EGP* 177): *'Shining by **night** with borrowed **light**, wandering round the **earth**.'* The same Homeric phrase was also borrowed by Empedocles (fr. 45): *'A round alien **light** spins round the **earth**, / like the track of a chariot, and around the extremity...' 'Alien'* implies *'not its own'* or *'belonging to another place'* or *'the property of something else.'* The *moon* and *sun* represent the archetypal *opposites* **heaven-earth** or MONAD-DYAD. In Parmenides as in Empedocles, the *moon* is related to the *sun*. Empedocles wrote (fr. 47): *'For the **moon** gazes staight at the pure **circle** of her lord'* [the *sun*]. In this poetry the *moon* is 'substituting' for the place of the central goddess. Although the fragment by Parmenides has its origins in a simple pun, it nevertheless sets up an allegorical context. The humor could be a literary device. Parmenides' pun may well have been similar in spirit to those of Xenophanes. We simply do not know to what extent Parmenides' poem was infused with humor, but episodes of such 'comedy' cannot be ruled out in any Eleatic philosopher. Perhaps such interludes formed a stylistic homage to his teacher Xenophanes.

Fragment 15 (and to a lesser extent fr. 14) was used as the authority for the statement that Parmenides recognized the reflected origin of moonlight. Plutarch's context fragment indicates this: *'Of all the heavenly bodies, so many in number, only it* [the moon] *moves around in need of a borrowed light, according to Parmenides: "always looking towards the rays of the **sun**."* Some doxographers went further, claiming that he made the initial discovery. Aetius (2.26.2) wrote: *'According to Parmenides the moon is equal to the sun; for the fact is that it gets its light from it.'* However, Aetius was also

ready to credit the discovery to others. At 2.28.5 he said: *'Thales was the first to say that it received its light from the sun. Pythagoras, Parmenides, Empedocles, Anaxagoras and Metrodorus followed him.'* Most scholars balk at the notion that Thales could have made the discovery—he is too 'early.' They prefer the authority of Plato (*Cratylus* 409a-b) who gave the credit to Anaxagoras. But the truth is that the 'discovery' could be attributed to Thales just as well as Anaxoragas. It is far more likely that *no* Greek astronomer made the discovery. The moon's *'borrowed'* light was already recognized by the Mesopotamians who also drew up the first lunar eclipse tables several hundred years earlier. Like so many of the astronomical 'discoveries' of the early Greeks, this one has little historical validity.

We must not forget that the early use of astronomical-meteorological language was to a certan extent allegorical for Musical verities. The pair *sun-moon* formed a poetic proxy for **fire-earth**. For obvious reasons, the *sun* stood for **fire** and the female changeable *moon* for the goddess **earth**. Hence they also served as 'stand-ins' for the characteristics of the MONAD and DYAD. The constant light of the *sun* suggests the omnipresence of the MONAD. The cyclical nature of the lunar movement suggests the cyclical identity and temporal characteristics of the DYAD. After all, the *moon* was the principal calendrical reference point in the ancient world. The *sun*'s yearly calendar, of course, was also important, but the calendar was primarily lunar—some years had 12 months, some 13. The *moon* and *sun*, being the most important of the celestial 'characters,' would naturally become associated with the *opposites*. Their celestial dance becomes material for a poetic literary genre that universalizes the *Roots* and *Forces*. Astronomy is good subject matter for Musical commentaries on *periodic motion*. The *moon* 'reflects' the constancy of the *sun* in a temporal progression. The language used for the *sun* and *moon* was generally identical to that used for the primal polar *opposites*. For example, Aetius (2.20.8a) said: *'According to Parmenides the **sun** and **moon** were separated off from the circle of the Milky Way, the former from the rarer part of the mixture or "hot," the later from the denser or "cold."* Similar examples can be extracted from Empedocles and others. Hence the commentary on the *moon* is another way of invoking the great goddess of the DYAD.

Some of the doxographical writers still recognized the poetic nature of Parmenides' work, in spite of the literalistic tendencies of Aristotle and Theophrastus. For example, Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* 7.111-14) gave an elaborate allegorical interpretation of the *Prologue*. Although we may find it overly neoplatonic, it preserves the spirit with which his poetry should be approached. A short passage by Menander or Genethlius (*On Epideictic*), who were third century A.D. writers on rhetoric, also illustrates the allegorical and essentially religious-artistic nature of Presocratic astronomy. *'(**Hymns** are) of this type (about **nature**), when uttering a hymn to **Apollo** we declare him to be the **sun**, and discuss the sun's nature, and say of **Hera** that she is **air**, and that **Zeus** is the **hot**; for such hymns are descriptive of nature. Both Parmenides and Empedocles use that genre in a masterly way...For Parmenides and Empedocles give full expositions, whereas Plato recalls it briefly.'* The term *'nature'* means more than just the 'teleological form' of the physical world for the early philosohers. ***Physis*** meant *'growth'* according to a universal musical paradigm in which the One becomes the Many. Early

philosophy was pointedly cosmogonical. The language could be biological, astronomical, or medical but the underlying paradigm was the same. All things arise from the One as a balance of *opposites* and Elements, only to resolve back into the One later when the periodic cycle is complete. The underlying conception is musical and has a firm justification in practical canonics.

Fragment 15a is above all else reminiscent of Xenophanes who commented mainly on the roots **earth** and **water**. It could also have formed part of a tribute to the elusive Thales whose **water** held the esoterics of the PENTAD. Then again, it could refer to the rivers of the underworld mentioned in Homer's *Odyssey* (10.513) and in Empedocles (fr. 52). Such rivers of **water** and **fire** were elaborated by Plato in the *Phaedo*. Unfortunately, we do not have enough 'bulk' of a context to make a meaningful comment about the specifics of Parmenides' usage.

FRAGMENT 16: MIND AND LIMBS

Fragment 16 was quoted by Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 5.1009b21) and by his student Theophrastus (*On Sensation* 1-4). The translation here is by McKirahan, but alternative renderings will be necessary. For this fragment, though much discussed, is enormously controversial.

(16) *'For as each person has a mixture of much-wandering* ***limbs****,*
so is ***thought*** *present to humans. For that which thinks—*
the constitution of the limbs—is the same
in all humans and every one; for which is more is thought.'

The meaning and position of this passage have been entirely problematic. Although the majority of scholars would put it in the *Way of Seeming*, others claim that it belongs to the *Way of Truth*. Very much hinges on the translation of line 4. '***Pleon***' can mean both *'more'* and *'full.'* If we translate the enigmatic statement as: *'the full is thought,'* then it could conceivably refer to the *plenum* whose *'signs'* concern the *Way of Truth*. Some scholars have preferred this interpretation because it reinforces the notion that the sole content of what people think is *'the full.'* What the human constitution thinks is the same for all men, i.e. *'what is'*—the only thought (indeed, existent) possible. It also makes thought inseparable from *'what is.'* Some translations are geared to support this interpretation. For example, here is the rendering by Robinson (found in Gallop 87): *'The quality of each man's ascertainment depends on the way his much-wandering body-components are co-ordinated, for what the body's nature knows is identical for all men and every man. For the plenum is ascertainment.'* Such a translation can charitably be called 'liberal.'

A more literal translation that still supports *'the full'* is that of Gallop (*PE* 87): *'For as each man has a union of the much-wandering* ***limbs****, / so is* ***mind*** *present to man, for it is the same thing / which the constitution of the limbs thinks, / both in each and every man; for the full is thought.'* The passage then supposedly asserts some sort of causal linkage between thought and the constitution of the body—a sort of mind-body

interactionism. However, Gallop (*PE* 22) points out how paradoxical this situation is. *'It would be to suggest the mortals believe falsely in physical bodies because of their own bodily constitution. Yet presumably, if their beliefs in physical bodies were totally false, then all statements about their own bodies, including those linking their mental with their bodily states, would be equally false.'* He also recommends the assignment to the *Way of Truth*, claiming that it affirms the close link between *'thought and reality.'* Nevertheless, he hedges his bets because the lack of a context makes interpretation uncertain. He was not the only scholar to find this fragment perplexing.

If we translate ***pleon*** as *'more,'* then line 4 can become *'what preponderates is thought.'* In this interpretation, human cognition depends upon the dominant element in the person's physical make-up. Again some sort of mind-body interaction is implied. Burnet's translation (*EGP* 177) supports this thesis. *'For just as thought stands at any time to the mixture of its erring organs, so does it come to man; for that which thinks is the same, namely the substance of the limbs, in each and every man; for their thought is that of which there is more in them.'* The difficult Parmenidean fragment was imbedded in Theophrastus' *'fragment on Sensation'* and this interpretation agrees with Theophrastus. The character of men's thoughts depends upon the preponderance of the light or dark element. If they are wise the *'hot'* holds sway and they become foolish when the *'cold'* gets the upper hand. Now we appear to be on the right track, since the superiority of the *'hot'* is maintained by the early philosophers—witness the Heraclitean claim that a hot dry *soul* is wisest. The translation by Guthrie (2.67) also supports the 'preponderance' interpretation. *'For as is at any moment the mixture of the straying limbs, so is the mind in men; for what thinks is the same for each and every man, the substance of the limbs. What preponderates is thought.'* However, we are not yet satisfied.

An adequate interpretation is difficult without a consideration of Theophrastus' context. The tangle between Theophrastus and Parmenides means that we must judge the worth of the context before we assess the Parmenidean statement. Here is what Theophrastus has to say (*On Sensation* 1-4, DKA46). *'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****:* [here he quotes fr. 16]. *For he speaks of perceiving and thinking as the same. That is why remembering and forgetting arise from these sources owing to the* ***mixture****; but if they are equal in the mixture, he has not specified further whether there will be thinking or not, and what its state will be. That he also attributes sense-perception to the opposites in its own right is clear in places where he says that a corpse does not perceive* ***light*** *or* ***heat*** *or* ***sound*** *because of its lack of* ***fire****, but that it does perceive* ***cold*** *and* ***silence*** *and the relevant opposites. And in general everything that exists has some cognition. It is in that way, then, that he seems to exclude by his assertion consequences that are uncongenial because of his supposition.'*

The passage gives a decently intelligible theory of sensation and knowledge. By emphasizing the mutability of human perception he is following poetic tradition. However, we are naturally suspicious of the Aristotelian slant. The classification of philosophers according to perception by *'like'* or *'unlike'* is glib and superficial. Such neat little boxes betray a lack of understanding concerning the true doctrines of the early philosophers. Above all, the claim that (qua Parmenides) all perceptions and understanding have *entirely physical causes* (depending only on the condition of the body) is *so* Aristotelian. The strict focus on the physical alone is foreign to the Presocratics and frankly anachronistic. It was the sole authority of Aristotle that confined the early philosophers to this convenient niche. Modern interpretations based upon 'mind-body interaction' have continued to tow the line. Whatever Parmenides intended, it was not confined to the gross body alone and may have had very little to do with the body altogether.

According to Theophrastus, Parmenides believed that *'perceiving and thinking are the same.'* If we associate thinking with *mind* (***nous***) and peceiving with the *soul* (***psyche***), then we find confirmation in the doxographical literature. Aetius (4.5.12) wrote: *'According to Parmenides, Empedocles, and Democritus,* ***mind*** *and* ***soul*** *are the same thing; for them, nothing lacking reason would, strictly, be a living being.'* No living creature is entirely without reason. Diogenes Laertius (9.22) gave: *'He held that* ***soul*** *and* ***mind*** *are one and the same, as Theophrastus mentions in his work on physics, where he is setting forth the tenets of almost all the schools.'* Macrobius commented that the *soul* consists of both **fire** and **earth**. Aetius said that according to Parmenides and Hippasus the *soul* is fiery. Moreover, Aetius stated (4.5.5) that Parmenides believed *'the mind is situated throughout the chest.'* Most of these doctrines are not controversial and were held by everyone. For example, Empedocles (Fr. 110.10) also said that *'everyone has thought and its due portion of insight'* [***nous***]. This would explain why Parmenides attributed some measure of perception even to corpses. Moreover, everyone believed that the *soul* (like all other forms of being) was compounded out of some *'mixture'* of the *opposites* (**fire** and **earth**). In Hesiod, the first woman was created out of mud by the god of **fire**. In the creation myth of Plato's *Protagoras* the gods made man out of a mixture of **earth** and **fire**. In the *Timaeus*, these same two elements have cosmogonical priority. In the pre-Aristotelian literature, practically all references to the primal *opposites* invariably relate back to **fire** and **earth**, the MONAD and DYAD.

What is more curious here is the identity of *mind* (***nous***) and *soul* (***psyche***), since they conventionally refer to distinct entities—respectively the DYAD and TRIAD. Perhaps the original intention was that they form a *unity*, since both partake of the nature of ***harmonia***. We must recall the integration of the Musical perspective. Even the fast distinction between the gross body (associated with the PENTAD) and the *soul* was not emphasized. Both the material and non-material realm exhibit the integrated characteristics of ***harmonia***. Hence they are *'the same.'* On the other hand, the bulk of the doxographical material is heavily indebted to Theophrastus and he may simply have gotten it wrong. At any rate the identification of *mind* and *soul* is one of the most curious features of the ancient commentaries on Parmenides.

The passage by Theophrastus proves to be the usual mix of valuable information and Aristotelian anachronism. Of this we can be sure—Parmenides' views on perception were *not* crude or simplistic. After all, he was also a medical philosopher. If we are to believe the testimony of Aetius (4.9.6), he propounded the theory of *'pores'* that we have already seen in Heraclitus. This is the medical theory that was supposedly discovered by Alcmaeon. *'According to Parmenides, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Epicurus, and Heracleides, the various sensations arise by way of commensurate passages, each appropriate percept fitting in at each point.'* Aetius was more specific at 4.13.9-10: *'Hipparchus says that rays from each of the eyes reach out with their ends, fasten around external bodies as if touching them with hands, and thus render them apprehensible by vision. Some associate this view with Pythagoras also, as founder of the sciences, and besides him with Parmenides, who expounds it in his poems.'* In the next chapter (on Alcmaeon and the medical writers) I shall argue that this doctrine was also widespread among the early philosophers and that it had a Musical base. The philosophies of Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Empedocles were entirely compatible with the Hippocratic corpus. We will not pursue the topic here, only to state that the balance between *opposites* formed the basis for medical theory. Although the focus became more and more exclusively physical over time, the early philosophers by no mean confined themselves to this domaine. Medical philosophy was yet another application of Musical principles.

Considering the somewhat checkered quality of Theophrastus' passage, it is worthwhile to interpret fr. 16 more independently of this context. The poetry contains two key words that give us much help: *mind* (***nous***) and *limbs* (***melea***). Modern interpreters consistently equate *'limbs'* with corporeal *'body'* in an Aristotelian fashion. However, it is useful to see how the term was used by other writers. *'Limbs'* refers poetically to the *elements* or *roots*. After all, *'limbs'* and *'roots'* have close etymologies derived from the tree metaphor for the Elements. Lucretius (5.243) spoke of *'the great limbs of the world.'* Plato (*Philebus* 29a-e) said that the four elements taken together compose the *'body'* (***soma***) of the universe, just as our own bodies are also formed of **earth**, **water**, **air** and **fire**. No doubt Aristotle interpreted Plato's *'body'* in a strict 'scientific' manner, but Plato was more coy about literal definitions. He quite likely used it as a metaphor and derived it from Empedocles, who spoke quite often about the *'limbs'* or *'members'* of the cosmic Sphere. Even in the extant fragments, representing only a fraction of Empedocles' huge output, the term *'limbs'* (meaning Elements) appears several times (eg. at fr. 27a, 30.1, 35.11). We can be reasonably sure that Empedocles derived the metaphor from Parmenides.

It is important to be clear about the difference between *'elements'* in Aristotle and the *'roots'* in the early philosophers. For Aristotle, the tetrad **earth-water-air-fire** are always deemed *'so-called elements'* or simple bodies. For him the true primary elements are the pair of *opposites hot-cold* and *dry-wet*. These 'quasi-atoms' combine to produce the bodies **fire** (*hot-dry*), **air** (*hot-wet*), **water** (*cold-wet*) and **earth** (*cold-dry*). In this tidy scheme we have *two* pairs of combinatory *opposites*: **fire-water** (*hot-dry* versus *cold-wet*) and **air-earth** (*hot wet* versus *cold-dry*). All four exclusive members have equal

status in the 'club.' We can call this scheme 'astrological' because of the use to which it was increasingly put.

Aristotle claimed that Empedocles 'discovered' the tetrad of simple bodies and most modern scholars still believe him. However, Empedocles was not the first to use such terms; for example, Heraclitus also mentioned four elements. Examination of the evidence shows that the early philosophers did not restrict themselves *only* to the specific *opposites hot-cold* and *dry-wet*. They used many more, such as *light-dark* and *rare-dense*. But all of these poetic terms referred to the *same* (and *only*) primal *opposites* **fire-earth** or MONAD-DYAD. Moreover, the number of elements was not necessarily resticted to four or another specific number. For example, the progressive Anaxagoras said there was an *infinite* number. The more radical of the early philosophers wanted to transcend the whole system of discreet elements in favor of a *continuum* between the initial archetypal *opposites* (whatever we call them). Thus the early scheme was more complex and less 'tidy' than the influential 'classical' model of Aristotle. Above all, the early framework had a consistent canonical foundation; hence we call it Musical. The Aristotelian scheme was later (and still is) consistently projected over the early philosophers, distorting their intentions and clouding the waters. Aristotle's *elements* were no longer sonically-based but *spacial*. He claimed that the four 'official' *elements* were 'democratically equal' in Empedocles, but this is just not so. Like every other early philosopher, Empedocles gave priority to **fire** and **earth**. When we examine the early philosophers free from the prejudice of the Aristotelian framework, their paradigm is self-consistent and musically appropriate. Aristotle's 'classical' paradigm is an effort to mutate the Musical paradigm into something more 'scientific.' No doubt his scheme was much influenced by the developments in the medical field.

In the Musical paradigm, the primary *opposites* are derived from the sonic characteristics of the MONAD and DYAD. As we have already seen, ***nous*** was associated with the DYAD. The *'limbs'* then refer appropriately to the *matrix* or *vortex* generated from the central DYAD core. Specifically, the term describes very well the 'materials' of 3-limit or 5-limit harmony and any further extensions of the complex. In other words, the *'limbs'* connote the *medial elements* of harmony—the *'mixture'* derived by mediation. Empedocles and the others painted this essentially sonic framework using colorful poetic terms derived from different studies—astronomy, medicine, and so on—because they believed the principles to be universal. Modern interpreters, however, read the whole thing literally at face value—with no appreciation for musical structures and an inordinate deference to the authority of Aristotle. No wonder they have troubles interpreting Parmenides and Empedocles!

When we apply the Empedoclean sense of *'limbs'* to fr. 16, the meaning becomes transparent and entirely consistent with the Musical paradigm. The *'man'* or person is the microcosmic man (or woman) who mirrors the Musical macrocosm. She births a mixture of the *'wandering limbs'* that tend to spread out into complexity. But this 'diversity' forms a unity through ***nous***, the constant DYAD circle that underpins all structures. The DYAD goddess **earth** generates everything else. She is common to all ***harmoniai***, every *'constitution.'* She is present in the *'full.'* This fragment proves to be yet another

comment on the great goddess as the ***nous*** (like at 4.1 and 6.6) and its personification as *thought* (***noema***) as at 7.2, 8.34 and 8.50.

Censorinus (*De Die Natali* 4.7) tied Empedocles' use of *'limbs'* with that of Parmenides. *'Empedocles affirms something of that sort. First, individual* ***limbs*** *were put forth everywhere from the* ***earth****, as if it were pregnant; then they united, and made up the matter of whole men, which was mingled together with* ***fire*** *and* ***moisture****...the same view is also found in Parmenides of Elea, who did not differ from Empedocles, except on a very few points.'* Although the writer probably had little understanding of the poets' work he nevertheless succeeded in transmitting a fairly accurate picture. The only weak part is the restriction to *'fire and moisture,'* an obvious influence from an Aristotelian conception of '*opposites*.' He should have mentioned instead *all* the elements. Note how closely he associated Empedocles and Parmenides. Many ancient writers stressed their close ties. Diogenes Laertius (8.55) wrote: *'Theophrastus affirms that he* [Empedocles] *was an admirer of Parmenides and imitated him in his verses, for Parmenides too published his treatise on nature in verse.'* Assuming their close association, it is entirely appropriate to use Empedoclean material to clarify matters in Parmenides. In a similar way, Empedocles can be clarified by reference to Parmenides and Heraclitus. We should note, in this respect, that Aristotle's quote of fr. 16 was made in a passage in which he was discussing Empedocles. All of these philosophers inhabited the same musical territory.

FRAGMENT 17: MALE AND FEMALE

Not only was Parmenides a lawgiver and an inspired poet, he also proved to be a medical man. This fragment and the following fragment 18 were preserved in the medical literature. Galen (Commentary on Sixth Book of Hippocrates' *Epidemics* 2.46) quoted this line from Parmenides' embryology.

(17) *'(She placed) young males on the right side (of the womb), young females on the left'*

We should not be too surprised that Parmenides had medical interests. Such topics were of general concern among the early philosophers. Pythagoras, Alcmaeon, and Empedocles were also known as doctors. The Milesians probably also investigated these matters. Moreover, the famous Italian medical school at Croton was not so far away from Parmenides' city of Elea. The practice of healing was not thought incompatible with artistic pursuits. Apparently part of Parmenides' poem was given over to medical issues. However, as we can see from this fragment, a medical topic could at the same time be a matter of cosmogony and even of astronomy-astrology.

The fragment concerns the sex of babies. The theory (widely held) said that males were conceived on the right side of the mother, females on the left. Aetius (5.7.4) gave some more information: *'Anaxagoras and Parmenides say that those (sperms) coming from the right side are discharged into the mother's right side, those from the left into the left. But if the direction of the discharge is changed, females are born.'* Later, at 5.11.2, he said: *'According to Parmenides, when the seed is separated from the right side of the*

mother, (children are born resembling) their fathers, and when from the left side, their mothers.' Censorinus (*De Die Natali* 6.8) confirmed the evidence of Aetius: *'But Parmenides' opinion is that when the right parts have provided the seeds, then the sons resemble the father; when the left, they resemble the mother.'* But the doctrine was not clear-cut and straightforward. Thus Censorinus (*De Die Natali* 5.2): *'The learned authorities are not agreed as to where the seed comes from. Thus Parmenides thought that it originates sometimes from the right hand parts, sometimes from the left.'* Later, at 6.5 he wrote: *'Parmenides held the view that females and males vie with each other, and that according as one or the other is victorious, the character of that one is reproduced.'* Apparently the doctors were trying to adjust the theory in order to account for femininity in men and masculinity in women.

The most elaborate account of the 'left-right' doctrine was given by Lactantius (*De Opificio Dei* 12.12-13). Parmenides is not mentioned by name, but we can assume that it is relevant to him. This passage will also concern fragment 18. The explanation holds our interest because it lays out the presumed natural characteristics of men and women in ancient Greek society. Modern women won't be pleased! *'Natures are also believed to become ill-matched in the following way: when the seed of a male offspring happens to fall on the left side of the uterus, it is supposed that the offspring is male, but because it is conceived on the female side, it possesses some female characteristic beyond what is appropriate for males, such as physical beauty, a very pale colour, lightness of body, delicate limbs, short stature, soft voice, a weak mind, or several of those things. Again, if the seed of the female kind has flowed into the right side, then the offspring is female, but because it is conceived on the male side, it possesses some male characteristic beyond what the plan of its sex permits, such as powerful limbs, immoderate height, dark colour, a hairy face, unbecoming features, a strong voice, a spirited mind, or several of those things.'*

Modern commentary on fr. 17 is strictly limited to physical embryology, even though the *'she'* involved is the great goddess. We see a general drive to downplay or ignore Parmenides' cosmogony. One modern school of thought even contends that he abolished *all* true cosmogony. According to this argument, the *opposites* are strictly dualistic, irreducible and timeless. Everything is 'born' through the mixing of the Light and Dark elements; hence genesis and dissolution are only illusions. In this doctrine, which is surprisingly widespread, later fifth century followers such as Anaxagoras and Empedocles also replaced all cosmogony with the 'mixing' of timeless elements—a theory entirely due to the influence of Parmenides. One can even read that Parmenides *discovered* mixture, though the concept was consistently tied to Anaximander by the doxographers. Such distortions boost Parmenides' status as *the* Presocratic philosopher. An example of this approach can be found in KRS (260). *'What is clear and important in his cosmogony is the general idea that creation is the product not (as the Milesians thought) of separation from an original unity, but of the interaction and harmony of opposite powers. This idea was to be taken up by Empedocles.'* The doctrine is used to separate Parmenides from the Milesians who fostered 'true' genesis. Unfortunately, the *'harmony of opposite powers'* is identical to Heraclitus, but the moderns also want to

isolate these two as well. Serious confusion arises out of the notion that the *opposites* are strictly dualistic in Parmenides' ***doxa***.

The goddess who 'sorts out' males from females is the same goddess of fr. 12 who *'sends females to mingle with males.'* She is responsible both for 'separating out' that leads to *Strife* and the reunions of *Love*. Although the application of the fragment is medical, the underlying paradigm is Musical.

Fragment 17 associates male with 'right' and female with 'left.' We are temped to relate *right-left* and *male-female* with more aspects of the so-called Pythagorean Table: such as MONAD-DYAD, *hot-cold*, *rare-dense*, **fire-earth**. However, such an association is a mistake. As explained earlier, MONAD and its co-relates (*hot*, *rare*, **fire**) are not male but androgynous. The TRIAD and all subsequent odd numbers are male. In short, male and female are not pure *opposites* but rather only 'unlike' each other. They relate as 2:3. Nor can we throw *active-passive* onto the Table. As explained in relation to fr. 12, such simplistic formulas do not do justice to the subtlety of the Musical model. Instead, the DYAD is both active (for the MONAD) and passive (for the TRIAD). The Pythagorean Table proves to be a rather confused affair probably put together after the movement had fragmented.

The relation between the classic *hot-cold* and *male-female* proves to be open ended. A man can have a predominance of either hot *or* cold. In other words, everyone is a unique *'mixture'* that sits between the polar extremes of hot and cold. Everyone also embodies a blend of both male and female characteristics. Unfortunately, the extant evidence of Parmenides' view is meager, but it nevertheless supports this thesis. We do have a testimony from Aristotle (*On Parts of Animals* 2.2, 648a25) that says (rather unusually) that men are generally colder and denser than women. *'For some say that water animals are warmer than land animals, maintaining that their natural heat compensates for the coldness of their habitat. Further, they assert that bloodless animals are warmer than those that have blood, and females warmer than males. Parmenides and some others, for instance, say that women are warmer than men, on account of the menstrual flow which they say is due to their heat and the abundance of their blood, whereas Empedocles maintains the opposite.'* According to this view, women menstruate in order to eject excess heat. (Blood is associated with life and the hot). Another medical text from the fifth century (*De victu* 34.6) takes the more common view that males are generally hotter and drier than females. There the argument is put forward that females are cooler because of the monthly *'purgation of the hot.'* Thus the same phenomenon (the menses) leads to opposite conclusions in Parmenides (according to Aristotle) and the medical text.

The only other extant testimony that is relevant here is by Aetius (5.7.1-2). *'According to Empedocles distinction of sex depends on heat and cold, wherefore he says that when living creatures arose out of the* ***earth****, the first males appeared in the south and east, and the females in the northerly parts. Parmenides says the contrary: those in the north were males (for the male partakes more of density), and those in the south females in accordance with their rarefied texture.'* It pretty much agrees with Aristotle

that males are cooler and denser and that Empedocles disagreed with Parmenides. We simply do not have enough evidence to prove that this viewpoint is truly Parmenidean. Aetius may simply be parroting the evidence of Aristotle who could well have gotten it wrong. Nevertheless, the extant medical texts indicate that the version of Empedocles has the norm: males are generally hotter and denser than females.

The specifics may be in doubt, but the evidence clearly shows that both Parmenides and Empedocles used the Milesian categories of *hot-cold* and *rare-dense* in order to build up a medical model. In many ways, this framework is not so very different from the classical Chinese model based on *yang* and *yin*. The interplay between primal *opposites* determines gender characteristics and disposition to disease.

FRAGMENT 18: DOUBLE SEED

The second medical fragment comes from Caelius Aurelianus (*On Chronic Diseases* 4.9). The translation is by I. E. Drabkin (Chicago, 1950):

(18) *'When man and woman mingle the seeds of love*
that spring from their veins, a formative power
maintaining proper proportions moulds well-formed bodies from this diverse blood.
For if, when the seed is mingled, the forces therein clash
and do not fuse into one, then cruelly
will they plague with double seed the sex of the offspring.'

Most scholars ignore this fragment due to problems of authentification. The text is not extant in Greek. It exists only in a Latin version composed in the fifth century A.D. Admittedly the passage is probably only a paraphrase at best. Nevertheless, it is well worth an investigation. The fragment proves to be a beautiful example of the way that a medical text can be (at the same time) a cosmogonical Musical statement.

The passage presents a discussion of the causes of the 'disease' of homosexuality. The context fragment is relevant here. *'Parmenides in his work* On Nature *indicates that effeminate men or pathics may come into being as a result of a circumstance at conception. Since his account is contained in a Greek poem, I shall also give my version in poetry. For I have done my best to compose Latin verses of the same kind, to avoid the commingling of the two languages.'* [Here he quotes fr. 18]. Thus Caelius is briefly reviving a practice that died out with the early philosophers—composing a medical text in verse. The reference to the *'circumstances at conception'* takes us back to the 'right-left' theory presented in the last section. We have little reason to doubt that the original Greek poetry was by Parmenides, although it may well have been by Empedocles. In fact, the style and particularly the dense concentration of classic Musical imagery remind us of Empedocles. But Empedocles imitated Parmenides' style. Although some doubts must remain, we will assume that the original passage was by Parmenides.

Caelius continues, giving an explanation of the passage. *'Thus Parmenides holds that the seminal fluids are not merely material bodies but possess active principles, and if*

these fluids mingle in such a way as to form a unified force in the body, they will thereby produce a desire appropriate to the sex of the individual. But if, despite the mingling of the seminal matter, the active principles fail to merge, a desire for both forms of love will harass the offspring.' His account fits in quite well with a Musical perspective. The *'seeds'* (equals *roots* or *elements*) are more than material entities. They represent *'active principles'* or active *creative powers* as in fr. 9. When they form a *mixture*, the position (right-left) is a factor, but more important is the overall character of the mixture. If they form a *'unified force'* under the influence of *Love* the progeny will have normal sex drives. However, if the mixture embodies some level of *Strife* so that the active principles do not merge completely, the offspring will be abnormal or 'between.' Underlying the whole theory sit the familiar *forces* of Love and Strife that effect union or separation.

Fragment 18 has wider cosmogonical associations beyond the specific medical issues. The passage is squeezed full of potent Musical imagery. The *'woman'* is the elemental DYAD, the *'man'* the TRIAD (or more properly 3, 5, 7…--the medial elements). They *'mingle the seeds of love,'* or form an elemental *mixture* under the influence of ***Eros***. *'Seed'* constitutes a widespread synonym for *Roots* or *Elements*. The roots *'spring from their veins,'* a universal genetic image for the cosmogonical process out of the 'cosmic waters.' The union of 2 and 3, forming the ratio (***logos***) 2:3 creates a *'formative power'* capable of generating complexity (3-limit harmony). The implication of ***harmonia*** is further emphasized by reference to *'proper proportions'* that *'mould well-formed bodies.'* The second sentence shifts the focus slightly away from thr *Roots* and toward the *Forces*. When the elements form a mixture with excessive Strife, *'the forces therein clash,'* and do not allow full *'fusion.'* The elements *separate off* rather than *unite*. The metaphor has its canonical origins directly in the tuning procedure. If the tuning effort is accurate, more fusion and Love occurs. But if the tuner is 'sloppy,' more Strife and separation is heard. Tuners often describe it as 'roughness in the tone' or 'beating.' The cosmogonical imagery suits the sonic perspective admirably.

In the final line, *'double seed'* is a curious expression denoting desire for the inappropriate sex or both sexes. But it also has wider Musical implications. Empedocles used *'double'* several times (e.g. fr. 17.1 and 17.16): *'I will tell a double tale.'* He goes on to speak of the One becoming the Many and then, in turn, the Many becoming One. The 'double movement' is impelled by Strife and Love. The *double*, of course, also invokes the DYAD goddess. The power spinning around the *double* generates the 'colored' vortex of ***harmonia***. References to the *double* always bring us back to fundamentals of musical architecture.

The fifth century medical literature took over the whole stock of Milesian Musical imagery. Indeed, the medical perspective was almost certainly present right at the beginning of the movement. Medical documents will form a large part of the next essay. As a foretaste, here is a testimony by Aetius (5.30.1) about the Crotoniate medical philosopher Alcmaeon, who was a near contemporary of Heraclitus and Parmenides. His theory that health is a proportionate mixture of *opposites* blends well with the evidence surrounding Parmenides. *'Alcmaeon maintains that the bond of health is the 'equal rights' of the* ***powers****, moist and dry, cold and hot, bitter and sweet, and the rest, while*

the 'monarchy' of one of them is the cause of disease; for the monarchy of either is destructive. Illness comes about directly through ***excess*** *of heat or cold, indirectly through surfeit or deficiency of nourishment; and its centre is either the blood or the marrow or the brain. It sometimes arises in these centres from external causes, moisture of some sort or environment or exhaustion or hardship or similar causes. Health on the other hand is the* ***proportionate*** *admixture of the qualities.'*

The medical world of Parmenides should be compared to that of Alcmaeon. Both of them lived in southern Italy around the same time. The notion that health is due to a ***harmonia*** is often credited to Pythagoras, but behind Pythagoras stood the great Milesians. We find the true origins of this medical philosophy in Ionia and not southern Italy. The confluence of Greek cosmogony, meteorology, and medicine had already established itself in Anaximenes. Moreover, regions further east also possessed long medical traditions with related Musical characteristics. Parmenides' medical fragments position him in the midst of a long medical tradition that was itself in a process of historical development.

FRAGMENT 19: NAMING AND BECOMING

These three potent lines were preserved by Simplicius in his commentary on *De Caelo* (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* 7.558). They came *'after he had related the ordering of perceptible things.'* The sense is clear, as demonstrated by using two different translations, repectively McKirahan and Gallop:

(19) *'In this way, according to opinion, these things have grown and now are*
and afterwards after growing up will come to an end.
And upon them humans have established a name to mark each one.'

'Thus according to belief, these things were born and now are
and hereafter, having grown from this, they will come to an end.
And for each of these did men establish a distinctive name.'

Many modern scholars conjecture that this passage must be the closing lines of the *Way of Seeming*. It may well be the case, but we must remain uncertain. At any rate, the passage presents a wonderful summing up of core characteristics of ***doxa*** as Becoming. As such it is suitable for a closing statement.

Becoming is characterized by both growth and decay. The One becomes Many through the influence of Strife, then the Many become One through Love. The eternal movement is cyclical or circular. Time is the high ruler of 'birth and death.' The passage emphasizes the temporal distinctions of past, present and future. The *'things'* that have grown and changed have the nature of ***harmonia***—they are 'time dependent' entities inhabiting a ***kosmos*** mixed with *both* Love and Strive, simplicity and complexity, consonance and dissonance. Becoming is a function of Time and its measurable periodicities. In so far as the 'surface phenomena' comes and goes, the realm of Becoming is inhabited by *'mortals.'*

This complex web, weave, net, or matrix of possibilities is amenable to *'naming'* or defining—a process closely allied to *'speaking'* or *'pointing out'* or effecting a *judgement*. The tuner who 'sets up' the scale makes a *choice* that establishes a particular ***kosmos***. Later, when the instrument is retuned by an alternative ***logos*** (set of *ratios*), the old scale is replaced, destroyed. The nature of ***harmonia*** is to emerge, mutate, and reunite with its origins. After the measurements had been made and the alternatives became familiar, the canonical architecture became common knowledge. For ***harmonia*** can be *'named'* very precisely using a monochord. Naming is allied with Becoming because alternative ***harmoniai*** are associated with alternative number-sets in the monochord arithmetic. A given number changes its function according to the *'color'* of the overall matrix. The philosopher is universalizing this canonical understanding in an effort to model the world at large. This process of *'naming'* must have a significant place in a paradigm of order that is sonic.

In much of the ancient literature, *'naming'* is tantamount to proclaiming an *existent*. The emphasis upon the memorized recital and sounding of poetry reflected the Musical valuation of 'sacred speech' and the existent as 'event.' Consequently, sacred writings abounded in verbal etymologies and puns. We have already examined the importance of *'naming'* in relation to Heraclitus. (See the sections: *Heraclitus in Plato's Cratylus* and *The Children of Aditi*). Perhaps the Heraclitean fragment most closely related to the Parmenidean fr. 19 is the wonderfully evocative fr. 67: *'God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, satiety and hunger, but changes the way (**fire**), when mingled with perfumes, is **named** according to the scent of each.'* The character of the mixture determines the ***ethos*** of the ***harmonia***. Whatever the mixture, it must lie between primary *opposites* which house it as a *unity of opposites*. The *opposites* are essential for the process of *'naming.'* Parmenides affirmed this elsewhere in the poem when he said (8.53-54): *'for they made up their minds to name two forms / for which it is not right to name one (only).'* Additionally, he wrote that (9.1) *'all things have been named light and night.'* The changing realm of ***doxa*** is housed in the unmoving grip of the first ***logos*** 1:2. Without the foundation of the MONAD and DYAD, the edifice of ***harmonia*** is rootless. The act of *'naming'* uses these principles as its 'mixing bowl.' All mixtures depend upon the primal *opposites* as 'yard-stick.'

Naming is connected to ***harmonia*** in the realm of Becoming in Parmenides' fr. 8.38-41. *'Wherefore it* [the whole] *has been named all names / mortals have established, persuaded that they are true-- / to come to be and to perish, to be and not (to be), / and to change place and alter bright color.'* Becoming is characterized by *'naming'* as well as *'changing place'* (from fret placement on the monochord) and *'altering bright color'* (by establishing a different mode or mood in the harmony). This whole sphere of things is inhabited by *'mortals'* or changing entities. Of course, it is also inhabited by *'immortals,'* the unchanging aspects of music. Naming is indemic to ***harmonia***.

Moreover, the act of *'naming'* is essentially the same as giving a *'sign'* or a *'mark.'* Thus in fr. 10.1 *'you shall learn...all the signs in the **aither**.'* The process assumes responsibility because giving names also denotes assigning powers. Thus fr. 9.1-

2: *'But since all things have been named light and night / and the things which accord with their powers have been assigned to these things and those, all is full of light and obscure night together.'* To give a name is to affirm the ***physis*** of something.

Naming as *speaking* radically affirms *existence* from a sonic perspective. Thus it negates Non-being and supports both Being and Becoming. Parmenides rendered Non-being (8.17) *'unthinkable and nameless.'* The same sentiment is echoed in fr. 2.8 where the path of Non-being is rejected because you cannot *'point it out'* or *'declare'* it or sound it. Naming cannot apply to this realm; rather, it is restricted to Becoming. Perhaps Parmenides' most delicious irony is that Being (as the Whole) is also nameless because it necessitates 'all names at once' or *'traversing every city.'* Yet the *Way of Truth* purports to give (8.2) *'signs exceedingly many'* concerning this paradoxical Being. Those *'names'* prove to be exceedingly difficult to fathom. Perhaps we have here an undercurrent of humor in Parmenides' poem: the obscure 'logical arguments' prove that Being is nameless after all.

CORNFORD'S FRAGMENT: NAMING THE WHOLE

This line was preserved by Plato (*Theaetetus* 180e) and quoted twice by Simplicius (*Phys.* 29.18 and 143.10). Diels and Kranz did not include it in their collection because it was generally believed to be only a misquotation of 8.38. It has been named after Cornford because he was the first to elevate it to independent status ('*A New Fragment of Parmenides*,' Classical Review 49, 1935). Since then a good minority of scholars have defended his judgement. Although we cannot be certain about these things, it *does* appear to be an autonomous passage because Simplicius quoted it twice in the same form without any reference to the *Theaetetus*. We will accept it as genuine.

The meaning and placement of this fragment are entirely controversial. This uncertainty is reflected in the variety of translations. Here is a representative sample:
McKirahan, Mourelatos: *'Such* [or, Alone], *unchanging, is that for which as a whole the name is "to be."*
Woodbury: *'One and unmoved is the name of the all—'being.'*
McDowell: *'Unchanging is by nature such as to be a name for the whole.'*
Waterfield (after Burnet): *'It is necessary that the universe has a title such as 'unchanging.'*

Plato quoted the passage in the context of contrasting Eleatic philosophers who say that *'all is one, and that this oneness is fixed within itself, having no space in which to change or move'* and Heraclitean philosophers who claim that *'nothing is at a standstill.'* In a typically Platonic manoeuver, he will distort both camps into extremist positions so that he can reject both of them and inject his own 'intellectualizing' theory. At 181b he states: *'If we find that neither group has anything reasonable to say, that'll be equivalent to thinking that insignificant people like ourselves have got something to contribute, while we disparage the all-wise sages of ancient times.'* Plato continues by making a rather lame and unfair assessment of Heraclitus. At 184a he professes a respect for Parmenides but declines a discussion of his views. Such a discussion is reserved for the

Sophist. Although we can have little trust in what Plato says about Parmenides, his quote is nevertheless probably genuine.

Like the last fragment, this one also concerns *'naming.'* However, fr. 19 puts *'naming'* in the context of ***doxa*** or Becoming. Here *'naming'* is related to the Whole. Essentially it says that the unchanging Xenophanean Whole is named *'Being.'* Such a revelation comes as no great surprise to us, but modern understanding is hampered by the need to fit the statement into a preconceived orthodoxy.

The modern interpretation of this fragment is inevitably tied in to the treatment of 8.38-39. Presumably they compliment each other. The most commonly seen view is that all names of pluralistic 'seeming' are only illusions or hallucinations as in a dream. They are names devoid of any reality because the objects referred to are entirely unreal. Humans invent many names in the mistaken belief that the world of plurality and change exists. Yet all that exists is the ontological principle: *'it is.'* Allied to this 'metaphysical' doctrine is the notion that all names actually refer only to the one existing 'thing.' But there can be only one correct name for the one existent, namely that *'it is.'* Hence Parmenides' only meaningful statement is the tautology that 'Being is.' All else is false and essentially unknowable, 'mere names' without any content—only meaningless words.

The modern interpretation is fixated on an erroneous and quirky 'either-or' exegesis of fr. 2. They suppose that the only two 'logical' paths of inquiry are Being and Non-being. There is no third path *at all*. And yet they feel obliged to comment on this non-existent third way. Becoming in the 'seeming' world acts as a counterfeit of Being in the 'real' world. Thus **fire**, as a necessary agent of Becoming, is the nearest in the phenomenal world to Being in the real world. Becoming is entirely false, yet, as the word 'seeming' suggests, it acts as a phantom or *imitation* of reality. If there were no semblence at all it could not deceive us. As we will see, this whole wildly improbable theory owes much more to the 'explanation' of Plato than it does to Parmenides. The modern understanding of Parmenides is so off-colored by Plato and Aristotle that the true Parmenides (like the true Heraclitus) is entirely lost. Plato has generated a 'counterfeit Parmenides' that still befuddles our perspective. In the coming section we will begin to sort out Plato's 'contribution' to the debate.

PARMENIDES AND PLATO

Parmenides composed a magnificent poem. Most of it followed the usual pattern of the Presocratic cosmologists—presenting a cosmogony of the world and man, a psychology, a medical philosophy, a meteorology-astronomy and more. Like the productions of his brilliant contemporary Heraclitus and his famed predecessor Anaximenes, Parmenides' work presupposed a common Musical paradigm and affirmed a canonical conception of Becoming. Little of this was original to him, although he doubtless made contributions to the tradition. However, Parmenides also included a small obscure section inspired by his enigmatic teacher Xenophanes. This segment later became renowned as the *Way of Truth*. It may have occupied as much as a quarter of the

poem but it could just as well have been far less. Its contents were deliberately paradoxical, anti-intuitive and downright problematic. Moreover, the thesis was defended using a distinctive and obscure 'quasi-logic' in support of the impossible. Parmenides' motives may have been satirical, since his teacher was famous for such 'tongue in cheek' productions and his pupil Zeno was also 'infected.' But even if we accept a humorous element in the work, it also displayed a serious effort to 'push' the canonical paradigm—to bring out problematical features of the musical model. Specifically, the commonly held 'discreet' digital cenception of the world-harmony was amended to include an analog and atemporal notion of the *Whole* or the 'All-at-once.' This vision of a peculiar 'Being' as the All included characteristics (based on atemporality) that seemed paradoxically to negate some (not all) features of traditional Becoming. Yet these features were invoked in order to affirm the 'special' Being in the face of Non-being (and not Becoming!). Meanwhile, in the rest of the poem Becoming was treated in the normal affirmative way.

It was inevitable that such a complex production would be increasingly misunderstood over time. Zeno's own writing further emphasized paradox and later writers focused even more intently on the barely comprehensible parts of the poem, neglecting the rest. Parmenides' composition thus encouraged the rise of scepticism and the slow corrosion of the Musical paradigm itself. At the end of the fifth century the sceptical Sophists delighted in setting one philosopher against another for the sake of rhetorical argument. Parmenides became a favorite target because his methods of 'twisted logic' formed a perfect vehicle for 'proving' almost anything. In effect, Parmenides had 'created a monster' that hastened the disintegration of the early philosophical movement.

Plato grew up in the new intellectual climate and felt no responsibility in accurately upholding or explaining his predecessors. Their work was only 'grist for the mill' as he proliferted his voluminous literary compositions. A consummate word-spinner, he remade the old philosophers for the sake of good (if sometimes tedious) conversation. His mastery of the Musical symbolic imagery and conceptual framework allowed him to 'play' with the material in complex, subtle and irreverent ways that only his aristocratic audience could intelligently appreciate. Moreover, his intentions were often satirical or 'colored' and polemical. It is not so easy to judge when he is serious or even what his own viewpoint is. The greatness of Plato lies in this very ambiguity, in the profusion of 'seeming' in the work.

Most modern scholars treat him rather one-dimensionally as a 'serious philosopher' of great originality whose 'greater maturity' affected 'progress.' Yet very little in Plato is entirely original. Rather, almost all of his reflections prove to be an intellectualized reworking of older material—a slanted commentary and/or parody of the entire philosophical movement. Nowadays most people stress the degree to which he was influenced by Pythagoreans. No doubt this is true, especially considering what a vague and all-inclusive category 'Pythagorean' was by his own time. But the influence of Heraclitus and Parmenides on Plato was even more acute.

If we consider the 'classic' middle-period Platonic doctrine of Forms, the evidence is clear. The sensory realm of Becoming (***doxa***) is endowed with 'Heraclitean

flux' and uncertainty. It also has characteristics of Parmenides' Non-being. Meanwhile, the intelligible realm of Being embodies atemporality and certainty. The Forms preserve many aspects of conservative digital ***harmonia*** but with temporality (its heart) removed. Forms exist in an 'eternal now' like Parmenides' ***aletheia***. Thus Plato's 'rift' between ***aistheton*** (perceptible) and ***noeton*** (intelligible) experience is essentially based upon the grouping *'Changing-Unchanging'*—just like Parmenides' distinction between ***doxa-aletheia***. The difference between them is this: For Parmenides (like his compatriots), both the perceptible and intelligible realms are integral aspects of the world-harmony. For Plato, an effete and 'ideal' ***harmonia*** is confined *only* to the unchanging intelligible Forms, while a very separate and changing perceptible world is ruled by unmusical 'flux' and accident. This Cratylan flux Plato contrived by twisting Heraclitus or interpreting him in an extremist manner (as in the *Theaetetus*). According to Plato's argument, whatever changes or becomes acquires the status of Non-being or something not much better. Only the static and 'removed' Forms have 'reality,' the perceptible realm merely imitating the ideal in an exemplary or deplorable manner.

What stands out in Plato's doctrine is the extreme *polarization* between the two realms of perception and intellect. True order is confined to only one side of the 'opposition.' Being is opposed to Becoming directly. The situation in Parmenides is not so simplistic. Being is opposed to Non-being, but the relation between Being and Becoming is more complex. Much of the poem affirms the equal status of Becoming. Like Xenophanes and Heraclitus, Parmenides probably recognized the interaction and essential interdependence between Being and Becoming. Only in the *Way of Truth* does Parmenides wilfully reinterpret Being as a 'special condition' with unique properties hard to grasp. A more balanced appraisal of Parmenides would put him closer to the center ground of Heraclitus and Anaximenes, but Plato (like most everyone) fixated only upon the obscure *Way of Truth*. He 'twisted' Parmenides in the same spirit as he 'reformulated' Heraclitus. Due to Plato's authority, both philosophers have been so damaged that the modern treatment of them still shadows Plato (and of course, Aristotle).

Perhaps one of the most common and widespread assessments of Parmenides is this: He posed a strict 'logical' *dichotomy* between Being and Non-being. There is no third way or middle ground. Becoming is just an inadmissible 'mortal confusion' to be strictly dismissed in the rubric. However, it still has *some* slight status as a 'seeming' or counterfeit of the truth. Parmenides did not succeed in establishing any logical relationship between the truth and its 'copy' or between these and Non-being. This problem he left to Plato who made 'progess' by substituting a *trichotomy* for the Eleatic dichotomy. The Platonic triad of Being, Non-being, and Becoming then gives knowledge, ignorance, and belief. Parmenides was 'stuck' in the impassable gulf separating the elusive world of timeless *truth* and the shifting sands of the physical world. Consequently, he allowed only the single assertion of *'what is'* and claimed that *'what is not'* is unthinkable. Plato must be given credit for integrating *'what becomes'* into the Parmenidean framework.

The reader will hopefully recognize how much this orthodox 'understanding' is heavily colored by Plato's counterfeit Parmenides. Moreover, it assumes that the early

philosophers had not yet 'discovered' or understood Becoming—or rather that their understanding was still 'primitive' and lacking the greater 'maturity' of Plato's thought. Like Heraclitus, Parmenides has been put into a Platonic 'straitjacket.' Meanwhile, this 'third ontological category' of Becoming has been stripped of its Musical characteristics and exists (*Republic* 479d) *'wallowing between not-being and pure being.'* Furthermore, Becoming has been entirely *divorced* or disconnected from Being, so that the integration of the canonical cyclicity is broken. As far as the old Musical paradigm is concerned, this is damaged property.

Plato's peculiar distinction between Being and Becoming is summarized quite well in *Timaeus* (27d-28a). *'The first distinction to be made is this: what is it that always is and never becomes; and what becomes everlastingly but never* ***is****? The one comprehensible by intellection with reasoned argument, being always consistent, the other believed by opinion with unreasoning sensation, coming into being and perishing but never truly* ***being****.'* His language could become quite Parmenidean, as in this passage from *Republic* (508d) comparing the relation of the eye to sunlight and the mind to truth. *'When the soul comes to rest on an object illuminated by truth and Being, it understands and knows and appears to have* ***nous****; but when it regards what is mixed with darkness, that is, what comes to be and perishes, it has only opinion and its sight is dimmed: its beliefs shift up and down and it is like something without* ***nous****.'* In this very short segment he has managed to include light and darkness, mixture, ***nous***, opinion and truth, Being, coming-to-be and perishing, soul, and even the pathway 'up and down.' But don't be fooled. In spite of the Eleatic language, this passage is not faithful to Parmenides. Rather, it is a Platonic *counterfeit* of the great poet-philosopher.

Plato professed to be highly respectful of Parmenides. In the *Theaetetus* (183e) he had Socrates say: *'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 that was altogether noble.'* Yet this respect did not prevent him from 'sending up' Parmenides whenever it suited him. Plato also mentioned the meeting between Socrates and Parmenides in the *Parmenides* (127a-c). We have already commented on this passage earlier in the controversy over Parmenides' dates. The meeting was also affirmed in the *Sophist* (217c). Here he had Socrates say: *'Or do you prefer to use the method of asking questions, as Parmenides himself did on one occasion in developing some magnificent arguments in my presence, when I was young and he quite an elderly man?'* In spite of these various admonitions, it is nevertheless quite unlikely that Socrates *ever* historically met Parmenides. Of course, even Socrates himself is a Platonic 'literary device' in the dialogue. Like so much of the treatment of Parmenides, he cannot be trusted as an impartial or truthful witness. Parmenides is only the context for a witty game of rhetorical-dialectical one-up-manship.

The *Sophist* is probably Plato's most Parmenidean dialogue. The main speaker is the 'Eleatic visitor' who is evidently modelled after Parmenides, Xenophanes, or some Eleatic follower of the school. Many Eleatic issues are discussed at length. But this complex late dialogue succeeds in sowing a vast amount of confusion. Moreover, it contains an unusually high concentration of 'comedy.' Plato even has the Eleatic visitor

ironically argue *against* Parmenides. Most famously, he maintains that we must commit 'parricide' and *'kill father Parmenides.'* Thus at 241d the Eleatic visitor says: *'In self-defence we must question the argument of our father Parmenides and force the conclusion that* ***what is not****, in some respect is, and conversely that* ***what is****, in a way is not.'* This dialogue is a major factor in the remaking of Parmenides as a 'logician' whose dichotomy must be amended into a trichotomy. Moreover, Eleatic issues are discussed in such a way that they are either trivialized, parodied, or in various ways distorted. For example, concerning the important topic of *'naming,'* we have such enlightened statements as this (*Sophist* 236e): *'The question of appearing and seeming without being, and of things being spoken yet not being true—all this is still full of perplexity as it has always been in the past. It is terribly difficult to see in what terms you can say or think that falsehoods have a real existence, without being caught in contradiction when you open your mouth.'* Such material proves to be maliciously satirical, although modern interpreters treat is *so* seriously. The *Sophist* desperately needs to be reassessed in order to unravel the imitation Parmenides presented there. Such an undertaking is beyond the scope of this format, although we *can* select out a few moments and comment on Plato's devious methods. Some remarks on the *Sophist* have already been made in the chapter on Xenophanes. (See the sections: *Xenophanes within Plato's Sophist* and the following *Plato on the Whole*). Suffice it to say here that the true Parmenides was as good as buried in the *Sophist*, just as Heraclitus was irrevocably damaged in the *Cratylus* and *Theaetetus*. Similarly, Xenophanes was parodied in the *Sophist* and Anaximenes was destroyed through sheer neglect.

PARMENIDES, ARISTOTLE, AND THE DOXOGRAPHERS

Aristotle's interpretation of Parmenides was influenced by that of Plato, but the situation is complicated by their rivalry. He felt compelled to counter the opinions of Plato and take an individualist stand. Just as the Pythagoreans were demeaned in order to refute Plato, so too the Eleatics were attacked partly because they had a strong formative influence on Plato's thought. Of course, another reason for Aristotle's negative treatment of Parmenides was the inability to fit him comfortably into his neat schema for early Greek philosophy. Like Xenophanes, Parmenides did not suit the label of 'material monist' and Aristotle complained that Eleatics *'make nothing clear.'* His general attitude to Parmenides was one of condescension. Parmenides was just a novice logician whose principles of logic had not yet reached Aristotle's own high level. Eleatics were simply inexperienced and had not sufficiently practiced the techniques of reasoning.

However, Aristotle singled out Parmenides as more intelligent than Melissus or the others. In *Physics* 207a15 he said: *'Parmenides must be thought to have spoken better than Melissus.'* The premises of both are false and their arguments invalid (185a9), *'but Melissus' account is cruder and presents no difficulty.'* Parmenides was somewhat harder to sideline.

Aristotle assumed that Parmenides maintained the strict Platonic dichotomy between the sensible and intelligible worlds and the notion that the sensible world is entirely false. He took Parmenides to mean that only one 'thing' exists, but he also felt

compelled to account for the duality of 'seeming.' Consequently, in *Metaphysics* A5, 986b27, he made his own dubious interpretive contribution. *'But Parmenides seems in places to speak with more insight* [than Melissus]. *For claiming that besides the existent, nothing non-existent exists, he thinks that of necessity one thing exists, viz, the existent and nothing else ... but being forced to follow the observed facts, and supposing the existence of that which is one in definition* [***logos***], *but more then one according to sensation, he now posits two causes and two principles, the* ***hot*** *and the* ***cold****, ie.* ***fire*** *and* ***earth****; and of these he ranges the hot with the existent, and the other with the non-existent.'* This equation of **fire** and **earth** with *'what is'* and *'what is not'* is a peculiar distortion that indicates a lack of understanding on the part of Aristotle. On the other hand, the distortion may well have been deliberate. At any rate it spawned an ongoing school of false interpretation.

Aristotle's second 'contribution' to the false understanding of Parmenides is found in *On Coming-to-be and Passing-Away* (2.9.336a3). *'For since, as they assert, it is the nature of the hot to separate and of the cold to bring together, and of each of the other qualities the one to act and the other to be acted upon, it is out of these and by means of these, so they say, that all the other things come to be and pass away.'* As we have already seen, the attribution of *active-passive* to **fire-earth** is simplistic at best and contradicts the direct evidence in Parmenides' poem that the goddess (**earth**) can also be active. This 'active-passive' doctrine became very widespread in the doxographical literature. For example, Cicero (*Academica* 2.118) gave: *'Parmenides (held that the basic elements are)* ***fire*** *to serve as a motive force, and* ***earth*** *to be formed by it.'* A second example is found in this summary by Hippolytus (*Refutation of All Heresies* 1.11). *'Furthermore Parmenides suggests that the universe is one, eternal, ungenerated, and spherical—nor does even he himself avoid the belief of most people, when he calls* ***fire*** *and* ***earth*** *the first principles of the universe, treating* ***earth*** *as* ***matter****, and* ***fire*** *as* ***cause*** *or agent. He asserted that the cosmos perished, but he did not say in what way. The same thinker said that the universe was eternal, ungenerated, spherical and homogeneous, having no space within itself, but changeless and perfect.'* A third example sits in Alexander of Aphrodisias' Commentary on *Metaphysics* (1.31). Here we have a typical doxographical summary of Parmenides. *'Theophrastus too, in the first book of his work on the natural philosophers, has this to say about Parmenides and his doctrine: 'This man (he is speaking of Xenophanes) was succeeded by Parmenides of Elea, son of Pyres, who travelled both routes. For he proves that the universe is eternal, and also tries to account for the coming-into-being of existent things; he does not hold the same views about both of these, but according to truth he takes the universe to be one, ungenerated, and spherical, whereas according to the opinions of the many, he takes two of the phenomena, with a view to accounting for coming-into-being, namely* ***fire*** *and* ***earth****, and makes these into first principles, the one as* ***matter****, the other as* ***cause*** *or agent.'* The active-passive interpretation has been subsumed into the Aristotelian efficient cause and material cause. This Aristotelian 'slant' later became an unquestioned orthodoxy among doxographers. Indeed, even many modern scholars still hold it.

Aristotle was not above contradicting himself over Parmenides. We have seen above that he equated **fire** with the existent and **earth** with the non-existent. We would

presume that the existent is intelligible and the non-existent sensible. However, in *Metaphysics* A5, 1010a1 he wrote: *'They examined the truth about existents, but they assumed the only existents to be sensible things.'* He was desperate to make Parmenides a materialist in conformity with his 'four causes' framework.

Another passage in which he tried to confine Parmenides to 'sensible objects' is found in *De Caelo* (3.1.298b14). This extract also attempts to dismiss the Eleatics as natural philosophers on the grounds that they discussed 'unchangeable entities.' *'Some of them flatly denied generation and destruction, maintaining that nothing which is either comes into being or perishes; it only seems to us to do so. Such were the followers of Melissus and Parmenides. Of them we must hold that, though some of what they say may be right, yet they do not speak as students of nature, since the existence of certain substances subject neither to generation nor to any other kind of motion is not a matter for natural science but rather for another and higher study. They, however, being unaware of anything beyond the substance of sensible objects, and perceiving for the first time that unchangeable entities (were demanded) if knowledge and wisdom were to be possible, naturally transferred to sensible objects the description of the higher.'* The reader will appreciate how contrived this passage is. It is little more than a veiled attempt to sideline the Eleatics because they do not conveniently fit his definition of what is 'proper' for philosophers. The negative and dismissive attitude of Aristotle was also reported by Sextus Empiricus (*Against the Mathematicians* 10.46). *'The non-existence of motion is affirmed by the followers of Parmenides and Melissus, whom Aristotle has called "stationers" of nature from their stationary state, and "non-nature man," because nature is the source of change, and in saying nothing changes they did away with it.'*

However, not all of the late writers blindly towed Aristotle's line. The Neoplatonist Simplicius was more willing to credit Eleatics as true philosophers. In the commentary on *De Caelo* (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* 7.556) he wrote: *'Is it because both Melissus and Parmenides entitled their books* On Nature*?...and indeed in these books they discussed not only things beyond the realm of nature, but also natural things; and perhaps that is why they were not reluctant to entitle them* On Nature.*'* The doxographers divided philosophy into three subjects: nature (***physis***), ethics, and logic. Aristotle's complaint was that the Eleatics emphasized only logic and neglected ethics and nature. Simplicius was more willing to credit them with commentary on all three fronts.

Aristotle maintained the Platonic line that sense and reason are strictly separated and that we must override the former and follow the logic of the latter. However, he was dubious about the worth of the specific Eleatic arguments and he wanted to give more concessions to the 'facts.' His ambivalence is evident in this passage from *On Coming-to-be and Passing Away* (1.8.325a13). *'As a result, then, of these arguments, passing over and disregarding sense-perception, on the ground that one should follow reason, they assert that the universe is one and immovable; some* [Melissus] *add that it is infinite as well, for a limit would be a limit against the void. Some philosophers* [Eleatics], *then, set forth their views about the truth in this manner and held them for these reasons. Furthermore, these opinions seem to follow in the light of the arguments, but to hold them in the light of the facts seems almost madness.'* Aristotle cautioned on the side of

common sense and maintained that the Eleatics depended too much upon logic alone. Thus Philoponus (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* 14.2.157-8) wrote: *'(Aristotle) reproaches the followers of Parmenides, because they believed that one should pay no attention at all to the manifest nature of the facts, but only to the implications of arguments.'* Thus Aristotle entrenched even more the Platonic notion that Parmenides is only a logician.

Like Plato, Aristotle's commentaries on Parmenides stem from misinterpretations of the *Way of Truth*. The rest of the poem is largely ignored. One doctrine that has since become standard orthodoxy is that Parmenides did away with all Becoming entirely. In *Physics* (191a27) he wrote: *'They say that no existing thing either comes into being or perishes because what comes into being must originate either from what exists or from what does not, and both are impossible: what is does not become (for it already is), and nothing could come to be from what is not.'* Of course, he is here using the dubious logic found in the Eleatics themselves. Parmenides' use of such 'cryto-logic' may have been satirical, but Aristotle is always serious. To his credit, Aristotle usually avoids this sort of pseudo-logic and opts for common sense. But his discussions often indicate that he had little sympathy for the old Musical paradigm and hence he was generally lost in the world of early philosophy. For example, here is a criticism of Plato from *Metaphysics* (1001a29): *'But if there is to be an absolute Being and an absolute Unity, it is extremely difficult to see how there will be anything else besides; how, I mean, existing things can be more than one. What is other than* ***what is*** *does not exist, so that the argument of Parmenides will necessarily apply, that everything that exists is one, namely "what is."* Evidently he no longer understands the musical relation between the One and the Many. His notion of unity and plurality is divorced from the musical context. Thus he reveals himself as a truly 'modern' philosopher.

Not all of the late writers followed every word of Aristotle, but usually some mixture of both Aristotle and Plato. Common to both is Parmenides' supposedly strict separation between the sensible and intelligible worlds. For example, here are two summaries of Parmenides given by Plutarch. The first comes from the *Miscellanies* (5). *'Parmenides of Elea, friend of Xenophanes, both accepted his views and at the same time adopted the contrary position. For he declares the universe to be eternal and changeless according to the truth of things: for it is* [fr. 8.4] *"alone, only-begotten, steadfast, and ungenerated." But he declares that coming-into-being belongs to appearances based upon a false notion. Moreover, he expels the senses from the realm of truth. He says that if anything exists apart from what-is, then that thing is not a being; but what-is-not does not exist in the universe. Thus he leaves only what-is, ungenerated; and he says that the* ***earth*** *came into being from the downflow of the dense.'* Note the Anaximenean touch at the end. The passage misrepresents Xenophanes, who also held 'both sides' in the same way that Parmenides did.

The second example comes from *Reply to Colotes* (1114d). *'Parmenides, however, abolishes neither the one world nor the other (neither that of intelligible nor that of sensible things). He gives each its due and puts what belongs to the world of the intellect under the head of 'one' and 'being,' calling it 'being' because it is eternal and imperishable, and 'one' because it is uniform with itself and admits of no variation, while*

he puts what belongs to the world of sense under the head of disordered motion. Of these we may further observe the criteria [fr. 1.29] *"Both the steadfast heart of persuasive truth" which deals with what is intelligible and for ever unalterably the same, and* [fr. 1.30] *"the beliefs of mortals, in which there is no true trust" because they consort with objects admitting all manner of changes, accidents, and irregularities.'* This second testimony is quite in line with Neoplatonism. Although Parmenides *did* probably make a distinction between the senses and reason, it has been blown out of all proportion by Plato and his followers. The impression left by these late writers is that Parmenides was entirely remade in the image of Plato and Aristotle. Some of the writers even had problems distinguishing between Plato and Aristotle! In this example from Ammonius (commentary on *De interpretatione, Comm. Arist. Gr.* 4.5.133) we get a kind of vague 'mash' that has little to do with the historical Parmenides. *'For first, as the* Timaeus *taught us, and as Aristotle himself declares in his theology, and before them Parmenides (not only the Platonic speaker, but also the poet in his own verses), with the gods nothing is either past or future, assuming that each of these is non-existent, the former as existing no longer, the latter not yet, and the former as having changed, the latter as being naturally liable to change; but it is impossible to apply such concepts to things that truly exist, and do not admit of change even in thought.'* Parmenides becomes the spokesman for anything that does not change.

SIMPLICIUS ON THE PERIPATETICS

Aristotle may have treated Parmenides in some depth. According to Philoponus (sixth century A.D.) in his commentary on *Physics* (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* 16.65) *'they say that a separate book has been written by him* [Aristotle] *dealing with the doctrine of Parmenides.'* But the very late Philoponus has little credibility. If such a book actually was written it has been entirely lost. We possess only the scattered references found mostly in the *Metaphysics* and the *Physics*. Here the Eleatics are treated quite unfairly, misrepresented and summarily dismissed. The commentary proves to be rather superficial and limited in scope. Clearly, such complex philosophers as Parmenides (like Heraclitus and Anaximander) were beyond his league. Either he mishandled them deliberately or else he just did not comprehend them. Either way, the intellectual environment of Aristotle and his followers was quite different from that of Parmenides and Heraclitus.

We get a glimpse of the level of the discussion in a passage from Simplicius' commentary on the *Physics* (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* 9.115-16). He relates the views of Theophrastus (founder of the Peripatetic School) and Eudemus, both of them prominent pupils of Aristotle. The material was filtered through Alexander (early third century A.D.) but probably still has some value. This rather long passage illustrates the tenor of discourse on Parmenides among the followers of Aristotle.

'According to Alexander's account, Theophrastus in the first book of his enquiry on natural science [ie. the Opinions of the Natural Philosophers] *expresses Parmenides' argument as follows: 'Anything beyond* ***what-is*** *is* ***what-is-not****;* ***what-is-not*** *is nothing; therefore* ***what-is*** *is one;' but Eudemus puts it thus: 'Anything beyond* ***what-is*** *is* ***what-is-not****; furthermore,* ***what-is*** *is spoken of univocally; therefore* ***what-is*** *is one.' Whether*

Eudemus has written this so clearly elsewhere I cannot say; but in his Physics *he writes the following about Parmenides, from which the aforesaid can perhaps be inferred: 'Parmenides does not seem to prove that* ***what-is*** *is one, not even were one to grant him that* ***what-is*** *is spoken of univocally, except what is predicated of each thing in the category of substance, as 'man' is of men. When definitions of particular things are being given, the definition of* ***what-is*** *will inhere in everything, one and the same, just as that of living thing inheres in living things. But just as, if all existing things were beautiful, and one could find nothing that was not beautiful, then indeed all things will be beautiful, but nevertheless what is beautiful will not be one thing but many (for color will be beautiful, and so will a way of life, and so will anything at all)—so too all things will indeed be 'beings,' but not one nor the same thing; for* ***water*** *will be one thing, but* ***fire*** *another. One should not then be surprised at Parmenides for following arguments unworthy of credence, and for being taken in by such things, which had not at that time been clarified (for no one then talked of multiple meaning—Plato was the first to introduce double meaning—not of* per se *and* per accidens*); and he seems to have been misled by those things. But they, and syllogistic reasoning, were brought to light as a result of arguments and counter-arguments; for they would not be agreed upon, if they did not seem necessary. But the earlier thinkers used to declare their views without proper demonstration.'*

Parmenides is imagined to be a rather inexperienced *logician* who had not yet grasped the 'advanced' Aristotelian tools of the categorical syllogism. The Greek ***Logike*** refers to that which belongs to intelligent speech or to a well-functioning reason—ordered, systematic, intelligible, consistent, certain. The term is derived from ***logos***, a word with wide-ranging meanings and associations. Aristotle applied his own sense of ***logos*** and ***logike*** to Parmenides so that he could demonstrate that his own standards had progressed. However, this intellectualizing only covers over the fact that Parmenides had an entirely *different* conception of ***logos***—a conception in which the old musical associations still played a prominent role. For ***logos*** does not only mean *'reasonable account'* or *'meaning,'* it also means *'ratio and proportion'* or *'relation.'* Aristotle emphasized abstract rules and procedures by which terms related as subject and predicate lead to necessary conclusions. But in Greek religion ***logos*** referred to the divine word of a god providing inspiration and wisdom. A prophet (***prophetes***) embodied *sacred speech* (***logos***) and communicated it through poetry or song or healing. Parmenides' sense of ***logos*** and ***logike*** came from an older and more Musical tradition that was being undermined and superceded. Aristotle complained that Parmenides used poor logic, but in actuality it was not logic at all in Aristotle's sense. The poem of Parmenides is more an ecstatic revelation than a logical treatise. The arguments in the *Way of Truth* are deliberate instances of 'quasi-logic' used to intensify irony and paradox. In no way do they constitute a straightforward 'rational account.'

In his *Metaphysics* (986b18) Aristotle said that *'Parmenides seems to fasten on what is one in definition.'* In other words, *'what is'* no longer refers to the analog All as an integrative totality. Rather, it refers to a *category* of definition shared by everything that exists. 'Being' has become something quite abstract and entirely removed from the early Musical context. Here we find the main authority for the modern orthodox

treatment of Parmenides as 'ontologist.' Having established that this is the true or even univocal (only) meaning of 'Being,' Aristotle needs only to apply his syllogistic methods to the material in order to discredit Parmenides.

Exactly the same sort of approach is used here by Theophrastus and Eudemus. In the argument of Theophrastus, there is no valid syllogistic reason for concluding that *'**what-is** is one'* from *'**what-is-not** is nothing.'* Rather, all we can say is that *'what-is'* is *something*—singular or plural. The following argument by Eudemus, further stipulating that *'what-is'* is univocal (or has but one sense or meaning), is just a variation of the same logic. In both cases the main import appears to be a demonstration that Parmenides was a failed logician. Yes, the mysterious logic in the poem certainly falls by syllogistic standards, but this fact is entirely beside the point. Parmenides was quite *deliberate* in using an ironic 'logic' in his ***aletheia*** to express the Musically transcendent. Elsewhere his account could be relatively 'common sense,' at least to the level of Empedocles or Anaximenes. The *Way of Truth*, being only a segment of the poem, may have expressed mainly an outburst of inspired 'madness' induced by his Muse. But the Peripatetics had little appreciation for the poet's mind-set. They homed in on a singular corner of Parmenides' world, expanding and twisting its significance. They refashioned the philosopher as an adolescent logician.

The passage then proceeds to expand on this Aristotelian conclusion by comparing the category of *Being* to the category of *Substance* (*as 'man' is of men*). Application of such categories does not necessarily confer singularity. Thus *'what-is'* is not needfully 'one thing.' All the many things that exist share in this same trait of existence. *'The definition of **what-is** will inhere in everything'* but this does not mean that **water** will be **fire** (using the classic Aristotelian *opposites*). Now this may be perfectly fine as 'common sense,' but what does it have to do with Parmenides? The Parmenidean Being has been remade and locked into Aristotle's categories, a prison from which escape has proved to be quite difficult.

The Peripatetic passage continues with the demeaning statement that Parmenides was fooled by these issues because they had not yet been *'clarified'* by Plato and Aristotle. Moreover, multiple meaning was unknown before Plato's work and the early philosophers confused what was *per se* (intrinsic, by itself) and *per accidens* (contingent on something else). They had not yet thought rationally over the definitions and procedures of proper argument. Hence their logical arguments are *'unworthy of credence.'* They *'declared their views without proper demonstration.'* Thus their work can be dismissed as but a feeble preliminary effort to gain the relevant tools (***to organon***) available to Aristotle.

In some respects the Peripatetics were right. The ancients were *not* confined to *'proper demonstration.'* The poem of Parmenides is much more a religious revelation or ecstatic poetic invocation expounded *in the face of reason* rather than some early 'primitive' treatise on logic. The use of 'strange logic' supports this intention. The Athenocentric writers of the fourth century mis-read and (probably intentionally) abused Parmenides and his compatriots. This rejection likely formed an aspect of pervasive

scepticism and the wider dismissal of Orphic religiosity in the fourth century. Pythagoras and the other philosophers were reinterpreted playing down the religious elements in their doctrines. Such religious movements as Orphism and kindred groups were decidedly out of favour among the intellectuals. Yet we must admit that the 'song-paths' of the early philosophers cannot be meaningfully separated from these very religious concerns.

THE ALLEGORY OF SEXTUS

The writings of the early philosophers were inherently religious, magical, medical, meteorological, musical, and biological. But Plato and especially Aristotle restricted the scope of their work and interpreted them largely as 'secular' developing intellectuals. Several hundred years later during the Hellenistic time religion-magic made a healthy ressurgence so that again it became fashionable to interpret the early philosophers as religious figures. Pythagoras (among Neoplatonists), Heraclitus (among Stoics) and Empedocles (among alchemists) were again 'rehabilitated' as spiritual guides. However, Parmenides did not fare as well as these others. Perhaps this is due to the sheer difficulty and inaccessibility of his writing and the notoriety of the *Way of Truth*. For whatever reason, Parmenides continued to be regarded primarily as an obscure logician. It must be said, however, that the Musical religiosity that resurfaced in Alexandria and reached a crecendo in the Hermetic writings preserved all of these philosophers as 'diluted' versions overlaid by much that is 'unmusical.' Parmenides was not alone in being represented by an *erratum* of himself.

We do have an example of Parmenides duly interpreted in an allegorical, more religious manner in a testimonial from Sextus Empiricus (*Against the Mathematicians* 7.111-14). Sextus was a third century (?) A.D. Greek physician and sceptical philosopher, but the coming passage would be just as much at home among Plato's many followers. His Books 7 and 8 were called *Against the Logicians* and Books 9 and 10 *Against the Physicists*. As we can imagine, he was not entirely sympathetic towards early philosophy! Yet in this appealing testimonial that preserved for us the *Prologue* intact, we glimpse the type of allegorical methods that would not be out of place in a Hermetic milieu. The passage is divided into four segments for commentary.

'But his [Xenophanes'] *friend Parmenides rejected the doxastic reason—I mean that which has weak conceptions—and assumed as criterion the epistemic, that is, the infallible reason, even abandoning trust in the senses. Thus in the opening of his work* On Nature *he writes in this fashion:'* [here Sextus quotes the *Prologue*, lines 1.1-30, followed immediately by lines 7.2-7 and lines 8.1-2].

We sit now in the post-Platonic world where the *doxastic* senses stand irrevocably opposed to the *epistemic* reason. Sextus assumed this framework without question. No one has ever given a satisfactory explanation why he tagged most of fr. 7 and the beginning of fr. 8 onto the *Prologue*, but such 'cut and paste' jobs were common in the late writers. These methods were employed to make epitomes and short summaries of the philosophers. Mostly we are grateful that he quoted practically the entire *Prologue*. He

must have been quite taken by it. Without this single source the wonderful *Prologue* would have been lost to us. The text continues by commencing the allegory proper.

*'For in these verses Parmenides means that the **mares** which carry him along are the irrational impulses and appetites of the **soul**, and that "the much-speaking **route** of the goddess" they travel is that of **inquiry** according to philosophical **reason**; this reason, like a divine guide, points the way to the **knowledge** of all things.'*

His commentary uses the worlds of *sense* and *reason* as the scaffolding on which to hang the allegorical imagery. ***Doxa*** and ***Logos*** become the 'substitute' *opposites* in the Hellenistic framework. The imagery of the poem is ranged under the two headings—irrational and rational, belief and knowledge, uncertainty and certainty. The psychology is familiar: *soul* is 'outward oriented' and 'steers' the *body*; hence it is grouped with ***Doxa***. Meanwhile *Reason* (***Logos***) was often related very closely to *Mind* (***Nous***) in the harmonious realm of Neoplatonic forms. The goddess represents ***Nous***, Justice, Necessity, all of them manifestations of the goddess (DYAD) principle. But Sextus probably had only a 'fuzzy' notion of the DYAD itself. For him the goddess is the *'divine guide,'* taking the role of Hermes in conducting the *soul* toward divine knowledge (***gnosis***). The pathway leads 'up and down' and eventually to a liberating realization. The *'much-speaking route of the goddess'* represents the path to 'certain' knowledge of a magical-spiritual import. In the typical Neoplatonic, Stoic, Orphic and Hermetic scenario, ***Nous*** imparts the initiation to the *soul*, then the *soul* initiates the body or *Nature* (2,3,5). The *soul* is being 'propelled' through the changing tides of ***Doxa*** by the mares that pull the *chariot* (representing the *soul* itself). Often this metaphor (widely found in both western and eastern religious philosophy) includes three horses for the three 'parts' of the Platonic *soul*: rational, spirited and desirous (2,3,5). In the passage, the latter two of them are spelled out as *'impulse and appetite'* but the first (thought) is therefore implied. This 'chariot' metaphor has also been long used with four horses (or five), representing the transmutating Elements. The import is the same: the *soul* has 'fallen' and must complete a cycle of expiations, a journey, before it is ready to gain reunion with the Supreme One.

If we disregard the specifically Platonic elements in the allegory, Sextus has nevertheless still given us (so far) an interpretation that is not so out of tune with the intent of Parmenides. The 'pathway up and down' is directed to some supremely valued *divine knowledge* beyond mere *human understanding*. The same orientation was also found quite strongly in Heraclitus, Xenophanes and Anaximenes. Some profound secret will be revealed that confers immortality. Early philosophy was not intellectual in an 'objective' removed cerebral sense. Rather, it was quite practical and directed to concrete results (some transformation of consciousness). It was thus more akin to sympathetic magic, which had always intertwined itself with religion. In Hellenistic times it also lived on in experimental alchemy. If we now associate this whole magico-religious mind-set with the Hermetists, it was also true of the early philosophers. This religious allegory in Sextus is *not* out of place when approaching philosophers like Parmenides and Empedocles. Their poetry is surely offered as a divine oracular utterance that imparts real grace. Empedocles wrote (fr. 110.1-4): *'If you fix them in your strong **intelligence** / and gaze upon them propitiously with pure attention, / these things will all be very much*

present to you all your life long / and from them you will obtain many others.' The teaching must be 'grown' within the self almost like a foetus.

Sextus has recognized that Parmenides' *Prologue* concerns the movements of the *soul* and not just some abstract logic of ontology. The words of Empedocles (like Parmenides, Heraclitus) are meant to act as a 'yeast,' raising the bread dough and effecting an eventual transformation of the *soul*. They induce spiritual transcendence or liberation. The Hermetists and Neoplatonists sometimes described it as a 'rebirth.' For example, in the *Hermetic Definitions* (6.2-3) we read: *'Just as the **body**, once it has gained perfection in the womb goes out, likewise the **soul**, once it has gained perfection, does out of the body...the perfection of soul is the knowledge of **what is**.'* Although the specifics may differ, similar goals animated early Greek philosophy.

*'And the **maidens** that lead him on are the senses; of these, he alludes to auditory faculties in a riddling manner by saying "it was urged on by two rounded wheels," that is with the **circles** of the ears, by means of which they receive **sound**; and visual faculties he calls "maidens, Daughters of the Sun, leaving the House of Night" and "hastening into the **light**," because it is impossible to make use of them without light.'*

At this point the allegory becomes somewhat contrived or artificial. Sextus insists that *everything* in the *Prologue* must refer either to the senses or reason. He comments only on what can be made to fit the scheme. In spite of these shortcomings, the passage still holds our attention. The *'two rounded wheels'* representing the circles of the ears remind us again of the *'fiery wheels'* in Parmenides' astronomy. The *'Daughters of the Sun'* represent the sense of sight because we need light in order to see at all. Such comparisons may have little to do with Parmenides other than to use Parmenidean terminology like *'wheels'* and *'light.'* But they also preserve a salient aspect of early philosophy—the emphasis upon the senses of sight and hearing over the other senses, which are generally ignored. Only these two senses (especially hearing) have any real bearing on canonical issues, as we will see in the next section. Consequently, these senses tend to dominate the field. In some traditions of ancient philosophy (in India) the five Senses are co-related with the five Elements, but the relation is not so direct in the Greek sphere. Nevertheless, the Senses and the Elements both inhabit the changing realm of ***Doxa*** in the Hellenistic world of Sextus and his contemporaries.

Sextus recognized that Parmenides writes in *'a riddling manner'* like Heraclitus and Empedocles. The allegory represents his own attempt to solve the riddles posed by Parmenides' enigmatic poem. Naturally his solution reflects the cultural values of his own time. We should not fault him for at least making an effort. Yet this is exactly what is done by most modern scholars, who generally ridicule or ignore the comments of Sextus as entirely irrelevant to Parmenides. Many modern commentators are somewhat embarrassed or even indignant over Sextus' allegory. They prefer to diminish the religious dimensions in Parmenides' work and represent him as a pioneer logician and initiator of complex abstract metaphysics. His religious side is only a 'residue' of irrationality in an account of ground breaking rationality. Inevitably, the modern view of Parmenides is largely an extension of his treatment among Aristotle's 'scientific'

followers. At least Sextus acknowledged that the *Prologue* is relevant to a tradition of religious philosophy. Indeed, the intent of the poem may well have been to stimulate the allegorical imagination itself, leading the reader (hearer) to a directed realization.

'And the approach to "much-avenging Justice" who also holds "the keys of requital" is to ***intelligence*** *which holds a reliable apprehension of things. And she, after welcoming him, promises to teach him two things: "both the steadfast heart of persuasive* ***truth****," which is the immovable foundation of knowledge, and secondly "the* ***beliefs*** *of mortals in which there is not true credence," that is to say, everything which lies in the realm of belief, because all such things are uncertain.'*

Sextus scored another direct hit in recognizing that the goddess should be compared with *intelligence* (***nous***), the companion of *reason* (***logos***) in the 'spiritual sky.' These two terms more than any others characterize the Hellenistic intelligible realm. Sometimes ***Nous*** is conceived as a special aspect of *soul*, but more often it is a separate faculty peculiar to humans. It is to be carefully nurtured through spiritual practices and confers powers not even the gods possess. Perhaps the heart of the Hermetic teaching is that the ***Nous*** is identical to the Supreme or cosmic *One*. In this magnificent religious perspective Hermetism echoes the *Upanishadic* doctrine that the ***Atman*** is ***Brahman***. How much of this was already implicit in Parmenides is difficult to say, but ***nous*** as the goddess had a very prominent place in the poem. Its significance was made even more explicit in Anaxagoras. Sextus was certainly correct in pairing the goddess and ***nous*** for Parmenides.

Inevitably Sextus equated Parmenides' ***aletheia-doxa*** with the Platonic 'opposites' *reason-perception*. How could it be otherwise? For people had been doing it for several hundred years. Plato wrote so much material that he proved to be a major influence over the long term. His understanding of ***aletheia-doxa*** obscured Parmenides' vision and essentially replaced it with an *opposition* between two tenuously connected worlds. In Parmenides himself (like Empedocles), the relation between ***aletheia*** and ***doxa*** is not so simple—we can better describe it as a *difference* rather than an *opposition*. Yet the Platonic version is so 'inviting,' it even seems to be well supported in the poem. If we take fr. 1.28-30 together with fr. 2, the offending pretext is formed. Apparently only two possibilities are allowed: Being and Non-being, and the second of these is false. The Platonic substitution of Non-being by Becoming is a convenient move, but Parmenides *affirmed* Becoming elsewhere. Plato rather 'stripped' Becoming and placed it in opposition with Being (his forms). The Platonic understanding then slowly smothered the Parmenidean Musical utterance. So were the Eleatics 'platonized.' The guilty framework is elegantly summarized by Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *De Caelo* (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* 8.557). *'Those men* [Eleatics] *posited two levels: that of what truly is, the intelligible; and that of what comes-to-be, the sensible, which they thought one should not speak of as 'being' itself, but as 'apparent being.' Hence they say that truth concerns what-is, whereas opinion concerns what comes-to-be. Parmenides at any rate says:* [here he quotes 1.28-32]. We see the establishment of a frame of *opposites*, but it proves to be only a clever imitation or 'retooling' of the true Parmenidean Musical *opposites*. Thus Plato (probably intentionally) mishandled the *opposites* of early philosophy and

refashioned them into a personal counterfeit. It is largely an intellectual formula in Plato, but the original Parmenidean conception is at once more complex, pro-active, and canonical.

HEARING AND LOGOS

The dichotomous Platonic framework of *sensation* and *reason* is pervasive in Hellenistic religious philosophy. Variants of it permeate Neoplatonism, Orphism, Stoicism, mystical schools of Judaism, Gnosticism and Hermetism. A particularly concentrated and elegant example is found at the beginning of the *Hermetic Definitions* (1.1); *'God: an intelligible world; world: a sensible God.'* Most modern scholars are willing to give Parmenides some small credit for its origin, but still largely in the shadow of the dominant Plato. We have taken pains in this essay to insist that Plato's famous interpretation must be carefully removed before we can hope to understand Parmenides. As we said, the relation between ***doxa*** and ***aletheia*** may well be the commanding riddle of the entire poem. While not a simple opposition, it nevertheless *does* tend to orient itself around perception and reason in some way. Meanwhile, the terms refer to a distinction between *human* and *divine* knowledge. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the conception has a strong base in a directly canonical milieu. That is to say, working with a monochord forces the evaluation of sensation (hearing) and reason (***logos***, ratio) to become a prominent issue.

The two greatest writers on specifically canonical issues in the Greek milieu were Aristoxenus and Ptolemy. We will use the beginning section of Ptolemy's *Harmonics* as our representative example here. He lived in mid-second century Alexandria and thus can be expected to hold the typical Hellenistic philosophical assumptions of his time. No matter, when discussing monochord practice the same problems crop up irrespective of when or where they are written. In other words, these issues are still just as relevant to the modern tuner as they were to Ptolemy or Anaximander. The very experiential context of canonical work generates a complex 'competition and cooperation' between hearing and calculation (ratio measurement). This issue is quite relevant to our quest for a Musical understanding of *sensation* and *reason*. Such an understanding should throw light on the attitudes of early philosophy, even if they do not definitively solve all aspects of the paradoxical relation between the Parmenidean ***doxa*** and ***aletheia***.

Our text is the introductory section of Book 1, called *On the Criteria in Harmonics*. This place in the text (happily for us) discusses fundamental issues but avoids the nuts-and-bolts, the numbers and terminological complexities of the subject. Rather, he defines some basic terms and lays out the experience that everyone encounters when using a monochord.

(3.1) *'Harmonics is a perceptive function of the differences in sounds between high and low, and sound is a condition of beaten air—the first and most basic element of what is heard. The criteria in harmonics are hearing and reason, but not in the same way: hearing is the criterion for matter and condition, while reason is the criterion for form and cause. This is because, generally speaking, discovering what is approximate*

and accepting what is exact are characteristic of perception, while accepting what is approximate and discovering what is exact are characteristic of reason.'

Harmonics (***harmonike***, ***harmonia***) is here defined in a manner that emphasizes practical matters, but Ptolemy and other writers (such as Aristoxenus, Cleonides) rightly maintained that it is both a science and an art, having both theoretical and practical aspects. It requires the acquisition of knowledge (concerning ratios, arithmetic) that leads to actual usage (application on an instrument for demonstration). When concerned with practical tuning matters, Ptolemy used the term ***mousike***. When discussing the wider, all-embracing science he used the term ***melos*** (literally 'music'), the root of our word 'melody.' In his practical definition *'the difference in sounds* [***phone***] *between high and low'* refers to musical intervals. The ability to hear and judge such differences is a perceptive *function* (***dynamis***), a term also translated *'power'* or *'faculty'* and used by Parmenides in fr. 9. Other writers also referred to it as ***akoustika dynamis*** (*auditory function*). Hearing or *'of what is heard'* is ***akouston***, the origin of our term 'acoustics.'

Approaching the central issue, *'the criteria in harmonics are hearing* [***akouston***] *and reason* [***logos***, ratio].' Monochord work combines 'quality' (hearing, judging) and 'quantity' (ratios, measurement) in ways that are interdependent. Important musical intervals (qualities) are defined by ratios (quantities) and measured out on the instrument. From the verb *'to measure'* (***kanonizein***) the Greeks derived their name for the monochord (***kanon***), or, perhaps it was the other way around. Ptolemy continues by expanding on the differences between sense and reason. Here his exposition is not so transparent, as he is sacrificing clarity for succinctness. Moreover, he uses terminology that betrays his Hellenistic background. *'Matter and form'* are terms typically associated with sensation and reason. They were often (for example) erroneously applied to the Pythagorean DYAD and MONAD. In this context, hearing is the criterion used for judging harmonic *'matter and condition'* on the instrument itself. It refers to the practical concerns of actual implimentation. Reason is the criterion for harmonic *'form and cause'* because the measurement of norms (ratios) constitutes the heart of the theoretical work. Ptolemy, with a typically Hellenistic attitude, contends that reason surpasses the senses in value, although he also knows that they cannot be entirely separated. He will argue that over-dependence on hearing without reason leads only to *'approximations,'* but the use of ratio gives what is *'exact.'* In the next passage he explains it more.

(3.8) *'Since matter is determined and limited only by form, and since conditions are determined and limited only by the causes of motion, some of which belong to perception and some to reason, it will follow in all likelihood that the observations of perception will be determined and limited by those of reason, first suggesting to them the differences picked out roughly, insofar as they are known through perception, and then being processed by the latter into more accurate and confirmed differences in sound.'*

Ptolemy is discussing something that every tuner experiences. The tuner can approximate (say) a musical fifth 'by ear,' but the measurement of a 2:3 with a monochord procedure and/or the use of string harmonics 'clinches' the interval and gives us a firm reference for perception. The more we practice tuning the better our 'ear'

becomes (through memory), but the use of measurement never ceases being useful. Simple powerful ratios like 1:2 (octave) become 'locked in' through practice so that the 'ear' can handle them quite well. However, more complex intervals like 15:16 (diatonic semitone) remain extremely difficult to handle by hearing alone. Such harmonic complexities *need* measurement. The use of ratio acts as an 'anchor' for the variability of perception. This is why tuners tend first to make a 'rough' estimate by hearing, then to fine-tune it using measurement. This experience forms the basis for the superiority of reason over perception. When we approach harmonic complexity, ratio becomes indispensible if we value accuracy.

(3.14) *'This is so since reason happens to be both simple and unmixed, wherefore also complete, fixed, and ever constant in relation to the same things. Perception, on the other hand, is of constantly mixed and fluctuating matter, so that on account of its instability neither the perception of all men nor that of the same men always observes the same thing in what has remained the same. Perception needs as its crutch, as it were, the educational assistance of reason.'*

Ptolemy writes about the practical science/art of musical tuning, but he must use language that we associate with philosophy. For example, *'perception is determined and limited by reason'* reminds us of the early Greek ***peras-apeiron*** (limited-unlimited). Motion (vibration) is fundamental. The description of ratio as *'constant'* and *'unmixed'* and *'complete'* while perception is *'fluxuating'* and *'mixed'* also takes us back to the philosophical criteria of Changing and Unchanging, ***harmonia*** as a mixture, and so on. The important point here is that monochord work naturally generates the philosophical language. Its corollary is also true: philosophical notions are perfectly illustrated by monochord work. This is the consistent situation in early Greek philosophy. Only when monochord expertise was largely set aside did the philosophy become increasingly abstract and 'metaphysical.' It lost (or threw away) its bearings. In Ptolemy's time monochord manipulation had ceased to be an important component of the Greek educational system. While still of interest to scientists, it had lost a lot of its religious-philosophical associations. Philosophers after the Presocratics no longer based their speculations closely on monochord realities. Sensation and reason become more general categories divorced from their monochord roots. Yet when a writer confronts specifically tuning issues, the old perspective and language returns and reminds us that an understanding of harmony is a prerequisite to an understanding of early philosophy.

(4.1) *'Just as a circle described by one's eye alone has often seemed to be accurate until one drawn by reason redirects the eye to recognize what is truly accurate, if some specific difference of sounds is perceived by the hearing alone, it will then for a time seem neither to fall short nor to be excessive;'* (4.5) *'yet it will frequently be proved not to be so when one selected according to the appropriate reason is heard. By comparing them, our hearing recognizes the more accurate, as if comparing the genuine with the illegitimate.'*

The comparison of *'genuine and illegitimate'* for reason and perception take us into Plato's language for *Forms* and ***Doxa***. The powerful ratios like 2:3 do act as norms

by which we judge approximations accurate or inaccurate. This experience can be verified by anyone who chooses to investigate the world of musical tuning. But there is also an undercurrent of polemic in Ptolemy's book. He wrote it against the older school of Aristoxenus, a more esoteric tuner who used *irrational ratios* (temperament or controlled mis-tuning of the norms). Ptolemy, on the other hand, defended *rational ratios* in his tuning approach. The competition between these two schools has animated the whole history of musical tuning. (The modern western system is irrational). The important point here is that Ptolemy linked the use of irrational ratios with perception rather than reason. This is unfair, since an irrational ratio is just as prone to accurate measurement as a rational ratio. Ptolemy thinks of the irrational ratio as *'illegitimate'* but Aristoxenus (for various reasons) deliberately selected irrational ratios. Ptolemy wants to argue that rational ratios are superior over irrational ones. This argument has persisted back and forth throughout history and cannot be definitively answered—each resource has advantages and disadvantages and specific aesthetic features. At any rate, Ptolemy clearly linked sensation-reason with illegitimate-legitimate and irrational-rational. Such links are not entirely fair.

Even though he championed reason over sensation, Ptolemy was also acutely aware that they could not be entirely separated and opposed to each other. Later in his book (2.12) he pointed out various shortcomings in the monochord 'technology' and noted that it had *'faded from use for both practical playing and for speculation about the results of realized ratios'* in his own day. The main deficiency is that string deflection creates a small inaccuracy or deviation from theoretical 'truth.' The error can be minimized by specific techniques but not eliminated entirely. Consequently, the fret-placement by ratio must be slightly 'tweaked' in order to achieve the perception of an accurate interval. Hearing then comes to the assistance of ***logos***. Tuning is therefore not only a science but also an art quite dependent upon hearing. In the context of canonics, perception and reason need each other and work together for a common aim (to be 'in tune,' however that is defined). Reason may have a higher status, but it cannot ultimately be divorced from hearing. Sight, of course, is also a sensory factor since the monochord is 'marked' and has a visual component (fret-patterning on the board). But hearing is the dominant sense perception, as it also is in Indian philosophy. Hearing is the first sense.

What does all of this teach us about ancient philosophy? First of all, Plato's separation of reason and sensation, the latter being a 'false' or illegitimate imitation, is largely an intellectual construct derived from a canonical base but distorting it. Although reason and sensation do not necessarily have equal status, to brand one 'true' and the other 'false' is patently unfair and devious. In contrast to the Platonic separation, Parmenides held very close relations between *hearing* and ***logos*** (and *speaking* and *thinking*). Secondly, the conception of ***aletheia*** and ***doxa*** in Parmenides (and Xenophanes, Heraclitus) is quite likely to preserve more of the underlying complexities of canonics. The early philosophers sat closer to their acoustical roots and took the musical model more seriously. In the specific case of Parmenides, ***doxa*** and human knowledge are tied to perception, change, movement and other features of ***harmonia***. They are, however, just as 'real' as ***aletheia***; indeed, ***harmonia*** holds the unchanging (through cyclicity) as an aspect of itself. On the other hand, ***aletheia*** refers to a specific

'divine' knowledge—a transcendent aspect of ***harmonia*** as the Whole, with some features that are paradoxically 'unmusical.' It does not necessarily have more 'reality' than ***doxa***. Parmenides' poem does *not* negate ***doxa***, it only negates Non-being in relation to Being, and then only as an argument in favor of affirming the analog continuum over the digital void. In short, the *Way of Truth* may well have constituted a 'special situation' which does not necessarily eliminate ***doxa*** at all. When we realize this, Parmenides can be favorably compared with Heraclitus and Xenophanes (and even the elusive Pythagoras), rather than being isolated in some separate 'logical' universe.

Having removed Plato and Aristotle from the picture, what then *was* the model for the relation between perception and reason among the early philosophers? They were always close. In a strong tradition associated with Pythagoras, the number 3 was considered *divine* and 5 *human*. By implication, the relation mirrors that of 3-limit and 5-limit harmony. Since the TRIAD and PENTAD also represent the medial Elements (**air** and **water**), a whole series of associations can be made concerning the *soul* (3) and *body* (5) as changing aspects of the Unchanging. The relation between them is thus not an opposition but a temporal interaction. Underlying them in emanation or sitting above them are ***Nous*** (2) and the *One* (1), the true Unchanging.

This framework suits the mainstream of the early philosophers, such as Heraclitus and Empedocles, but it has some curiosities in Parmenides. Even if we ignore the strange doxographical evidence that he equated *mind* and *soul*, it must be admitted that he said very little about the medial Elements (3,5) in his poem (at least, the part we have), concentrating on the primal Elements (1,2) almost exclusively. It tends to confirm his radicalism. The medials became the analog continuum (n). If sense and reason can not be properly projected onto the MONAD and DYAD at all, we are forced to conclude that they are just not relevant to Parmenides' reflections on the goddess. But another model is also appealing and also blends with Heraclitus and Empedocles. Reason could sit comfortably with the DYAD (or MONAD-DYAD) and sense with the plenum (n), a more likely scenario. Here the analog plenum has 'replaced' the field of medial Elements (3,5) in Empedocles or (3,5…n) in Anaxagoras. However, the 'space' is divided, it retains its old associations with process, 'weather,' density, movement and time. Reason and sense are then (as they should be in a canonical model) not estranged opposites but 'co-conspirators' in the game of Love and Strife. Both of them emerge from the same musical experience and understandably work very closely together in the early philosophers.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO UPANISHADIC PHILOSOPHY

In these essays we are drawing comparisons between early Greek and Indian philosophy, in order to show that they are not entirely alien to each other. As a suitable companion to Parmenides I have chosen Uddalaka Aruni, one of the Upanishadic writers who lived perhaps in the eighth century. But before we examine the views of Uddalaka in particular, it is desirable first to present a brief introduction to the *Upanishads* in general.

The *Upanishads* present us with the earliest known movement of speculative philosophy, several hundred years older than the Greek (and Chinese) flowering. This priority is a source of some embarrassment for those Eurocentric scholars who maintain that philosophy was discovered in Greece. The prevalent response is to explain it away by arguing that the Indian sphere does not represent 'real' philosophy; moreover, they commonly maintain that Indian philosophy could not possibly have had *any* influence on the west. Although this Eurocentric argument is unreasonable, I will not argue against it here—only note that many parallels exist between the Greek and the Indian spheres. In both cases the movement arose as a reaction to and a reinterpretation of older ritual and mythological lore. In both cases we see a desire to find *first principles* concerning the nature of the world and man's place within it. In both cases it is entirely artificial to distinguish between philosophy and religion. In both cases a musical view of the world is assumed and pondered. We will see that even many of the individual doctrines were held in common. In other words, Orphism has broad resonances with the east. Indian thought could well have influenced the Greek development, although it is most likely to have been filtered through the Iranian zone.

Sanskrit has two names equivalent to the western ***philosophia***. The term ***darshana*** originally meant *'seeing the truth'* but applies more generally to all views of reality taken by the mind of man. The term ***anviksiki*** means more specifically any system which has been built up by reasoning alone. These terms have been used from an early time. The oldest Upanishadic writers are unknown to us since their names were not transmitted, but from about the eighth century onward individual names were associated with particular theories. Such 'heroic' names indicate an intellectual ferment also present in Ionian Greece and Chou China.

It is difficult and even hazardous to characterize the early *Upanishads* as a whole. Only a fraction of the literature has survived. The various writers differed from one another and sometimes even contradicted each other. The well-known formal schools of Indian philosophy arose later when people took a stand in the interpretation of these seminal writers. Nevertheless, we can make note of some commonalities within the literature. These comments apply not only to Uddalaka but also to the entire group of extraordinary seers: such names as Yajnavalkya, Balaki, Svetaketu, and Sandilya.

The term ***upa*** (near) ***ni*** (down) ***shad*** (to sit) literally means *'sitting down beside (a teacher),'* implying a *'confidential session.'* Soon it came to signify an esoteric doctrine imparted by a teacher to select pupils—some arcane insight not meant for the general public. Appropriately, *Upanishads* mark the last stage of the Vedic literary tradition: ***samhita***, ***brahmana***, ***aranyaka*** and ***upanishad***. The secret doctrines represent an effort to find or achieve liberating knowledge (equivalent to the Greek ***gnosis***) regarding the ultimate or the absolute first principles. We should note here that an esoteric component also permeated early Greek philosophy. Moreover, the early *Upanishads* emphasized secrecy in their tone and flavor. They made frequent recourse to elaborate allegory and myth as vehicles of expression. Such veiled pronouncements regarding abstruse matters courted misunderstanding and the various schools of Indian philosophy attemped to clear it up. The emphasis on secrecy, allegory and myth is another common feature with early

Greek philosophy, including Plato. The true meaning of the writing must be sought below the surface.

The Upanishadic writers couched their insights in a lofty, forceful and graphic mode of expression noted for its elliptical and condensed imagery. Although the earliest *Upanishads* were written in prose, many were written in verse. Sometimes the writing took a dialogue form. Again we can make a comparison with early western philosophy, especially the poetic writers Anaximander, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Parmenides and Empedocles. The use of poetic forms is ideally suited to a genre that did not offer one complete, consistent, and logically systematized conception of the world. The Upanishadic speculations were only later reduced to fixed systems by the philosophical schools of Vedanta, Mimamsa, Sankhya and so on.

Scholars agree that the oldest *Upanishads* are the *Brhadaranyaka*, *Taittiriya*, *Aitareya* and *Chandogya*. The first is simpler, more beautiful and more ancient. It is also the longest single *Upanishad*. The *Chandogya* shows a more complex style and content and was probably written later in time. However, all of these core *Upanishads* well predate the Buddha who was a contemporary of Pythagoras and Xenophanes. Indeed, the Buddhist writers represent a later heterodox wing of the Upanishadic movement. Buddhism would have been impossible without the Upanishadic foundation.

The Indian philosophical writers yearned for an understanding of the beyond. They sought the underlying first principles that ground both the world and man. Increasingly, the emphasis upon the rituals of the sacrifice shifted to an emphasis upon the *knowledge* of the meaning of the sacrifice and man's place within it. They searched for the implicit *unity* of the world and man that expresses itself in the manifold diversity. Like the early Greeks, they assumed the identity of the macrocosm (the world) and the microcosm (man). Diverse phenomena came to be identified with each other in allegorical parallels. The highest principles of the macrocosm (the elements: **aither**, **fire**, **air**, **water**, **earth**) correspond with the faculties, organs, and limbs of man as well as the details of the sacrifice. The enumeration of the familiar *elements* and their application to man is another powerful example of how close the Greek and Indian conceptual frameworks are. For example, in both spheres the element **air** was described alternatively as *wind* and *breath*. One conceptual language (the *elements*) applied both to cosmology and psychology.

Some of the early writers championed one *element* over another as the fundamental principle, all the while acknowledging the existence of the other *elements* as well. Does this not sound familiar? I will give a few examples. In the *Brhad. Up.* (5.5.1) **water** is regarded as the first principle. Later, Vedantic theologians identified it with ***brahman***, but every *element* was similarly identified at one time or another. The revered writer Yajnavalkya in the *Brhad. Up.* (1.5.12) regared **air** (***vayu***) as the *'thread'* (***sutra***) that *'holds together'* all of the worlds. A remarkably similar image is found in the Orphic literature. Moreover, **air** was identified with *breath* (***prana***) and the life principle. As such it was almost identified with the intelligent self or soul (***atman***, ***purusha***). Anaximenes would have approved. Again, many Upanishadic texts treat **fire** as the

fundamental principle, calling it Universal Fire (***Agni Vaisvanara***). The whole universe was identified with cosmic fire. In the *Brhad. Up.* (6.2.11) we read: *'This world is **fire**. The **earth** itself is its fuel, **fire** the smoke, **night** the flame, the moon the coals, the stars the sparks. In this **fire** the gods offer rain. Out of that offering food arises.'* **Aither** or space (***akasha***) was described in a similar way. In the *Chand. Up.* (7.12.1) it was that from which everything arises and latter dissolves in an endless rhythmic dance. Even more than the other *elements* **aither** was the foundation (***pratistha***) and the closest equivalent to the absolute (***brahman***). A famous passage in the *Tait. Up.* (2.1) gives the order of emanation common in the Indian sphere: *'From this Self* [***atman***], *verily, **aither** arose; from aither **air**; from air **fire**; from fire **water**; from water the **earth**.'* The order differs somewhat from the Greek version, although it still progresses from the rare or light elements to the dense or heavy elements. In spite of this variation, the importance of emanation is similar in both traditions. Above all, both Greek and Indian philosophy was steeped in the same four or five *elements* with surprisingly similar associations.

The *elements* formed a poetic language—a way of speaking about a fundamental principle considered the Ultimate or Absolute, the One, the original Being. In India the concept of the absolute expressed itself in terms of a metaphysic of the inner life of man. The philosophers strove to identify the macrocosmic absolute (***brahman***) with the microcosmic man-centred Self (***atman***). The latter as the known was used to explain the former as the unknown. The nature and significance of this identity forms the core thrust of the Upanishadic philosophy. In order to get a handle on it we must examine the content of the notions ***brahman*** and ***atman*** as they came to be identified through the practice of meditation.

The etymology of the word ***brahman*** is uncertain. It has been suggested that it is related to the Greek ***phlegma*** (*flame*). If so, it has a firm connection to the western spiritual principle. The term ***brahman*** already appeared in the *Rg Veda* where it signified the uplifting or spiritualizing *power* of prayers, magical formulae, or key words in the rituals. It was always connected to secret magical powers used to influence divine beings or even to force something from them. Thus it was closely tied to magic. Over time it came to signify sacred knowledge and even the scriptures themselves. In the *Brahmanas* it signified the divinity manifested in the rituals, the priest, and the sacrifice. By the Upanishadic period it became the holy principle that animates the world. From there it was a small step to its hypostatization as the highest principle and primordial cause. In the later philosophical schools it naturally was an appellation for the absolute.

Ancient philosophy generally distinguishes between a higher impersonal macrocosmic creative power and a more personal creative principle that also accounts for the world. The more personal ***Prajapati*** in the *Brahmanas* was taken over by the ***atman*** as the creative power in the *Upanishads*. The etymology of ***atman*** is also uncertain. In the *Rg Veda* it meant *breath* or *wind*; for example, the *wind* was described as the ***atman*** of ***Varuna***. Here it has a ready counterpart in the Greek element **air** or even **aither**. Supporting this association, one suggested etymology of ***atman*** relates it to the Greek ***atmos***, from which we derive 'atmosphere.' We have a confluence here with the *soul* principle, the TRIAD, and **air**.

In the *Brahmanas* ***atman*** was the principle that confers *life* or divine individuality on a person. The reference frame moves from the human plane to the sacrificial to the divine. Already in the *Brahmanas* the term ***atman*** referred to the 'self' later expressed as the absolute *Self*—sometimes as ***purusa*** or the cosmic man. As a substantive it denoted one's own person or body in contrast to the outside world, also one's trunk apart from the limbs. But above all, ***atman*** signified the *soul* or the *true self* in contrast to the gross body. It involves the consciousness principle. Again we have a ready Greek equivalent in the terms ***psyche*** (*soul*) and perhaps even ***nous*** (*mind*). Indian philosophy, however, always made a strict distinction between ***atman*** and ***manas*** (*mind*). The other sense organs are subordinated to ***manas*** as their 'controller,' for every perception is the work of mind as integrator. For example, *Brhad. Up.* (1.5.3): *'My mind was elsewhere, therefore I did not see it. My mind was elsewhere, therefore I did not hear. It is with the mind, truly, that one sees. It is with the mind that one hears. Desire, determination, doubt, faith, lack of faith, steadfastness, lack of steadfastness, shame, intellection, fear, all this is truly mind. Therefore even if one is touched on his back, he discerns it with his mind.'* As a principle ***manas*** is subordinated to ***atman*** but they are nevertheless quite close. Uddalaka (*Chand. Up.* 6.8.2-3) wrote: *'When a man is said to be hungry,* ***water*** *is carrying away what has been eaten by him. When a man is said to be thirsty,* ***fire*** *is carrying away what has been drunk by him. Among ingredients of man what keeps life is* ***breath****. Mind is fastened to breath. Just as a bird when tied by a string flies first in every direction, and finding no resting place anywhere, settles down at last on the very place where it is fastened, exactly in the same manner, that* ***mind*** *after flying in every direction, and finding no resting place anwhere settles down in breath.'* Mind comes to rest in ***atman***.

In the Greek sphere, ***nous*** is honored as that special aspect of the ***psyche*** embodying the highest functions. Again we have the association with consciousness. The poet Epicharmus wrote (fr. 12): *'Mind* [***nous***] *sees and mind hears; everything else is deaf and blind.'* In the west mind had a higher 'status' than soul but they were nevertheless inseparable. We also find the doctrine (for example among Pythagoreans, Plato) of two souls: one mortal and changing according to the laws of ***harmonia***, the other immortal, unchanging, and tied to the highest **aither**. The immortal intelligent principle (***nous***, ***daimon***) is common to man and the world. It is the divine spark or **fire** enclosed in the cave of the body with its personality. It is so described in Plato's *Timaeus* and *Phaedo*. We cannot be reproached for commending such terms as ***psyche***, ***nous***, and ***daimon*** with the Upanishadic ***atman*** and ***manas***. The complex of conceptual and mythological associations has so much in common.

In both the Greek and Hindu spheres, creation stories use the analogy of sex. In the beginning there was only the One (***atman***, ***brahman***) alone. Out of loneliness it desired a second being and became woman, then man. This pair then birthed the human race. *Brhad Up.* (1.4.3): *'He* [***atman***] *caused that self to fall into two parts. From that arose husband and wife. He became united with her. From that human beings were produced.'* The One is prior to gender—in some stories it is the androgynous person who combines both male and female. It creates the *elements*, the gods, and so on as the 'multitude' are related to the one fundamental principle. In classical Greek terms we must

refer them to the MONAD and DYAD. The unchanging principle initiates the changing principle as an identification through Time. The DYAD unleashes the vortex yet does not move. The terms ***brahman*** and ***atman*** remind us strongly of the western MONAD and DYAD, although the ***atman*** also has the essential characteristics of the TRIAD. The female and male relate to the DYAD and TRIAD but both of them are expressions of the MONAD. Such a mixture of strong similarities with interesting divergencies is practically always seen when we compare Greek and Indian philosophy.

As in the western soul principle, the ***atman*** pervades all living things. *Brhad. Up.* (1.4.7): *'It* [***atman***] *is here all-pervading down to the tips of the nails. One does not see it any more than a razor hidden in its case or fire in its receptacle. For it does not appear as a whole When it breathes, it is called breath; when it speaks, voice; when it hears, ear; when it thinks, mind. These are mearly the names of its activities. He who worships the one or the other of these organs, has not correct knowledge...One should worship it as the Self. For in it all these become one.'* The sense organs are related to the consciousness principle. The intelligent spirit is sometimes also called ***purusa***. It is identical to the fundamental principle of the universe. People confuse this spirit with the body, with the dream self, or other lower principles. While the Self is united to the body (by thinking that this body is I and I am this body) it is held and dominated by pleasure-pain. The breaking of this identification (through the practice of yoga) provides a glimpse of the true ***atman***.

The nature of the ***atman*** and the levels of consciousness are explained by various analogies. In the *Chand. Up.* (8.7-12) there are three stages. The soul in the body as reflected in a mirror or water is first identified with ***brahman***. Then the dreaming soul in which the senses are freed from physical constraints is so identified. Finally the soul in dreamless sleep reveals the inner core. Later in the *Mandukya Upanishad* four stages of consciousness are systematized: the waking state, dreaming state, deep-sleep state and a fourth state highest of all. In all cases the ***atman*** represents the essential heart of consciousness.

Much has been said here about ***atman***, little about ***brahman***. For ***brahman*** is the great macrocosmic principle which is so difficult to know. It can only be approached through ***atman*** by means of meditative introspection. The seeker who follows these practices eventually realizes that his innermost being is ***brahman***—that ***brahman*** is the ***atman***. This identification of the Self with the Absolute is the predominant assertion of Upanishadic philosophy.

UDDALAKA ARUNI

Having introduced some fundamentals of Upanishadic thought, we are ready to examine Uddalaka. Nothing is known about his life, but his teachings can be found in Book 6 of the *Chandogya Upanishad*.[2] There he addresses his remarks to his son

---

[2] Quotes from the Upanishads are extracted from: S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads*, (Harper Collins India, 1953). An excellent translation, the introduction also draws numerous comparisons between eastern and western philosophy.

Svetaketu. Perhaps these writings represent a whole school of philosophy rather than one individual, but the distinctive character of the imagery could also point to a single creative source. We will never know for certain. At any rate, Uddalaka is representative of those Indian philosophers who elevate the importance of ontology—the manifestation of the world from *being-as-such*. This emphasis on *being* (***sat***) is comparable to that of Parmenides.

Uddalaka clearly regarded his own doctrine as the fundamental key to understanding all of reality. It is (6.1.3) *'that instruction by which the unhearable becomes heard, the unperceivable becomes perceived, the unknowable becomes known.'* Note that hearing is the primary sense perception. He continues by using clay (additionally gold and iron) as an analogy for the essence (***atman***, ***brahman***). (6.1.4) *'Just as, my dear, by one clod of clay all that is made of clay becomes known, the modification being only a name arising from speech while the truth is that it is just clay.'* The term ***vikara*** means modification, change, development, or manifestation. He suggests that the realm of *name-and-form* (***nama-rupa***) arises through change but it has one underlying and unchanging essence (clay, gold, iron). We give phenomena various names but we must also acknowledge a unity beyond any particular name. Again we are reminded of Parmenides, who contemplated an unchanging reality transcendent of the changing realm (manifested by speech). The realm of change is characterized by names. Like Parmenides, Uddalaka's philosophy concerns being and becoming.

Uddalaka also suggests a 'higher science' and a 'lower science' analogous to the Greek distinction between ***aletheia*** and ***doxa***—unchangeable being and impermanent becoming. This distinction is made more explicit in later Upanishads, eg. *Mundaka Up.* 1.1.4. Associated with this doctrine the sages posited two minds: pure and impure (*Maitri Up.* 6.34.6). The impure mind is contaminated by desire or will to change. The pure mind (called ***daivam manas*** in the *Brhad. Up.* 1.5.19) is disconnected to desire and rests in ***brahman*** utterly beyond ***vikara***. In the west we see a similar distinction between two parts of the soul, or between two souls, or between the higher and lower mind. In both the east and west the fault line lies between the changing realm (giving rise to names) and the unchanging realm where we find the essence (***atman***, ***brahman***, the immortal 'spark' of Soul or Self).

That immortal essence Uddalaka called Being or the One. He declares the primacy of Being over Becoming and also over Non-being (***asat***). This is made clear at the start of the next section (6.2.1-2): *'In the beginning, my dear, this was Being alone, one only without a second. Some people say 'in the begining this was non-being alone, one only; without a second. From that non-being, being was produced.' But how, indeed, my dear, could it be thus? Said he, how could being be produced from non-being? On the contrary, my dear, in the beginning this was being alone, one only, without a second.'* He declares that the One could not be produced from non-existence (***abhava***) because it would necessarily invoke some form of change and differentiation. By definition Being is utterly devoid of such characteristics. Hence it always was. This very argument with its peculiar logic was to be associated with Parmenides by Gorgias and Aristotle. We would almost conclude that Uddalaka was a student of Parmenides—except that the Indian sage

lived several hundred years earlier! On the contrary, the lines of influence were much more likely to have flown from east to west. Parmenides' philosophy is surely a variant of Uddalaka's approach, but filtered through the Iranian zone. This thesis will become more and more plausible as we further examine Uddalaka's document.

In the passage above, *'in the beginning'* (***sad eva***) connotes Being (***sad***) without any limitation or infinite. ***Eva*** is equated with ***upadhi*** (*infinite*). By implication the One had no beginning but rather always existed. Such an argument is paradoxical or at least problematic, because we can imagine the One 'whole' to arise out of the 'zero' or Silence. The One itself is then the first manifestation. But Uddalaka would have us conceive the One as pure Being prior to the manifestation of *'this'* (***idam***) world of name-and-form. He points mysteriously to some Being apart from names and Becoming. Such an anti-intuitive argument is also found in Parmenides and Heraclitus, masters of the paradoxical doctrine. Parmenides wrote (8.5-6) *'nor was it ever nor will it be, since it is now, all together, one continuous. For what birth will you seek for it?'* It could not come from what-is-not because that is unknowable. Hence it always was. Heraclitus wrote (fr. 30): *'This kosmos, the same for all, none of the gods nor of humans has made, but always was and is and shall be: an ever-living fire being kindled in measures and being extinguished in measures.'* The foundation of the universe always was and always will be. Only the names and forms dance in and out of existence in cyclical measures. We could equate this doctrine with a 'steady state' cosmology as opposed to a 'big bang' cosmology that posits some beginning out of nothing. Both theses can be supported by a musical argument, but the doctrine of 'no beginning' is the more paradoxical or at least anti-intuitive. Uddalaka's stand reminds us of Parmenides and Heraclitus.

Uddalaka proceeds (6.2.3-4) to lay out his emanatory ontology. The One Being mysteriously resolves to become the Many. This evolution occurs through *thought*, enforcing the importance of the consciousness principle. We must also recall here the Parmenidean close association between Being and Thought. In order to become the Many, the One must first become three elements. *'It* [Being] *thought, May I be many, may I grow forth* [or procreate myself]. *It sent forth **fire**. That fire thought, May I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth **water**. Therefore, whenever a person grieves or perspires, water is produced from the fire (heat). That water thought, May I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth **food**. So food for eating is produced from water alone.'*

In this passage he does not refer to the *elements* directly but rather to their presiding deities. Later Vedantic interpreters found the element **food** rather strange and (reasonably) equated it with **earth**. Uddalaka's order of emanation is distinctive and different from the standard Greek pattern and also different from other *Upanishads*. Usually **aither**, **air** and **fire** (the light elements) appear successively before the heavy elements **water** and **earth**. Later interpreters rationalized Uddalaka's pattern by stating that the order of creation was not so important for him as the doctrine that all elements are derived from Being. Note that there are *three* elements with the underlying Being making a fourth or 'prior' element.

Uddalaka tended to organize everything by threes. In the following statement (6.3.1) he expressed three widespread mythological bases for the birth of the elements. *'Now of these (living) beings there are only three origins, those born from an egg, born from a living being, born from a sprout.'* The first basis is the 'cosmic egg' found in mythologies from India to Europe. The second basis refers to the primordial sacrifice. The third basis relates the elements to the cosmic plant or tree. The *Aitareya Upanishad* mentioned a fourth *'born from heat.'* The import of this passage is that the various mythological stories all refer to the birth of the *elements* from Being.

Primordial Being and the three elements are regarded as divinities (6.3.2). *'That divinity thought, 'Well, let me enter into these three divinities by means of this living self and let me then develop names and forms.'* The elements are called ***devatas*** with Being ***para devata***. *'This living Self'* (***jiva atman***) is the inner soul that unites with each element, animates it, and produces the varied manifestations of the world.

Later theologians equated Being with ***vac*** (cosmic primordial sound). Uddalaka probably also did so. At any rate, he displays his musical tendencies by *dividing* the initial three-part pattern threefold to make a canonical nine (6.3.3). *'Let me make each one of the three threefold.' The divinity entered into those three divinities by means of the living self and developed names and forms.'* Followers of Uddalaka fleshed out his brief statement to form the doctrine of ***trivrt-karana***. Each of the original elements (**fire**, **water**, **earth**) is divided into two equal portions, of which one half is kept intact and the other half is divided into two equal parts filled with the remaining elements. Thus each element contains a portion of the other two elements. We are reminded here of the doctrine of Anaxagoras that there is a portion of everything in everything. By implication, all of the possible names and forms can be defined as complex combinations of the three initial elements.

In the next section, Uddalaka makes clear that the three elements can be defined by three colors: red (**fire**), white (**water**) and dark or black (**food** or **earth**). (6.4.6) *'They knew that whatever appeared red was of the form of heat; they knew that whatever appeared white was of the form of water; they knew that whatever appeared dark was of the form of earth.'* The colors stand for the characteristics of the elements. The dominant characteristic conditions what we call the element. For example, **fire** is predominantly red, but the presence of white and black indicates the presence of the other two elements. Thus what we call empirical fire is essentially dissolved into the three elements. The phenomenon fire is only a name, grasped by speech (***vac***), but the truth (***satya***) is the three colors (6.4.1). *'Whatever red form fire has it is the form of heat, whatever (is) white (is the form) of water. Whatever (is) dark (is the form of) earth. Thus vanishes the quality of fire from fire, the modification being only a name arising from speech while the truth is that it is only the three forms.'* Examples of material bodies, fire, the sun, the moon and lightning (6.4.1-4) are each of them dissolved into the three forms. By implication, all names and forms can be so dissolved.

The *Sankhya* school of philosophy took over the three colors and applied them to the three primary ***gunas*** or characteristics: ***sattva***, ***rajas***, and ***tamas***. We should

emphasize how intensely musical this whole schema is. The three colors correspond to the three primary vibratory elements (the powers of 2, 3, and 5) that emerge from the One. Every traditional harmony can be dissolved into these components that are expressions of the One in action. We have already examined the musical associations of the ***gunas*** in the *Sankhya* section of the chapter on Pythagoras. Uddalaka's formula was an early version of the ***gunas*** doctrine that was to be pervasive in many of the later philosophical schools.

The philosopher continues with concrete illustrations of the threefold division. For example (6.5.1): *'**Food** when eaten becomes threefold; its coarsest portion becomes the faeces; its middle (portion) flesh and its subtlest (portion) mind* [***manas***]. ' Similarly, **water** becomes urine, blood and breath. **Fire** becomes bone, marrow, and speech. By implication, everything is threefold and all the three elements exist in everything. One is reminded of the old Greek *phlogiston* medical theory in which various constituents (usually elements) are given up when a substance burns. As we will see in the next chapter, many similarities exist between ancient Indian and Greek medical philosophy.

In comparison with other *Upanishads* and with Greek philosophy, Uddalaka has muddled the order of the elements. Rather, his order of emanation clearly refers to the implicit harmonic order of the ***gunas***. In the west this order was also expressed as the ***genera***: diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic. Underlying this pattern is the power of the three primary archetypes—the musical 'character' of the numbers 2, 3, and 5. Uddalaka has assigned the elements differently and also cryptically referred to the element **earth** as **food**. Nevertheless, the underlying musicality of his framework is evident. We should also note that Uddalaka's three elements (**fire**, **water**, **earth**) have a prior element (*being*, ***atman***) that can be likened to the western element **air** or **aither**. Hence his scheme is not fundamentally different from the elemental framework found in other *Upanishads* and in western philosophy.

The philosopher also related his elements to the microcosm of human functions (6.6.5). *'Thus, my dear, mind consists of **food**, breath consists of **water**, speech consists of **heat**.* ' These vital functions will surely collapse without the support of the three elements. During deep sleep, speech and mind with its errent senses take a rest. Only breath is still active. Personal subjective consciousness subsides and the self (***jiva***) becomes absorbed in the Higher Self of Being (6.8.1). *'Then Uddalaka Aruni said to his son, Svetaketu, Learn from me, my dear, the true nature of sleep. When a person here sleeps, as it is called, then, my dear, he has reached pure being. He has gone to his own. There they say he sleeps for he has gone to his own.* ' Understanding (***buddhi***) remains only in potential here but becomes activated in dreams and the waking state. All human functions depend upon the blend of the three elements (6.8.3). *'Understand that this (body) is an offshoot which has sprung up, for it could not be without a root.* ' The elements are the primary roots but they themselves have a root in Being (6.8.4). *'All these creatures, my dear, have their root in Being. They have Being as their abode, Being as their support.* ' When a person dies, speech, mind and breath merge with Being and together they depart (6.8.6). *'When, my dear, a person departs from hence, his speech merges in his mind, his mind on his breath, his breath in heat and heat in the highest divinity.* ' The process of dying then

reverses the order of emanation. The last sign of life to depart is the body heat (**fire**). If we leave this life with our thoughts focussed on the Supreme we will merge with pure Being and have no need to re-enter the world of Becoming.

The elements comprise aspects of a monistic view of Being illustrated by various observations of nature. However, Uddalaka is no straightforward realist for whom the world has an objective basis. Being can only be known through knowledge of the Self and its unity with the macrocosmic principle. The world is thus not independent of the knower. In fact, it has no independent existence at all. Instead, the world is identified with the knower. It is a vision of his *soul* and its life is his life. The ***atman*** has created the world. The essence of the knower is the essence of the world. In understanding the Self the world is transformed. This confluence of the Self and the world is characteristic of Upanishadic philosophy. Can we not also see it in early Greek philosophy? For the theory of elements does not refer to the outside world alone but also the 'inside' world. Heraclitus' emanatory pathway *'up and down'* concerns *'sleeping and waking'*—the consciousness principle is implicit. The achievement of ***gnosis*** entails an understanding and a direct experiencing of the oneness between the innermost self and the macrocosmic principle. Is this experience not the aim of religious philosophy both in the east and the west?

Uddalaka expresses all of this in 6.8.7—perhaps his most sublime statement. *'That which is the subtle essence (the root of all) this whole world has for its self. That is the true. That is the self. That art thou, Svetaketu.'* Only by knowing the innermost or essential Self (***atman***, *antah purusa*) as opposed to the body or mind (the empirical or accidental self) can one understand the true *root* of the world. The famous phrase *'that art thou'* (***tat tvam asi***) is arguably the most renowned statement in the whole of Upanishaic philosophy. It is repeated in variant forms throughout the literature. For example, in the *Jaiminiya Up.* (3.14.1-5), when the deceased reaches the Sun-door he is asked, Who art thou? If he answers by his personal or family name, then he is subject to karma and will be reborn. However, if he responds *'Who I am (is) the light thou (art). As such, I have come to thee, the heavenly light'* he is allowed entry. The presiding deity ***Prajapati*** then answers: *'Who thou art, that same am I; who I am that same art thou. Enter in.'* The analogy of light for the innermost Self is common both in the east and the west. Compare Parmenides' *'light and dark'* or the beginning of the Hermetic *Poimandres*. The highest spiritual principle has always been described as light in India, Iran, and Greece.

Uddalaka continues his instruction by drawing various analogies derived from nature for the meaning of the indwelling spirit. In 8.9.1-4 the essence is compared to honey. The bees collect the juices from various trees and reduce them into one essence that does not discriminate between this or that tree. The tree has long been associated with the elements and the One.

In section 10, he appeals to the hydrological cycle (6.10.1-3). *'These rivers, my dear, flow the eastern* [Ganges] *toward the east, the western* [Indus] *toward the west. They go just from sea to sea. They become the sea itself. Just as these rivers while there*

do not know 'I am this one, I am that one.' In the same manner, my dear, all these creatures even though they have come forth from Being do not know that 'we have come forth from Being.' Whatever they are in this world, tiger or lion or wolf or boar or worm or fly or gnat or mosquito that they become. That which is the subtle essence, this whole world has for its self. That is the true. That is the self. That art thou, Svetaketu.' In other words, creatures that reach Pure Being without being conscious of it return to their special separated forms. The right consciousness confirs liberation from the cycle. The rivers describe the realm of change, just as in Heraclitus. They move *'from sea to sea'* because clouds lift the water from the sea to the sky (or **air**) and send it back again as rain (**water**) to flow as rivers to the sea. One is strongly reminded here of the 'musical meteorology' that permeates early Greek philosophy. The medial elements (**air** and **water**) represent the *'rivers'* of the changing realm, but they are underpinned by the unchanging 'polar' elements (**fire** and **earth**). The medials emerge from **fire** in the western expression, from Being in Uddalaka's analogy. The movement of the cycle is equivalent to Heraclitus' and Anaximenes' pathway *'up and down.'* Liberation from the cycle is the goal offered by the western initiations in the Orphic (and other) Mysteries.

Sections 11 and 12 again use the tree as an analogy for the indwelling spirit. If a mighty tree is wounded it bleeds but still lives because the life principle resides in it. When the tree dies the life principle departs from it but does not itself die. The Self (***atman***) is immortal. Section 12 emphasizes the subtlety of the ***atman*** by the analogy of the Nyagrodha (fig) tree. If one breaks the tiny seed there appears to be absolutely nothing inside. Yet from this subtle essence a great tree grows. In the same way, the complex world of name-and-form arises from Pure Being—something so subtle that it does not yet possess name-and-form. The import of this analogy reminds us of the Christian parable of the mustard seed and Zeno's paradox of the millet seed. However, the upanishadic writing is far older than the Christian text or even Zeno's book. The analogy of the tree for the cosmic elements or *roots* is, however, not original even to Uddalaka. It is already found in the bronze-age *Rg Veda*. Surely it is one of the oldest images for the relation between the One and the Many.

Section 13 continues the theme of the utter subtlety of the ***atman***. It is illustrated by dissolving salt in water. We cannot perceive the salt by sight or touch; yet it is present throughout the whole as confirmed by tasting the top, middle, and bottom of the water. In the same way the ***atman*** pervades the all, even though it is not obvious to the senses.

Uddalaka's teaching is difficult and not obvious. In section 14 he insists on the need for a teacher. He is likened to one who removes the bandage from a blindfolded man. Without this operation he cannot find his way home. The proper teaching confirs liberation from the cycle of rebirths and guarantees union with the 'real home' of ***sat*** or Being (6.14.2). *'I shall remain here only so long as I shall not be released (from ignorance). Then I shall reach perfection.'* Indian philosophy has always emphasized the need for a teacher and a direct personal contact between teacher and student. This is so because the techniques of liberation involve much more than 'book learning.' Such attitudes were also evident in western philosophy, for example within Hermetic circles.

They remind us of the presence of an esoteric component generally not stated in the texts themselves.

Our introduction to Uddalaka has drawn many parallels between the great Upanishadic writer and early Greek philosophy, including Parmenides. However, we should also note some differences in the conception of Being (the One) between Uddalaka and Parmenides. For Uddalaka, Being is evolutionary and it becomes the other elements and all of their derivatives. For Parmenides, Being is static because it refers to the 'all at once.' The conception in Parmenides is far more cryptic and 'counter intuitive.' Another major difference concerns the status of **fire**. In Uddalaka Being comes before **fire** in the emanatory scheme. Also in various other Upanishadic texts, **fire** tends to be placed after **aither** (and also sometimes after **air**) as the highest element, although the literature is not always consistent. Even in the west, **aither** is more likely to be considered the highest element, but it is normally equated with **fire** (sometimes **air**). In general, we can say that the status of **fire** in representing the One is much more prevalent in Greek philosophy than it is in Indian philosophy. Since **fire** represents the One it also represents Being, that which is common to the All. The enhanced status of **fire** as the primary symbol of the One probably reflects the closer proximity of the Greek intellectual world to that of Persia.

ELEMENTS, DIALECTIC, AND THE PHILOSOPHER

As I have stated earlier, the *Sophist* is arguably Plato's most Eleatic dialogue. However, the segment we are about to examine (253a-254b) has import not only for Parmenides but also for the whole of early philosophy. Before we dive into this remarkable passage allow me to set the stage for the theatre.

In the *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Philebus* and other late dialogues Plato refers to a mysterious scientific methodology that he calls *'the method of collection and division.'* He also names it *'dialectic'* or the art of separating (***dialegontas***) 'things' into their proper classes or kinds (***genera***). This science is rather esoteric and Plato rarely ever says anything clear or unambiguous about it. Nevertheless, it forms a key component in the special education of rulers in his *Republic*. In spite of the deliberate obscurity of the topic, we can safely conclude that the method involves the ability to make a proper classification whereby there is a repeated division of a concept into its respected subclasses. The subclasses nest within each other like Russian dolls. The most perfect examples of this architecture are the musical *genera*: diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic—wholes within architectonic wholes. Indeed, the entire framework of Plato's obscure science comes directly out of monochord manipulation. Yet he never explicitly informs us of the musical base supporting his esoteric discipline. Instead he drops a series of cryptic hints and forces the reader to work it out on his own. One such passage with a near explicit reference to music is the segment of *Sophist* we will examine.

The concept of *elements* (or *roots*, *limbs*) is indispensible to musical classification. In the context of harmonics, numbers form hierarchical relations (***logoi***) in

which the first few primes generate 'children' (composites) and exclude higher primes. The first few prime numbers (1, 2, 3, 5) are 'parents' that birth a matrix of relations (a musical scale) of varying complexity. A ***harmonia*** is a relation (***logos***) between unlike elements or numbers. On its simplest architectonic level a ***harmonia*** is a *ratio*, for example 1:2 (C C), the octave. A complex ***harmonia*** has many 'nested' ratios, for example the monochord 3:4:5:6 (C G Eb C). In this case 1:2 has redefined itself as 3:6 so that further ratios (ie. 3:4, 4:5, 5:6, 3:5, and 4:6 = 2:3) can also be caught in the 'net' or matrix of ratios. Even though prime numbers are incommensurable, they can form 'marriages' through least common multiples. When the numerosity of 1:2 is expanded to 3:6 it allows ratios of 3 and 5 to join the 'family.' This is the background that makes sense of *'division and collection.'*

In the lead up to our passage, Plato is discussing the elements and their blending or not blending. For example, at 251a he says: *'Lets give an account* [***logos***] *of how we call the very same thing, whatever it may be, by several names.'* Then at 251b he reiterates: *'We take a thing to be one, and at the same time we speak of it as many by using many names for it.'* Plato often talks about 'things' when he really refers to elements or musical materials. In the case presented above, the same thing (the octave interval) was given two names, 1:2 and 3:6. As a self-standing ratio we would call it one entity, but it is also many as a component of the more complex harmony 3:4:5:6. Yet this 'many' is also 'one' since harmonies are architectonic—wholes within wholes. Although Plato does not say so, the whole context of the passage is implicitly musical.

As for characteristics of the *'things,'* Plato offers *being*, *rest* and *change*—reminding us of the later Hellenistic astrological triplicity: cardinal, fixed and mutable. Again, these qualities relate to the musical elements and their consequent harmonies. While the numbers change with various divisions, the identity or quality of a given ratio is maintained. An octave is a double whether we call it 1:2 or 3:6 or whatever numerosity is involved in the division. Even the numbers alone as true *elements* or *roots* have an association with change and rest. The numbers 1 and 2 invariably form the unchanging polar base of harmonic structures, while 3 and 5 generate cnanging patterns of complexity. Thus discussion of *rest* and *change* steers us to a musical context. *Being* also fits into this environment, since the realization (being) of one harmony negates other different harmonies. The tableau shifts through time. *Being*, *non-being*, *rest*, and *change* are inescapable parameters of harmonic materials.

Plato is concerned with *blending* or *mixture* (***krasis***), a fundamental aspect of musical materials recognized at least since Anaximander. Alternatively the elements either blend totally, not at all, or else some mix and others do not. All three possibilities have a musical supporting argument. All elements (prime numbers) are mutually incommensurable; that is, they are not divisible by each other but only divisible by 1. In this sense they do not blend on their own. Every additional prime number incorporated into the *'mixing bowl'* (***krater***) adds a whole new dimension of further harmonic complexity to the 'recipe.' On the other hand, elements *do* blend through the agency of least common multiples, forming 'marriages' within complex harmonic structures. Even higher primes can be 'caught in the net' through the appropriate division. The agency of

this 'miracle' is the cyclical identity of the DYAD. The elements *do* blend—otherwise ***harmonia*** would be impossible. In the third scenario, the variability of blending can only refer to the fact that harmonic norms (consonances) clash or form mutual dissonances once an appropriate complexity level is achieved. As a practical example we say that one musical scale (or system) is incompatible or 'out of tune' with another. In this manner we can justify the statements that elements blend, elements do not blend, and some elements blend while others do not.

The important point here is the recognition that such talk of blending or not blending also steers us toward a musical context for the discussion. Yet so far Plato has not made *any* explicit reference to music or monochords. Harmonic science is entirely below the surface or 'between the lines.' Instead he just hints at musical relevance. As a final hint (before our passage properly begins) he takes a jab at some of the great musical philosophers. For example, at 252b he writes: *'Also there are people who put everything together at one time and divide them at another. Some* [Anaxagoras] *put them together into one and divide them into indefinitely many, and others* [Empedocles] *divide them into a finite number of elements and put them back together out of them.'* In other words, Plato has offered multiple clues for the relevance of music to the discussion. I have emphasized this relevance here because modern exegesis of the *Sophist* excludes any relevance *at all* for music.

At this point we enter the fray at 253a. In my usual manner, the passage has been divided into short segments with commentary. Like other quotes from *Sophist* in this book (unless otherwise stated), the translation is by Nicolas P. White (found in *Plato, Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper, Hackett, 1997).

'VISITOR: Since some [elements] *will blend and some won't, they'll be a good deal like letters of the alphabet. Some of them fit together with each other and some don't.*

THEAETETUS: Of course.

VIS: More than the other letters the vowels run through all of them like a bond, linking them together, so that without a vowel no one of the others can fit with another.

THE: Definitely.

VIS: So does everyone know which kinds of letters can associate with which, or does it take an expert?

THE: It takes an expert.

VIS: What kind?

THE: An expert in grammar.

VIS: Well then, isn't it the same with high and low notes? The musician is the one with the expertise to know which ones mix and which ones don't, and the unmusical person is the one who doesn't understand that.

THE: Yes.

VIS: And in other cases of expertise and the lack of it we'll find something similar.

THE: Of course.'

This text is very prominent within Plato's ouvre. For it is one of the few instances in which he refers to the elements (***stoicheion***) in its proper etymological meaning as *letters of the alphabet*. The Latin ***elementum*** is simply a direct translation of the Greek ***stoicheion***. Another example of Plato's awareness of the primary meaning of ***stoicheion*** is found in *Timaeus* 48b-c: *'We speak of them* [**fire**, **earth**, **air**, **water**] *as* ***stoicheia*** *of the universe, although they may not be fittingly compared even to syllables.'* Note how coy Plato is over his intended meaning of the term. Elsewhere in *Timaeus* he uses the term 'elements' to mean various things. At 32 they define the body of the world, but at 30 he insists that the body of the world is just a copy of a more perfect model. Then at 35 they are cryptically implicated in the *soul* of the world. At 40 **fire**, **air**, **water** and **earth** represent four kinds of living creatures: gods, birds, fish and animals. At 42 the human soul with its *'limbs'* is related to the world soul. At 49 the elements are *'the receptacle of becoming.'* At 50 he insists that **fire**, **air**, **water** and **earth** refer to qualities rather than substances. The underlying 'material' has no definite character of its own and the elements stamp differing impressions upon it. At 51 the elements are modelled after *forms* that exist *'in themselves.'* Here he comes close to a musical implication since elsewhere numbers are examples of *forms*. At 53-56 the elements refer to regular geometrical patterns (square, triangle, pentagon) and the five geometrical solids derived from them. Here he associates the elements with geometrical powers of 2, 3, and 5. At 57 elements mean *'kinds'* or ***genus***, a concept related to *forms*. He goes on to connect elements to various senses. All of these variant meanings for the elements come from just one dialogue—the *Timaeus*! Plato refuses to be pinned down to a consistent doctrine, prefering to spin out alternatives that have varying degrees of musical associations. Nevertheless, the passage in *Sophist* shows that he was aware of the original primary meaning for the term ***stoicheion***.

We tend to associate the term ***stoicheion*** more with Aristotle, and rightly so. For Aristotle used it in a consistent manner to stand for his 'physical principles.' He was more forthcoming than Plato in citing his sources and Aristotle makes clear that the term was first introduced by the atomists. In various places (eg. *Genn. Corr.* 315b14, *Met.* 985b17) he speaks of the diverse ways in which letters may be arranged to form words and written texts to illustrate the infinite creative power (***dynameis***) of the atoms. Democritus evidently equated elements and atoms. Aristotle's fr. 208 says *'from the atoms as if from letters'* in reference to Democritus. Lucretius (1.196, 823) gave similar examples. Thus Aristotle, like Plato, was aware of the primary meaning of ***stoicheion*** as *letters*. Nevertheless, both philosophers were happy to redefine it in diverse ways to suit their own purposes.

Modern interpreters who are trying to understand the ancient meaning of ***stoicheion*** have entirely internalized Aristotle's definition of the term. Consequently, they fail to see any relevance or significance for the elements as *letters* of the alphabet. How can 'substances' be like letters apart from their ability to be combined and arranged to make various patterns? Typically, a musical perspective is entirely absent. Perpetuating a neo-Aristotelian stance, the orthodox modern viewpoint entirely misses or ignores the close association between *letters* and *numbers*. For the ancient Greeks commonly represented numbers by using letters. Thus a monochord number sequence

would appear as a sequence of letters. Just as groups of letters or words are governed by syntax, causing one sequence to be meaningful and another to be nonsense, so a similar form of *'grammar'* also governs monochord number sequences. Some patterns form useful harmonies while others are nonsense or at least frightfully exotic. In other words, the term ***stoicheion*** has a natural connection to canonics that is entirely ignored by Aristotle (purposefully) and by moderns (unwittingly). Once the connection is restored the Platonic passage above takes on added meaning. It is not at all arbitrary that he links expertise in *'grammar'* with musical expertise. Here we have a rare passage in which the musicality of the concept of elements is made almost explicit. The natural connection between elements and music was always present in ancient culture and it persists below the surface. After all, we still speak of the 'elements' of a musical scale when refering to the notes or components of the harmony. Moreover, musicians have long used *letters* to stand for musical notes. It was Aristotle who finally divorced all musical associations from his progressive 'scientific' conception of the elements.

The early Greek philosophers did not use the term *element*s, prefering the more musically transparent *roots* or *limbs*. (Democritus, of course, was a special case appearing at the end of the movement). However, all of these terms had natural associations with *numbers* in the context of canonics. The only aspect of elements as *letters* that is not quite clear is its lack of a distinction between prime and composite numbers. For it is specifically *prime numbers* that are the true elements. The rest are derivatives or 'compounds.' In this respect *roots* is a better description. However, the Platonic passage above even hints at the distinction between primes and composites through the analogy of vowels and consonants. The analogy works quite well when we apply 'letters' to a monochord. Of course, vowels can also refer to the strong harmonic norms (consonant ratios) and consonants to the dissonant ratios. Consonances *do* act *'like a bond'* and *'link'* everything together in the *'mixture.'* Note the phrase *'running though all of them,'* reminding us of Parmenides' *Prologue*. The whole passage is exquisitely musical.

Our passage of the *Sophist* continues by linking together elements or *'kinds'* with the esoteric science of *'dialectic.'* Moreover, it defines the philosopher as one who has expertise in this field. At this point we begin to learn more about the methodology of *'collection and division.'*

'VIS: Well then, we've agreed that kinds mix with each other in the same way. So if someone's going to show us correctly which kinds harmonize with which and which kinds exclude each other, doesn't he have to have some kind of knowledge as he proceeds through the discussion? And in addition doesn't he have to know whether there are any kinds that run through all of them and link them together to make them capable of blending, and also, when there are divisions, whether certain kinds running through wholes are always the cause of the division?

THE: Of course that requires knowledge—probably just about the most important kind.

VIS: So, Theaetetus, what shall we label this knowledge? Or for heavens's sake, without noticing have we stumbled on the knowledge that free people have? Maybe we've found the philosopher even though we were looking for the sophist?

THE: What do you mean?

VIS: Aren't we going to say that it takes expertise in dialectic to divide things by kinds and not to think that the same form is a different one or that a different form is the same?

THE: Yes.'

At the beginning of *Sophist* the participants had decided that the sophist, statesman and philosopher are three separate *'kinds.'* The rest of the dialogue consists of an effort to *'look for the sophist.'* The following dialogue, *Statesman*, does the same for the statesman. Unfortunately (but probably purposefully) Plato never got around to writing the dialogue *Philosopher*. However, in this passage we get a glimpse of what the philosopher is all about. Like the supreme rulers in *Republic*, he is an expert in dialectic, the esoteric science. We can be sure that this expertise involves more than just mundane classification. The philosopher's task is not only the organization of a filing system. Like the leaders in *Republic*, he has mastery of harmonics.

The musical undercurrent in the passage is again highlighted in the concern over *'which kinds harmonize with which.'* The underlying model is monochord based. I continue to emphasize this point because the prevalent modern exegesis of *Sophist* recognizes nothing musical whatsoever in it. Yet the specifications for his science are perfectly illustrated by invoking canonics. Indeed, they seem to make sense *only* in relation to a harmonic model. The continuing difficulties that modern interpreters have in comprehending Plato's obscure science stem from an inability (or refusal) to understand underlying monochord verities. When music was marginalized from philosophy the key was lost.

Plato uses *'kinds'* and *'forms'* interchangeably. Forms are ostensibly eternal unchanging 'objects,' each with a unique nature or character, which we grasp with our minds. Our senses experience only approximations or *'copies'* (some better, some worse) of these ideals. Forms are thus like *norms* toward which we strive. Plato generally talks about forms in vague or diversionary terms, such as the *'form of Beauty.'* However, the most perfect example of something that actually fits the specifications of a form is a musical *ratio*. Indeed, musical materials may be the *only* example in the real world of something that behaves in the way that Plato describes. For example, the ratio 2:3 (musical fifth) is a unique entity with a stable 'personality' but the efforts to actualize it on a monochord meet with varying degrees of success. The theory and the practice do not always synchronize. This is the case with all harmonies, since more complex harmonies are also wholes with similar properties to simple ratios. In other words, Plato's conception of forms has a covert practical foundation in canonics. Once we realize the presence of this foundation, Plato's description of their behaviour is no longer perplexing. It begins to make sense on its own terms. Some *'kinds'* blend with each other and exhibit strong consonances. Others are dissonant and tend to exclude each other—they do not belong in the same scale. Platonic forms behave exactly like musical harmonies.

Some *'kinds run through all of them and link them together to make them capable of blending.'* This property refers specifically to the MONAD and DYAD or the ratios 1:1 (unison) and 1:2 (octave). The One is omnipresent in every harmony and assures that it is a unique *whole*. Meanwhile, the 'power of the double' embodies the special property of cyclical identity, forming a 'house' in which complexity can be contained. It literally allows 'battling contenders' to co-exist within a higher structure, making it possible that incompatible higher primes can *'blend.'* As such the DYAD is the goddess who allows the birth of complexity and change while she herself remains *'motionless.'* The special properties of the MONAD and DYAD act as a 'yardstick' and permit all other ratios to *'run through'* each other, forming wholes within wholes at all architectonic levels of complexity.

Additionally, *'certain kinds running through wholes are always the cause of the division.'* In canonical work one always makes a *division*. The choice of division depends upon what prime elements are to be integrated into the fabric of the harmony. For example, let us begin conventionally with the octave 1:2 (which is the most fundamental division of the One whole). Say that we want to integrate the ratios 4:5 and 5:6 into the weave. The simplest harmony allowing such an inclusion is the sequence 3:4:5:6. In other words, the presence of the higher prime element (5) necessitates the octave to be expressed as 3:6 rather than 1:2. In this sense the ratios of 5 are the *'cause'* of the desired division. In general, we can state that higher primes and their 'compound' descendents form ratios that necessitate greater numerosity in the division. The commanding factors are, of course, prime numbers, the *roots* or *elements*.

The expert in dialectic knows how to *'divide things by kinds and not to think that the same form is a different one or that a different form is the same.'* This claim can be justified through canonics. In the first case the expert knows that the ratio 3:6 is the same harmony as 1:2. He is not confused by the specific numerosity of the division. In the second case he will not confuse 4:5 and 5:6, knowing that they are different natures or characters. In other words, the expert has a familiarity with the properties of ratios.

Our *Sophist* passage continues with a statement that has continued to perplex modern interpreters. The Eleatic visitor proceeds to specifiy more ways in which forms behave:

'VIS: So if a person can do that, he'll be capable of adequately discriminating a single form spread out all through a lot of other things, each of which stands separate from the others. In addition he can discriminate forms that are different from each other but are included within a single form that's outside them, or a single form that's connected as a unit throughout many wholes, or many forms that are completely separate from others. That's what it is to know how to discriminate by kinds how things can associate and how they can't.

THE: Absolutely.'

Without an understanding of the underlying canonics this passage is practically unintelligible. But it makes perfect sense once the context is restored. Plato demonstrates

four further instances of the characteric behaviour of his *'forms.'* I will explain them using two relatively simple 5-limit harmonies as our reference—3:4:5:6 (C G Eb C) and 4:5:6:8 (C Ab F C). These two harmonies represent any group of harmonies that are not identical to each other. My aim is to show that his statements are not obscure abstractions but rather verifiable properties of musical harmonies. As ever, Plato demonstrates that he is an astute student of canonics.

First of all, we can *'discriminate a single form spread out through a lot of other things, each of which stands separate from the others.'* Our two harmonies represent 'things separate from each other.' Yet both contain the single form 2:3 (musical fifth) expressed as 4:6 in the first harmony (between G C) and the second (between C F). In other words, different harmonies can contain common ratios or other subset materials.

Secondly, we can *'discriminate forms that are different from each other but are included within a single form that's outside them.'* Our two harmonies 3:4:5:6 and 4:5:6:8 are demonstrably different from each other. But both of them can be included in the least common multiple harmony 12:15:16:18:20:24 (C Ab G F Eb C). This harmony stands *'outside'* the other two but contains them as subsets. In other words, harmonies that differ from each other can be integrated into the same 'house' by finding a superset harmony through the use of least common multiples.

Thirdly, we have *'a single form that's connected as a unity throughout many wholes.'* Jowett (The Dialogues of Plato, Vol. 2, 262) translated it *'one form knit together into a single whole and pervading many such wholes.'* The best example here is the simple octave ratio. The Greeks called it ***diapason***, literally *'running through all the notes.'* The name is entirely appropriate and aptly describes the character of the DYAD.

In the fourth instance we have *'many forms that are completely separate from others.'* Here we can refer back to our two sample harmonies that are not identical and hence separate from each other. White offered the alternative translation *'many forms that are all marked off in separation.'* We could have used as examples any number of alternative divisions.

Plato has used a musical model to show *'how to discriminate by kinds how things can associate and how they can't.'* To a large extent his statements are practically meaningless without the musical model. Hence they serve as strong circumstancial evidence that the musical model underpins his conception of forms. Modern exasperation with Plato's obscurity arises because of an unwillingness to apply 'musical thinking' to the issue. According to the modern estimation forms exist as intellectual abstractions (eg. the form of Beauty) subject to classification but with no connection to a practical musical model whatsoever. As far as they are concerned the monochord does not even exist. In fact, many attempt to delay its 'invention' to Hellenistic times and blandly assume that tuning issues have no relevance for ancient philosophy. Plato is partly to blame for this situation, since he rarely ever makes his canonical foundation explicit. But the passage in the *Sophist* demonstrates the efficacy of the canonical model. A musical understanding opens up the world of ancient philosophy to intelligibility on its own terms.

The passage of *Sophist* ends with a contrast between the sophist and the philosopher. Here the language points more directly to Parmenides. This reference is apparent through the deployment of the images *'light and darkness'* as well as *'being and non-being'* and what *'seems to be.'* At this juncture in the dialogue Plato also lapses back into satire or dark humor—a stance that is abundantly apparent in much of the composition.

'VIS: And you'll assign this dialectical activity only to someone who has a pure and just love of wisdom.

THE: You certainly couldn't assign it to anyone else.

VIS: We'll find that the philosopher will always be in a location like this if we look for him. He's hard to see clearly too, but not in the same way as the sophist.

THE: Why not?

VIS: The sophist runs off into the darkness of ***that which is not****, which he's had practice dealing with, and he's hard to see because the place is so dark. Isn't that right?*

THE: It seems to be.

VIS: But the philosopher always uses reasoning to stay near the form, ***being****. He isn't at all easy to see because that area is so bright and the eyes of most people's souls can't bear to look at what's divine.*

THE: That seems just as right as what you just said before.'

To recap: Plato's difficult science is a thinly disguised analog of canonics. It only makes sense on its own terms when *'forms'* act as generalizations of harmonies. The musical nature of his *'kinds'* explains the importance of *elements* in the framework. A conception of elements as *roots* and materials of harmony is indispensible to a sonic perspective. In tying these issues to the philosopher Plato is confirming the inherent musicality of early philosophy. For all of the Musical philosophers had something to say about elements.

PARMENIDES AND PLATO'S *PARMENIDES*

No essay on Parmenides is complete without some discussion of Plato's late dialogue, the *Parmenides*. Modern interpretations of the historical Parmenides are inevitably colored by Plato's enigmatic composition, even though everyone agrees that his portrait probably has little connection to the actual Parmenides. But the *Parmenides* is Plato's most difficult dialogue. Its complexity cannot be adequately treated in a few pages. Consequently, my treatment must focus mainly on an overview that highlights his parody of Eleatic methods. I aim to convey something of the convoluted and colored atmosphere surrounding the composition.

The *Parmenides* may be interpreted as a cryptic homage to Parmenides, just as the *Cratylus* is a homage to Heraclitus. Since Parmenides was undoubtedly the most problematic of the early philosophers, Plato has written a piece in which he aims to outdo Parmenides at his own game. Nothing *seems* to be what it is on the surface—truth and seeming are mixed in a maze of satirical black humor that sends Parmenides 'up the

river.' Not only the portrait of Parmenides itself but also the contents of the dialogue are problematic to the extreme. This obscurity is surely deliberate.

Something of the atmosphere can be seen in the short introduction (126a-127d). It has already been discussed early in this essay concerning Parmenides' dates. The unprecedented triple frame throws into doubt the accuracy of Cephalus' account and the supposed historicity of a conversation between Socrates, Parmenides, and Zeno. Moreover, the undercurrent of sexual humor affects a subtle character assassination of the great philosophers. He is giving us a signal that nothing is as it appears.

In the *Parmenides* Plato reverses the normal role of Socrates and his conversers. Generally the interlocutor states a position or doctrine and then Socrates subjects it to critical cross-examination. But here the young Socrates advocates a doctrine (the Platonic theory of forms) and then the 'master' philosopher Parmenides proceeds to tear it to pieces. It is highly unlikely that the historical Socrates ever held such a position. Indeed, he was known not to have a doctrine of his own, but rather to act as a 'midwife' for the doctrines of others. Socrates is obviously a literary fiction here. Moreover, we cannot assume that Plato's own views co-incide with Socrates, Parmenides, or any other character in the dialogue. Some scholars would like to see Socrates as representing Plato's younger self and Parmenides as the older Plato who is heroically questioning his own doctrine of forms. But it is not clear that Plato is endorsing *any* of the perspectives presented in the composition. Be that as it may, it *seems* that Plato is undermining the very doctrine on which his fame as a philosopher ultimately rests.

The theory of forms permeates most of his compositions. He discusses it openly in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, but the *Parmenides* is the only dialogue that deals with the theory of forms as the explicit focus of attention. We have seen elsewhere that the theory is monochord based and justified through practical canonics. But in the *Parmenides* the underlying musical verities are purposefully twisted and distorted so that they can be 'disproved' by using examples of Eleatic 'logic.' The relevant musical entities become highly abstracted and elusive. Moreover, the logical arguments are notoriously baffling and contain various blatant fallacies. They should be judged as purposeful parodies of Eleatic methods. It appears that the unstated sub-text of the dialogue is an attack on Parmenides who, after all, did more than anyone in unwittingly promoting the rise of scepticism and the ultimate corrosion of the old musical paradigm. Plato is adopting an Eleatic perspective so that we can be 'led astray.'

The layout of the dialogue also displays apparent echoes of Parmenides' famous poem. After the brief introduction it breaks into two unequal and seemingly self-contained parts with a brief transition between them. The first part (127d-135c, about one-quarter of the dialogue) is lively, conversational, and more accessible. There is a brief discussion of Zeno's book (itself a difficult topic). Then Socrates makes a long speech giving his proposal about forms. Thereafter Parmenides criticizes the proposal rather decisively. Socrates admits defeat. In the brief transitional passage (135c-137c) Parmenides states surprisingly that there must be forms after all if we are to preserve '*dialectic*' (135c). Socrates' problem is simply that he has posited forms '*too soon*,'

before he has been '*properly trained*' in the logic of *dialectic* (***dialegesthai***, also translated *discourse* and related to ***logos***). The second part (137c-166c, a good three-quarters of the dialogue) consists of a lengthy demonstration of the sort of training Parmenides has in mind (the '*exercise*'). At this point the writing style changes into a series of dry deductions—one long, relentless stretch of arguments, lacking in social interaction and the play of character that we see in the first part. The content of the second part is extremely controversial. It isn't hard to recognize here that the second part is an echo of Parmenides' *Way of Truth* while the first part (by default) suggests the *Way of Seeming*. Plato's dialogue has probably influenced the historical tendency to divide Parmenides' poem itself into two neat and self-contained 'halves.' But of course, the balance is reversed. In Parmenides' poem the obscure deductions of the *Way of Truth* only formed about one-quarter of the poem; here they make up three-quarters of the writing. Plato is determined to beat Parmenides in the obscurity game.

The two parts of Plato's dialogue prove so radically different in writing style that many scholars have conjectured that they are separate compositions—written at different times and then rather awkwardly patched together in the transitional section. Students of Plato will often treat them as entirely separable, studying the first part and ignoring the second part as too difficult. The first part has provoked much comment from scholars, but the second part has proved to be too difficult a mountain to climb for most. Moreover, the value of the second part (most of the composition!) is entirely controversial. Some scholars (eg. Cornford, Miller) find in it a magnificent metaphysical system and attempt to defend the logical arguments in all seriousness. Others (eg. Russell, Ryle) see in it a great collection of philosophical puzzles that continues Zeno's tradition of antinomies and paradoxes. Still others (eg. Burnet, Cherniss) claim that the composition is a veiled parody of earlier philosophers (Parmenides and Zeno) by using arguments like theirs. This third approach has gone increasingly out of fashion, but it makes the most sense. Of course, the third interpretation does not deny elements of the other two. Nevertheless, the *Parmenides* elevates satire to an unprecedented level of intellectual sophistication. Such humor is a fitting tribute to the Eleatic school whose founder, Xenophanes, was a great satirist.

The controlling issue of the *Parmenides* is familiar to ancient philosophy: the One and the Many. Socrates raises the topic early on (128b): *'You* [Parmenides] *say in your poem that* ***the all is one*** [***hen einai to pan***], *and you give splendid and excellent proofs for that; he* [Zeno], *for his part, says that it is not many and gives a vast array of very grand proofs of his own. So, with one of you saying 'one,' and the other 'not many,' and with each of you speaking in a way that suggests that you've said nothing the same—although you mean practically the same thing—what you've said you* ***appear*** *to have said over the heads of the rest of us.'* Detailed discussion of Zeno's book is best postponed until the chapter on Zeno. Suffice it to say that Socrates proposes the theory of forms in order to overcome a contradiction in Zeno. If things are many, they must be both like and unlike; but this impossible because the same things cannot have incompatible properties. Therefore things are not many (127a). In his long speech Socrates proposes to resolve this contradiction by suggesting that we (129a) '*partake of forms*' and that forms themselves are not subject to such a compresence of opposites—they do not admit their

opposites. A form (eg. of likeness) exists '*itself, by itself*'—a property never unambiguously explained. He challenges Parmenides to show that this is not so.

Of course, the contradiction is itself suspect. The same thing *can* have incompatible properties in relation to different things or different times. I can be like my brother since we are both male, but unlike him in my musical tastes. In other words, Socrates' statement is underdetermined and the contradiction is only *apparent*, a seeming. However, Socrates takes the problem at face value and launches into the discussion. This example is only one of many instances in which pseudo-problems and dubious paradoxes drive the dialogue. Such ruses form a key component in the parody of Eleatic methodological 'logic.'

Parmenides adroitly points out various difficulties that infect Socrates' theory (130b-134e). Socrates (ever the 'fall guy' in this burlesque) gives him ample ammunition by assuming that the one cannot be *both* one and many—the one is *incompatible* with the many. But this assumption is itself a ruse and Plato knows it. He is fully aware that in the old Musical conception the one and the many are inseparable—two sides of the same coin. An important element in the comedy is the retooling of the 'one and many' away from its musical roots. The one (or oneness) becomes *'the one thing'* so that, for example, Parmenides' philosophy would imply that reality consists of just one *thing*. The manifold becomes *'the others,'* conveniently denying its architectonic wholeness. Plato gets a lot of mileage out of this travesty as he squeezes every 'logical' absurdity possible out of this artificial assumption. It forms the basis for much of the discussion. In Part 1 Parmenides shows the inadequacy of Socrates' position by repeatedly proving that forms are not one but many. Moreover, the relations between one and many turn out to be suspiciously problematic. By the end of the session Socrates is forced to admit that forms, if they exist, have no relation to us or we to them. We are faced with epistemological scepticism, a condition supposedly ameliorated by the proposed 'exercise.'

Much of the parody hinges on the reconceptualization of musical materials away from their proper reference. For example, some instances of apparently genuine forms *are* mentioned in the dialogue. They consistently pair by opposites: one and many, like and unlike, in motion and at rest, being and not-being, limited and unlimited, the same and different, equal and unequal, largeness and smallness, in contact and not in contact, and so forth. All of these examples have strong musical referents, but the musical basis is assiduously avoided. Instead, a very unmusical picture is presented and associated in a subtle manner with the Eleatic philosopher. Plato may well be subconsciously blaming Parmenides for the destruction of the old musical paradigm.

Plato's arguments are notoriously baffling, especially in Part 2 but essentially everywhere. He sometimes uses blatant fallacies. At times valid arguments rely on false premises. He probably made a few inadvertent mistakes but it is important to note that most of the errors are quite deliberate. If there is an obvious route to a conclusion he ignores it and instead takes a circuitous route. Many arguments are highly tortuous or at least very peculiar. Moreover, the concepts of *'the one'* and other terms are engaged in as abstract and elusive a manner as they can possibly be. Plato never made clear to what *'the*

one' refers. Many modern commentators take this to mean that he is expounding some advanced metaphysics, but it is much more likely that he is consciously mimicking Parmenides in a satirical and corrosive manner. This intent would explain why he explores issues that appear in Parmenides' poem: one and many, whole and parts (130e-131e), and forms as thoughts (132b-c)—parodying Parmenides' fragment equating thinking and being. Many oblique and twisted references to Parmenides' mystical poem appear—all with the effect of ridiculing it or distorting it in some subtle or devious manner. Surely the persistent use of faulty logic is itself a pointed commentary on the Eleatics.

The very heights of irony and *double entendre* are reached in the transition to Part 2 (134e-137e). After demolishing the theory of forms Parmenides states that we must nevertheless save it in order to preserve *'dialectic.'* Hence we would expect that he will now defend the old musical paradigm that he has just destroyed. Instead he proposes an elaborate *'exercise'* as training for grasping *'the truth.'* We are reminded of Parmenides' *'path of persuasion that attends upon Truth.'* That exercise will use rigorous logic of the sort apparently found in Parmenides and Zeno, as it explores the 'true' relation between the one and many. True to form, instead of rehabilitating the presocratic paradigm Plato's arguments in Part 2 generate the most baffling confusion. We are left wondering if he *ever* intended to defend the theory of forms after all. By the end of the composition it seems that the theory of forms has been dealt a serious blow.

The most blatant and obscure absurdities abound. For example, consider the very end of the dialogue (166c). Here he sums up all the various arguments and ties them together to form a tight conclusion. *'Let us then say this* [i.e., if one is not, nothing is] – *and also that,* ***as it seems****, whether one is or is not, it and the others both are and are not, and both appear and do not appear all things in all ways, both in relation to themselves and in relation to each other.'* Can such a statement possibly be taken seriously? Surely this passage parodies Parmenides' conception of the All, as well as the classical notion that 'all is steered through all.' Note that this summary is dominated by the words *'as it seems'* (***hos eoiken***), an obvious pointed jab at Parmenides. We are reminded of the book by the Sophist Gorgias in which he proves by Eleatic logic that *'nothing exists.'* Part 2 does *not* intend to rehabilitate or clarify the old understanding of the one and the many. Rather, it demonstrates a *tour-de-force* of Eleatic pseudo-logic gone wild. Surely the intent is satirical and not a sincere attempt at advanced metaphysics, as many modern scholars contend.

On the surface, the exercise plan seems reasonable enough. Parmenides will use the method of Zeno: start with a hypothesis, demonstrate incompatible properties and then reject the hypothesis. In addition, the speaker must also consider the relevent counter-hypothesis and look at the consequences that follow. Here Plato is again having a dig at the historical Parmenides who said in his poem that only one path (being, the Whole, the All) is knowable, its opposite (not-being, the void) is indiscernible. We should also note that Plato's satire is directed at Zeno (and Xenophanes) just as much as it is at Parmenides. In the chapter on Zeno more must be said concerning the *Parmenides*.

The 'philosophical' exercise is to have two parts, starting from two opposed hypotheses: the one is and the one is not. Both are to be treated equally. The many are also approached in the same way. Here is part of Plato's own explanation of the methodology (136a-b): *'If many are, what must the consequences be both for the many themselves in relation to themselves and in relation to the one, and for the one in relation to itself and in relation to the many? And, in turn, on the hypothesis, if many are not, you must again examine what the consequences will be both for the one and for the many in relation to themselves and in relation to each other.'* Thus we are to consider the consequences both for the 'entity' (or entities) and for *'something else.'* In addition, we are to contemplate both positive and negative consequences. It appears that all possible situations are to be covered 'democratically.' Finally, the method should be repeated with other entities besides one and many, for example, likeness and unlikeness, limited and unlimited, and so on. Evidently this procedure will lead to real understanding (136c): *'All this you must do if, after completing your training, you are to achieve a full view of the truth.'*

Parmenides chooses the youngest person present, Aristotle, as his respondent rather than Socrates. Presumably Aristotle will cause the least trouble and not interfere with the course of Parmenides' rigorous deductions. This Aristotle is apparently not the great fourth-century philosopher, but rather a young companion of Socrates who later (404 B.C.) became one of the Thirty Tyrants in Athens at the end of the Peloponnesian War. However, the philosopher Aristotle *was* a diseffected pupil of Plato who set up a rival philosophical school. Consequently, Plato may have chosen his name purposefully in order to mock his great rival in this late dialogue. As ever, Plato shows great capacity for subtle forms of polemic.

It simply is not possible here to do a thorough analysis of the arguments and counterarguments in Part 2 or Part 1 either. Yet something like an analysis is necessary in order to get an idea of the Parmenidean flavor of the composition. Hence I present an all too brief bare-bones precis of the deduction conclusions. Hopefully the reader will recognize the many Parmenidean echoes, even though it isn't possible here to explain all of the twisted parallels.

Deduction 1 (137c-142a): If the one is one, what are the negative consequences for the one? If it is one, it is not many. It is not a whole and has no parts. It has no beginning, middle or end. It is unlimited and without shape. It has no location, not in another or in itself. It is not in motion nor at rest (re. Xenophanes). It is not the same as nor different from another or itself. It is not like nor unlike another or itself. It is not equal nor unequal to another or itself. It is not older nor younger than (or even the same age as) itself or another. In fact, it is not in time at all. The one is not, nor is it one. The one cannot be named or spoken of, and is not the object of opinion, knowledge, or perception.

Deduction 2 (142b-155e): If one is, what are the positive consequences for the one? It partakes of being, but being is different from oneness. The one is a whole and has parts. It is unlimited in multitude, yet limited. It has a beginning, middle and end. It has shape and location, both in itself and in a different thing. It is in motion and at rest. It is

the same as and different from the others and itself. It is like and unlike the others and itself. It touches and does not touch the others and itself. It is equal and unequal to the others and itself, having measures (and parts) equal to, and more and fewer than, itself and the others. It partakes of time—past, present, and future. It comes to be older and younger than itself and the others and yet neither comes to be older or younger than itself and the others. The one is named and spoken of, and is the object of opinion, knowledge, and perception.

Deductions 1 and 2 form an *antinomy*—a contradiction between conclusions of deductive arguments that seem equally reasonable. The conclusions of deduction 1 are initially surprising and absolutely counter-intuitive, but *seem* 'plausible' when we recognize that he is examining what the one is '*itself, by itself*,' solely in virtue of its supposed oneness. But of course, this cryptic conception of oneness has been irrevocably twisted away from the old Musical sense. Note the many Parmenidean themes that are touched: being and not-being, whole and parts, limited and unlimited, motion and rest, in time and not in time, naming, knowledge, opinion, and perception. The presentation of a contradiction is itself an echo of Parmenides and Zeno.

Deductions 1 and 2 prove to be more extensive than the following ones. They set the standard for the rest. Later arguments sometimes build on the results of the first two. Deductions 1 and 2 can also be distinguished by having an added commentary, generally called by modern interpreters 'the appendix.' This title is not supported by Plato's text but seems appropriate enough. The Neoplatonist Proclus (*Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*) used these sections to contrive a rather unlikely Hellenistic explanation: Deduction 1 is about the one beyond being, deduction 2 is about the second hypostasis (*mind*, ***nous***), the third (the appendix) is about the third hypostasis (*soul*), and so on. By using this schema Proclus could claim that the pairs of positive and negative deductions concern different 'entities,' thus nullifying the contradiction. Various other historical commentators have tried similar defences of the arguments, generally just as contrived. The contradiction cannot be neutralized so easily. Meanwhile, Plato revels in the antagonism—it is obviously intentional and aimed at Parmenides' fragment 2.

Appendix (155e-157b): If the one is as described in Deductions 1 and 2, and it exists in time, what are the consequences for it? Deduction 1 concludes that the one is neither one nor many, while deduction 2 claims that it is both one and many. Therefore the one must partake of being (one and many) at one time and not partake of it at another time. It gets a share of being and parts from that share at a different but definite time. It comes-to-be and ceases-to-be when it gets and releases being. Coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be describe a state of motion while being (and not-being) describe a state of rest. The one must change from the one state to the other. When an object *changes* from motion to rest, it is neither in motion nor at rest. But there is *no time* in which the object can be in neither state. Thus the change occurs in an instant, which is not in time. At this instant of change the one is neither in motion nor at rest, neither being nor not-being, neither coming-to-be nor ceasing-to-be. A similar situation exists with other opposed states and processes.

The appendix is particularly twisted but above all it paints a peculiar situation which stands *outside time*. As such it mocks Parmenides' effort to express an aspect of the old paradigm utterly transcendent of time. The elimination of time is put into a new context of dubious value. The compresence of motion and rest is another mainstay of the Musical paradigm 'royally' treated here. Being and not-being likewise. This section of the composition is outstanding in its degree of color. He is on a roll, as the following deductions also demonstrate. The appendix tries to overcome the logical Law of Non-contradiction by imputting a factor of time. But by focussing on the instant of change it also violates the Law of Excluded Middle. The solution proposed in the appendix evidently does not work and leaves us uneasy about his intentions.

Deduction 3 (157b-159b): If one is, what are the positive consequences for the others? The others are not the one, but the others must somehow partake of the one (as wholes and parts). The others are many. As they get a share of the one they are in themselves unlimited in multitude. On the other hand, by partaking of the one, they partake of a limit. The others are both like and unlike each other and themselves. They have all sides of the opposite properties.

Deduction 4 (159b-160b): If one is, what are the negative consequences for the others? If the one is, it is separate from the others and the others are separate from it. The others are in no way one. The others are not even many. They cannot be like or unlike the one. The others have no other properties. Consequently (summarizing deductions 1 to 4) the one is all things and is not even one, both in relation to itself and the others.

Note that deductions 3 and 4 form another antinomy. Setting aside the appendix, the arguments form consistent pairs of antinomies: 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, 7 and 8. However, Plato has broken the clean reflective symmetry with the appendix as the added solitary 'ninth' section. The decision to step beyond the traditional 'eight' is itself a form of parody, since the significance of 'the eight' is deeply embedded in the old musical perspective. Moreover, the pairs of deductions divide according to a musically intuitive and anti-intuitive conclusion. In this case, deduction 3 is more consistent with the 'common sense' classical musical model while deduction 4 is mostly inconsistent with it. The dichotomy along musical lines proves to be evident to some degree in the other pairs as well. For example, deduction 2 has much more in common with the old paradigm than does deduction 1, although both have their 'opposition' as well. As a generalization (possibly dangerous) we could say that the 'positive consequence' conclusions tend to be more 'pro-musical' while the negatives are decidedly 'anti.' Again we see a takeoff on Parmenides, who strove to reveal a mystical aspect of the Musical model so sublime as to be paradoxically unmusical. Plato's parody puts the 'contest' into a different intellectual setting.

Deduction 5 (160b-163b): If one is not, what are the positive consequences for the one? If it is not, it is nevertheless knowable. It is different from the others and they are different from it. It partakes of such expressions as *'that, something, this, these'* etc. The one is both like and unlike: unlike the others and like itself. The one is both equal and unequal: unequal to the others and equal to itself. It somehow partakes of being and also

not-being. It is both in motion and at rest. It is both altered and not altered. The one both comes-to-be and ceases-to-be and yet does not come-to-be or cease-to-be.

Deduction 6(163b-164b): If one is not, what are the negative consequences for the one? In this case the one in no way partakes of being. It neither comes-to-be nor ceases-to-be. It is not altered. It is neither in motion nor at rest. Nothing that is belongs to the one. The others are not related to it, neither like nor unlike it, and neither the same nor different. Terms like *'that, something, this'* etc. are not applicable to what is not. Time itself (past, now, future) is not applicable to what is not. Knowledge, opinion, perception, an account, naming and so on also have no relevance. The one is in no state at all. (These conclusions contradict deduction 5).

Deduction 5 is the first of the group (5 to 8) that considers if the one is not. By saying that the one '*is not*' he proposes that the one '*partakes of*' not-being and treats not-being as a characteristic on a par with being. Partaking of this property in no way deprives it of other properties and relations. These properties confer onto the one some sense of being, as noted in this particularly tortuous passage (162a): *'Therefore, **as it seems**, the one **is** a not-being; for if it is not to **be** a not-being, but is somehow to give up its being in relation to not-being, it will straightway be a being.'* Here Plato is playing with the meaning of being and not-being. His argument also hinges on some cryptic non-musical notion of participation or *relation*, echoing the importance of ***logos*** in ancient philosophy. Deduction 6 then contradicts 5 by saying that if the one in no way partakes of being it can have no other characteristics either. Here Plato is asking how we can even talk about something that is nothing at all, for example, can we coherently say 'Pegasus does not exist.' Maybe we should not use words like 'something' when there is nothing—no object—that we are talking about. If the one is not to be discussed we should talk about '*other things*' instead. We are led into deductions 7 and 8.

Deduction 7 (164b-165e): If one is not, what are the positive consequences for the others? The others must be other than each other. They are masses unlimited in multitude. The others appear one but are not really so. There *seem* to be a *number* of others and some appear to be *even*, some *odd*, but they aren't really so. The others appear unequal and equal, limited and unlimited. A mass appears to have a limit in relation to another mass, but it is unlimited because it appears to have no beginning, end, or middle in relation to itself. In addition, it appears one from far off but unlimited up close. The others seem to be both like and unlike themselves and each other. The many *appear* to have all the other opposites available.

Deduction 8 (165e-166c): If one is not (but things other than the one are), what are the negative consequences for the others? In this case the others are neither one nor many. They don't appear one or many. In fact, the others neither are nor appear to be anything at all. Therefore nothing is.

Deductions 7 and 8 form the final antinomy, making four pairs altogether. Deduction 8 is rigorously unadorned and abstract, but 7 stands out against the others for its more vivid imagery. It has a good assortment of pro-musical attributes characteristic

of a 'positive consequent' argument. Indeed, it comes close to revealing a core musical element when the properties (even and odd) of numbers come into play. Musical issues are nevertheless effectively sidetracked. Above all, this argument puts peculiar emphasis on *appearances*. Nothing is as it seems. Although the whole dialogue has supported this thesis, argument 7 gives it peculiar emphasis. Plato's literary 'Way of Truth' is obsessed by seeming or '*opinion*' (***doxa***). The theory of forms was meant to save us from this 'counterfeit' but it too is thrown into question. Plato ends this 'logical' composition with his extraordinary summary of all the conclusions, reiterated here: *'Whether one is or is not, it and the others both are and are not, and both appear and do not appear all things in all ways, both in relation to themselves and in relation to each other'*—as it seems! What are we to make of this ending? The arguments have expressed multiple contradictions. Have they provided an insight or even a clue about 'the truth?' I think not, nor were they so intended.

From a wider perspective, the layout of the four pairs of antinomies appears comprehensive. The eight arguments alternate positive and negative, covering all the statistical possibilities. The normative arrangement is reinforced by the initial affirmation and denial: arguments 1 to 4 affirm that the one is while 5 to 8 deny that the one is. Plato has taken pains to display how 'logical' his investigation is, but he has also left signs that it is only a scaffold for deception. For example, the neat alternation of pairs (positive, negative) is broken by arguments 1 and 2 (negative, positive). It is then followed by the appendix as a foreign element outside the normative eight altogether. The schema suggests that the eight deductions should be given roughly equal value but Plato does not do so. In fact, there is a real attempt at progression in the arguments. Deduction 2 tries to reassess 1, then the appendix tries to reconcile arguments 1 and 2. Later arguments also build on conclusions from the early ones. Plato manages to reduce repetition to a minimum and give the impression that his '*dialectic*' has a logical direction. The later arguments may be shorter than 1 and 2, but they are just as controversial and even more so. We are left with the impression that the schema was only a convenient framework in which the content could be adroitly manipulated to appear progressive. Like other aspects of the composition, the appearance of a logical progression is an elaborate ruse.

Modern readers naturally prefer to support the affirmative proposal (the one is) espoused in deductions 1 to 4. Hence there is a tendency to look for and find more 'errors' in arguments 5 to 8. The conclusion of deduction 8—if one is not, nothing is—often gets used to support the notion that the one *must* be. After all, there *is* a world to be explained. Scholars who think that Plato is 'serious' sometimes claim that he actually *does* favor one side over another. They look for flaws in the counter-arguments. But Plato may never have intended us to read the *Parmenides* in this manner. Everything about the dialogue exhibits such an advanced level of ambiguity that it proves to be a masterful anti-Eleatic mock laudation. We may find deduction 3 more appealing in its constructive 'common sense' results, but it is immediately negated by deduction 4. In other words, it is dangerous to assume that Plato has any more commitment to either side of the contradiction. Modern interpreters usually attempt to save Plato from himself and assume that he *must* be supporting the existence of the one (and forms) underneath it all.

Perhaps the core issues of the *Parmenides* are best focused in deductions 3 and 4. Argument 3 proposes that the one is altogether one and that the others somehow partake of it. Deduction 4 then negates 3 by indicating that if the one is altogether one and in no way many, the others cannot partake of it. For if the others were to partake of the one, they would fragment it into many so that it is no longer one. This notion that if the one is one it cannot be many dominates not only Part 2 but also Part 1. Socrates assumed it in his long speech and challenged Parmenides to refute it (129d-130a). Rather than doing so, Parmenides triumphally used it in deduction 4 to overthrow deduction 3. Arguments 1 and 2 also rely on the same assumption—that the one cannot be both one and many. This very unmusical thesis forms the main source for Plato's deliberations.

Closely allied to it is the vexed issue of *participation* and the whole-part dilemma. What *is* the relation between physical things and forms? Indeed, what sort of 'entities' are forms themselves? In middle period dialogues such as *Republic* and *Phaedo*, the canonical model is more consistently adopted, almost in a positivistic manner (and not altogether serious but touched by satirical moments). Here and in other late dialogues (such as *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Philebus*, *Theaetetus*, *Laws*) the stand is more problematic, even sceptical. Plato is returning to his Sophist roots. In Part 1 Socrates is asked to clarify his position (130e-131a): *'But tell me this: is it your view that, as you say, there are certain forms, from which these other things, by getting a share of them, derive their names—as, for instance, they come to be like by getting a share of likeness, large by getting a share of largeness, and just and beautiful by getting a share of justice and beauty?' 'It certainly is,' Socrates replied.'* The form and the *name* are closely connected. Things are properly named after the forms in which they participate. But just what is participation? The meaning is elusive and purposefully so. In the *Parmenides* Plato uses the terms ***metalambanein*** (to get a share), ***metexein*** (to partake), ***metesti*** (has a share) and ***koinonia*** (communion)—none of them clearly explained. When pressed for an account of participation, Socrated agrees to two exhausive alternatives: each thing gets as its share of a form either a *whole* form or a *part* of it. Parmenides then proceeds to destroy both legs: a whole form cannot be in a number of things because it would be '*separate from itself*' by being in things separate from each other (131a-b). On the other hand, using the analogy of a sail covering several people, forms are divisible and things partake only of a part. But if a form is divisible it is no longer one. In this case a form is just an aggregate of scattered parts (reference to Parmenides' 'scattering and gathering'). Both legs are problematic.

Plato furthers the ruse by treating wholes and parts in as unmusical a way as he can. They become merely quantities of stuff that 'things' get a share of. A whole is larger than its parts and a mere aggregate of parts. This conception may work for a sail, but Plato applies it to abstract entities such as '*smallness*.' The form of smallness is small in conformity with its nature, but it is also large because it is a whole (which is larger than its parts). A regress follows (132a-b). Such 'logic' takes Parmenides' musical conception of the Whole or the All and distorts it beyond recognition. Elsewhere in the composition 'whole and parts' are discussed in a similar fashion. His treatment of this issue constitutes a blatant roasting of the matter that is central to the historical Parmenides. Plato himself

called the Eleatics '*partisans of the whole*' (*Theaetetus* 181a). The concept of wholeness is placed in an entirely new context that buries the central musical issue in Parmenides.

The *Parmenides* holds a prominent position in the writings of Plato. Most scholars agree that it forms the boundary between his middle period and his late period. Dialogues such as the *Sophist, Statesman, Theaetetus* and *Philebus* are assumed to be written after the *Parmenides*, since they refer to it in various ways. Although we cannot know the true order in which the dialogues were actually written, we can be sure that these late works form a tight group. The *Timaeus* is also often called a late dialogue but it has more characteristics of the middle period. It has likely been misplaced. *Laws* also seems to stand apart from the rest, though it too is undoubtedly late. What characterizes all of the late dialogues is a certain ambivalence between 'tragedy and comedy.' The writing is more dense, more eliptical, more abstruse and more problematic in its meaning. Perhaps some element of profound sophistic scepticism underpins it. At any rate, many of the 'anti-musical' or at least unmusical conceptions that also infect Aristotle's work have roots here. Aristotle appears to take many of Plato's 'comedies' quite seriously. Consequently, the *Parmenides* has much importance in the development of fourth century philosophy.

The *Parmenides* raises a disturbing issue that most modern interpreters would rather ignore. Just how much of the satirical intent found in these late works is also to be found in the historical Eleatics? Xenophanes is certainly credited with satirical genius but he is also carefully isolated from Parmenides and Zeno. These later two are generally treated with the utmost one-dimensional seriousness, as if they were actually trying to say what they mean and mean what they say. We will see later that the satirical intent is not completely absent in Zeno either. Could Parmenides' *Way of Truth* also be so calculated? Quite possibly. Even if we admit an element of 'comedy' in his poem, Parmenides was surely reaching for a conception of Music so transcendent that it can only be described as paradoxically unmusical. A satirical method is not necessarily incompatible with this lofty aim. The very subtlety of Parmenides' anti-musical argument demonstrates an advanced level of proficiency in the historical poet. Plato's *Parmenides* is certainly an extraordinary satirical landmark, but the achievement of the actual Parmenides is still greater. His treatment of the paradoxical puts him right in the middle of the philosophical movement, a position shared with Heraclitus.

Through the later fifth and especially the fourth centuries, as the old musical model slowly corroded and misunderstandings multiplied, the distinction between 'comedy and tragedy' became increasingly blurred and misplaced. In particular, Aristotle lacked a certain empathy with Plato and tried to put philosophy on a more sensible and prosaic foundation. Enough of this mystical-musical Platonic nonsense, he must have thought. We moderns have internalized Aristotle's perspective to such a degree that the early (musical) philosophers have become an alien world—and Plato is arguably (in some respects) the last of the early philosophers. We must learn to read Plato (like Parmenides) in a different way than our reading of Aristotle. For the poetic Muses (according to Hesiod) say many false things resembling the truth but also utter true things when they wish. Truth and seeming are irrevocably mixed in some variable proportion. As

Heraclitus said, the Delphic oracle gives only a sign—the hearer must interpret it as he may. Plato's writings reveal not only 'surface' meanings but also hints of depths—hidden (oral) doctrines never discussed in writing. This very feature makes Plato so much more interesting to read than Aristotle. Plato still preserves some of the multi-dimensional poetic ambivalence that animated Parmenides and Heraclitus as well as their master Xenophanes. The likely source for this potent embodiment of radicalism is Anaximander who contemplated the problematic analog All.

CONCLUSION

Parmenides represents the poetic flowering of a tendency in early philosophy: the disposition toward a paradox as the means for expressing deeper aspects of the old Musical paradigm. The model itself is not yet being questioned as such, only explored in a profound and sometimes irreverent manner. The paradox can present itself as a grand overarching cunundrum (in Parmenides) or as numerous paradoxes with related referents (in Heraclitus). These tendencies can also be found in various poets and dramatists of the time. Parmenides' poem really belongs to the tradition of the Orphic poets, who invented theogonies along musical lines and commented on the elements of ***harmonia***. The modern separation of Parmenides' work from the sixth century Greek poetic tradition is a serious mistake. The roots of this error (as usual) go back to Plato and Aristotle. Fourth century thinkers wanted to 'intellectualize' Parmenides like the other early philosophers. The change of mind-set resulted in grave misunderstandings of the poet's intent and metaphorical methods. Readers no longer placed the poem in the proper frame of reference, for Orphism had gone quite out of fashion. However, fashions tend to reverse themselves, and varieties of Orphism persisted to the end of the Hellenistic era. The old Musical perspective lived on in various circles in spite of the dominance of Plato and Aristotle. But it lacked the depth and clarity of the early (sixth century) manifestations. The comprehensive pall of Aristotle's logical system fogged the landscape so that the old perspective was obscured in the scientific mist.

Parmenides' 'attack' on the old paradigm was largely innocent; that is to say, it came from within the old perspective rather than from without. The same cannot be said for the sceptical Sophists and other writers of the fourth century. The roots of their doubt go back to a certain 'appreciation' of the fifth century Eleatics and ultimately the sixth century Xenophanes. The infamous notion of *oneness without motion* is apparently unmusical or even paradoxically anti-musical. A subtle wedge had been inserted within the old musical paradigm—an implant destined to promote eventual fragmentation. Logic of the peculiar Parmenidean variety would be used to undermine *any* doctrine whatsoever. Misunderstandings multiplied and finally the dominance of the 'sensible' Aristotelian synthesis colored everything. Looking at the wide sweep of Hellenistic philosophy, aspects of the old paradigm lived on but in fractured variants through Stoicism, Neopythagoreanism, Hermetism and so on. But the views of Aristotle would always have the last word.

As an appropriate ending for this study of Parmenides I have chosen a quote from Linus: *On the Nature of the World*. The fragment was cited by Stobaeus (1.10.5). Linus

was a mythical or semi-legendary poet similar to (and associated with) Orpheus, Musaeus and Epimenides. All of these figures invented musical theogonies. Linus was initially mentioned by Homer (*Il.* 18.570) as someone lamented in a ritual song, also as the name of the song itself. From an early time he was treated as an archetypal representative of 'the singer.' Hesiod (fr. 305-6) made him the son of the Muse ***Urania*** (Orpheus was also the son of a Muse), and claimed that he was *'learned in every sort of (poetic) skill.'* Inevitably, many poem-songs were written in his name throughout the Hellenistic period. The quote cited below was probably composed by someone from a Stoic circle in the third century. It shows clear influences from Heraclitus—in a later fragment of the poem the topic of the Great Year comes up. But what strikes me is the ease with which the poet unites the musical perspectives of Heraclitus and Parmenides. In its sentiment it favors the old paradigm admirably and could well have been written in the sixth century or even earlier. Above all, it presents a concise precis of what concerns early philosophy.

> *'So through discord all things are steered through all.*
> *From the whole are all things, all things form a whole,*
> *All things are one, each part of all, all in one;*
> *For from a single whole all these things came,*
> *And from them in due time will one return,*
> *That's ever one and many...'*

-completed June 18th, 2001, in Amsterdam.