PLATO'S CONFRONTATION WITH PARMENIDES

By

Jason Patrick Mask

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ABSTRACT

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Parmenides is sometimes thought of as the father of metaphysics. He is the first philosopher of the abstract notion of *being*, and as such even many contemporary issues in metaphysics go back to some basic concepts in his poem, written nearly 2600 years ago, and of which we only have several fragments. The currently hot topic of *metaphysical monism* is just one which traces back to Parmenides. Others include the problems of nonexistent things and attendant notions of not-being, the nature of false statement, the nature of identity, the issue of appearances and reality, and the very concept of *being anything at all*. His concern is the fundamental nature of reality, and in terms of metaphysics and epistemology, logic and the nature of language, he is indeed what Plato called him explicitly: both Father and the One.

But Parmenides—perhaps by virtue of being the first, a watershed in Western thought—stumbles out of the gate. It is *not* by virtue of espousing or employing faulty concepts, such as the notions of generation and perishing, wholeness, oneness, and completeness, that Parmenides stumbles. It is by virtue of a strict adherence to a bivalent logic, which pits absolute being and absolute not-being against one another. Parmenides' adherence to this bivalence effectually disallows a main part of his philosophy: the admonishment of mortal opinions by way of eradicating the very things—sensibles—those opinions are *of*.

When Plato confronts Father Parmenides, he does so from the perspective of one who sees that in order to admonish opinion, one must also take into account the sensible world; explication, not eradication, is the foundation of Plato's confrontation with Parmenides. In so

doing, however, Plato never fully abandons his Eleatic roots. He agrees that the reality must be a singular and whole; but he moves beyond Parmenides in arguing that such a single reality must be really divisible, if sensibles are to make sense.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

The influence of Parmenides on Plato is acknowledged across the board. Yet Plato's Eleatic predecessor—as a historical figure—hardly gets a mention in the dialogues. When he is mentioned, the context is nearly always of considerable philosophical importance. But what is this influence? How is it manifested in Plato's discussion of *forms*, one of the most important and intractable aspects of his philosophy?

Of critical importance is understanding just what can be taken from the surviving fragments we have from Parmenides. Though scant, they present a philosopher deeply concerned with the most fundamental nature of reality and how it must ultimately relate to human nature and cognition, arguing in a way different from his near contemporaries and Milesian predecessors. Parmenides presents, I argue, a *monistic philosophy* of a particular strong degree.

There are, however, many versions of monism. There were several ancient monisms, most of them *physicalist* and *reductionist*: reality is reducible to one or another physical *stuff*. Parmenides moved beyond these philosophers by starting from a *logical* point, and arguing for an abstract concept of *singular being*. There are later versions of monism as well. Early modern thinkers such as Spinoza and Leibniz had monistic or quasi-monistic philosophies. Finally, there are contemporary versions, some of which seem to point in various ways to their predecessors. The salient differences between them are that they can either be *strong* or *weak*, where the former take there to be just one thing (being, the cosmos, etc.) or one substance, and the latter countenance a plurality of singular real beings.

There are some basic philosophical problems that all versions of monism—weak and strong alike—must take into account. The overarching problems are the problem of the one and many (and whole-part relations), and the problem of not-being. The former problem concerns whether there are wholes/ones at all, and what the relation between these and their many parts amounts to. There are attendant sub-issues too, most important of which are the problem of appearances and reality, and the problem of individuation. For, if some version of strong monism is true—that reality is a singular thing or substance, for example—then appearances must somehow deceive us. An important question I address is how this might be possible on strong monism, especially Eleatic monism. How is it, in other words, that the world *seems* to be divided up into *different individual things* if there is just one being or substance?

After examining the overarching themes of various versions of ancient, modern, and contemporary monism, I embark on a lengthy discussion in chapters 2 and 3 of Eleatic philosophy, specifically, the philosophy of Parmenides. In chapter 2 I focus on what can be gleaned from Parmenides' *Aletheia*—or *truth*—section of his poem. Here I defend Parmenides as a *numerical monist*, one who countenances the reality of a single, unique, being. Taking into account the sheer scope of Parmenides' project, I argued for a fused sense of *esti* ('is'), one that finds fruitful ambiguities between *existential*, *predicative*, and *veridical* senses of the term; different nuances of *esti* arise in different contexts, depending on whether Parmenides wants to emphasize the subject he is discussing, the principles that bind it, or the connection between being and truth.

But the cornerstone of Parmenides' philosophy is his strong denial of the coherence of

not-being, *nothing*, or *what is not*. Numerical monism, I argue, follows from such a denial, since it entails a denial of non-identity; if there are no good *fundamental* reasons for asserting distinctions within being, as Parmenides argues in his longest fragment (B8), then all appearing-things (sensibles) essentially collapse into a single, undivided, *being*. The full effect of fragment B8, the denial of not-being in fragment B2, and the assertion of the identity of being and thought in fragment B3, cumulatively compel the numerical monist reading of Parmenides.

In chapter 3 I set my sights on the relation between the *Aletheia* and *Doxa*—or *belief*—section of Parmenides' poem. Taking over a position from chapters 1 and 2—that sensible appearances can, in a qualified sense, be understood as existing within a numerical monistic framework—I argue that the only way to make sense of this is by subsuming them under being. This, however, effectually wipes out any claim they have to the sorts of things we *experience*. It follows from this, I argue, that Parmenides cannot make sense of the nature of mortal opinion, even though the motivation for the goddess's instruction of the uninitiated youth (*kouros*) is precisely to shield him from the persuasive nature of mortal opinions. It is *this* problem, I contend, where one can make hay of Parmenides' philosophy; it is no logical inconsistency to say that the beings who think they, or any purported things at all, exist in their own right, *do not exist*. It *is* an inconsistency to demand something that one's own philosophy cannot countenance.

I adopt in chapter 3 a sort of argument from Mackenzie (1982), who finds a similar inconsistency in Parmenides' poem, though her argument is more concerned with how Parmenides' dialectical method cannot get off the ground if he denies the existence of dialectical

interlocutors. I apply a similar method and show that there is something Parmenides wants—the admonishment of mortal opinions—that his *ontology* cannot make sense of, namely *that* there seem (to mortals) to be a plurality of sensible things. I first try to make the case for a variety of ways sensibles *might* exist, rejecting all but the one that subsumes them under being. I then analyze three technical terms from the poem—βροτῶν δόξας (mortal opinions), τὰ δοκοῦντα (either opinions or appearances), and δοκίμως (realiably, genuinely, etc.). I argue that making sense of the goddess's obscure pronouncement at the end of the first part of the poem (the *proem*)—that mortal opinions offer no true trust, but that τὰ δοκοῦντα somehow exist genuinely—requires taking τὰ δοκοῦντα to mean appearances (or more weakly, sensibles). This effectually divides mortal opinions from what they are opinions *of,* and allows the objects of opinions, sensibles, to be subsumed under being, as the goddess seems to indicate: they are *just being*.

In chapters 4 and 5 I argue that Plato accepts something like the inconsistency I attribute to Parmenides—that sensibles need explanation but cannot be explained on Eleatic grounds—and uses this problem to examine his own Eleatic nature of his forms. In chapter 4 I focus on Plato's confrontation with Eleaticism in the *Parmenides*. After arguing that Plato can indeed be seen as adopting Eleatic notions to explicate the nature of forms, I shift to the problem of the *separation* of forms from the things that participate in them. I frame that argument using the very last of the character Parmenides' arguments against Socrates, namely, the greatest difficulty argument (GDA). I argue that Plato uses the GDA as a heuristic device to examine the Eleatic nature of forms, and advocates there a *symmetrical separation* of forms and participants: within

the framework of the GDA, no relation (ontological dependence, causal dependence, etc.) is possible between forms and participants. I further argue that this is the logical outcome of an unexamined endorsement of Eleatic aspects for forms in the Socratic and constructive dialogues; if pushed to the brink, then something like the GDA obtains for *unexamined Eleatic* forms. But if so, then Plato's philosophy ends up being a version of an interpretation of Parmenides that I reject in chapter 3: that *being* and *appearances* have entirely separate governing principles.

After I discuss separation, I discuss the difficult second part (2P) of the *Parmenides*. I argue in 2P Plato is not merely putting the Eleatic nature of forms to the test; he is also testing what happens if forms are the *opposite* of Eleatic, that is, if they might better be considered Heraclitean entities. Thus, I argue that the first two deductions find Plato taking forms to be Eleatic in the first deduction, and thoroughly Heraclitean in the second. In *both* cases the thing under examination—the nature of the *one*—ends up being nothing at all. The main conclusion of chapter 4 is that Plato is seeking a middle ground between the not-being of assuming Eleaticism, and the not-being of assuming its opposite, Heracliteanism. Such a middle ground is required to explain the sensible world. The final, surprising upshot is that forms and participants are best viewed as being mutually dependent entities.

In chapter 5 I argue that in the *Sophist*, Plato makes a breakthrough against his Eleatic predecessor. In an attempt to define 'sophist' and examine the nature of the *type* of thing the sophist *is*, Plato argues that sophistry can, in effect, be grounded in Eleatic philosophy. This should strike us as astonishing. First, Plato often heaps scorn on sophists who teach their trade for large sums of money. Second, as was noted above, Parmenides is nearly always revered

when mentioned in the dialogues. So why tie them together?

The sophist is one who doles out deception by fabricating deceptive appearances. The main appearance at the sophist's disposal is the *appearance* that false statements are *true*. The sophist even denies that falsehoods are possible by *invoking* Parmenides: Parmenides denies not-being, which seems required for falsehoods, if they say of things that are, that they *are not*, and of things that *are not*, that they are. The Eleatic denial of not-being prevents this, so the sophist can claim victory in argument. Sophistry is here *grounded* in Eleatic philosophy. So the way to "capture" the sophist in definition is to find a coherent sense of not-being, such that the sophist (who is likened to not-being in contradistinction to the true philosopher), can be *brought into being*. This demands nothing less than arguing how not-being can somehow *be*, against the venerable Parmenides. Plato secures this notion of not-being as *difference*, and is afforded ontological status as a *form* or *kind* in its own right.

The upshots of chapters 4 and 5 are that Plato has found at least tentative understandings of oneness and not-being. These two principles function for Plato as *structuring principles*; the one acts as a limit that helps define and demarcate the relation between wholes and parts, and secures the determinate nature of wholes and parts, both in relation to themselves and each other. Not-being as difference guarantees that parts are separate from both themselves and the whole. Both principles, working in tandem, allow Plato to find a middle ground between the austerity of Eleaticism (which ends in nothingness), and the predicative generosity of Heraclitean flux (which also ends in nothingness).

In the final chapter I take some of these conclusions and offer a speculative interpretation

of how one might resolve the intractable problem of participation in Plato. There are two main argumentative thrusts. First, I argue that the notion of a *particular* that *participates in* forms is faulty. Second, I argue that Plato should be interpreted as advocating a *one-world* thesis, as opposed to the traditional *two-worlds* thesis. Regarding the former issue, either particulars are *bare*, and have no intrinsic properties (in which case they are nothing); or they have individuating properties (which puts the cart before the horse, as it were); or they have identical minimal properties (in which case there seems to be just *one* particular). The final alternative is that particulars (i.e., sensibles) are just bundles of forms. I explore this idea by arguing that Plato never fully rejects the Eleatic notion that the world is one—that "the whole of nature is akin"—as Socrates says at *Meno* 81d1. It is, as I argue, a *single structured entity*. Plato moves beyond Parmenides by arguing that the single thing must be *really divisible* along structured "joints," but that it is a whole, structured entity.

CHAPTER ONE

VARIETIES OF MONISM: CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL

1. The Ambiguity of the Standard View of Various Monisms

Monism, both contemporary and historical, is concerned with the *oneness* of reality.[1] What this amounts to, however, is far from clear, and so it is not initially clear whether monism is a defensible position. The most prominent "crude" *standard view* of monism—represented by pronouncements such as *all things are one* (Mourelatos 2008:130) and *reality is one* (Sider 2008:129)—seems outlandish on its face.[2] But the standard view is ambiguous: what does it mean for reality to be one, and what does "reality" amount to—what *counts* as real? The most historically typical disambiguation of the standard view—that there is literally just one thing, the cosmos or being—is cause for alarm among most contemporary philosophers. Some reject this historically ubiquitous version of monism because it is apparently at odds with common sense (recall G. E. Moore's comparable protestation against idealism, indeed, a form of monism: the appearance to him of his hands acts as "proof" that the external world exists). Others might claim that monism does not square with what we apparently know about the world from other

[1] In fact, as Schaffer (2008a:1) notes, there are "many monisms." All monisms "attribute *oneness*," however, and he specifies that monism is a philosophy of what is *targeted* (that is, *what* oneness is attributed to), and how what is targeted is counted (the *unit*). If, for example, the target is "concrete object" and the unit is "highest type," then, on Schaffer's analysis, monism says there is one type that all concrete objects fall under. Monism, therefore is "*…relative to a target and unit*, where monism for target *t* counted by unit *u* is the view that *t* counted by *u* is one." But 'monism' is used in many more contexts than this. For example, K. Fine (2003:2-3) uses the term for the view that material coincident things are one. Zagzebski (2004:191) uses 'monism' for the epistemological position of *epistemic value monism*: "any epistemic value other than the truth of a belief derives from the good of truth." These are just two heterodox examples. My concern is the more traditional understanding of monism as a view about how reality as such is or must be.

[2] As will become clearer below, these two ways of stating the standard view amount to the same thing, depending on how one disambiguates them. Note, however, that Mourelatos calls the standard interpretation "holistic monism," and vacillates between *all things are one* and "the All is One" (2008:131 n42). The latter is a disambiguation of the former.

disciplines, for example, physics. In neither case does monism square with what Sider calls *material adequacy*: monism seems prima facie *empirically* false (2008:129). Those who want to defend monism appear to be in quite a precarious position.

But given the ambiguity of the phrases 'all things are one' and 'reality is one', the monist may be in a better position than these historical caricatures portend. Indeed, a cursory glance at some of the positions attributed to Parmenides, one of the first Western philosophers to have monistic leanings, shows just how disparate disambiguations of the standard view can be. Guthrie, for example, attributes to Parmenides the position that reality is "and must be, a unity in the strictest sense and that any change in it [is] impossible" (1965:5). This is the most common historical view of monism: that there exists just one thing, the universe as a whole.[3] Curd argues that Parmenides is a *predicational monist*, her term for one who thinks that "whatever genuinely is must be a predicational unity; but this is consistent with there being many things, each of which is one in the appropriate sense" (1998:66-67). Similarly, Mourelatos argues that Parmenides is a monist in the sense of being a non-dualist; Parmenides is committed to what Mourelatos calls *speculative predication*, and this leads to a monism concerned with "uniqueness," where what is real amounts to "one *type of attribute* that satisfies the postulated criteria [for reality]" (2008:130-31). Both Curd's and Mourelatos' interpretation of Parmenidean monism allows for a numerical plurality of individual things. In contrast to all these positions, Barnes attributes no monism to Parmenides at all: the fragments, according to Barnes, commit

[3] As we will see below, this is the view Schaffer on a number of occasions calls "crazy" or indefensible (e.g. 2007a:181; 2010a:32). He points to Horgan and Potrč (2008) as the only current defense of this "crazy" view. As I argue in chapters 2 and 3, however, it is even unclear what 'universe *as a whole*' is supposed to mean, especially for Parmenides.

Parmenides to the position that "nothing does or will exist apart from what now exists" (1982:207).

Now, these Parmenides scholars are largely trying to glean whatever position they find from Parmenides' fragments, and not trying to articulate the coherence of monism as such. But it is striking that the first three positions (i.e. the ones that attribute monism to Parmenides) give us a general sense of two ways monism can be understood, on the one hand as disallowing a plurality of things, and on the other as allowing a plurality of "ones."

The standard view, too, can be disambiguated to countenance either plurality or singularity. Which way it is disambiguated is largely determined by what the monist means by 'reality' and 'all', that is, in what *way* reality or all things is/are one. If these questions cannot be answered univocally, monism ends up fragmenting into many different philosophies about oneness.

My strategy in this chapter is thus. I first disambiguate the crude standard view and give interpretations of monism that countenance both pluralistic and stronger (non-pluralistic) readings concerning reality as a whole. I then discuss several motivations and problems for monism, arguing that individuation *qua* criteria for oneness as such is the key characteristic of monism. I then argue that only a disambiguation of the standard view that allows for reality as a whole to be one object suffices for meeting the criteria set forth above: that monism requires a univocal account of individuation.

1.1. The Standard View: Disambiguation and Interpretation

There are several ways to disambiguate and interpreate the standard view, countenancing both singularity and plurality oneness theses. I give an (a)-reading (singularity) and a (b)-reading (plurality) for these versions of monism. It turns out that (a)-readings strictly concern *what* is to be counted as one, and (b)-readings strictly concern what oneness amounts to (being open about how many things are ones). I argue, however, that the (b)-reading must ultimately be interpreted as fitting—or being subsumed under—the (a)-reading, since monism's account of oneness must be univocal, and can only be such if its target is one thing.

Starting with the (a)-reading, then, an initial attempt to disambiguate and dispense with the crudity of the standard view (SV) yields

SV(a): all things are really just one thing

SV(a), however, is still ambiguous, for it can countenance a monism of just one *object*,[1] say, the universe as a whole (if sense can be made of calling the universe an object), or a monism of just one *kind*, allowing for many objects that are reducible to that kind. So further disambiguation of SV(a) yields two types of monism, which are versions of what Schaffer (2008a) calls *existence monism* on the one hand, and *substance monism* on the other:[2]

SV_{EX}(a): there is just one real object, the universe as a whole
SV_{SB}(a): everything is really reducible to one kind

On these disambiguations, the target is one *real* thing; on SV_{EX}(a), the universe as a whole is taken to be one real *object*, whereas on SV_{SB}(a) the universe (or "everything") is taken to be of a

[1] I also include events and treat them as if they were object-like.
[2] Curd (1998) calls existence monism "numerical monism." In the rest of the dissertation, I follow Curd's terminology.

determinable *kind* (for example, matter or mind or water or twine). The crucial point for (a)-readings is that the target is something that is *one*, i.e., *unique.*

$SV_{EX}(a)$ and $SV_{SB}(a)$—as distinct but appropriate disambiguations of the crude view—are strong versions of monism, in that they disallow more than one object or kind.[3] As such, both views share certain difficulties, most notably epistemological problems that result from the fact that in each case the target is one: if there is just one object or kind, then our commonsense view of reality, which countenances fundamentally separate things like trees, people, and atoms, is mistaken. If $SV_{EX}(a)$ is correct, then apparently separate objects are not *properly separable* from each other (since there is just one proper object), and any belief in a plurality of objects is necessarily false.[4] And if $SV_{SB}(a)$ is correct, then such apparently disparate kinds of things as people, water molecules, and electrons are reducible to just one kind.[5] But neither $SV_{EX}(a)$ nor $SV_{SB}(a)$ is materially adequate (in Sider's sense), and the monist in either case (if material adequacy in the end matters) bears the considerable burden of making his or her position respectable in light of these epistemological problems.[6]

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[3] It should be noted that an exceedingly strong version of monism, where there is just one thing in the strongest possible sense of 'one thing', seems impossible, and it is not clear (as I show below) that numerical monism is such a strong monism as some take it to be. For, even if the universe were the only object—call it *a*—it would still be true that there would exist the singleton of *a*, or {*a*}. The singleton of *a* is something *different* from *a*, and exists just in case *a* exists. Numerical monism (often) concerns the universe as a *physical* object, and allows for only one such object. For now, I remain neutral on the status of abstract objects (see n8). Note, however, that these set-theoretic moves may themselves *not* be possible on Parmenidean monism: talk of singletons (etc.) is doxological, and therefore (according to Parmenides), incoherent, but for *ontological* reasons. See chapters 2 and 3.

[4] Note that usually when I use the term 'proper' I mean non-arbitrary or not *ad hoc*. This is somewhat different from the notion of *proper parts*, by which is meant that nothing is a part of itself. If I mean the latter, I will specify.

[5] The difficult case here is whether 'concrete' and 'abstract' denote different kinds of things. See n6 for a case where, if a concrete thing exists, then an abstract thing (it seems) necessarily exists along with it.

[6] In the end, it may be that philosophical positions that deny the reality of a significant part of commonsense will be too outrageous for some to accept. G. E. Moore would be one example. Most empirically minded philosophers, too, will likely give no credence to a philosophical position that denies the reality of (but can in *some* way account for) commonsense experience.

Unlike (a)-reading disambiguations (which require the target to be one), (b)-reading disambiguations allow plurality. One way to disambiguate the standard view with plurality yields

SV(b): all (and only) real things are ones (i.e. unified wholes)[7]

SV(b) can admit (fundamentally) separate things like trees, people, and planets, and indeed *different substances*. Realness and oneness, on SV(b) mutually entail one another: something is real if and only if it is a unified whole.[8] SV(b)'s main concern is what makes single objects the single objects that they are, or what *properly individuates* individual objects. Committing SV(b) more explicitly to plurality, giving it a particularly weak (that is, traditionally non-monistic) interpretation, yields

SV_{WK}(b): each of many real things is a unified whole

SV_{WK}(b) is not committed to any specific number for the target, but it does explicitly state that there is more than one thing that is a unified whole.[9] One motivation for accepting this version of monism is that it is supposed to save the phenomena; that is, it aligns more closely with commonsense views that accept the existence of the many. But SV_{WK}(b) is not monism as

[7] I leave more detailed discussion of unified wholes to chapters 4 and 5.

[8] As we will see, one problem confronting Plato is whether one, both, or neither sensible things or forms are unified wholes in any proper sense. If sensibles are, then on this reading they are real; if forms are, then they are *in the same way* just as real. Both of these run afoul of at least some interpretations of Plato.

[9] Note that SV(a) entails SV(b), but is not entailed by it. But SV(b) is not incompatible with SV(a), since if there is just one real thing, then SV(b) is still true. It is true that SV_{WK}(b) is *not* entailed by SV(a). So if SV(a) entails SV(b), SV_{WK}(b) cannot be a *disambiguation* of SV(b). Rather, I take it to be an *interpretation* of SV(b) that is committed—for other reasons—to plurality. In chapter 2, I argue that Eleatic monism cannot be understood as SV_{WK}(b), as some authors take it. That is, it is an incorrect interpretation of SV(b). But ultimately, one version of SV(a) and SV_{WK}(b) must "converge," i.e., be mutually *compatible*, even though they do not entail each other. Later, I argue that this just is Plato's confrontation with Parmenides. The convergence means that each position is weakened, in some sense, by the other, to affect the convergence. See chapter 4's discussion on Plato's forms.

traditionally conceived: it is a "monism" insofar as it is committed to the unity or oneness of the real things that do exist. Moreover, (b)-readings explicitly require individuation criteria; if something is a unified whole, then it is a *one*. As will become clearer below, it is not obvious whether (a)-readings have appropriate individuation criteria; they simply tell us what is to be counted as one.

The (a)- and (b)-readings are largely ontological theses; they are concerned with the reality or nature of whatever exists. An arguably non-ontological way to think about monism is by taking it to concern the relations of priority and posteriority between wholes and parts.[10] This is best advocated by what Schaffer (2010a) calls *priority monism*, which can be summarized as the position that the whole universe is prior to any of its proper parts,[11] and the whole universe is the only basic actually existing concrete object.[12] Formally, Schaffer lays out priority monism thusly:

$$\text{Monism} =_{df} (\exists!x)\, Bx \,\&\, Bu$$

In words, priority monism says that there is exactly one thing that is basic, and that this basic thing is the whole universe. For Schaffer, monism properly understood is a position about what *grounds* being, or about "which objects are fundamental" (2012a:33). That is, monism for Schaffer does not concern the nature of the existents, just which existents are fundamental. This is controversial for two reasons. First, it is not clear whether Schaffer is correct both in taking

[10] Schaffer (2010a) argues that this way is not ontological. It is ontological in some respects, and these respects turn out to be important. See §3.
[11] 'Proper part' is here used in its mereological sense.
[12] Schaffer's is not the only version of priority monism. Sider (2008:130) has a version, which is that "the world-object may not be the only object, but it is 'prior' to all other objects." Cameron (2010) too has a version concerning facts: there is just "one fundamental fact."

priority monism to *be* monism, and *especially* in taking priority monism to be the monism of historical monists.[13] Secondly, it is not clear whether Schaffer's monism is, as he maintains, non-ontological. If, for example, the fundamentality of the universe as a whole *qua* basic object is part of the very nature of the universe, then priority monism is at least partially an ontological position; that is, it implies certain specific ontological commitments. As I argue in §3, these ontological commitments arise from the individuation of the fundamental basic entity and its parts.

To sum up, there are two main threads in monism, what I call (a)-readings and (b)-readings. The former specify the target: there is only one object or one kind. The latter articulate what it means for something to be one: an individual, unified whole. I argue in §3 that monism, properly understood, requires that the (b)-reading be interpreted along the lines of the (a)-reading: monism is committed to the existence of one concrete object that is a unified whole. Whether this is a *coherent* position will be determined by how it addresses various problems faced by all purported monisms.

2. Some Motivations and Problems for Monism

What philosophical problems might lead one to such an apparently radical position as monism? In short, why be a monist? It is worthwhile to rehearse some historically significant motivations for monism. I offer three: the *problem of the one-and-many*, the *problem of not-*

[13] Indeed, Schaffer (2010a:32) says "[p]erhaps monism would deserve to be dismissed as obviously false" if the traditional interpretation of monism obtains, i.e., that there is really just one object, or everything really is of one kind. As will be shown in §2, it is not at all obvious that even these loftier monisms deserve less than considered dismissal.

being, and the implications of the principle of sufficient reason. Once the motivations are clearer, it will likewise be useful to examine some problems for monism. I offer two major problems, the *problem of appearances-and-reality*, and the *problem of individuation*. The former is an age-old philosophical problem that has special relevance for monism (though no obvious solution). The latter, I maintain, is perhaps the most significant problem with which any version of monism must deal. The problems for monism intertwine with each other and the motivations for monism, and so must be discussed as they arise.

2.1. The Problem of the One-and-Many: Appearances, Reality, and Individuation

Perhaps the oldest problem in Western philosophy—since at least Thales and other Milesian philosophers—the *problem the of the one-and-many* has led to a variety of monistic and pluralistic philosophies, depending on how one answers the problem's main concerns: whether reality (as a whole? *qua* part?) is ultimately one (thing, kind, etc.) or many (things, kinds, etc.).[14] It is controversial whether Milesian philosophers ever formulated their ideas as responses to any *specific* problem of the one-and-many, but much of their thought appears to concern some of the sorts of issues that later developed into more or less considered versions of monism and pluralism.[15] Additionally, there appears to be an asymmetry between accepting some version of

[14] Another concern, at least in contemporary philosophy, is K. Fine's problem (n1 above): whether coincident objects like a statue and its bronze are one or many things. This contemporary issue is not immediately relevant to my discussion.

[15] Regarding monism, Thales, for example, is usually taken to be concerned with what the world is ultimately made of, and he (apparently) posited water as the basic constituent of everything. Alternatively, Thales is taken to be concerned with water as *archê*, or *source* from which all things come. The accuracy of these views determine whether Thales might be construed as an early monist, reducing everything to one kind of thing or claiming that everything comes from one thing. I do not take up these issues in the dissertation. Nonetheless, the information available on Milesian philosophy is scant, and attributing later positions (like considered views of monism or pluralism) to the Milesians is speculative at best.

monism over accepting some version of pluralism when dealing with the problem of the one-and-many: since monism is *prima facie* a radical position, one might accept some version of monism only if pluralism presented too bitter a pill to swallow, though the converse does not seem true. Why might this be?

The reason for the asymmetry has to do with an important problem in antiquity, namely, the *problem of appearances-and-reality*. This problem largely concerns the puzzle of how appearances of the world *for us* are related to how the world *really is*.[16] The problem of appearances-and-reality gets uptake from how one answers the problem of the one-and-many. If one claims the world is one individual or whole, the problem of why there *appear* to be many different things immediately follows. Appearances are, after all, what are most easily accessible to us, and if the world is really one thing, there is a problem of explaining why it *seems* to be or contain many things. In other words, it is doxastically plausible that there are many things; it is not at all apparent that there is only one thing (that is, no one commonsensically *believes* this). The asymmetry is thus: pluralism is *prima facie* plausible, since it is materially or empirically adequate; monism is *prima facie* implausible, since it is not easy to see the world as one thing (especially as *the only* thing). Thus, one might accept monism only if pluralism falters; but it is not necessarily the case that one would accept pluralism only if monism falters. As an example, several presocratic philosophers entertained dualistic metaphysics, and Plato (and Aristotle) offered solutions to the one-and-many problem that combined monism and pluralism in various

[16] It may beg the question to assume that such a problem exists in the first place, for if the world *just is* how it appears to us, then monism is false. If the appearance-and-reality problem is genuine, then there must be independent reasons for thinking it genuine, reasons *other than* simply thinking monism is true.

ways.[17] Monism is—*on the face of it* at any rate—the more radical of the two positions. Indeed, Sider's material adequacy constraint is precisely concerned with monism's alleged implausibility.

But though pluralism is prima facie (i.e. empirically) plausible, it may in the end be the radical position. If it ends up being incoherent, then this would be reason (though not *sufficient* reason) for accepting monism. For one thing, *pace* Sider, one might wonder whether material adequacy is relevant for understanding reality at the *fundamental* level, especially if, as philosophers since at least Parmenides have recognized, appearances can be deceiving. Guthrie calls Parmenides an "ancient Descartes" who "refused to accept this datum [the physical world], or any datum" (1965:20). On this view, if the physical world—the most immediately accessible thing to us—is ruled out as fundamental because it is deceptive, then the pluralism it apparently countenances must fall along with it. Sider, perhaps, puts the cart before the horse concerning monism, that is, if he considers any motivations for *ancient* monism relevant at all, when he says, "no disrespect to the heroic metaphysicians of antiquity, but this world is not just an *illusion*" (2008:129). But unlike an ancient Descartes, the dubiousness of appearances (and the very *nature* of sensible reality) is for Parmenides a *conclusion* from an altogether onto-epistemic starting point: the rejection of the notion that the *being* of not-being is in any way coherent. From the rejection of not-being, monism follows.[18] The appearances-and-reality problem is indeed intimately intertwined with the one-and-many problem.

Another, perhaps more forceful, reason than the deceptive nature of appearances for

[17] I discuss Plato's inheritance of various Parmenidean (and Heraclitean) issues in chapters 4, 5, and 6.
[18] In the next chapter, I argue against Parmenides as a crude Cartesian, defending an interpretation of him as a numerical monist.

abandoning pluralism has to do with the difficulty of imagining where pluralism is supposed to "bottom out."[19] In other words, pluralism all the way down seems to admit of what might be called the problem of Heraclitean flux (see, for example, *Theaetetus* 152d-e), where *nothing* is stable, where nothing *is* any single *thing* (since 'thing' is meaningless in a world of absolute flux). Thus, if reality must be stable in some sense, then, in the same way that monism must account for what *appears* to be many, pluralism must account for what seems *real* or *stable*, in the sense that there are ones, or wholes—individual objects. Another way of putting this is that monism requires an explanation for why there seem to be many things; pluralism requires an explanation for why there seem to be entities *at all*.

As I argue in chapters 3 (regarding monism) and chapters 5 and 6 (regarding the problems of pluralism in Plato), however, monism cannot explain why there seem to be many things, and extreme pluralism cannot account for the relative stability of the many, why there are any *things* at all. As I argue in chapters 4 through 6, this sort of critique is at the heart of Plato's confrontations with Eleaticism and Heracliteanism, starting in the second part of his *Parmenides*. For anything to *be* a single thing (an individual), there must be an *absolute* one, a principle that acts as a *limit*.[20] By positing an absolute one Plato is supposed to resolve various Parmenidean *and* Heraclitean issues at once: there is no such thing as pluralism all the way down *pace* Heraclitus (for then there would be no things or objects at all); at the same time, there is change or internal division *pace* Parmenides (and hence Plato ostensibly meets Sider's requirement for material adequacy—he saves the phenomena, while arguing that phenomena cannot account for

[19] In §3 I argue that strong pluralism can in fact lead to strong monism, and I note in chapter 2 that Heraclitus and Parmenides—on some construals—end up with roughly the same monism, from different starting points.
[20] There are thorny issues concerning not-being here as well, discussed below.

all of reality). Indeed, if phenomena exhaust reality, the story goes, *reality* ends up being logically incoherent in a way similar to how relativism is logically incoherent: the only reality is that *nothing is real* in the sense that nothing is stable. Pluralists of this sort, in other words, question the assumption that real things must be stable things. But on the purported Platonic solution in the *Parmenides* (and *Sophist*), the strong pluralist cannot even make claims about *things* at all—the only possible way to account for (denumerable) things is to posit an absolute one (see Scolnicov 2003:160). Furthermore, it is far from easy to see how strong pluralism could be maintained, given the apparent fact that 'nothing is real' indicates something that *is* stable, namely, a truth about reality *as a whole* (that is, as a thing in its own right).[21]

A Platonic solution such as the one above—as a way to combat strong pluralistic readings that admit of apparent logical inconsistencies—may however seem to be a cheat: it is not clear whether this sort of middle ground between strong monism and strong pluralism is possible. If SV_{WK}(b)—a position that allows for a plurality of wholes or ones—can be defended, then this "cheat" will be legitimate (whether it is monism or not). But there may also be reasons for thinking such middle ground positions arbitrary.[22] If so, then such apparently reasonable compromise or "non-exotic" positions cannot satisfy what Sider says of "exotic ontologies," namely, that they satisfy "our desire to avoid arbitrariness, anthropocentrism, and metaphysical conundrums" (2008:129). For what it is worth, the goals Sider mentions for exotic ontologies indeed seem to be precisely what *any* metaphysics, at heart, strives for. It remains to be seen

[21] As I argue in §3, such a position entails a version of monism: nothing *other than* reality as a whole is real. Heraclitus himself is sometimes seen as a monist in this light, for he says "listening not to me but to the Logos, it is wise to agree that all things are one" (Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (KRS) 1983:187). In fact, Schaffer's sustained defense of priority monism (2010a) begins with just this quotation.

[22] That is, they may end up solving pluralism's problems by fiat.

whether monism (of a stripe) can fulfill such noble desires.

The motivational problem of the one-and-many and the related problem of appearances-and-reality can now be understood as related to another problem concerning monism, namely, the *problem of individuation*. This problem is an immediate concern for SV_{WK}(b), since that position countenances individuals as the hallmark of reality. Individuation concerns issues about what it means for something to be a single thing, that is, what it means for something to *be* one thing at all. Individuation concerns two distinct sets of problems: problems regarding individuation criteria on the one hand, and problems concerning identity criteria on the other. With Lowe, we may say individuation has two conditions: (a) what is it that makes something a single (one) thing, and (b) what is it that makes something the very thing that it is (2003:75). Identity criteria set up conditions under which some *x* is the same thing as some *y* (76).[23] Both sets of criteria are important for understanding what makes something a *single* thing. Thus, individuation and identity are related to what Schaffer calls the problems of *partitions*—criteria for properly "carving up the world," and *boundaries*—criteria for when one properly carved chunk of the world ends and another begins (2010a:48).[24] These are criteria for separating individuals from other individuals (people, trees, mountains, etc.). It seems true that properly carved chunks (parts) of the world must have individuation and identity criteria, since—being

[23] For brevity, I will simply use the phrase 'problem of individuation' to refer to the sets of criteria for individuation and identity. Note, however, that it seems clear that everything is identical with itself, given that we are (already) talking about something *as* an individual. But Lowe (78) argues that some things can satisfy the (a) individuation condition and not the (b) condition, and vice versa: his example of the former is an electron, for each electron is one thing, but there is no way to tell whether some electron is this or that one; his example of the latter is a quantity of matter, for any given quantity of matter can satisfy conditions that make it the quantity that it is, though there is nothing that makes it one (i.e. denumerable) quantity of matter, for matter is not denumerable at all.

[24] These issues come up, too, in the second part of the *Parmenides*. See chapter 4, especially the sections on the third deduction (D3).

proper chunks of the world—they are *not arbitrary*. In this sense, the problem of individuation concerns what must be the case for there to be non-arbitrary chunks of reality (individuals), and thus is crucial for determining whether middle ground positions like the Platonic solution noted above are arbitrary or not. If individuation and identity criteria can be given for chunks of the world, and if such chunks rely (in an appropriate sense) on there being a *general* (universal) principle of individuation, then a middle ground position in the vein of $SV_{WK}(b)$ might be defensible (again, whether it is monistic or not). If so, such chunks will indeed be *proper* (non-arbitrary).

The problem of individuation becomes an especially pressing problem for monism, however, in a different way: since most traditional versions of monism (those allied to variants of $SV_{EX}(a)$ and $SV_{SB}(a)$) take the universe itself to be one or whole—indeed the only proper *individual*—it appears that the universe as such must meet our best individuation and identity criteria. If so, two problems immediately follow. First, if the universe can be partitioned, then such parts are apparently *not* real individuals (if the universe is the sole real or basic individual). Any individuation criteria for the parts would be arbitrary or "pragmatic," in the sense that such individuals (as trees, people, etc.) are individuals only insofar as *we* pick them out as such.[25] They are not, in other words, *proper* individuals outside of arbitrary or (perhaps anthropocentric) ways of carving up the world. They do not, as it were, stand alone. Secondly, if the parts are *not* arbitrarily so carved (i.e. they are individuals *qua* being non-arbitrary *parts* of the whole), then they indeed require individuation criteria. But either the *same* individuation criteria for the parts

[25] See Lowe (2003:75) for an explanation of this "epistemological" reading of individuation (which he does not focus on).

apply to the world itself (if it too is an individual) or some *other* criteria apply. It cannot be the same criteria, because the partition and boundary problem does not apply to the world as a whole. There is nothing, in other words, from which the world as a whole can be distinguished, save for its parts. The partition and boundary problem, however, cannot apply to the relation between whole and part: it makes no sense to say where the whole ends and the parts begin.[26] The partition and boundary problem concerns only the individuation of parts from *each other*. Thus, if the world as a whole is a thing in its own right, it must have criteria of individuation distinct from the individuation criteria for parts; the world requires its own criteria for being the very (one) thing that it is. It is not clear, however, whether the world as a whole *can* have such individuation criteria. Van Inwagen asks "if there is only one individual thing, what is meant by calling it an *individual* thing," given that individuation requirements typically concern those conditions that properly *separate* one thing from another thing. If there is only one individual, there is nothing from which it is (physically) separate (2009:34). In §2.2 I discuss how one might resolve this problem, since it is not clear whether individuation criteria for something, *a*, requires there to be *another* thing, *b*, if by 'criteria of individuation' we mean whatever makes something one thing. That is, purely internal criteria may suffice.[27]

The problem for monism is now clear: if there is one whole, it requires individuation criteria *qua* whole; if there are parts, these require individuation criteria *qua* parts. But now there are *two* sets of individuation criteria, two accounts of oneness, one for the parts of the world and

[26] In this sense, the partition and boundary problem concerns physical things only. It may be, however, that the whole and part relation can be discerned abstractly, and in this way it would make sense to say where the whole "ends" and the parts "begin." But in this case, uses of 'end' and 'begin' are metaphorical, not ontological.
[27] This is problematized in the *Sophist*. See chapter 5.

one for the world itself. We have said from the beginning, however, that monism is concerned with the oneness of reality. If anything, a coherent monism must have a univocal account of what it means to be *one thing*. If it does not, that is, if there are *two* (or more) sets of individuation criteria (indeed, individuation criteria for any number of things one can think of), then such a philosophy immediately ceases to be monistic.[28] Here we see why the (b)-reading must be subsumed under the (a)-reading: if there is to be one object or kind, then there must be a sense in which that object or kind is *one*, a *unified whole*.

2.2. The Problem of Not-Being: Appearances, Reality, and Individuation

A second motivational problem for monism—important in antiquity, and related to the previous problems—is the *problem of not-being*. According to Solmsen (1974) and Barnes (1982), it is not a direct interest in oneness but primarily the problem of not-being that motivates Parmenidean monism.[29] The problem of not-being has many senses, so it is crucial to set out what they are, and how they relate to or motivate monism. The first sense is the notion of *nonexistent objects*, such as centaurs or other fictional objects. Quine calls this problem "Plato's beard" since "historically it has proved tough, frequently dulling the edge of Occam's razor" (1961:2). After all, it is not clear what a nonexistent object is supposed to *be*. Either it exists or it does not exist. If it exists, then it is not a nonexistent object. But if it does not exist, then (apparently) there is no way to talk about or refer to it, and so it is not clear what one is talking

[28] Note, however, that one set of individuation criteria can still allow for many things, in the vein of SV_{WK}(b). But the existence of many *sets* of individuation criteria not only allows for many things, it allows for many (unlimited) senses for what oneness amounts to. SV_{WK}(b) *may* be monism (of a stripe). The latter reading is more clearly a form of pluralism: a pluralism of *ways* of being one.

[29] I discuss more specifically the issues surrounding Parmenidean not-being in Chapter 2. Here I want to focus on how the problem might be formulated in a general way, and how it relates to the other problems I discussed above.

about when one mentions centaurs, for example. As Quine's imaginary philosopher McX notes, if one is talking about, say, Pegasus, Pegasus must exist—that is, any *denial* of Pegasus' existence assumes the existence of Pegasus. It is far from clear, in this sense, how one can *deny* the existence of something—*what is it* one is denying? Thus any attempt to deny nonexistent objects is self-refuting: denial of existence, on this view, immediately leads to paradox.[30]

A related sense of not-being concerns the problem of *negative truths*, or truths that contain as constituents negations of some sort.[31] Assume the statement 'Thomson is not Witchfinder General' is true. There seems to be a problem about what makes this claim true. The problem of negative truths is thus a problem for what is commonly called *truthmaker theory*. If, in a Parmenidean sense, truth and being are either identical or related in some essential way, aspects of truthmaker theory will be relevant to discussions of monism just in case there is a strong relation between what kinds of things are allowed into one's ontology *as* truthmakers. If resolution of the problem of negative truths turns on there being one thing only that can be truthmaker, then monism of a sort follows as the solution. In fact, Schaffer (2010b) argues for just this position, which he calls *truthmaker monism*. Let us look at the problem in some detail.

Molnar (2000:84-85) summarizes the problem of negative truths as involving some background metaphysical assumptions, namely

(1) The world is everything that exists

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[30] The McX response is that Pegasus is an idea in the mind. But now, as Quine and Furth (1974) show, we are no longer talking about Pegasus (or centaurs etc.), but something else entirely (something whose existence is *not* controversial), namely, an idea. Another candidate for what Pegasus "really" is—an unactualized possible object—is also rejected by Quine (1961).

[31] I will use 'negative truths' as an umbrella term for issues involving the following: negative facts/existentials (negative states of affairs), and negative properties (properties—infinitely many?) that some object does *not* have). An example of the former is "there is no beer in the fridge," and an example of the latter is "the beer in the fridge is not flat."

(2) Everything that exists is positive
(3) Some negative claims about the world are true
(4) Every true claim about the world is made true by something that exists[32]

Molnar captures the historical importance of these four theses by noting that some have denied each, with various metaphysical outcomes (85). For example, one might deny (1) by denying that existence exhausts being: e.g., Meinong held the grossly un-Parmenidean position that there *are* some things that do not exist.[33] One might deny (2) with Russell, according to whom there is a negative fact of the matter that would make the statement 'Thomson is not Witchfinder General' true, namely, the fact of *Thomson's not being Witchfinder General* (1988b:184). Again, we find ourselves positing the existence (being?) of non-existing things, to explain why some negative claims are true. According to Molnar, denial of (3) leads to the Parmenidean position regarding the impossibility of speaking or thinking not-being.[34]

The move to monism becomes clear only after seeing why other purported solutions for negative truths apparently fail. So, assuming some version of truth correspondence (that is, that truthmaker theory is correct in claiming that the truth of propositions has something to do with the world or parts of the world as truthmakers), the problem of negative truths seems immediately to go down the metaphysical rabbit hole of positing utterly mysterious objects. On Russell's reading, what makes negative truths true are *negative facts*; but just what *are* these? According to Molnar, negative statements such as 'Thomson is not Witchfinder General', might

[32] Parsons (2006:591-92) notes a possible equivocation of the terms 'positive' and 'negative' from (2) to (3). It is true that these terms need disambiguation, though an intuitive sense of what it means for something to be positive or negative is adequate for present purposes.
[33] Meinong's position, however, is more complex than can be dealt with here. See Chisholm (1973) for more.
[34] Denial of (4) is just a denial of correspondence theories of truth, and Molnar (85) cites Putnam, Rorty, and Strawson as contemporary examples of this move.

have *absences* as truthmakers: "S is the truthmaker for *p* iff the absence of S is the truthmaker for ¬p" (75). It is the absence of Thomson's being Witchfinder General that makes the statement 'Thomson is not Witchfinder General' true. But now it is unclear what the ontological status of an *absent* state of affairs amounts to; what *is* such a thing? Once again, we are populating our ontology with not only (perhaps infinitely many) more objects, but with objects that are apparently inexplicable.

A second possible solution to the negative truths problem is what Molnar calls *exclusion* (73-75).[35] On this reading, the sentence 'Thomson is not Witchfinder General' is true just in case there is some other truth (or set of truths) that is incompatible (Molnar argues for "ontological incompatibility") with its negation. Molnar claims "A excludes B iff necessarily, if A exists then B does not exist." Something that might exclude the negation of the original claim is the fact *Hopkins is Witchfinder General*. This fact, it is argued, excludes the truth of 'Thomson is Witchfinder General', thereby necessitating the truth of its negation (i.e. the original claim). The advantage of exclusion, arguably, is that we are at least above the rabbit hole, in the world of positive facts, having no need to posit negative facts or other mysterious entities.[36]

One problem with this solution is that facts concerning compatibility are actually negative. In other words, the incompatibility relationship itself is negative, and thus a truth concerning the incompatibility of Thomson's and Hopkins's both being Witchfinder General itself relies on a negative fact as truthmaker. Molnar's example illustrates this problem better

[35] The exclusion solution is reminiscent of Plato's "resolution" of Parmenidean not-being as *difference* at *Sophist* 256d; see also the extended discussions in Ambuel (2007). Armstrong (2004:56) calls this solution "incompatibility" and notes that Plato's notion of difference is akin to incompatibility.
[36] This is quite akin to Plato's *Sophist* solution. See also Demos (1917).

than the example here (since here there is a further assumption that there can be only one Witchfinder General): does the fact that there is tea on the table act as a sufficient truthmaker for the true sentence 'there is no wine on the table' (2000:83)? Molnar says no: it is obvious that there could be both tea *and* wine on the table, and therefore this positive fact is not a sufficient exclusionary truthmaker for there being no wine on the table (unless, as in the above example, one supplements 'there is tea on the table' with the obviously suspect assumption that there can be *only* one item on the table). It appears that positive facts such as *there is tea on the table* cannot be sufficient as truthmakers for negative truths; at some point, there must be a mysterious negative fact that acts as truthmaker, and thus we are back to where we started. Molnar, for one, sees no solution to the problem of negative truths (85).

Two other solutions, both rejected by Molnar, are important to note. First is the positing of *totality facts*, which are supposed to combine with simpler facts to make sense of negative truths. For example, the totality fact that *tea is all there is on the table* is supposed to be sufficient for the truth of 'there is no wine on the table'. Molnar rejects totality facts because they too end up being negative facts (as he says, "*tea's being all there is on the table* is the same state of affairs as *there being nothing that is both not tea and on the table*" (2000:81). Secondly, *supervenience*: "higher-order negative states of affairs supervene on first-order positive states of affairs" (82). Molnar rejects supervenience as trivially true *qua* truthmaker theory that the world as a whole is a truthmaker for all truths (83). It is just this triviality, however, that Schaffer (2010b) rejects, arguing that the world as a whole is indeed the only truthmaker (though for Schaffer the relation between truths and truthmaker is not one of supervenience).

Although Molnar sees no solution to the problem of negative truths *except* the one rejected as trivial, Schaffer argues precisely *for* this position: for claims dealing with negative

existentials—negative truths that deny the existence of some object or class of objects, his example being "there are no dragons"—there must be a relation of *grounding* (or dependence) between the world and the sentence expressing the negative existential.[37] But for Schaffer, the grounding relation that truthmaker theory must be committed to is one where truths are grounded in fundamental entities ("substances," as he calls them), and there is only one such fundamental entity: the *actual* world as a whole.[38]

Imagine, then, what Schaffer calls an *expanded world* where the actual world is contained as a counterpart,[39] though there is an expanded part with a dragon. The actual world, then, is not sufficient for *necessitating* the truth of 'there are no dragons', since in this scenario, the actual world exists (as a counterpart of the expanded world) and yet 'there are no dragons' is true, by virtue of the expansion. But Schaffer argues that "any expansion (any *more* to the world) requires a different unique fundament—if the worlds in question did not differ, then they would be indiscernible, rather than contracted and expanded" (2010:321). 'There are no dragons' is true, then, of the *actual* world, given the assumption that the actual world is the only fundamental entity (this is Schaffer's monistic thesis). Thus, negative truths are made true by being grounded in the way the world is at actuality, that is, the way the world is, given an actualist reduction of possible worlds.[40] Schaffer has three basic assumptions that allow him this

[37] Schaffer rejects the common truthmaker theory commitment to *necessitation* between truthmakers and true sentences for three reasons: 1) necessitation is intensional, and this relation cannot handle certain issues dealing with necessary truths (for example, mathematical truths); 2) necessitation is not an "ontological relationship," which Schaffer argues is required for grounding; 3) necessitation deals with propositions and not being—it is *linguistic*.
[38] Schaffer uses possible world notions to make the argument for the grounding of truths on fundamental entities, though he is committed to what he calls an "actualist reduction" (2010b:313).
[39] Here, we are again doing mereology.
[40] An actualist reduction of possible worlds amounts to the notion that possible worlds are useful heuristically, but there *are* no possible worlds; there exists only the actual world.

conclusion (the third argued for explicitly and at length in Schaffer 2010a): (i) truthmaking is a relation between true claims and fundamental entities; (ii) the relation is grounding rather than necessitation; and (iii) there is only one fundamental entity. It follows that all truths—negative and positive alike—are grounded in the way the one fundamental entity *actually* is.

Now, one issue that inevitably arises is whether one *must* accept monism (of a stripe) to combat negative truths. Schaffer says yes. But, again, Schaffer has a specific understanding of monism as the *priority* of the one fundamental entity to all other entities, and it is at least controversial (as noted above) whether this is properly understood as monism.[41] As we have seen, Schaffer calls numerical monism ($SV_{EX}(a)$) "crazy" (2010b:24), and is right to claim that such a view is precisely the reason why most people reject monism as untenable.[42]

I urge, however, that Schaffer's dismissal of numerical monism is uncharitable, given that, as we have seen, there are significant problems with individuation for all monisms, priority monism certainly no less than numerical or substance monism ($SV_{SB}(a)$). Thus, whether monism is necessary to combat negative truths may depend on which monism one is committed to;[43] if individuation problems make priority monism in the end untenable (as a monism), then it cannot be required to combat problems with negative truths if such a problem requires monism for a solution.

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[41] Van Inwagen (2009:35), for one, argues that monism properly understood is the thesis that there is just one individual thing and it is not even *possible* for other individual things to exist. Schaffer assumes, it seems, that the parts posterior to the whole are individuals; they simply are not *fundamental* or *basic*, he argues explicitly in (2010a). This contrasts with nihilistic positions, where there are no proper parts.

[42] Schaffer cites Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (1997) as having this view.

[43] For example, if one is committed to numerical monism and a correspondence theory of truth, it seems to follow trivially not only that all truths are grounded in the same truthmaker, but that all propositions mean the same thing by virtue of being about the same thing, namely, the one. See Pelletier (1990 Chapter 1), for an interpretation of Parmenides in this vein.

A third and final sense of not-being is that of a *void*, emptiness, or pure nothingness. The problem of the void is an ancient problem, and certainly one sense of not-being with which Parmenides was concerned.[44] Related to this problem is the problem of *ex nihilo nihil*, the denial that something can come from void, emptiness, or pure nothingness.[45] Mourelatos argues that Parmenides was explicitly interested in *ex nihilo nihil* (1981:649). Whether other Parmenidean concerns (such as the problem of negative existentials or negative truth) are just species of *ex nihilo nihil* remains to be seen. The question immediately relevant is how the principle might lead to monism.

Stated via *modus tollens*, the *ex nihilo nihil* principle goes something like this:

(1) if nothing existed at time t_1, nothing could exist at time t_2
(2) something exists at time t_2
(3) therefore something exists at time t_1

Stated this way, 'nothing' seems to denote an object, which would obviously contradict the original principle. It ought to be understood as a logical operator.[46] Indeed, it must be understood as a logical operator, since if 'nothing' denotes, then *something* exists, namely, whatever it is that 'nothing' denotes. A clearer way to put the principle, then, might be this:

(1*) if not-(something exists at t_1), then not-(something exists at t_2)
(2*) (something exists at t_2)
(3*) therefore (something exists at t_1)

Simply put, the argument takes the fact that something exists now as evidence for the impossibility of a state of *total* nonexistence at some prior time; it asserts, that is, that something

[44] It is denial of a void that motivates Parmenidean and Zeno-like arguments against change: crudely, if a void is denied, then there is no "space" within which something *a* can change or alter into something else, *b*.
[45] This principle is, of course, important in philosophy generally, and it figures in theological arguments for God's existence.
[46] That is, given the assumption *pace* Frege that logical operators are not themselves objects.

has *always* existed. But how does this principle lead to monism?

According to Mourelatos, Parmenides subscribes to a version of *ex nihilo nihil* that is stronger than the traditional formulation. It is, for Parmenides, a two-way affair: he certainly denies that anything can come to be from a state of pure nothingness. But he also denies that anything can come to be *even if* something exists. According to Mourelatos, *ex nihilo nihil* is not a principle for Parmenides, but "a special application of a sweeping ban on coming-to-be" (652). Thus coming-to-be and perishing are both species of a general ban on not-being; the first is straightforward (as a denial of pure nothingness). But perishing into something else too implies not-being, for when *a* goes from being *F* to being *G*, it is true of *a* at a time that it *is-not F* (and not *G* at an earlier time). Here again, we see the problem of not-being understood in the way articulated above as negative truths or facts: if Thomson defeats Hopkins in the Dorchester elections for Witchfinder General, Thomson *becomes* Witchfinder General from not being so, and Hopkins *becomes* not being so, from being Witchfinder General. Since Parmenides bans all not-being, these sorts of changes are banned (whatever they turn out to be—it is not clear, for example, whether Thomson is supposed to gain a *property*, either by becoming or ceasing to be Witchfinder General). And in banning all not-being, Parmenides bans all change: existents cannot *come from* nothing (the *ex nihilo nihil* principle); and existents cannot *perish into* anything (else).

Does monism follow from *ex nihilo nihil*? Certainly it is not sufficient for any version of monism rehearsed thus far: just because it is false, say, that something can come from pure nothingness, it does not follow that there is only one thing ($SV_{EX}(a)$), one substance ($SV_{SB}(a)$), or a plurality of real unified wholes ($SV_{WK}(b)$). It further does not follow that priority monism is true; it could be that the parts are prior to the whole, and have always existed (as a plurality of

parts). What secures monism, I want to show, is how individuation combines with *ex nihilo nihil*: given certain assumptions about individuation and identity, along with the stronger Parmenidean denial of perishing, versions of monism indeed follow. For example, if one denies not-being in a strong Parmenidean sense, then it is false that *a* can go from being *F* to being *G*. Why? Because then it would be true to say of *a* first, that it *is-not F* (or, more controversially, is *not-F*),[47] and second, that its *F*-ness has perished. So in the first case, we have the problem of negative truths or facts for explaining how something *a* lacks some property *F* (or has some property not-*F*). In the second case we have the problem of ceasing-to-be or perishing, which (if we follow Parmenides and strongly deny not-being) has been denied. Thus *a* ceases to have a property (or it gains a new one) on the one hand, and the property itself ceases to be on the other.

The acute problem for *a* now becomes: does the *same a* that (now) has *G* also now lack *F*, or is some property (*F* or *G* etc.) necessary for *a* to be *a* (and not, say, *b*)? Mourelatos (2008) and Curd (1998) argue that Parmenidean monism is a version of SV_{WK}(b), and allows for the following (essentialist) interpretation: each thing that exists is a unified whole and *completely unique*, where uniqueness is exemplified by only *one* property or predicate it has and *cannot* lack if it is to be the very thing that it is.[48] In this way, monism amounts to a uniqueness claim for each individual thing. If something is an individual, there is one thing (an essential predicate) that makes it the very individual that it is, apart from other individuals. Proper individuals, then,

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[47] This difference marks the difference between lacking a positive property (is-not *F*) and having a negative property (is not-*F*). These are just the problems of negative facts discussed above. They surface again in the chapter 5 *Sophist* discussions.

[48] Mourelatos (2008:133) argues that Parmenidean monism is a denial of strict dualism. He says "nondualism is compatible with numerical plurality, provided one is careful to exclude any relations of contrariety or opposition between pairs of real elements." Curd's predicational monism (see §1) says: each thing that exists has a single predicate that "indicates what it is" (1998:66). I discuss these versions of Parmenidean monism in Chapter 2, mentioning them in the present context for how they relate to not-being and individuation.

cannot come to be or perish into other *proper* individuals (lest they lose their identity altogether). To deliver Bishop Butler's maxim to the jaws of Parmenidean metaphysics: everything is what it is and *cannot* be another thing.

Assume, however, that there are no clear individuation or identity criteria for chunks of reality; assume, in other words, that there is no non-arbitrary way the universe can be partitioned. It follows that there is no clear way to individuate some purported individual, *a*, from another, *b*; that is, there is no way, in Schaffer's terminology, to articulate non-arbitrary partition or boundary conditions for any purported individual. Assume, however, that something exists. If there is no way to partition chunks of reality into *non-arbitrary* parts (parts that meet appropriate individuation and identity criteria), and there exists something, it follows that there exists just one thing, the universe as a whole (cut it any way you like). Not-being concerns individuation, then, when it is not clear whether there are *fundamental* individuation and identity criteria for discerning between two purported individuals, for discerning where there is one individual and *not* another. If such criteria end up being arbitrary, stronger versions of monism than SV_{WK}(b) follow, since on these stronger versions, there *are no* individuals (plural) at all; there is just one thing. But in that case, individuation ends up not being a separability thesis at all: it is simply whatever makes the universe the one (whole) thing that it is.

The difficulty is that if there is just one thing, it is not clear in what sense it is an *individual*. If individuation necessarily concerns what individuates one thing *from another*, then strong monistic readings like SV_{EX}(a) make little sense as monisms, if monism (as I have argued) concerns what makes reality one. We have already noted that van Inwagen mentions the peculiarity of how, if there is only one thing, it can be an individual at all; and that Lowe argues that individuation is "whatever it is that makes an entity *one* entity, distinct from others, and *the*

very entity that it is, as opposed to any others" (2003:78, italics in the original), while later noting that a preliminary definition of 'individual' (now in terms of *substance*) is "an individual object which is capable of independent existence" (79). Lowe mentions the obvious circularity of this preliminary definition, but if "independent existence" is the salient feature of individuation, then it follows that no *other* thing is required for making something an individual as such.[49] That is, no relation with some *other* thing is required for something to be the very thing that it is. It would follow that if there is just one thing, that thing is an individual.

I now turn to the final motivator for monism, namely, an acceptance of the principle of sufficient reason. As I show, the principle of sufficient reason, the problem of individuation, and the problem of not-being work together to motivate monism of a particularly strong variety.

2.3. The Principle of Sufficient Reason, Not-Being, and Individuation

The principle of sufficient reason (PSR) concerns the explicability of things: for everything that exists, there is a reason or explanation for why it exists. Stated another way, the PSR disallows brute facts. Spinoza endorses perhaps the strongest version of the PSR in the history of philosophy, a version that is, as Della Rocca puts it, "rationalism on steroids" (2008:4). Moreover, it is Spinoza's acceptance of a strong version of the PSR that undergirds his monism. I now turn briefly to Spinoza's arguments from the PSR to monism to show how the

[49] Indeed, the separation-from-others aspect may be, in Lowe's sense, *epistemically* necessary for individuation, that is, for how *we* distinguish (purported) individuals (75). But it seems not to be *metaphysically* necessary because an individual requires the *existence* of another individual in order for it to be the very thing that it is. If it is not a metaphysical necessity, then it is possible for there to be just one thing. Significantly, however, if epistemology is tied strongly to metaphysics, in the sense that knowing something is knowing its very nature, and there is just one thing, then either separation-from-others is not even epistemically necessary for individuation (because there *are* no others), or there is no such thing as knowledge about (seeming) partitions of the whole.

PSR leads to at least one version of monism.[50]

Spinoza's monism is loaded with the language of seventeenth century rationalism, making generalizations regarding monism as such somewhat strained. Some very brief explanation of key terms is thus in order. Spinoza understands 'attribute' in the way other modern philosophers do: the very basic categories that substances can fall under, such as extension (physical things) and thought (ideas, minds). Spinoza is unique in allowing for other attributes, but he does not explain what they might be. Spinoza understands the term 'substance' similarly to how other modern philosophers understand it: substances are things that exist absolutely independently of other things; they are ontologically prior to their attributes, as well as to any other modifications (modes) they may have, such as the specific ways substances under different attributes can be affected (by being, for example, colored, shaped a certain way, intelligent, etc.).

According to Della Rocca, what drives Spinoza's monism is his acceptance of the PSR, plus his thesis that there can be no trans-attribute explanation for the non-identity of substances falling under different attributes (46-58). What does this mean? Take an extended substance *a*. Is there anything that could explain why it is not identical to, say, thinking substance *b*? The initial response is that something's being extended precludes it from being thinking, and so this difference would explain their non-identity.[51] But given that there is no trans-attribute explanation (there is what Della Rocca calls a "conceptual barrier" between attributes), it follows

[50] In chapter 2, I note that Parmenides endorses a crude version of the PSR; PSR-motivated arguments seem crucial to several varieties of monism.

[51] Plato, at *Sophist* 255e4-6, too rejects the notion that *x*'s essence can be an explication of why *x* is not *y*. But Plato accepts that *x* and *y* are not identical, and so explicates the reason in ways different from Spinoza.

that one cannot appeal to the nature of extension to explain anything about thought. But if there is no explanation through attributes for why *a* and *b* are not identical, it follows by the PSR and Spinoza's acceptance of the principle of the identity of indiscernibles that *a* and *b* are identical.[52] So for any two purported substances, there is just one substance, no matter how many attributes it has. Thus, Spinoza's substance monism immediately follows.

Spinoza's monism is almost universally seen as a *substance* monism, apparently because the PSR-driven argument yields just one substance. But is Spinoza's monism a substance monism of the SV_{SB}(a) variety, which simply explicates the standard understanding of substance monism? Recall that SV_{SB}(a) states that *everything is really reducible to one kind*. This reading is consistent with Schaffer (2007a), who classifies substance monism as a monism where concrete objects ultimately fall under the unit "highest type," and Curd who points to presocratic material monism as one where "each thing is made out of or is a modification of the single material stuff" (1998:65). Both are substance monisms of the SV_{SB}(a) variety, since in each case, individuals are reducible to a specific *kind*.[53] But in Spinoza's case, concrete individuals (understood for Spinoza as modes of the one substance) are *not* reducible (in an ultimate or final sense) to a specific *kind* of thing: there is no final reduction of, say, trees or people to either material or thinking things, since trees and people are *both* material and thinking things (along with whatever other attributes obtain). That is, every concrete particular thing falls equally under

[52] The identity of indiscernibles states that if two things share all properties (they are indiscernible regarding properties), they are the same thing (that is, there is just one thing, not two). Another assumption for the argument is that no two substances can share attributes, which Spinoza explicitly accepts at *Ethics* I Proposition 5. It is unclear whether this works, as an application of the PSR. In chapter 3, I explore the notion that the *seeming* difference between something *x* and *y* must also be explainable, if the PSR holds. Parmenides, I argue there, had no solution. It is unclear to me whether Spinoza did, other than to invoke the vague notion of "ignorance."

[53] One may add the modern idealist thesis along with Curd's material monism: each thing is a modification of a single *mental* stuff.

every attribute. The only "thing" (if it can be so called) to which all concrete particulars are reducible is substance itself, and it is far from clear whether 'substance' denotes any *kind* of thing, or indeed any *one* thing at all: kind ascriptions necessarily involve attributes, each attribute is *sufficient* (but completely conceptually distinct) for explicating the nature of substance, and (on most readings of Spinoza) there are infinitely many attributes (see Della Rocca 2008:43).[54]

One interesting result of Spinoza's arguments regarding explanations of non-identity between substances is that the PSR can be used more generally for *all* non-identity claims, even claims of non-identity *within* attributes (i.e. claims about why some material thing, say, is not another material thing). For example, if some concrete particular *a* (under some specific attribute) is not identical to some other concrete particular *b* (under the same attribute), there must be a reason for their non-identity. That is, there must be a reason why one *is not* the other. Naturally, such explanations will turn on our understanding of both not-being and individuation. The PSR—if it is of the strong variety—pushes not-being and individuation, and demands coherent answers to Schafferian partition and boundary questions for (purported) concrete individuals. There has to be, in other words, an explanation for where, say, *a* ends and *b* begins and why it is *those* things that bind and partition *a* as *a*, and *b* as *b*; what are the legitimate ways for explaining (non-arbitrarily and without recourse to brute facts) the non-identity of purported concrete individuals?

It is, as we can now see, the problem of not-being and an acceptance of the PSR that

[54] Note that it is for these reasons that Spinoza should not be called a *neutral monist*; neutral monism is the thesis that there is one substance, but that substance is neutral between being any determinate *kind* of substance: substance may equally be material or thinking or anything else. Spinoza, however, says that substance is equally *all* attributes, not that it *may* be one or another.

presses issues regarding individuation, and these two motivations work together: the PSR demands answers to problems concerning not-being, and if such problems (e.g., the non-identity of concrete particulars or anything whatsoever) have no non-arbitrary solutions that sustain non-identity, then *identity follows*. Acceptance of strong monism is directly determined by whether one accepts not-being as a genuine problem and whether one accepts the PSR. But why accept either?

Recall that Molnar could find no resolution to the problem of negative truths. If solutions to this problem, a species of the problem of not-being generally, are indeed hard to come by, then it seems not-being is a genuine problem. Schaffer's solution led directly to a version of monism. If monism (of a stripe) offers a way to resolve the problem of negative truths (and possibly of not-being generally), then the problem of not-being is at least something to take seriously. But what kind of monism can fit the bill is governed by acceptance of the PSR.

Della Rocca (2010) argues that the PSR ought to be accepted, especially by philosophers who want to avoid arbitrariness or brute facts (the rhetorical implication being that all philosophers wish to avoid these). But accepting the PSR and the problem of not-being as a genuine problem countenances a stronger sort of monism than Schaffer's priority monism: there is no non-arbitrary way to individuate parts *qua* parts, and so parts are not genuine entities at all. The only genuine entity is the universe or reality as a whole.[55]

[55] McDaniel (2010) notes that such a position is a weakened version of numerical monism, but stronger than priority monism.

3. Conclusion: The (a)- and (b)-Readings

Monism, as we have seen, concerns two overarching issues: *what is it* that is one ((a)-reading), and what *counts* as oneness ((b-reading). Those committed to the possibility of more than one (concrete) thing and argue that all real things are *ones* (i.e. those committed to (b)-readings) can be seen either as pluralists or as non-traditional monists. Such advocates of the (b)-reading, however, face two distinct problems, depending on how strongly they are committed to pluralism, and what sort of pluralism they countenance. On the strong pluralistic interpretation, there seems no principled way to say where reality "slices" into a plurality of entities that exist in their own right. This is the problem of Heraclitean flux: pluralism all the way down results in there being no demarcation among things at all, and thus *no things*; any purported demarcation of one thing from another rests on there being reasons or principled grounds for such demarcation.[56] And if such grounds exist, then pluralism in this strong sense falters, because there are "stopping points"—non-arbitrary ways of slicing up reality—and thus it is true that some things *are not* other things. In this case, there are denumerable things (objects, individuals, etc.), and Heraclitean flux is false.

The existence of such non-arbitrary ways of slicing up reality just is SV_{WK}(b), mentioned above as a possible "cheat" for solving the problem of Heraclitean flux. But on SV_{WK}(b), saying that something *a* is wholly and uniquely *F* (Curd's predicational monism)—thereby allowing for a plurality of strongly construed ones—falters on not being able to deal with PSR-driven issues of not-being: if *a* is wholly *F*, then it is not *G* (because, say, *b* is wholly *G*). This secures the

[56] Note that human experience is typically taken as the "principled ground" for such demarcation, even though humans are themselves part of the flux.

stability of unique ones but at the price of failing to explain non-identity: there must be a reason for *a*'s not being *G*. These sorts of PSR-driven arguments against Curd and Mourelatos are open, however, since Mourelatos argues that Parmenides accepts the PSR (1981:652). But Parmenides—as both Curd and Mourelatos accept, along with other Parmenides scholars generally—denies not-being. It is difficult to see how Parmenides can accept the PSR and yet countenance what amounts to a weak *acceptance* of not-being, namely, the brute fact that *a* is not *G* (because it is *F*).

Where does this leave the (b)-reading? In chapter 2, I argue that Eleatic monism—against Curd and Mourelatos—cannot sustain the SV_{WK}(b) interpretation, because it cannot handle not-being. But interestingly, *giving up* a plurality of ones and allowing for a *general* pluralism (pluralism all the way down) ends up leading directly to a sort of strong monism: if there are no principled ways of slicing up reality into discrete chunks, then reality ends up being just one thing. Heraclitean flux culminates in strong monism. Along these lines, I agree with Schaffer, who argues that mereological nihilism can lead to (but does not *entail*) numerical monism (2007:176-81). Schaffer argues that the mereological nihilist—one who argues that there exists nothing but concrete simples (and not, for example, composites such as chairs or people)—ought to, on Occamite methodological grounds, accept numerical monism. That is, both the mereological nihilist and numerical monist accept that composites like chairs and people are fictional paraphrases for what such things are *really*: concrete simples. But if nihilist and monist stories about the world are the same (i.e. composites are useful fictions), then on Occamite grounds, concrete simples ought not to be multiplied beyond necessity: positing one such simple is "explanatorily sufficient." Numerical monism is identical to what Schaffer calls "maximal nihilism," the view that there is one "world-sized" simple, as opposed to minimal

nihilism (there are minimally small simples) or intermediate nihilisms, which posit "molecules" out of atoms. Numerical monism is simply mereological nihilism shorn by Occam's razor.

Schaffer, however, thinks both mereological nihilism and numerical monism are crazy views (181). He argues that the mereological nihilist ought to be a numerical monist, but he thinks one ought not to be a mereological nihilist in the first place. Schaffer's reasoning for rejecting nihilism (and numerical monism) has to do with his acceptance of priority monism, which in some sense is based on a desire to save the phenomena.[57] But for the numerical monist, it is irrelevant whether something *really* is as it appears to be; the numerical monist accepts such a radical position because pluralistic alternatives (i.e. $SV_{WK}(b)$) cannot handle the motivational problems outlined in §2. Schaffer's priority monism—as an explanation of reality based on the relation of whole to part, which is thus an explanation of reality as *hierarchical*—is an attempt to save the phenomena while at the same time be a monist. Priority monism, however, falters on problems of individuation: Schaffer says that the universe as a whole is the only *basic* fundamental entity. It is prior to its parts, which are construed as individuals (but not basic individuals). But if ontologically dependent "shards" (as he calls the parts, 2007:190) of the whole are individuals, and the whole itself is an individual, then the same individuation criteria must apply to both. It does not seem possible for this to obtain, however, since any individuation criteria for a fragment of the one whole will have to account for the dependency of the fragment on the whole: *the very thing that it is* is necessarily tied up with its being a *dependent being*. But the whole is not dependent on anything, and thus an account of how *it* is an individual (i.e. the

[57] Schaffer has arguments for priority monism, most notably one based on the possibility of atomless gunk, the view that every part of some whole has proper parts (see Schaffer 2010a). Numerical monism, however, indeed seems crazy to Schaffer *because* it does not countenance separate things, and therefore fails to save the phenomena.

very thing that *it* is) will contain no such account. Thus different individuation criteria apply to the parts and whole. But if this is the case, priority monism is no monism at all, since it requires *two* accounts of what it means for something to be one—two distinct *ways* of being one. Monism, as a philosophy of oneness as such, requires one such account.

In the chapters that follow, I restrict myself to the historical relation between Parmenides and Plato, and examine both how we should understand Parmenides in his own words, and how we should understand Plato as *interpreting* Parmenides. I argue that Parmenides' monism accommodates a univocal account of individuation (oneness), since there is only one individual; this is the SV_{EX}(a) position. The universe as a whole is one object (individual/being) with its own unique individuation criteria, indeed, the *only* individuation criteria. Numerical monism is thus a position about individuation *as such*: to understand what it means to be an individual, one needs to understand the universe as a whole *qua* individual.

But, as I argue, Eleatic monism falters on its own internal inconsistency, though this is not a problem for its *monism*.[58] A central feature of my Plato-based critique of Eleatic monism is whether, since Plato had certain strong affinities with Parmenides, he *abandoned* Eleatic notions, or whether he saw his job as clarifying them, and if the latter, whether Plato himself can rightly be considered a *monistic* heir to his Father. I argue that he can be so construed, and that by understanding the (b)-reading as being subsumed under the (a)-reading, the problems in Eleatic ontology are more properly worked out in Plato, as I point to in the final chapter. What

[58] Most commentators who think Parmenides is crazy call attention to various paradoxes I discuss in chapter 2. The real problem, I contend, is something Plato saw: strong monism cannot countenance falsehood, something Parmenides' philosophy requires. See the chapter 5 discussion on falsehood in the *Sophist* for my explicit argument. It is conceivable that—were Parmenides to arise from the dead in the East and confront these Plato-based arguments—he might simply become a Buddhist. Some versions of Buddhism *do* countenance the very paradoxical notions Western philosophers have lobbed against Parmenides.

occurs, however, is this: SV_{WK}(b)—which is neither entailed by the SV(a) reading nor entails it—must still "converge" with it for a proper *ontology*. I argue in the final chapter that this ontology is a sort of monism: *structural monism*. It is effectually the convergence of the one and the many.

CHAPTER TWO

PARMENIDES: THE FATHER OF NUMERICAL MONISM

1. Background to Eleaticism

1.1. Brief Outline of Parmenides' Poem and Some Central Fragments

Parmenides of Elea left to posterity a poem in three parts. First is an introductory *Proem*, which takes up the whole first fragment and shows a goddess telling a young man, or *kouros*, that he shall "learn all things, both the unshaken heart of persuasive Truth, and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true reliance" (B1.28-30).[1] The section comprising fragments B2 through B8.49 is called by many commentators *Aletheia* (literally, truth), where Parmenides' goddess gives arguments for the persuasive Truth mentioned in the *Proem*: not-being *is not*,[2] and this entails a strongly monistic ontology. Finally, the *Doxa*[3] (belief) section, fragments B8.50 through B19, gives a dualistic cosmology, ostensibly one that is suitable for wrong-headed mortal thinking. All of these brief descriptions of the sections are controversial. In this chapter I focus on the *Aletheia* and argue that it presents the essentials for a version of numerical monism.

The following fragments and parts of the poem will be crucial to what follows. I mention them here for ease of reference. Other, lesser used fragments, I quote in the text, along with alternate translations of the following when necessary.

> **B2**: "**[1]** Come now and I shall tell, and do you receive through hearing the tale, **[2]** which are the only ways of inquiry for thinking; **[3]** the one: that it is and that it is not possible not to be,

[1] All translations of Parmenides, unless otherwise noted, are from Graham (2010). Numbering of Parmenides' fragments follows Diels-Kranz.

[2] I use the term 'not-being' as a blanket term for the rejection of the negative route.

[3] Graham (2010:203), following most in Parmenides scholarship, uses the transliterated Greek terms *Aletheia* and *Doxa* as titles for the two later sections of the poem. I will follow him here.

[4] is the path of Persuasion (for she attends on Truth); **[5]** the other: that it is not and that it is right it should not be, **[6]** this I declare to you is an utterly inscrutable track, **[7]** for neither could you know what is not (for it cannot be accomplished), **[8]** nor could you declare it [or: point it out].
B3: ". . . for the same thing is there for thinking and for being."
B8.1-25: "**[1]**. . . Only one tale is left of the way: **[2]** that it is; and on this are posted **[3]** very many signs, that [i] what-is is ungenerated and imperishable, **[4]** [ii] a whole of one kind, [iii] unperturbed and [iv] complete. **[5]** [i] Never was it, nor shall it be, since it now is, all together, **[6]** one, continuous. For what birth would you seek of it? **[7]** Where [or: how], whence did it grow? Not from what-is-not will I allow **[8]** you to say or to think; for it is not sayable or thinkable **[9]** that it is not. And what need would have stirred it **[10]** later or earlier, starting from nothing, to grow? **[11]** Thus it must be completely or not at all. **[12]** Nor ever from what-is-not will the strength of faith allow **[13]** anything to come to be beside it. Wherefore neither to come to be **[14]** nor to perish did Justice permit it by loosening its shackles, **[15]** but she holds fast. And the decision concerning these things comes to this: **[16]** it is or it is not. Thus the decision is made, as is necessary, **[17]** to leave the one way unthought, unnamed—for it is not a true **[18]** way—the other to be and to be true. **[19]** And how would what-is be hereafter? How would it have come to be? **[20]** For if it has come to be, it is not, and similarly if it is ever about to be. **[21]** Thus coming to be is quenched and perishing unheard of. **[22]** [ii] Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike, **[23]** nor is there any more here, which would keep it from holding together, **[24]** nor any less, but it is all full of what-is. **[25]** Thus it is all continuous, for what-is cleaves to what-is."
B8.32-49: "**[32]** [iv] Wherefore it is not night for what-is to be incomplete; **[33]** for it is not needy; for if it were it would lack everything. **[34]** The same thing is for thinking and is wherefore there is thought. **[35]** For not without what-is, to which it is directed, **[36]** will you find thought. For nothing else <either> is nor shall be **[37]** beside what-is, since Fate shackled it **[38]** to be whole and unmoved. In relation to this have all things been named, **[39]** which mortals established, trusting them to be true; **[40]** coming to be and perishing, being and not being, **[41]** changing place and exchanging bright color. **[42]** Yet since there is a final limit, it is complete **[43]** from every direction, like the mass of a well-rounded ball, **[44]** equally resistant from the center in all directions. For it is not right **[45]** for it to be any greater or any smaller here or there. **[46]** For neither is there what-is-not, which might stop it from reaching **[47]** its like, nor is there what-is in such a way that there would be of what-is **[48]** here more and

there less, since it is all inviolate. **[49]** For being equal to itself in every direction, it equally meets with limits."

1.2. Overview of Central Issues in the Parmenides Literature

Parmenides has been called many things. He is the philosopher of the One, the philosopher who denies not-being or nothingness, the philosopher of being, the first metaphysician. To Plato, he is Father Parmenides. Some of these monikers are certainly fitting; others import philosophical controversies in Parmenides scholarship that remain unsettled. An important example is Parmenides' alleged monism: it is not clear that he argues for numerical monism, or any monism for that matter,[4] something he is typically taken to advocate. Another example is his denial of not-being: though Parmenides denies not-being in *some* sense, *making* sense of what he means by the denial has been a source of great vexation. On the standard interpretation, not-being and monism are related; the denial of not-being is supposed to entail that there is just one thing: there can be no void or emptiness inside or outside of what-is because what-is is *all* there is.[5] To mention a popular slogan in the Parmenides literature, there can be no "gaps" in being. If so, then two things, *a* and *b*, that purportedly exist in their own right, cannot be legitimately distinguished—their nonidentity cannot be *ontologically* justified. If there can be no gaps internal to each thing *a* and *b*, and no gaps externally between them, then *a* is identical to *b*. Denial of not-being on this interpretation is denial of *difference,* and this denial applies to everything. If there are no differences internally within or externally among things, then there is just one thing.[6]

[4] See chapter 1 for a discussion of numerical (and other versions of) monism.
[5] This echo's Quine's (1961:1) question "what is there?" Answer: "everything."
[6] As will become clearer, the text is ambiguous at crucial points about whether a denial of not-being entails monism,

Whether the standard interpretation of Parmenides' monism is feasible remains to be seen. Indeed, the standard interpretation, which makes Parmenides a strong numerical monist, may not offer the best understanding of numerical monism itself. Because they are ambiguous in important places, the fragments do not in any obvious way support numerical monism. Granted, we do not have everything from Parmenides, and the style of the text we do have suffers from what Barnes calls an "almost impenetrable obscurity" (1982:155). But there are *interpretations* of Parmenides (such as they may be, given the obscurity and ambiguity of the text) that allow for numerical monism, and these interpretations more or less view Parmenides as, in Owen's words, "a philosophical pioneer of the first water" (1975:68). Numerical monism is shocking, and, on this view, represents a stark contrast with earlier Milesian natural philosophy (monisms of substances such as air or water) and marks a move to a more abstract, strictly metaphysical philosophy, beyond what Anaximander's *apeiron*, or *boundless*, attempted to achieve.[7] On this view, Parmenides is the first philosopher of being[8] *as such*, and the being he is discussing is absolutely *one*.

Some recent authors, most prominent of whom are Mourelatos (2008), Curd (1998), and Barnes (1982), argue that there are better readings of Parmenides that support either a weaker

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since it is not clear how Parmenides construes the notion that being "clings to" (ἔχεσθαι) being at B4.2. Some recent commentators, such as Coxon (1986:189), argue that this passage is ambiguous regarding monism or pluralism.

[7] Anaximander's *apeiron* is an early attempt to move toward abstraction, though he is ambiguous about whether the *apeiron* is physical or non-physical. Parmenides, as I shall argue later, takes being to be *both* physical and thinking, which is arguably non-physical.

[8] In the text, I will use interchangeably 'what-is', 'being', 'reality', and 'the real' to mean more or less the same thing. Curd (2011:19 n80) notes that earlier (mostly Anglo-American) interpreters avoided these metaphysical terms because they did not want to be lumped in a category with Heidegger. My project is significantly different from Heidegger's and my use of these terms should be construed as denoting (in a sufficiently vague sense) *whatever* objects or individuals exist. It will turn out that for Parmenides, these terms denote one thing.

monism or no monism at all. Most of these authors, however, are silent on the actual coherence or incoherence of the numerical monism reading as a viable *philosophical* position, and instead focus on disambiguating the *text* in ways favorable to a weaker monism or no monism at all. It is important to note that these authors do not take weak or no monism as a guiding principle in their interpretations; rather, these are *conclusions* they infer from an interpretation of the text, as well as detailed historical analyses of the presocratic context within which Parmenides wrote. Thus, Parmenidean monism (of one stripe or another) follows from what an author takes as the best way of understanding the text itself. To put it somewhat crudely for now, those who see Parmenides as a numerical monist typically understand him as using a sense of *esti*[9] that emphasizes existence: when Parmenides initially declares "it is" at B2 he is saying that something *exists* or is referring to something's existence. Furthermore, strong monism is typically an interpretation of Parmenides as a radically original philosopher, distinct from his predecessors. On the other side, those who understand Parmenides as a weak monist typically take his use of *esti* as predicative: "it is" is a copulative use that must be understood as "it is *F*," or "it is (something or other)." Moreover, they typically see Parmenides as responding to or engaged with the philosophical and literary traditions of his predecessors, most notably Heraclitus, Xenophanes, and Homer, though not always in equal measure.[10]

In fact, however, Parmenides scholarship is much more complex than I have indicated, since some authors see Parmenides as using an existential sense of *esti* yet also as fully engaged

[9] I follow Curd (1998) in using the transliterated italicized terms '*esti*' (it is) and '*ouk esti*' (it is not) to refer broadly to the routes mentioned in B2. When other forms are required for analysis, I use the Greek.
[10] Indeed, no one denies Parmenides' relation to Homer. The philosophical import of this relation, however, is unclear.

with his predecessors.[11] Some authors think Parmenides is using a "fused" sense of *esti,* which can be any combination of existential, predicative, identity, and veridical senses, among others.[12] Kahn, in articles and books over the last several decades, has been the primary champion of the veridical interpretation (which sees Parmenides as primarily concerned with *truth*), though his position is closer to a fused sense with predicative and existential nuances. Once the denial of not-being is added to this complex interpretive array, the issues get very muddy very quickly, since interpretations of not-being often rely heavily on interpretations of *esti*.

In this chapter I examine Parmenides' ontological commitments, his picture of reality, or *what reality must be like* given his arguments about what-is and what-is-not. The picture that emerges corroborates Graham's claim that Parmenides is the "inventor of metaphysics" as a distinct philosophy (2010:204). Several authors, however, view Parmenides as a sort of ancient Descartes.[13] In what follows, I argue that far from being a fumbling proto-Cartesian, Parmenides is best interpreted as a numerical monist. In that respect, neither his epistemological nor his ontological commitments could possibly make him an ancient Descartes; his project is *being*.

In §2 I examine the most important interpretive issues for Parmenides, specifically the problem of how to interpret *esti* and the poem's subject matter, as well as the problem of not-being. Both of these issues are central to understanding Parmenides' ontological commitments. In §3 I take the best interpretation of Parmenides' metaphysics and argue specifically for his numerical monism and for the identification of thought/thinking and being. I also note some

[11] Barnes (1982) sees an existential sense of *esti* but no monism at all in Parmenides.
[12] Guthrie (1965) sees Parmenides using an existential *esti* while engaging his predecessors. Furth (1968) is prominent among those who argue for a fused sense of *esti*.
[13] For example, Guthrie (1965) and Owen (1975).

paradoxical results before concluding the chapter in §4.[14]

2. Interpretive Issues

I want to mention, before getting into details, some problems with which all students of Parmenides must engage. Perhaps the most important unresolved issue is the subject matter of Parmenides' poem: *what* is he talking about? Intimately related to the subject matter is the language Parmenides uses, most importantly his use of the terms *esti* (it is) and *ouk esti* (it is not), and the ontological commitments each entail. The subject of the poem becomes clearer to the extent that Parmenides' use of these terms becomes clearer. Moreover, this subject, once established, is usually taken to be either mostly epistemological or mostly ontological, given whatever *else* one takes to be important in the poem.[15] I rehearse some candidates at this initial stage, and discuss them more thoroughly below.

In the literature, Parmenides has been interpreted as concerned in different degrees with *routes of inquiry* (Mourelatos 2008), *the real nature of things* (Mourelatos 2008; Curd 1998), *the one* (Cornford),[16] *whatever can be spoken or thought about* (Owen 1975 and Gallop 1984, among others), and *the possibility of scientific inquiry* (Barnes 1982). There is considerable overlap among these positions. But phrases such as 'whatever can be spoken or thought' or 'the real nature of things' countenance *numerical monism* if the only real thing is the one existing

[14] In the next chapter I argue that Parmenides' monism cannot stand up to the goals of his own project, namely, the desire to explain how mortal belief is fundamentally misguided. In chapters 4 and 5, I invoke Plato as the first distinctly *philosophical* challenger to Parmenides, one who nonetheless salvages (in chapter 6) a quasi-Eleaticism all its own.

[15] As will be shown, the epistemological and metaphysical aspects cannot be separated in Parmenides: they are the *same aspects*, but from different viewpoints, as it were.

[16] According to Owen (1975:57), Cornford—against most interpretations—takes the one to be an assumption for Parmenides, and not a conclusion from arguments.

thing, and that is the only thing that can (properly) be spoken or thought about, *weak monism* if there are many real "ones" that can (properly) be spoken or thought about, and even *no monism* if whatever can be spoken or thought about is not required to be "one," whatever that might mean. The fact that any one of these interpretations is possible (or has been defended) from the *text*, shows that it is likely not possible to come to any definitive conclusion on Parmenides' subject matter. At the very least a clearer picture emerges once the interpretive material is accounted for. I argue that the best interpretation for the subject matter is *reality* (or *what-is* or *being*), and that there is just one such reality. That is, Parmenides denies pluralism (and indeed denies *parts* of reality). To see this, a thorough discussion of *esti* is required.

2.1. Parmenides' esti

As noted, of the several different interpretations of Parmenides' use of *esti*, three have been prominent in the literature, with a fourth category that sees Parmenides as fusing (or confusing) some or all of these.[17] The existential and predicative interpretations dominate the literature, whereas Kahn's veridical sense is an important modification of the leading interpretations.

Of central concern regarding these interpretations, however, is the fact that none are obvious from the fragments. There are two broad interpretative angles of Parmenides' uses of *esti*, and each takes different things into consideration. First, we can use the arguments from the *Aletheia* as a whole (and abstract a fitting usage from there). These interpretations typically emphasize philosophical considerations. Second, we can use the *Aletheia* along with context

[17] Kirk, in Kirk and Raven (1957), is prominent among those who thought Parmenides was confused.

provided by earlier Greek writers, such as Homer and Milesian philosophers. These interpretations include literary and historical evidence alongside philosophical interpretations. Broadly speaking, those who take *esti* existentially tend to use the *Aletheia* (and less so literary and historical evidence) as the context that provides sense to *esti*; those who take *esti* predicatively tend to find evidence for its use in broader literary and philosophical uses. All interpreters, however, seem to agree that central to the context is an understanding of *esti* as somehow related to the two routes or roads of inquiry the goddess lays out in B2. The filling-in work, then, has to do with how to understand the two routes, given the myriad possible interpretations of the subject and the senses of *esti*.

2.1.1. The existential interpretation of esti[18]

The simplest and thus predominant interpretation of *esti* is that it is used existentially to discuss *what exists*. The predominance of this interpretation is largely due to work by Owen in the 1960s, and Gallop and Barnes after him. In his discussion of *esti,* Owen is primarily concerned with understanding Parmenides' subject, and an existential reading plays a role in his argument (1975:59-60). Simplifying the argument somewhat, Owen thinks that to find the subject of *esti* in B2, we must ask what the subject has to be to answer a disjunctive question implicit in the *krisis* (decision) the goddess mentions at B2.1-5. The question Owen understands as implicit in the *krisis* is "does it exist [or doesn't it exist]?" Now, Parmenides argues that one route must be rejected as "an utterly inscrutable track" (B2.6), and so only one route remains: the

[18] Prominent among those who give an existential interpretation are Owen (1975), Gallop (1979, 1984), Barnes (1982), Furley (1973), Graham (2006), Tarán (1965), and Finkelberg (1988). I focus on Owen, who made the position prominent, and Gallop, who filled in many of the details.

route *that it is*, (the positive route), which "is the path of Persuasion (for she attends on Truth)" (B2.4). Since it is not possible to answer the implicit disjunction negatively, and at B2.7-8 the goddess forbids the negative route concerning *what can be spoken* (φράζω) and *thought* (γνοίης),[19] Parmenides' subject, according to Owen, is whatever can be spoken or thought.[20]

The *krisis* seemingly makes clear that the two routes are mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive. This fact plays a key role in existential interpretations.[21] Gallop takes this feature as fundamental and, using Owen's existential interpretation as a starting point, gives a more detailed analysis of why the existential interpretation should be accepted. He argues, for example, that μοῦναι (alone) at B2.2 indicates that the routes are jointly exhaustive: there are only two possible routes (1979:62). Second, he says, Parmenides at B8.11 and B8.15-18 argues that the two routes are mutually exclusive. By travelling one route, one *necessarily* is barred from travelling the other.[22] These features are important for the existential reading, according to Gallop, because they show that Parmenides is talking about judgments concerning *things* (as opposed to attributes), and he accordingly modifies Owen's disjunction: "does a thing exist or

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[19] Note that when I embed Greek in the text, I am *mentioning* the Greek as it is found in the manuscript. Some commentators both mention and *use* Greek, to fit the English grammar of their surrounding sentence. Sometimes I quote authors who do this; as such, I preserve their text. Context should make all of this clear.

[20] Owen further proposes understanding ἐστιν as ἔστιν, as the latter enclitic form implies existence, whereas the former form is predicative. Only the latter form makes sense of Owen's proposed disjunctive question implicit in the *krisis*. Smyth (1984), §187, says that "ἐστι is written ἔστι at the beginning of a sentence; when it expresses existence or possibility."

[21] A potential problem here is that the two routes at B2, in addition to the simple distinction "is or is not," contain modal constructions: "it is *and cannot not be*" and "it is not and *must not be*." If so, then the routes are logical contraries, not contradictories, and would thus not be mutually exclusive. But as Gallop (1979:78 n37) argues, "the modal components merely anticipate the subsequent argument pattern, i.e. the rigorous deduction of one of the basic alternatives by the elimination of the other." The "basic alternatives" should not be modally construed, according to Gallop; Ketchum (1990:175) argues similarly. Palmer (2009) argues that the modal constructions are crucial to Parmenides, though his interpretation plays no significant role in my arguments.

[22] We might be tempted to view Parmenides through an Aristotelian lens and qualify the mutual exclusivity with "at the same time" here; but Parmenides (later) will claim that there is only *one* possible route, namely, the positive route. Here he simply offers two routes to set up the problem. There is only one route.

does a thing not exist" (68).

Why must Parmenides be talking about judgments concerning things and not attributes? The existential reading naturally seems fitted for judgments about things, whereas a predicative reading is suited to judgments about attributes. To thwart the question-begging of simply assuming Parmenides must be talking about judgments concerning things *because* he uses an existential *esti*, Gallop needs independent arguments. Such arguments, Gallop shows, come from the alleged fact that only an existential reading can make sense of Parmenides' ban on not-being. Assume, then, that the disjunction should be construed, as a predicative reading would have it, "*x* is *F* or *x* is not-*F*." Now, the second disjunct is banned, leaving only "*x* is *F*" as the path of persuasion. But, as Gallop argues, Parmenides cannot have meant to rule out judgments of the form "*x* is not-*F*" *a priori*, leaving only judgments of the form "*x* is *F*" (68). This would mean that the goddess *required* that the subject be judged to have a positive attribute. But if so, this would entail that it *also* must be judged to have several related *negative* attributes. In assailing Kirk's 1957 position,[23] for example, Gallop argues that the goddess cannot require a judgment, say, that *x* is white, since this would entail the judgment that *x* is not-black. The first judgment is along the positive route, and the second is (ostensibly) along the negative route. If so, however, then the two routes are *not* mutually exclusive, since both judgments are *true* (of *x*). Additionally, for some black object, the judgments "*x* is white" and "*x* is not-black" would both be *false*. The predicative reading therefore cannot make sense of the mutual exclusivity of the

[23] Gallop discusses and rejects several interpretations of what Parmenides must mean by negative judgment—all of which use some version of a predicative *esti* (including fused/confused versions)—to show that the existential reading is the only one that makes sense of this contentious aspect of Parmenides' philosophy. He rejects all or part of the views of Kirk in Kirk and Raven (1957), Mourelatos (2008), Furth (1968), and Kahn (across the decades). I will discuss each of these views at different points in the main text. For now, I want to concentrate on Gallop's own arguments for the existential view.

two routes.

Predicative readings also, according to Gallop, fail to make sense of various aspects of the arguments at B8. Specifically, B8.11, B8.23-24 and B8.47-48 disallow such readings, according to Gallop (68). These passages assert that the subject cannot or does not admit degrees of being. If the subject in B8 is the same as the subject (implied) at B8—which it is, according to Gallop, since Parmenides "reaffirms" it at B8.2[24]—then the arguments from B8.11, B8.23-24, and B8.47-48 could not be construed predicatively, since predications (such as 'is white') *do* admit degrees of being: something can be *more or less* white (62). It is absurd, according to Gallop, to construe *esti* predicatively, given that these passages flatly deny degrees of being, and predicative constructions require them. Moreover, one thing clearly denied of the subject at B8.41 is "change of bright color" (on Gallop's translation). A "change of bright color" can plausibly be construed as something's becoming, for example, less white, which ostensibly would be a change in its degree of being (white).[25]

Other reasons for an existential interpretation rely on Owen's contention that the subject cannot be "impersonal." As Owen notes, Parmenides gives determinate principles for marking what-is in B8, and it is unclear how determinate principles can be given to a subject that is, strictly speaking, indeterminate or undetermined (1975:59). This disallows Mourelatos's "sentence-frame" construal of *esti*, where *esti* is flanked by blank subject and predicate variables:

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[24] If Kirk's interpretation of the disjunction (*x* is *F* or *x* is not-*F*) is correct, then the unmentioned subject in B2 could apparently *not* be the same as at B8. So if Parmenides is using *esti* predicatively (Kirk thinks Parmenides has a "confused" sense of *esti*) in B2, then he is not talking about the same subject in B8. Charity, however, dictates that the poem should have a uniform subject; otherwise, Parmenides would not so much be confused as downright incoherent. Given charity, then, the subjects ought to be the same, and thus a predicative reading of the disjunction is inadmissible.

[25] As I show below, Mourelatos (and Curd) take predication to be something different from what Gallop is critiquing here. Thus, his arguments on these points may be made of straw.

x is *y*. Moreover, Mourelatos's sentence-frame and his notion of not-being as inquiry into the nature of what something *is not*, imply that Mourelatos believes Parmenides wants to ban negative judgments generally. These are points to which I shall return. Again, as mentioned above, arguments that seek to attribute to Parmenides a *general* ban on negative judgments fall apart from the point of view of the mutual exclusivity of the routes. Indeed, Parmenides himself uses such judgments in his argument for what-is, and so Gallop argues that it is not plausible to construe him as banning negative judgment generally.[26]

Finally, a brief point about language. Two "signs" (σήματα) of what-is, mentioned at B8.3—that the subject is "ungenerable" or "ungenerated" (ἀγένητον) and "imperishable" (ἀνώλεθπόν)—disallow a predicative reading, according to Gallop (1979:72). He notes that ὄλλυσθαι (or ὄλλυμι—*to make an end of* or *to perish*) does not mean the gaining or losing of attributes, but applies to the *thing* under consideration: when some *object* goes out of existence. Thus, even if a thing could gain or lose properties at once (thus meeting the degrees of being challenge above), Parmenides' use of ὄλλυσθαι makes the predicative interpretation implausible.

In short, the existential reading (i) makes the best sense of the apparent implicit disjunction of the *krisis* at B2; (ii) makes the best sense of understanding this disjunction as mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive; (iii) accounts for Parmenides' ban on negative judgment as being in no way *general*; (iv) accounts for Parmenides' ban on degrees of being, and

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[26] Gallop (76 n11) notes Mourelatos's (2008:53) response to Parmenides' use of negative judgments: the B8 negations (that what-is is *un*generable, *im*perishable, etc.) are "not negations made *de re* but negations *de dicto* of negations made *de re*." That is, Parmenides is using a meta-language to negate statements about not-being as attached to *things*. But Gallop correctly asks, "why should Parmenides not be denying *de re* that the world is generated (B8.3) or has a beginning (B8.27), basing his denial upon a rejection *de dicto* of a negative statement?" Indeed, Parmenides seems to be discussing *things*, and *denying* negative language concerning what exists. Austin (1986, Chapter 1) gives controversial arguments for how Parmenides can be seen as using and admonishing negative language simultaneously.

finally, (v) allows there to be the same *determinate* subject in B2 and B8.

2.1.2. Predicative interpretations of esti[27]

Predicative interpretations of *esti* differ from most existential readings insofar as they place Parmenides squarely within the presocratic tradition.[28] But they also view *esti* as doing different ontological and epistemological work than do the existential readings: Parmenides is not discussing what exists, but the nature of existing things *as something(s) or other*,[29] or what the *real nature* of a thing is.[30] The predicative view often lends itself to weaker versions of monism or to a strictly noncommittal stance on the monism question; in either case, a plurality of individuals is not ruled out by most predicative readings (though Mourelatos (2008:133) says dualism *is* ruled out). I will discuss the major points of the predicative interpretation as found in Ketchum, followed by views shared on important points by Mourelatos, Curd, and Nehamas. Other nuances provided by other authors will also appear.

As a first point, Ketchum offers an apparently simple grammatical reason for interpreting *esti* predicatively (1990:170 n6). In a footnote, he argues that certain purportedly existential occurrences of *esti* ought to be translated as 'there is' and not as 'exists'. To see why the two are not synonymous, we simply need to notice certain sentences where both phrases are used, and

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[27] Prominent among recent scholars who favor a predicative interpretation are Mourelatos (2008), Curd (1998), Nehamas (2002), Ketchum (1990), Austin (1986), and Coxon (1986).
[28] On existential readings, Parmenides is seen as more radically breaking from earlier tradition, evidenced by his alleged strong monism. Graham (2006:167) argues that strong monism for Parmenides can be of at least two types: first as Curd's *numerical* variety, and second as an *essential* monist, which sees Parmenides as purporting "the unity of a single essence or nature in the world." Graham notes that these two types are not mutually exclusive: Parmenides may be *both*.
[29] See especially Ketchum (1990) and Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (KRS) (1983).
[30] See especially Mourelatos (2008), Curd (1998), and Nehemas (2002).

where a purported synonymy would result in contradiction, e.g., 'there are many things that do not exist'. If this sentence is contradictory— if 'there are' means the same as 'exist'—then we would be committed to the absurdity that there exist many things that do not exist, which is false. But it is only contradictory if 'there is' means the same as 'exists'. Since the sentence is true and thus not contradictory, the two phrases cannot mean the same thing. Ketchum further notes that in a phrase such as 'there are many things that do not exist', 'there is' would be translated as ἔστι, whereas 'exist' would require some other device in Greek. Thus, in specific statements where existence or nonexistence matters, as in our sentence, it is *not esti* that explicates a thing's existence. This shows that existential interpretations of *esti* are somewhere missing the mark; *if* Parmenides were primarily concerned with examining what exists, he would choose a less roundabout way of discussing what exists, employing other means available in Greek.[31]

More substantively, Ketchum offers reasons for the predicative *esti* that concern how Parmenides understands not-being. Ketchum's argument is chiefly linguistic, since it trades on the purported synonymy, accepted on existential readings, of the various uses and forms of εἶναι, and especially its denial, in the fragments. Thus Ketchum argues that 'to be' must be interpreted as 'to be something or other', since the phrase τὸ μὴ ὄν ('what is not' or, as he later interprets it, 'what is not anything at all') at B2.7 and the term μηδέν ('nothing') at B6.2 are synonymous (171-72). But 'what is not anything at all' cannot be synonymous with 'what does not exist' (which the existential interpretation takes to be the best translation of the negative route at B2.3)

[31] Ketchum does not specify exactly how one might convey existence "in some other way" (170 n6), though he does note that sometimes *esti* can be *translated* 'exist' and probably means 'exist' in some contexts. See Kahn (2003:245-50) for some examples, two of which Ketchum uses from the original (1973) edition of Kahn's book.

because, according to Ketchum, it is false that what does not exist just *is* nothing at all.[32]

Centaurs do not exist. But it is true, according to Ketchum, that they are mythical creatures or hooved creatures or that they are sometimes imagined. Thus many things (fictional things, possible things, events from the past, to name a few) are things that strictly speaking do not exist, but they are *not* nothing whatsoever, since they have properties.[33] Thus, if one of Parmenides' central concerns is a proscription on nothing, and 'nothing' is synonymous with 'what is not anything at all' but *not* with 'what does not exist', then *esti* for Parmenides cannot have a primary existential sense, since its denial (*ouk esti*) is not synonymous with 'what does not exist'. The upshot is that Parmenides' target in his denial of not-being is what is not *anything* (μὴ ἐόντος, B8.7), although such uses (synonymous with 'nothing') occur only in contexts where "'nothing' is used as a definite singular term", e.g., B6.2 (μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν—'nothing is not').

Ketchum, however, finds a reading of 'nothing' as a definite singular term problematic, and he argues that this is one of Parmenides' primary mistakes or confusions. For 'what is not anything' will only be synonymous with 'nothing' if the latter is taken to be definite—to denote or pick out some *object*. This use of 'nothing', Ketchum argues, is improper, since 'nothing' typically, or *properly*, is *indefinite*: when I say "I heard nothing," I am not describing something I *did* hear, namely nothing. Rather, I am denying I heard anything at all, which is just what an indefinite use allows. Ketchum sees Parmenides as conflating the indefinite and definite senses

[32] The phrase 'nothing at all' is understood by Ketchum as meaning something's having nothing ascribable to it, or having no properties whatsoever. See also KRS (1983:246).
[33] This view, which I discuss more thoroughly in §2.2, carries with it deep—and in Ketchum's case, unsupported—*metaphysical* assumptions, besides the linguistic aspects explicitly argued for.

of 'nothing'; Parmenides requires this conflation, according to Ketchum, if he wants to conclude from the ban on knowing or speaking not-being in B2 to the ban on qualitative change at B8.41: "if what is something or other (e.g., *F*) has come to be (*F*) then there must have been a time at which it was not anything at all" (181). This principle, to which Ketchum thinks Parmenides is dubiously committed, conflates an incomplete use of *esti* in the consequent with what Ketchum calls a use "whose predicate complement is a universally quantified predicate variable" in the antecedent.[34]

A couple of general objections to Ketchum's argument are in order. Aside from issues with not-being (discussed in §2.2 below), Curd argues that Ketchum's predicative reading is too weak to do justice to what are ostensibly deeply *metaphysical* arguments in B8. As Curd says, Ketchum takes Parmenides' *esti* to be "an ordinary predication," thus not used to explicate or reveal the nature of the subject under consideration (1998:39 n42).[35] And though Ketchum sees primarily predicative senses for *esti* throughout the poem, he agrees with Owen that Parmenides' subject is what can be spoken or thought about. Thus, as Curd notes, Ketchum deflates Parmenides' project as it is traditionally understood, and, regarding not-being, says Parmenides is articulating "'that what is not anything at all simply can't be mentioned, discussed, or thought of while mentioning, discussing, or thinking. . . . In short, nothing cannot, without being something, be discussed or thought of'." It is precisely this deflationary account that allows

[34] An "incomplete copula" use for Ketchum (168-69) explicates *esti* as "*x* is something or other" and its denial as "*x* is nothing at all." This is to be contrasted with "straight-forward elliptical uses" of the form "*x* is…," where context fills in the ellipses. Central to Ketchum's argument is an argument by analogy between incomplete uses of *esti* with transitive verbs such as "*x* dreamed (something or other)."

[35] Assuming that this is indeed what Parmenides is after. Mourelatos, Curd, and Nehamas—as well as prominent existential interpreters—take some version of this to be what Parmenides is doing: describing what reality must be like. I discuss Mourelatos, Curd, and Nehamas below.

Ketchum to see *esti* used predicatively, though at the same time with the "spirit" of existential senses: most existential readings take the subject to be what can be thought or spoken of, and most predicative readings take *esti* as some form of copula (167). Ketchum takes Parmenides to be applying a predicative use to the mundane subject of what can be spoken and thought of. But, as Curd rightly points out, Ketchum ignores much of B8 and thus seemingly does not offer an account of how *esti* should be understood in relation to what Graham has dubbed the "Eleatic properties"[36] mentioned at the beginning of B8 (2006:165).[37] I now turn to the Mourelatos/Curd/Nehamas reading, which gives an account of the relation of *esti* to certain metaphysical aspects of the poem, and is therefore preferable to Ketchum's deflationary account of predicative *esti*.

Mourelatos, Curd, and Nehamas offer similar accounts of the predicative interpretation of *esti*, and their interpretations are accepted as the standard predicative reading. On this interpretation *esti* expresses, as Mourelatos notes, a grammatical copula but logically a relation of *identity* between a subject and a predicate (2008:57). The *esti* functions as a bridge between a subject and that subject's nature, what Nehamas calls the Aristotelian "what it is to be" (*to ti ên einai*) relation: in '*x* is *y*', *y* represents what it is to be *x* (2002:50). Curd's interpretation along these lines takes *esti* to be giving an "informative identity claim," though on her view the relation between the subject and predicate is *not* "asymmetrical" (1998:39), as it is on Mourelatos's

[36] I shall modify Graham and use the term 'principles' or sometimes 'meta-principles' for what Parmenides mentions at B8, and save 'properties' for discussions of features of ordinary objects. I shall also use 'principles' and 'signposts' interchangeably, though, strictly speaking, signposts are how we *access* the principles themselves.
[37] He emphasizes B8.6-7, which is little more than a restatement of his own main focus on the *krisis* of B2, and aspects relevant to his main concern with B2. Ketchum also discusses ungenerability and imperishability, as I mentioned, but mostly to show that Parmenides is conflating two senses of a predicative *esti*.

view.[38]

On all these views, Parmenides is in some sense anticipating Aristotle's discussions about the essences or natures of things. Thus the arguments of B8 offer, as Palmer (2008) says, "meta-principles" for explicating what anything that is truly or really real must be like; there are certain *ways* of being (ungenerated, imperishable, whole, unique, complete, etc.) that are necessary and sufficient for something's being real. Anything that does not fulfill these conditions is somehow not real.[39] Numerical monism does not follow from such predicative interpretations, since they remain uncommitted to how *many* things are real or one (i.e. individuals in the proper sense).[40] Indeed Nehamas argues that Parmenides is vague on just what sort of ontology he *is* committed to, though he is committed to the claim that "everything is one." The problem, according to Nehamas (51), and as seen in chapter 1, is that 'everything is one' is ambiguous between 'there is just one thing' and 'anything that *is* is one'.

A second aspect of the Mourelatos/Curd/Nehamas readings, extolled in the literature and in contrast with most existential readings, is that Parmenides was consciously working within a

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[38] Curd (1998:40 n46) argues that *x* and *y* in '*x* is *y*' "could be used interchangeably in claims about the world," and in this sense are less asymmetrical than they would be on Mourelatos's view, which says that '*y* is *x*' does not follow from '*x* is *y*'. Mourelatos, Curd, and Nehamas, take the relation between *x* and *y* to be *identity*: the *nature* of *x* just is *y*. Two things are unclear here. First, how should we take Mourelatos' asymmetry? If *x* is (identical to) *y*, and both are, in Curd's sense, ontologically basic, then it is unclear how *y* could *fail* to "follow from" *x*, to use Mourelatos's words (57). There is no mention by these authors of opaque contexts, where an asymmetry (a "does not follow" relation, as it were) might occur. If *x* and *y* are ontologically basic *things*, and they occur transparently in '*x* is *y*', then asymmetry falls by the wayside and each could be used in claims about the world *salva veritate*. Secondly, it is unclear how the what-it-is-to-be relation (the essence) is supposed to be *identical* to the thing it is an essence *of*. If the identity is strict, then being-a-thing and being-a-thing's-essence cannot be categorically different. Yet they seem to be.

[39] It is in fact difficult to see how any "thing" that fails to fulfill such principles could be *things* at all, since the arguments of B8 appear to give conditions for thinghood as such.

[40] It is important to note that numerical monism is compatible with these predicative readings; what would be required for numerical monism on a predicative reading would be a constraint on how many things (i.e. one) can or must be ungenerable, imperishable, whole, unique, etc. There is good reason, as I show in §2.2, for accepting just this position (as part, however, of a fused understanding of *esti*).

broader presocratic philosophical context. Mourelatos and Curd especially see Parmenides as exploiting certain features of his predecessors' views, which informs his use of *esti*. Thus, for Mourelatos (2008), *esti* must be understood as setting up a *sentence frame* for cosmological inquiry, since this gives the best interpretation of B2 as outlining a *cosmological quest*, a search for the real nature of things (51-55). Mourelatos calls this quest-based understanding of *esti* "speculative predication," and sees Parmenides' sense of *esti* at work in the earlier presocratic tradition in similar fashion. Examples he gives are Xenophanes and Heraclitus: in Xenophanes' fragment B29 ("the things which come to be and grow are all of them earth and water")[41] shows that before Parmenides other philosophers were using *esti* to connect subjects and predicates *essentially*, that is, to show by way of the predicate the real nature of the subject. Parmenides' innovation was to make this exercise abstract: the sentence frame interpretation of *esti* just shows, according to Mourelatos, the *nature* of cosmological inquiry itself, and does not commit (at least in the *Aletheia* section of the poem) to any specific subjects or predicates.[42]

2.1.3. Critiques of Existential and Predicative Interpretations

Before examining and arguing for a fused sense of *esti* I want to discuss the main objections to existential and predicative interpretations, since most arguments for one interpretation are arguments against the other. I will examine these critiques and point out problems as they occur.

There are several reasons for rejecting the existential interpretation, some more decisive

[41] Translated by Mourelatos (2008:60).
[42] In §2.2 I discuss the bearing this interpretation has on Parmenides' understanding of not-being.

than others. As noted above, an oft celebrated objection to the existential reading is that it fails to make explicit connections between Parmenides' philosophy and those of his predecessors'. Curd, for example, argues that Parmenides' predecessors were not concerned with inquiring into nonexistent things, so the question of whom Parmenides might be arguing *against* is perplexing on an existential reading (1998:10-11). Furthermore, she argues that "Owen and Barnes offer [no evidence] that connects Parmenides with the views or arguments of earlier philosophers." Recall, however, that Owen especially views Parmenides as a starkly original thinker so, on the face of it, Curd's point here begs the question against those who see Parmenides as offering *original* arguments. Furthermore, even if Parmenides targeted earlier philosophers, this does not preclude him from giving original philosophical arguments regarding *existence*.

There are, however, a number of compelling historical arguments that purport to show that *esti* should not be construed existentially, and most of these take as a central point of Parmenides' philosophy his emphasis on the *routes* of inquiry—the proper *method* one must use to understand what something really is. Broadly the arguments are of two types, positive and negative. The positive arguments attempt to show that Parmenides was appropriating linguistic and philosophical ideas from his predecessors who were similarly interested in understanding the nature of things but failed to have the correct method. The negative arguments attempt to show that Parmenides was attacking certain substantive views of his predecessors. I start with the positive arguments.

As briefly mentioned above, Mourelatos argues that the "speculative" understanding of *esti* was conceptually available to Parmenides from his predecessors, and that Parmenides makes decisive use of it. The difference or innovation for Parmenides, however, is that unlike his predecessors he leaves the two sides of 'is' open (for cosmological inquiry), whereas

Xenophanes and Heraclitus (for example) use 'is' in "closed" cosmological sentences; that is, they make claims about the nature of *particular* things, whereas Parmenides is more concerned with the nature of cosmological inquiry *as such*. Parmenides, on this view, appropriated an earlier use of *esti* regarding inquiry into the natures of particular things and abstracted out the particulars.

To contrast, Heraclitus in fragment B30 says "this world . . . was always and is and will be ever-living fire."[43] Mourelatos also notes that earlier Milesian philosophers may have invoked the speculative *esti* in their pronouncements about the nature of reality as reducible to air (Anaximenes), water (Thales) or the *apeiron* (Anaximander).[44] Parmenides' use of the speculative *esti* abstracts out any specific nature and must be understood, according to Mourelatos, in close conjunction with the two routes *as* routes: given the (asymmetric) identity between subject and predicate in an "*x* is *y*" judgment, one is led *to* the identity of subject and predicate through cosmological inquiry. But the relation is not obvious from the beginning. Parmenides is emphasizing, on this interpretation, the route or journey or quest that *all* cosmological inquiry requires: the *real nature* of something (anything at all) will never be obvious, and requires a journey along one path only, that the subject *is* (and *is only*) what is explicated in the predicate.[45]

Curd too notes that Heraclitus and the Milesians were interested in finding the nature of things, but only in Parmenides do we find methodology and ontology combined into a whole

[43] Mourelatos's translation.
[44] Anaximander is a somewhat different case, since the *apeiron* (boundless) is not in any obvious way a *substantial* correlate to air or water.
[45] There are related issues pertaining to not-being I discuss in §2.2 below.

philosophy (47). The notion of the route *qua* correct philosophical method is thus as crucial for her account as it is for Mourelatos's. On both accounts, the rejected negative route plays an important role for understanding the proper way to conduct philosophical or cosmological inquiry. Both Curd and Mourelatos emphasize that the negative route is one that is wholly uninformative or infelicitous: the negative route has nothing to do with inquiring into objects that do not *exist* (as the lack of historical examples of others who might have taken this route allegedly shows), but rather with (vain) attempts at understanding the nature of something by way of what it is *not*. Mourelatos argues that the negative route has to do with negative predication of a specific sort: an attempt to fill in the right-hand side of the (speculative) sentence frame (i.e. the noun phrase in the predicate position) with a negative (74-75). To inquire into what the things that come to be and grow *really are*, we step onto the negative route if we fill in the right-hand predicate with (for example) *not-air*. This is, according to Mourelatos, strictly speaking not incorrect (since water and earth are both not air), but *ineffectual*. It is, on the Mourelatos/Curd account, the theme of the route or quest (δίζησις) as related to method of inquiry—available from historical context and literature—that is a primary reason for rejecting an existential *esti*.[46]

Nehamas offers a negative argument for accepting a predicative *esti*. He argues that Parmenides may have sought to discredit Milesian cosmology on the ground that water, for

[46] A possible objection relates to the word δίζησις itself. Mourelatos and Curd both acknowledge that, used as a noun, δίζησις is original with Parmenides. But Coxon (1986:173) points out that Parmenides possibly used it "to *distinguish* his procedure from the Ionian enquiry into nature" (my emphasis). The Ionians used the term ἱστορίη, which also means a sort of inquiry, or "knowledge about," as Mourelatos writes (68). Coxon (174) also notes that Parmenides' notion of inquiry survives as something akin to scientific method or philosophical inquiry, "which he in effect created." Thus, the sort of inquiry Parmenides is after can be *distinguished* from Ionian inquiry. This provides at least weak evidence that Parmenides' project was original or a shift away from his predecessors.

instance, becomes *something else* (e.g., air). This is the problem of how "one thing (one *nature*) can change into another . . ." (2002:52, my emphasis). If Parmenides can be seen as attacking Milesian cosmology in this way, then an existential reading of *esti* seems off point, since Parmenides would naturally be attacking a Milesian position that takes change from water to air to be *substantial* change, change from *what it is to be* water into *what it is to be* air.[47] An existential reading, according to this view, cannot make sense of *esti* as explicating the what-it-is-to-be relation, since on that view *esti* functions as a term used to show what exists (and must exist), not what the nature or essence of some purported thing is.

A second issue follows from this critique, namely, Milesian views regarding the one and many: how is it that *many* individuals come to be from *one* substance? If there can be substantial change, it follows that there can be *two* substances where there had previously been one, if something of the original substance remains (behind, as it were) after the coming-to-be of the new substance. Some portion of *x*, on this interpretation, breaks off and becomes *y* (and thus is not *x*): if air comes from water, and is substantially different from it (i.e. not substantially reducible to water), then a plurality of substances follows. Parmenides, on this historical view, is attacking the very notion of substantial change, and thus *a fortiori* the notion that many can come to be from one.[48]

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[47] Nehamas' position here is controversial, as it aligns with Graham's (2002, 2006) position on the Milesians, namely, that they were not material monists in the traditional sense, but held what Graham calls the Generating Substance Theory (GST): there is an original stuff from which *substantially different* things arise. See Sisko's (2007) review Of Graham (2006) for critiques of the GST interpretation.

[48] Parmenides can similarly be seen as critiquing the traditional picture of the Milesians as material monists (and not GST) if we consider B8.23-25 and B8.41. Parmenides might be arguing against the traditional material monist explanation of *apparent difference*: the one substance air, for example, is more or less here or there, and thus has, as Sisko (2007:2) calls them, various *state* changes but no *substantial* changes, since it is all really air, but in different forms. Question: what is the difference between a *state change* and a *substantial* change?

There are at least two reasons for rejecting historically based arguments against the existential interpretation. The first, as some commentators have noted, is that since the historical evidence is itself murky and ambiguous, it can never give conclusive evidence for how Parmenides understands *esti*.[49] Secondly, the emphasis on historical or literary context seems to downplay the fact that, as Graham claims, Parmenides is giving *a priori* arguments for his ontology (2006:159). In this sense, historical and literary arguments de-emphasize Owen's pronouncement of Parmenides' (apparent) originality. But even if reasonably strong connections between Parmenides and earlier philosophers can be made, it is not entirely clear what such connections show. Mourelatos, as noted above, sees something like the speculative *esti* in earlier philosophers. What is less clear is whether these philosophers used *esti* consciously and speculatively in the way Mourelatos sees them using it. Even if Parmenides wrote within the epic literary tradition, or at least with a nod to that tradition, or responded to earlier philosophical arguments, this is not sufficient to show that he was using *esti* in precisely the same way as his predecessors. In any case, the chief weakness of historical or literary-based arguments for the predicative *esti* remains the sheer ambiguity of interpretation that reliance on historical and literary evidence invites, since there are those, Graham and Guthrie among them, who take Parmenides' historical context seriously but fail to see strongly predicative uses of *esti* in the fragments.[50]

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[49] Graham (2006:158-59) says such arguments are often little more than conjecture. Gallop (1979:74) argues that the "hard-won insights" of these sorts of arguments are "gift-horses to be looked squarely in the mouth," since existential readings *too* are found in the historical (philosophical and literary) sources.

[50] Curd (1998:34-35 n29) acknowledges that veridical and predicative readings of *esti* use sources other than Parmenides more so than existential readings. It seems evident, however, that since predicative readings tend to focus on the method of philosophical inquiry into things that Parmenides could reasonably be taken to countenance *given* his historical context, the predicative reading relies too heavily on outside sources. Indeed, there are certain aspects of the text that check the potential over-reliance on historical context, especially (as Graham says) the *a*

Besides the interpretive problems associated with relying on historical or literary evidence, predicative readings tend to emphasize the epistemological aspects of inquiry into the nature of things, and thus can be seen as *motivated* by epistemological concerns with metaphysical aspects made secondary. On this interpretation Parmenides is not primarily concerned with what exists or what kinds of *particular* things exist. B2, since that fragment first mentions the correct and incorrect methods of inquiry, is foundational for predicative readings. Existential readings, on the other hand, take the metaphysical as primary: Parmenides is concerned with what exists or what kinds of thing(s) exist(s). Thus, existential readings take the whole of *Aletheia* as foundational. Indeed, as McKirahan notes, B2 does not specify any particular subject (and thus at B2, Owen's very general subject—*whatever can be spoken and thought about*—is at least a reasonable assumption at that stage); it is not until B8 that a more specific subject is filled in, and the subject specified (abstractly) there lends itself to an existential reading, since B8 seems to be about the basic principles for *being a thing* at all (1994:160). In this way, B2 and B8 work in conjunction to specify an ontology first and foremost, leaving methodological considerations as secondary. [51]

The existential reading, then, allegedly makes better sense of B8 than a predicative reading, since the existential reading ostensibly takes the Eleatic principles mentioned at B8.3-5 as constraining objecthood *as such*, and not about how the *properties* of objects must be understood. For example, existential readings on the surface make more sense than do

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priori nature of the arguments themselves.

[51] One way to think of the difference between predicative and existential readings on this score is this: predicative readings take B2 as setting up the correct and incorrect methods of inquiry, where B8 supplies the principles that constrain the *objects* encountered along the correct route; existential readings take both B2 and B8 as, respectively, a *general* statement on what exists and what cannot exist, and a *particular* statement on the features of the existent/s.

predicative readings of Parmenides' argument against generation and perishing at B8.7-9. Parmenides is *prima facie* arguing that some *object* could not have come into *existence* from a previous state of *nonexistence*. Most commentators see here an early version of the *ex nihilo nihil fit* argument: nothing comes from nothing. On a predicative view, Parmenides would seemingly be arguing that something could not gain or lose properties. Parmenides *does* seem to deny that something can gain or lose properties at B8.41. But arguments against changing properties might be independent of arguments regarding existence. McKirahan notes that Parmenides *separates* existential claims from property claims, whereas on the predicative view, they come out to be the same (163).[52]

An objection to these pro-existential considerations can be made along Mourelatos/Curd lines. Recall that their interpretation takes Parmenides' methodological approach to be ultimately concerned with finding the nature of some purported thing: the proper method of inquiry is set up at B2, which leads to an understanding, argued for in B8, that the only things that can properly be inquired into are ungenerable, imperishable, unique, whole, etc. So if *F* explicates the very nature of something *x*, then if *x* lost *F*, *x* would seemingly go out of existence entirely—that is, it would cease to be the very thing it is. Predicative readings do not deny that *x* must exist in order to have *F* (and so they do not deny existential senses outright); for *x* to exist at all, however, it must be all and only *F*. Thus, existential readings that deny that in B8 Parmenides is initially concerned with the gaining and losing of properties such as whiteness miss the thrust of Mourelatos's and Curd's narrower and strongly metaphysical understanding of

[52] Recall, however, that Ketchum's predicative view does indeed have Parmenides conflating the ostensibly existentially-tinged arguments at the beginning of B8, and the ban on property change at B8.41. But Ketchum argues that this is a serious *problem* for Parmenides' philosophy.

predication. In this way, Parmenides can be seen as arguing on predicative grounds in B8 about the strong relation between a thing and its nature; and he is denying that a thing—to be the very thing that it is—can ever have its nature come to be or perish. Moreover, the Mourelatos/Curd interpretation takes the predicate not to be a normal predicate at all, if it is *identical qua* essence or nature to the subject.[53]

For similar reasons, Parmenides' denial of degrees of being at B8.23-25 and B8.47-48 is not sufficient support for an existential reading of *esti* against a predicative reading.[54] For once again, on the narrow Mourelatos/Curd view of predication, Parmenidean speculative predication does *not* admit degrees of being. Such an objection as Gallop's makes sense only when directed at readings such as Ketchum's, which take Parmenides to be concerned with ordinary predication and ordinary properties. Since, on the Mourelatos/Curd view, the predicate is *identical* to the subject, the nature of the subject explicated in the predicate cannot be "more or less here or there" without changing the identity of the subject itself. The subject would cease to be itself, which is absurd, if its very nature admitted of degrees of being. Thus, the argument from the denial of degrees of being is not decisive against the narrower predicative view.

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[53] It seems—and Curd's arguments bear this out more fully than other supporters of the predicative *esti*—that the class of things that *can* have Eleatic principles is in fact quite restrictive. Mourelatos's arguments appear to allow any entity to fill the blanks of the sentence frame *x* is *y*. So, for example, on Mourelatos's reading, if we fill the subject with 'human being', then the predicate ostensibly must be filled in with whatever is the essence or nature of human beings. In this way, Parmenides is closer to his predecessors who attempt to say what some *x really* is. On Curd's view, Parmenides can only have "metaphysically basic entities" in the subject position. She likens these to Plato's forms: things which *themselves* cannot come to be or perish.

[54] Recall that the denial of degrees of being was central to Gallop's arguments against predicative readings. His understanding of predication, however, is not the same as the narrower Mourelatos/Curd understanding.

2.1.4. Fused Interpretations of esti[55]

I now want to discuss and argue for an understanding of *esti* that takes existential and predicative (and other) interpretations and fuses them. Furth's arguments center on the idea that the conceptual distinction between existential and predicative uses was not available to early Greek thinkers until Plato clarified the issue (1968:112-13). If such conceptual distinctions were not available to Parmenides, was he *confused* about a fused sense of *esti*? Or did he understand the fusion/assimilation and deliberately invoke it? I reject both: I argue that Parmenides' chief concern was first metaphysical, and second epistemological, but that for him, these two notions could not be separated. It was only later, perhaps with Plato, that metaphysics and epistemology could be *conceptually*, but not *actually*, separated; Parmenides' philosophical concerns required a use of *esti*, probably unknown to him, that allowed him to pre-reflectively conflate philosophical concerns we now conceptually separate. But his pre-reflective conflation was not without its merits.

Furth argues that for the ancient Greeks, the "paradigm form of the fact-stating assertion [is] the ascription of a property to an object." Furthermore, however, this paradigm is itself explicated paradigmatically in a subject-predicate sentence form, using *esti* as copula. In these ways, then, Furth argues that the predicative use is also veridical, because it is used to assert "that anything at all *is the case*, or *obtains*" (italics in the original). From this veridical aspect of *esti* we can further see an existential element: if something *is the case* or *obtains*, then that thing

[55] Prominent among those who advocate a fused interpretation of *esti* are Furth (1968), Schofield in KRS (1983), Kahn's veridical sense of *esti* argued for in several articles and books, Pelletier (1990), and Long (1996). Owen (1999) advocates a fused sense of *esti*, which reflects a change from his arguments in Owen (1975).

exists.[56] Furth argues that there is considerable assimilation between these three senses and forms, and all are usually fused in uses of *esti*. It is important to note, however, that working in the background, according to Furth, is a tendency in Greek ontology to assimilate facts and objects, which the fused *esti* makes explicit. Graham, noting Furth's arguments, says that *esti* is in some way mutually translatable across the three interpretations: "*x* is *F*" means or entails both "this *F* exists" and "it is the case that *x* is *F*" (2006:157).

Schofield's interpretation of the fused use of *esti* deals directly with the text, though more by way of noting Parmenides' *use* of at least the existential and predicative senses, instead of justifying that he used it consciously. Schofield says that the *krisis* in B2 can be interpreted both existentially and predicatively: we cannot know or talk about things that do not exist, such as Mr. Pickwick or Pegasus (KRS 1983:245-46). This interpretation picks up Owen's and Gallop's arguments for an existential *esti* discussed above. Further, we cannot know or talk about that which has no predicates, i.e., *is not anything at all* in Ketchum's sense. Schofield accepts that the arguments at B8.5-21 against generation and perishing require an existential sense; that is, he agrees with others who think Parmenides must be talking about *things* that purportedly come-to-be and perish: if something *x* came-to-be, then there was a time when *x* did not *exist*. But, as Schofield notes, Parmenides *also* in these lines talks about, by way of the definite singular term

[56] Matthen (1983:119) points out, however, that 'obtains' should not be understood to mean *exists* when applied to facts. For example, if 'John is pale' is true because some fact obtains (John's being pale), then if John acquires a tan, say, then 'John was pale' is *now* true. Matthen asks "is it not plausible to say that the fact that once made 'John is pale' true is the very same as the fact that now makes 'John was pale' true? If so, ceasing to be true does not correspond with going out of existence." This is a challenge to a fused sense of *esti*, but it is not clear that it works as a challenge to a strictly Parmenidean fused sense of *esti*; Parmenides seems to deny application of tense to what-is at B8.5. In fact it is not clear it works as any sort of objection, since, if 'obtains' means 'is true,' then it is unclear whether all truths must be facts. Certainly all facts must be truths; it is unclear whether '2 + 2 = 4' is a fact, though it is a truth.

'nothing', *that which does not exist*, which translates best as that which is not anything at all, or what has no properties. Here, then, a predicative sense is most suitable. Schofield concludes, much as did Furth, that Parmenides' use of *esti* is at once existential and predicative, but that it is *not* a "confusion" of the two senses. Parmenides' ontology, in other words, seems to demand simultaneous senses.

Kahn's interpretation of *esti* is usually taken to be solely veridical, but as he himself notes (e.g., 2002:84-85), his understanding of *esti* is a version of the predicative sense, where the "'veridical' value of the verb is an isolated focus on the truth claim implicit in any predication." Further, Kahn argues that the veridical use is *based* on predicative uses, which are thus *fundamental* uses, and that any existential sense is linguistically derivative of the more fundamental predicative and veridical aspects. Kahn does not deny that Parmenides is concerned with existence, at least indirectly: the arguments in B8 against coming-to-be apparently *presuppose* something about existence "because it is already *there*" (italics in the original). He says elsewhere that there is an "intuitive connection" between the notions of coming-to-be and perishing as coming-to-*exist* and ceasing-to-*exist* (2009:176). Moreover, the signposts of B8, according to Kahn, just are several predicates of what-is, and thus denial of the predicative force of Parmenides' *esti* would render his arguments incoherent.[57]

[57] This line of reasoning assumes—it seems against predicative interpretations such as Mourelatos's—that the signposts at the beginning of B8 are something other than meta-principles for *whatever* is real—they just are the *properties*, understood in an ordinary sense, of what-is. For Mourelatos (2008:57) the predicate that is asymmetrically identical to the subject in an '*x* is *y*' statement is "somehow final or ultimate" and excludes *all* other possible predicates for the subject (since it explicates the subject's nature). But if *each* real thing is ungenerated, imperishable, whole, complete, unique, etc., then the signposts presumably must be meta-properties or principles; *each* real thing is constrained by these principles, whatever other specific *properties* the thing might have *qua* essence or nature. For example, if Plato's form of beauty is a Parmenidean entity (as Curd would have it), then, in addition to being ungenerated, imperishable, etc. (since it is really real), it is *also* self-predicationally beautiful. In any case, on the Mourelatos/Curd interpretation, the signposts in B8 are *meta*-principles for what-is. Kahn notes

Objections to existential and predicative senses of *esti* also work against those respective aspects of the fused sense. Thus, I want to focus specifically on challenges to the veridical aspect of fused readings. Gallop (1979:66-67) offers three objections to veridical readings, to which Kahn (2009:180-82) responds. Gallop argues first that the veridical interpretation allows certain epistemological notions in Parmenides to move to the forefront, since the ban on the negative route (*ouk esti*) at first seems to make good sense on a veridical reading: at B2.7 the goddess bans *knowing* (or thinking and saying) what is not. Thus, as Gallop maintains, '*S* knows that *p*' entails 'it is not false that *p*.

Moreover, such a reading does *not* warrant a wholesale ban on negative judgments such as "John is not nice" (negative predication) or "centaurs are not" (a negative existential), since both of these are presumably *true*. But, as Gallop argues, such an interpretation of *esti* seems to require, because of the mutual exclusivity of the routes, that the goddess is committed to the notion that *some* true proposition must obtain if it is impossible to know what is false: if knowing what is false is banned, then given mutual exclusivity *some* truth must obtain. But as Gallop points out, even if it is impossible to know what is false, there may be no truths whatsoever and *a fortiori* no knowledge.

If this is what Parmenides means then the argument would simply beg the question against a skeptic, who maintains that *no* truths obtain. Kahn replies that Gallop's objection misses the mark. For Parmenides *presupposes* the viability of inquiry, and as such, truth. As Kahn says, "the initial question is: What *assumption must we start from*, what way must be travelled, if we are to have any hope of reaching this goal [of truth]?" (my emphasis). But, with

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that they are properties, understood in an ordinary sense, of what-is.

Gallop, we might think this too begs the question against the skeptic, since according to the skeptic, who has no hat in the ring, the burden of proof would be on one who assumes without demonstration that such an enterprise is possible in the first place. The skeptic—who demands demonstration and never satisfactorily gets it—wants to know why, *without assumption*, such an enterprise is feasible.

Secondly, Gallop argues that veridical readings require that Parmenides' subject be propositions or have propositional structure—that is, that they be *truth bearing* entities—and it is not clear how these can fit the arguments of B8. As Gallop points out, it is unclear what it would mean for true propositions to be ungenerated and imperishable, whole, complete, unique, etc. Moreover, as Mourelatos and Gallop note, veridical readings, which translate *esti* as *it is the case that* or *it is true that* must take as their object *facts* or *states of affairs*, and this, Mourelatos argues, does not accord with early Greek ontology (2008:59). Rather, early Greek ontology concerned itself with *things*, and as such, *esti* should be understood as strongly predicative or in Gallop's case, existential.[58] Kahn responds by arguing—much as Furth does—that Parmenides (and other early Greek thinkers) would not have been able to finely distinguish between *things* and *facts*. Further, Kahn's veridical reading is both existential and predicative. That is, the veridical reading is a fused reading that asserts the existence of the subject via asserting truths about it, and is syntactically on par with predicative constructions because, presumably, a true proposition must, at minimum, be a subject-predicate construction.

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[58] One possible way to respond to these charges is to take states of affairs as things: states of affairs can be individuated and have their own identity conditions. But whether this move is *philosophically* well-motivated for Parmenides is dubious. At any rate, the move may not be *historically* motivated, if Mourelatos and Gallop are correct that states of affairs did not concern early Greek ontology. See "Heraclitus, Parmenides, and the Naïve Metaphysics of Things" in Mourelatos (2008) for arguments concerning early Greek ontology on these specific issues (299-332).

Finally, according to Gallop, it turns out that, *pace* the prima facie plausibility of veridical readings in terms of knowledge and not-being noted above, B8 is not concerned with false propositions but with negative existential statements. Again, Kahn argues that the veridical reading always includes an assertion of existence, so this objection misses the mark. But, Kahn points out (182), Parmenides argues fallaciously here, since the veridical *esti* is committed to something like the fusion statement '*x* (has properties) *a*, *b*, and *c*,' and the scope of denying this statement is ambiguous between three possible interpretations: (i) the whole statement is denied, thus changing its truth-value; (ii) the subject is denied, thus turning the statement into a problematic Russellian negative existential; (iii) one or another predicate is denied, thus turning the statement into one that asserts negative predication. Kahn (and Ketchum 1990) view Parmenides as arguing fallaciously "from *is not* to μηδέν, nothing at all"—that is, from nonexistence to having no properties.

Are there, then, independent reasons for accepting a fused sense of *esti*? Perhaps the best evidence in favor of a fused interpretation is the scope of Parmenides' project itself: a fused sense of *esti* seems more amenable to the *several* topics broached in the poem. Long notes that "we can confidently state that Parmenides is talking about truth/reality/being, thought and knowledge, language or meaning, valid reasoning and error" (1996:126). If we can be *confident* that Parmenides is discussing all of these topics, and if *esti* is somehow central to understanding Parmenides' project as a whole, then overly narrow or univocal accounts of *esti* cannot seemingly account for the sheer breadth of the project. Such accounts typically concern only one or some of the above topics, depending on which aspect is emphasized by the interpreter. But

Parmenides appears to be unifying epistemological, linguistic, and logical concerns under the broader topic of ontology.[59] It seems clear, for example, at B2.2-5 that Parmenides is tying ontology and epistemology together. The epistemological notions of inquiry, by way of the coined term δίζησις (search or investigation) and νοεῖν (thought)[60] are, on the traditional reading, tied directly to the ontological notion of what *exists*—one cannot inquire into what does not exist, and so one cannot *know* (γνοίης) *what is not* (τό μὴ ἐὸν). B2 brings to the forefront existential nuances of *esti*, which are corroborated in B8 with the arguments against generation and perishing.

But predicative and veridical nuances are present in these passages as well. For instance, epistemological concerns in general seemingly require *esti* to have predicative and veridical force. The predicative sense—as both Mourelatos and Curd have rightly argued—explicates for Parmenides the nature of the subject under discussion, and to *know* something's nature, one must know something about it, that is, know it *as* something.[61] The veridical sense reveals the propositional structure of the predication relation, in the sense that to know something *as* something one must presumably know a corresponding proposition of the form '*x* is *F*'. Since Parmenides takes truth to be directly correlated with (or more strongly, *the same as*) reality, a true proposition will likewise implicitly assert the existence of the subject and predicate terms.[62]

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[59] It is outside the scope of this dissertation, but Spinoza—as history's most famous early modern monist—interestingly adds *ethics* to these topics, showing that strictly speaking, metaphysics is the foundation for *all* philosophy.

[60] Or, as Coxon (1986:174) translates, *conceiving*.

[61] As I discuss in the next section, however, Mourelatos and Curd are wrong to allow pluralism for Parmenides.

[62] Coxon (1986:168) writes "in each case [of the use of ἀληθείη in the poem] the context shows that it denotes not the truth as an attribute of thought or language but objective reality . . . ." Most commentators see Parmenides as taking 'truth' to mean something like *reality* or *the real*. But since ontology is tied so strongly together with language and knowledge, truth for Parmenides cannot be divorced from any of these conceptually distinct concerns.

As Mourelatos and Curd argue, however, the subject and predicate terms in '*x* is *y*' statements are *identical*: the predicate term is a noun or noun phrase that gives the nature of the subject. If Parmenides' project concerns reality and how we can know it and speak about it, then a more substantial interpretation of *esti* that allows ontology, epistemology, truth, and language to be unified into one discourse seems more plausible than narrower approaches allow. Narrower interpretations prohibit Parmenides from doing in any clear or coherent manner what he *seems* to be doing, namely, discussing each of these conceptually distinct philosophical topics from a distinctly ontological point of view.[63] A fused sense of *esti* better captures the scope of Parmenides' project. As noted above, Kirk (1957) thought Parmenides confused different senses of *esti*. But Schofield's update in KRS (1983) seems more appropriate for Parmenides' project if Parmenides is seen as tackling several conceptually distinct philosophical topics that require different sense of *esti* and tying them to ontology. For example, introduction of the Eleatic principles at B8 requires the use of the predicative construction; but the two routes of B2 seem to require an existential sense, and discussion of the subject as ungenerable and imperishable explicitly requires a fusion of existential and predicative senses: these are predicated of what *exists*. Moreover, if Parmenides takes truth to be, or be strongly tied to, reality, then a veridical sense is always present in any other use. This is not confusion, but rather a *requirement* of the scope of his project.

2.2. Some Issues Concerning Not-Being

It can hardly be denied that not-being plays a central role in Parmenides' philosophy.

[63] Whether this project is itself coherent is a separate matter.

This is somewhat unfortunate, since the issue of not-being in Parmenides is ambiguous, tied as it is to interpretations of *esti*. The issue is so problematic that Kahn calls it "a conceptual nightmare," and concerns anything from negative predication, false statements, the non-identity between apparently distinct things, non-existent objects, or finally with being nothing at all (2002:90). Kahn calls the issue a fundamental "confusion" in Parmenides, though he does *not* think there are parallel confusions for the positive route of *esti*; it is only *ouk esti* that is problematic and, according to Kahn, Plato finally sorts out and corrects Parmenides' confusions, mostly in the *Sophist*. Part of this confusion, or Plato's interpretation of it (which I examine Chapter 5), has to do with the mutual exclusivity of the two routes: Parmenides is committed to a sense of *absolute* not-being as against being, and this (according to Kahn, Plato and later, Aristotle) is where problems arise. These issues aside, most commentators offer fairly detailed interpretations of what Parmenides must mean by his denial of not-being. I will rehearse these here, ending with interpretations that are most philosophically coherent.

The Mourelatos/Curd view of Parmenidean not-being is intimately tied to their more or less shared understanding of *esti* as simultaneously predicative and as explicating an identity relation. Moreover, their emphasis on the search or quest for metaphysically basic explanations of reality plays a fundamental role. Thus, Mourelatos's interpretation has Parmenides denying the route of *ouk esti* as "ineffectual" since no inquiry into the nature of what something *is not* would ever lead anywhere. The negative route, he writes, "is not a rejection of negative predication in general. It is rather a rejection of negative attributes *in answer to speculative, cosmological questions*" (2008:75-76, my emphasis). Simply put, the rejection of the negative route is a rejection of what might be termed *vague inquiry*. As Mourelatos notes, "the not-bright" is not some property of some object, logically on par with "the bright." It is "wholly

indeterminate and vague: anything and everything outside" the bright. One who attempts to get at the very nature of something is therefore barred from inquiring into whatever that thing *is not*, since such an inquiry "is one 'from which no tidings ever come'" (παναπευθέα at B2.6).

Curd argues in similar fashion that the negative route amounts to negative inquiry into something's real nature, but that this would be an inquiry into "nothing in particular." Indeed, Curd argues that such an endeavor is a "practical impossibility" and has nothing to do with the problem of thinking about non-existents (1998:49-50). This corresponds to Mourelatos's later notion of not-being as a "characterizing" use of 'nothing' (1983:61). Thus, one might ask "what are you doing," to which you might respond "nothing." This is not to say that you are doing nothing *at all*—i.e. that there does *not exist* something that you *are* doing—but rather that you are not doing anything within a particular, pragmatically constrained, domain of discourse.[64] It is clear that when one is "not doing anything" in this restricted sense, one *is* doing countless other things: sitting, fidgeting, looking at things, breathing, etc. For Mourelatos and Curd, Parmenides' ban on not-being is constrained by inquiry and has to do with the right sort of inquiry into the right sorts of things. One cannot inquire into something that is not anything at all, and one can only inquire into something that has a *nature* in a strong sense—is *really* something. But to inquire into the real nature of something, one's inquiry cannot proceed by what that thing *is not*.

There are several reasons for rejecting this view of not-being for Parmenides. I will focus on two. But a weaker point to mention first is that both Mourelatos and Curd, in their arguments

[64] The "characterizing" use is opposed to an "existential" use, where one denies in the standard way the existence of something: "What is in the box? Nothing."

against the existential *esti*, are persuaded by the lack of historical evidence that philosophers before Parmenides attempted to inquire into non-existent things. It might equally be said, however, that it is not evident that any of Parmenides' predecessors engaged in the sort of wholly *vague* inquiry required by the Mourelatos/Curd understanding of the negative route. That is, they offer no philosophers who ever knowingly attempted such a hapless method of inquiry. This objection can perhaps be dispensed with because, as Curd argues, *anyone* committed to generation and perishing is already on the negative route, even if they do not realize it. It was up to Parmenides to point this out.

This notion makes room for interpretations that have Ionian philosophers as Parmenides' targets, since they were committed to the view either that the one substance changes in various ways to give us the changing world we experience, i.e. the monistic interpretation; or that one substance substantially changes into a different substance or substances to give us the world we experience, that is, Graham's GST interpretation. In either case, change obtains and these philosophers are thereby committed to the negative route. Thus, as Curd says, "if something changes from being, say, *F* to being *G*, it cannot actually have been either *F* or *G*. *What it actually is remains inscrutable and indeterminate*" (49, my emphasis).

But Mourelatos and Curd are not always clear on exactly where not-being comes into the picture, and there seems to be some conflation between the *things* that somehow share in not-being, and the *method* that purportedly uses not-being as a device for inquiry. Curd's terms 'inscrutable'[65] and 'indeterminate' highlight this apparent conflation: the first term has epistemological connotations, whereas the second seems directed toward things themselves. But

[65] This is also Parmenides' word at B2.6: παναπευθέα.

in both cases—the epistemological-methodological and the ontological—the Mourelatos/Curd interpretation of not-being has problems. Curd continues: "mortals fail in controlling *noos*; not understanding the *nature of its proper object*, they fail to *steer it properly*. So their *noos* wanders, having no genuine *object* on which to fix" (50, my emphases). Both the objects of inquiry and mortals' method of inquiry are reprimanded on this picture. But there is a dilemma here, reminiscent of the paradox of inquiry in Plato's *Meno*: if mortals *did* understand the nature of the proper object of *noos*, there would apparently be no reason for cosmological inquiry. But if they did *not* understand the nature of that proper object, then they could not even begin to inquire. In terms of how Mourelatos and Curd understand not-being, this dilemma is not *eristic*, since it does not allow for the Platonic solution of *partial* knowledge argued for in the *Meno*. Indeed, to find out which things have real natures, one must either have the *thing* (such that one could subsequently inquire into its nature), or the *nature* (such that one could subsequently "assign" it to the right thing).

Two examples from biology might help clarify what I mean. First, we might discover a wholly new animal; here we have the *thing*. To understand its nature, we might try to link it to other things that are similar to it, understand its internal structure, etc. On the other hand, we might have some medical symptoms; we here have a *nature* since we know what happens, by hypothesis, to victims in each case. But we do not yet know what it *is*—what sort of *thing*—that is causing the symptoms. Is it a disease, is it mechanical failure of organs, is it chemically induced from the outside, or some combination of these? In *either* case, however, one must necessarily move along the path of not-being in *inquiry*, as Plato would later show. For example, in the *Theaetetus*, Plato and Theaetetus inquire into what knowledge is. At 210a10-b2, Socrates says "So it would seem, Theaetetus, that knowledge is *neither* perception, *nor* true judgment, *nor*

an account added to true judgment" (my emphasis).[66] Socrates and Theaetetus agree that their discussion had presented many false versions of knowledge. Later, however, Socrates tells Theaetetus that if they attempted "to conceive anything else [about knowledge], and do so, what you're pregnant with will be the better for our present investigation" (210b10-c1). That is, the long discussion that yielded many apparently correct answers about what knowledge *is not* was in no way *ineffectual*: it made Socrates and Theaetetus *better* for any future investigation into the nature of knowledge.[67]

If we suppose that Parmenides' concerns about not-being are largely methodological—banning inquiry into what something *is not*—then not only will Plato's and Socrates' preferred method of refutation be banned, but Parmenides' own method for the goddess (described as *elenchus* at B7.5) will be as well: in B8, Parmenides proceeds by showing what the real *is not*.[68] Furley's comment on Mourelatos's view sums these points up best: Mourelatos is correct in arguing that statements about what something is-not cannot "ever feature as the last statement (or one of the last) in cosmological inquiry" (1973:13). "But," as Furley notes, "we are now considering the use of τὸ μὴ ἐόν in the *first* stages of cosmological inquiry." To emphasize methodology over objects in considering the ban on not-being would lead to the impossibility of inquiry *as such*; but not-being in inquiry, when it is concerned with the *first* stages, is not problematic at all, and indeed it is required. Mourelatos's above statement is directed against the objects, not the inquiry. That is, no object can ever be *constituted* by not-being: the nature of *x*

[66] The translation is McDowell's (1973).
[67] I take this to mean, at least in the immediate context, *better suited* for engaging in subsequent inquiry.
[68] See Austin (1986), Chapter 1, for a lengthy if somewhat controversial discussion of how Parmenides can be seen as positively *using* the language of not-being while at the same time arguing against it. Mourelatos (2008:53), too, notes some problems here.

cannot be such that it *is not-F* (a point he makes later: 80). But this is just to shift emphasis from the route of inquiry to the objects along the route, which Mourelatos had already said was not to Parmenides' main point (e.g., at p. 75).[69]

While Mourelatos and Curd emphasize the route of inquiry in their interpretation of not-being, they say it applies to objects as well. That is, they argue that not-being cannot be *constitutive* of some real thing's nature. This position, however, is inconsistent: it cannot be the case that there are *many* fundamental things *and* that not-being never enters into the *natures* of those things. Austin argues, for example,[70] that statements such as 'Heidi is not anything that is not Heidi' cannot be accounted for on the Mourelatos/Curd view (1986:20-21). On their view, *is not* cannot be directed toward some specific thing, say Klara, because this would mean that Heidi's nature is *constituted* by her not being Klara. Instead, 'is not' must be completely general:[71] Heidi is not *anything* that is not Heidi. For a plurality of ones to obtain, the view of not-being must be this generalized view to secure the oneness of each individual.

But even this will not work, as Austin notes: ". . . one cannot say, 'This is not any of the others' without sooner or later saying 'This is not that one, or that one, or that one'—and this is a feature even in a world of monads, and even if there are no two members of the same family." This is just to say that the *general* application of not-being (in cosmological inquiry) implies the

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[69] It should be noted that Curd explicitly says the arguments of B8 concern both objects and method of inquiry. She writes (1998:48 n68) "the signs of B8 function both as characteristics of the natures that are reached by proper inquiry and regulating principles for that inquiry." But, it seems, Eleatic principles—such as something's being ungenerated and imperishable— act as regulating principles for inquiry, because they *primarily* have to do with objects: the nature of the objects guide the inquiry.

[70] This example is Austin's; only the names have been changed.

[71] It should be noted that this generality does not go against Mourelatos's above excoriation against negative predication in general, since Mourelatos's interpretation *requires* a ban on general negative predication *for cosmological inquiry*. Mourelatos's point was that Parmenides is not denying humdrum negative predications like "that sweater is not blue."

specific application of not-being eventually. If Heidi is not *anything* that is not Heidi, then she is not *each* of the things that are not Heidi. Austin points out that "if the identity of an individual is *secured by its not being identical with any other*, then it is secured also, sooner or later, by its not being identical with this one or that one" (my emphasis).[72] Thus, the Mourelatos/Curd view of not-being, at the level of *things*, is incoherent on its own terms: individual natures involve constitutive not-being, *if* there are many such individuals. This is a strong reason to reject Curd's predicational monism: it is internally incoherent along the Parmenidean lines she accepts.

All the same, Mourelatos and Curd are not wrong that Parmenides is *somehow* concerned with not-being at the level of things. But this is ambiguous between several interpretations. He might be banning non-existent objects, because, for example, such things are not thinkable. Or he might be saying that objects we think exist do *not* exist—at all or in the way we think they do. To further complicate this are Ketchum's arguments concerning the non-synonymy of 'what does not exist' and 'what is not' (τὸ μὴ ὄν) or 'nothing' (μηδέν). As already noted, Ketchum argues that things that do not exist are not necessarily things that are *nothing at all*, since the former have many apparently true statements concerning them. Just because Heidi's formerly living with her grandfather, and Klara's future being able to walk, do not strictly speaking *exist*, it is false that these things, such that they are, do not have properties attached to them. Or Pegasus: 'Pegasus is a mythical creature' and 'Pegasus is a hooved creature' are true statements, on Ketchum's view. Thus, though these things do not *exist* they are *something*, since they have

[72] One serious problem for monism, as noted in Chapter 1, is that if the identity of *x* is indeed secured by its non-identity with *y*, then it is far from clear how, in a world with just one thing, that thing can be identical with itself; how can it be an *individual*, if individuals are (or must be) self-identical? A monism that denies the individuality of the one existing thing seems utterly incoherent.

properties or can be subjects of true statements. Parmenides, on Ketchum's view, bans that which is not anything at all—such things cannot be spoken or thought about.[73]

If Parmenides is unifying disparate philosophical topics within an ontological framework, as I claimed above in defense of a fused sense of *esti*, then it is unclear whether he would accept Ketchum's claim that nonexistent objects are somethings. Indeed, Parmenides makes rather *strong* connections between knowledge, language, thought, and reality.[74] On this objection, the statement 'Pegasus is a hooved creature' is strictly speaking *false*, since it is not the case that one can make true statements *about* Pegasus, since there is no Pegasus for anything to be true *of*.

Now, this objection brings in the highly problematic view of the ontological status of non-existent things. Ketchum's arguments largely concern the semantic issue of the purported synonymy between 'what does not exist' and 'what is not anything' or 'nothing'. But he does note that the members of the class of what does not exist and of what is not anything are extensionally identical: what is not anything at all *does not exist*, though, again—according to Ketchum—it does not follow from this that 'what does not exist' *means* what is *nothing at all* (1990:171). If we shift focus, however, from the intensions of these key phrases to their extensions—the *objects* with which they are concerned—then we arrive at what seems to be a very Parmenidean position: intension (or Fregean *sense*, roughly understood as cognitive significance) becomes irrelevant, since presumably intensional aspects of meaning would belong to human *doxa*. If, for example, I pick out Ulysses S. Grant by the description 'the drunk Civil War general' (and he is *not*, in fact, a drunk), then it seems I am not picking out Grant at all. I

[73] Recall that these considerations are crucial for Ketchum's largely predicative view of *esti*.
[74] Specifically B2, where Parmenides says what is-not is not sayable, thinkable, or knowable.

may *believe* this about Grant, but if it is false, then I do not *know* this about Grant. For Parmenides, this is precisely because I am attaching a definite description to nothing. If meaning has anything to do with reality, it seems as if it has to do solely with *extensions*: meaning just is whatever objects are denoted, and Parmenides is, on Furth's colorful term, a "hyper-denotationist." Thus, if some statement refers to nothing, i.e., if its extension is empty, it follows that the statement is meaningless.[75]

The overall point is this: when I say "Heidi's grandfather liked to smoke pipes," I am not saying anything true *about* Heidi's grandfather (since there is no such person). If the statement is to be true at all, it must be modified to something such as 'The character "Heidi's grandfather" is represented as having liked to smoke pipes in the story'. But now, on a Quinean analysis, we have ceased to talk about Heidi's *grandfather* at all; we've changed the subject.[76] At any rate, Ketchum's argument for the non-synonymy of 'what does not exist' and 'what is not anything' assumes a certain ontological position about the status of non-existent objects, one that Parmenides would find dubious, especially if he is a hyper-denotationist,[77] and given a plausible but controversial identity reading of B3: "thinking and being are the same," on Long's translation (1996:132).[78] If Parmenides countenances the identity of thinking and being—for

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[75] These twentieth century conceptual problems are not applicable to Parmenides historically, but the thrust of his poem seems to entail these onto-linguistic conclusions. It is *because* the ontological problem of banning not-being obtains in the first place that not-being is not sayable or thinkable. This is one reason the shift from semantic (intensional) concerns to extensions seems justified.

[76] These issues bring in further problems about statements such as 'Pegasus is a mythical creature'. Is this true or false? I am prepared to say 'Pegasus has hooves' is strictly false, but it is not clear that a statement *about* something's being fictional is in the same way false. Certainly Pegasus is not a *creature* in the normal understanding of that word; perhaps Pegasus is more appropriately a *character* in fiction. I will not dwell on the ontology of fictional objects, other than to argue—*pace* Ketchum—that they are nothing at all *because* they do not exist. When discussing them, we are in fact (with Quine's McX) discussing something else entirely (brain states, etc.).

[77] Ketchum does not find Furth's arguments on these scores convincing. See his 1990:171-72.

[78] The issue of whether B3 asserts an identity between thinking and being is controversial. I discuss this issue more

which I argue in §3[79]—and we understand B2 as linking language, thought, and reality in a particularly strong way, then the *semantic* aspects Ketchum discusses must be seen as wholly dependent on *ontological* notions Parmenides raises. And if so, semantics is entirely extensionalist.

One thing seems fairly clear for Parmenides, however. He does not seem concerned about denying the cogency of non-existent objects in the sense of *fictional* characters such as Pegasus or centaurs or the gods. He seems committed to the much stronger—and thus less plausible—position of denying the existence of ordinary objects of experience: people, lions, trees, buildings, and the like. Gallop cites B7.4-5 as evidence that Parmenides is primarily concerned with denying reality to such things, since Parmenides says there, in a broader denunciation of mortal inquiry into things that are not, that ignorant mortals "wield an unseeing eye and echoing ear and tongue" (1984:9-10). That is, the goddess is denouncing the objects of sensory experience—they are, somehow, *not real*, or as Gallop says, they are, according to the goddess, an *illusion*. In B8, the goddess gives arguments that attempt to prove what reality must be like, in accord with Eleatic principles. Anything falling outside these principles is strictly speaking not real. Whatever is real is constrained by the Eleatic principles of being ungenerable, imperishable, whole of a single kind, unique, etc. The objects of sensory experience fall outside the scope of these principles, and so are not real. Parmenidean not-being, then, properly applies to sensory objects: because they are not real, they strictly speaking *do not exist*.

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in §3 below.

[79] However, I argue *against* treating Parmenides as a proto-Berkeleyan idealist, which is typically the objection to taking the reading as an identity. Cf. Graham (2010:236).

3. Philosophical Implications

What exactly are we supposed to take away from Parmenides if the preceding interpretive issues are accepted, namely, that he countenances a fused sense of *esti* and denies plurality because he denies not-being? In this section I first discuss some of the basic ontological implications of this position. Next I examine the further ontological issue of the relation between thought and being in Parmenides, arguing that for him they are identical. One consequence of the identity thesis some commentators object to is that it allegedly commits Parmenides to a form of idealism. I argue against the proto-idealism interpretation. Finally, I examine some apparently paradoxical conclusions that result from Parmenides' ontology.

3.1. Basic Ontological Implications

For all Parmenides' somewhat archaic interweaving of topics contemporary philosophers conceptually distinguish, he approaches knowledge, language, thought, and truth from a distinctly ontological perspective—from what he takes to be real. His ontology, however, is where paradox sets in, for much of what Parmenides can reasonably be seen as committed to ontologically entails numerical monism, the thesis that there is just one thing.[80] On this front, Parmenides seems committed to a strong denial of internal and external difference.[81] Thus,

[80] Paradox comes in at several points for numerical monism, but one place Parmenides commentators have not adequately addressed is the position itself: it is not easy to see how the one reality/nature/what-is could be anything but an individual thing if it is one; but at the same time, it is unclear *how* it could be an individual, given that individuation and identity conditions appear to require plurality. Most commentators focus on other paradoxes, for example, how some of Parmenides' conclusions appear to contradict the very premises upon which they are based.

[81] In the Parmenidean framework offered here, internal and external differences amount to the same thing. Take some purported whole, say, a human being: the differences within the body just are differences among the different "parts" inside. Similarly, take two humans: their nonidentity is a difference between them *qua* "parts" of the world, their environment, etc.

what-is is one *because* difference is impossible: "…since it now *is*, all together, one, continuous" (B8.5-6). The arguments for the homogeneity of what-is at B8.22-25 further seem to show that Parmenides is committed to denying difference. Now, the weaker Mourelatos/Curd interpretation of 'it' at B.8.22 concerns *whatever* is real, which allows for many real things that are all together, one, and continuous *within themselves*: each existing thing is homogeneous *qua* essence as the particular thing it is.

McKirahan has more recently defended a similar view, taking Parmenides' ontological commitments to be nothing more than a commitment to "anything that qualifies as a legitimate subject of 'is'" (2008:215).[82] But if the arguments concerning not-being noted above (§2.2) hold, then a pluralism of "ones" (or monads) is incoherent on strictly Parmenidean terms: the position fails to treat Parmenidean not-being adequately. There *cannot* be many things, on the very Parmenidean terms Curd and Mourelatos, the major proponents of the view, accept. Thus, reality turns out to be one in a way we might call *token-simpliciter*: there is nothing *other than* the one world/reality/being that adheres to the Eleatic principles mentioned at the beginning of B8. If there were anything besides, this would imply that reality is *not* all together, one, and continuous—it implies internal or external difference.[83] It follows that the objects of sense experience, for example, because they are, or appear to be, many—and since they fail to adhere to Eleatic principles—strictly speaking *are not*.[84] For Parmenides, anything that comes to be or

[82] As should be clear by now, this is a loaded statement, since it is perfectly consistent with there being only one thing that is a "legitimate subject" of 'is'.

[83] For example, at B8.36-37. Sedley (1999:120) ties the rejection of internal and external difference to Parmenides' rejection of time. Reality's wholeness implies that it is "spatially all-inclusive, [which] means that there can be no external change to provide the measure of time, while its being unmoved likewise eliminates any internal measure of time."

[84] This is a highly controversial and contentious claim, even in Parmenides scholarship. Nevertheless, I am arguing that things experienced by mere mortals *are not* in purely Eleatic terms: ponies, people, planets, and plants do not

perishes does not strictly speaking exist.[85] The ban on not-being guarantees that the ostensible objects of sense experience do not exist, since the only *possible* existent is something totally imperishable, ungenerable, continuous, etc.

If not-being is geared to objects of sense experience (and not, for example, to denying fictional objects or dubious methods of inquiry)—that is, if Parmenides' denial of not-being is a denial of difference *as such*, which entails that objects of sense experience are not Eleatic beings—what sort of monism results? It seems clear that, at the very least, a *physical* monism obtains if difference among sensory objects is denied. That is, if there is no non-arbitrary way to divide up the physical world into proper parts or chunks—given, however, that the senses divide up the world relative to whatever has the sense experience—then it seems to follow that, if there *are* no proper parts strictly speaking, if the world cannot be partitioned non-arbitrarily according to strict Eleatic principles, then if anything physical exists, there is only one such thing.[86]

But in this case Parmenides seems little different from the Milesians he is often seen as arguing against; they too thought the world was reducible to one sort of physical stuff, and that, strictly speaking, all objects of sensory experience were really manifestations of the one physical stuff. But while it seems Parmenides wants to deny the existence of a plurality of real, i.e.

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exist *in their own right*. If reality is constrained by Eleatic principles, then things outside those constraints are not, strictly speaking, real. In chapter 3, however, I argue that Parmenides' ontological commitments disallow unreal things in an even stronger sense than he seems to notice.

[85] This seems implied at B8.7-9 and B8.19-20. It is clear at B8.7-9 that Parmenides is at *least* rejecting the notion that something can come to be from *nothing*. It is less clear whether he advocates the rejection of coming-to-be from what already exists. If he does not, then his ontology is far less radical than most commentators think. What seems to be an admonishment of change and alteration *in general* at B8.41 perhaps gives credence to the view that Parmenides rejects all coming-to-be, if that term is understood as any sort of change whatsoever.

[86] Sedley (1999:121), in connection with his view that the Parmenidean world is literally spherical, argues against the objection that a sphere has distinct parts by arguing that the world *can* be divided up (and indeed is so divided), but only by unthinking mortals: ". . . we misconstrue reality if we do impose" divisions. Reality as such is divided up by mortals because in some sense *they cannot help it*. But in chapter 3, even this seems dubious if we truly follow Parmenides down the rabbit hole.

Eleatic, physical beings, the *being* that he is arguing for cannot simply be physical reality. For, at B3, Parmenides appears to identify being with *thought* or *thinking*. This is a contentious issue in the Parmenides literature, and I turn now to defending what Long calls the *mind/being identity reading*: being and thought are the same (1996:132).

3.2. Parmenides' Ontological Commitments on Being and Thought

The identity thesis is controversial despite its being, as Graham says, "the most obvious translation" of . . . τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι (2010:236).[87] On the identity reading, B3 translates as "thinking and being are the same." [88] But the sentence is, as most people realize, syntactically ambiguous, and can be translated, as Granger notes, "'For the same thing is for thinking and for Being' or 'For it is the same thing that can be thought and can be'" (2010:22). These disambiguations are weaker than the identity reading since they say simply, as Granger notes, "that thinkability and reality go together." Granger's own interpretation has Parmenides committed to a teleological relation between thought and being that includes, but is not identical to, an intentional relation between thought and being: "thought in its teleological directionality is drawn inexorably towards its object Being so that it cannot help but be *about* Being" (emphasis in the original). This shows that, weaker than identity, thought and being are somehow necessarily connected: knowledge, cognition, or thought/thinking are always of what-is.

A key reason for accepting the non-identity thesis is that B3 is reasonably read as the

[87] In chapter 5, in a discussion about being's divisibility in the *Sophist*, I discuss an objection, which relies on the identity thesis, to arguments I lay out in chapter 3 that (I contend) shore up a key inconsistency in Parmenides: he cannot account for the fact that mortal opinions are in error *by virtue of* the *belief* that appearances are real. If thinking is being, so the objection goes, this is only an alleged problem.
[88] Note, however, that this is not Graham's own translation.

justification, i.e. *premise*, for the positive route mentioned in B2.[89] That is, the *reason* one cannot speak or think of not-being, and therefore, via mutual exclusivity, must think only along the positive route, is that thought and being are related: whatever can be thought must *exist*. Seen this way, B3 is the assumed foundation of Parmenides' entire program, since B2 is largely seen as the foundation for the arguments in B8, where Parmenides draws his counterintuitive conclusions about the nature of reality. The simple explanation for this interpretation, as Long notes, is that while it is less obvious as a *translation*, it is philosophically more defensible, because it accords with common sense (1996:136).

If, however, B3 is read as an identity statement, then it becomes unclear how it can be a justification for rejecting the negative route in favor of the positive route. As Gallop writes, "if it means that thinking and being are strictly identical, [the identity translation] makes it difficult to take B3 as a premise for B2.7-8" (1979:78 n36). Gallop's note cites Robinson (1975:626) as understanding B3 as a *grammatical* identity, "but takes it [B3] as stating 'in a terse, gnomic way' the necessary interconnectedness of ascertainment and the real." But Gallop argues that this sort of necessary interconnection between thought—or, on Robinson's construal, knowledge— and reality is "needlessly strong for the goddess's argument *at this point*" (my emphasis).

Two comments are in order. First, Gallop's point, as I understand it, is about the programmatic structure of the poem: *at this point*, i.e. early in the goddess' delivery, it is not necessary to construe thought and being as identical (though they may turn out to be identical).[90]

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[89] Witness the use of γὰρ, which can be construed as the premise-indicator 'for'.

[90] The placement of B3 within the poem is problematic. The non-identity thesis seems to require placing it early in the poem, if part of the justification for that position has to do with the idea that the goddess would not force the *kouros* to accept a dubious premise early on. One advantage of the identity reading is that it does not, in the end, matter where B3 is placed.

Granger has said[91] similar things about how B3 ought not to be construed as an identity claim, at least insofar as the goddess' delivery; the *kouros* should not be required at the beginning of the discourse to accept prima facie dubious *premises*. Long also notes that this is an attractive view for similar programmatic reasons.

The problem, however, with the non-identity thesis is that, in the end, *if* one is committed to a version of numerical monism for Parmenides, *and* one accepts the non-identity thesis through and through, it is then unclear how these positions can be reconciled, as it would then appear that Parmenides is at least committed to two distinct fundamental things, thinking and being.[92] Sedley notes that "the price of *not* identifying thinking with being is to undermine [Parmenides'] monism, by separating the thinking subject from the object of thought, that-which-is" (1996:120). But this begs the question against the non-identity proponent unless monism can be established independently of the identity of thinking with being. As I already argued, monism has to do with the rejection of not-being, so Sedley's point does not in fact beg the question against non-identity. Granger himself is committed to a monistic reading of Parmenides[93] but also to the intentionality/teleology (i.e. non-identity) reading of B3, which structurally *requires* both the object to be cognized and the subject to cognize. In the end, as I argue below, a non-identity reading is harmless if it is used for expository purposes, or if the non-identity is conceptual or semantic.

Secondly, Long argues against Gallop that B3 need not be construed as a premise for the

[91] In conversations at the University of Michigan Ancient Philosophy Reading Group, first summer session, 2011, and in an unpublished (2008) paper. He has confirmed these views through private correspondence.
[92] In his unpublished (2008), Granger notes this objection.
[93] For example, in Granger (2002).

positive route in B2, since the first two lines of B6 handle the job. In this way, B6.1-2—"What is for speaking and thinking must be. For it is able to be, but nothing is not"— allow B3 to stand on its own, as it were, as an identity claim that nonetheless reinforces B6's support for the positive route.[94] As all commentators attest, however, these two lines are some of the most puzzling in Parmenides, so salvaging B3 for identity by transferring the work to B6.1-2 is not without its own problems. B6.1-2 can, for example, be translated as "it is right to say and to think that what-is is, for being is [or: it is for being]."[95] Unless one takes the bracketed material as the translation, as Long's translation does, and specifies the modal aspects of the claim, as Long explicitly does, then B6.1-2 is not *obviously* a justification for the positive route in B2. In any case, Long's translation is certainly possible, and given that B3's most obvious translation is the identity claim, it is reasonable to see how B6.1-2 might justify the positive route of B2, thus isolating B3 to act as a statement of identity.

Perhaps a more contentious problem for the identity claim is how to construe identity: to what does the identity of thought and being amount? Long cites Cornford's complaint that Greeks from Parmenides' time would understand 'exists' meaning the same as 'thinks' as nonsense (1996:134). Long contends that this is just an *ignoratio elenchi*: Parmenides does not need to be construed as arguing that 'exists' and 'thinks' are *synonyms*. As he writes, "there are ways of construing 'is the same as' that permit the terms on both sides of the equation to carry their own *independent meanings*" (my emphasis). This point is crucial for understanding how

[94] Another passage often noted in connection with these is the very similar B8.34-6. Long's translation (modified from Sedley 1999) is, "Thinking and that which prompts thought are the same. For in what has been said . . . you will not find thinking separate from being."
[95] Graham (2010:215).

the identity thesis might be supported.[96] Before examining how to construe the identity thesis along these lines, I want to briefly detour and examine a different, indirect objection to the identity thesis; but the detour will—as detours should—take us precisely back to Long's point about difference of meaning.

An indirect argument against the identity thesis is offered by Skirry.[97] Skirry argues that if Parmenides is a numerical monist, he must accept the identity thesis, but if so, then he thereby requires that being and not-being are the same and not the same, something he (fairly clearly) rejects (2001:403). Thus, numerical monism must be rejected. Skirry gives three independent arguments for three premises to which a Parmenidean numerical monist must be committed, and these are based on what he calls the central thesis of Parmenidean numerical monism:

> T Parmenides argues that there is only one thing that is genuinely or truly real—that is, is not generated, not perishable, immutable, indivisible, whole, complete, continuous.

From here, the argument runs as follows (413):

> P1 If T, then Parmenides is committed to thinking/Being identity.
> P2 If Parmenides is committed to thinking/Being identity, then he thinks that Being and not-Being are both the same and not the same.
> P2a If T, then Parmenides thinks that Being and not-Being are both the same and not the same (Follows from P1 and P2).
> P3 Parmenides does not think that Being and not-Being are both the same and not the same.
> ∴ Not-T (Follows from P2a and P3).

P3 can reasonably be justified from the text at B6, where Parmenides scorns "wandering two-headed mortals" (lines 4-5) who are "both deaf and blind" (line 7) and for whom "to be and not

[96] I ultimately reject this argument in chapter 3.
[97] Skirry's argument is against numerical monism, but central to his argument is the requirement of the identity thesis to the cogency of that position. At the time of publication, Skirry was a graduate student of Curd's.

to be are thought to be the same and not the same" (lines 8-9). In any case, it is reasonable to think Parmenides does not agree with two-headed mortal opinion on these matters. The problematic premise is P2, since it is unclear how, if Parmenides is committed to the identity thesis, he is committed to the simultaneous identity and non-identity of being and not-being.[98]

Skirry's argument for P2 is based on Parmenides' apparent commitment in various passages to the distinction between thought and being—that is, to their non-identity. Specifically, B4.1-2, which Skirry has as "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." Moreover, he renders B8.34-36, "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," as supporting roughly the same distinction, from a different direction.

As Skirry notes, none of this is sufficient to show that Parmenides is committed to the non-identity thesis (410-11). But he argues that the apparent dependence of thought on being is at least an indication that they are distinct for Parmenides. The real reason Parmenides is committed to being and not-being as both the same and not the same is, according to Skirry, that Parmenides is committed to the *conceptual* distinction between thought and being, as well as their real identity (under numerical monism). As he writes, "*insofar as* Parmenides is making a conceptual distinction, thinking and Being are not identical. Yet, he does think that thinking is identical with Being under" numerical monism (my emphasis). Skirry further states that "by 'conceptual distinction,' I mean a distinction that is made in the mind without a corresponding

[98] This combination is often understood as a third route—one of mortal opinion—which combines the positive and negative routes. No consensus has been reached on whether there is a third route, but that issue is not pertinent to the present discussion.

distinction in the thing itself" (416 n28). It appears, then, that commitment to a conceptual distinction is not incompatible with commitment to *real* identity. But if so, then just because Parmenides is, or seems to be, committed to a conceptual distinction between thought and being in various places, this does not entail that he is committed to being and not-being as both the same and not the same: Skirry *derives* the objectionable conclusion for Parmenides from the fact that Parmenides accepts both that thinking and being are the same and not the same only *conceptually*. To derive the contradictory conclusion about the *token* being, however, Parmenides would have to be committed to the identity and non-identity of thinking and being at the *token* level. But he is only committed to their *identity* at the token level.

Skirry has conflated the token identity of thought and being in B3 with the type non-identity of thought and being: the token can be described under various type-descriptions. But the rejection of numerical monism requires that Parmenides be committed to *token* identity and non-identity. Parmenides can countenance a qualified sense of the non-identity thesis so long as he maintains that there is no *real*, i.e. token, distinction between thought and being. Such a distinction does not entail that Parmenides (or the goddess) is somehow, like mortals, committed to a blatant contradiction. I can maintain, for example, that the evening star and the morning star are the same and not the same, in a qualified sense, without thinking the distinction is real. To reject numerical monism on this score, the distinction between thought and being must be *real*.[99]

These considerations bring us back to Long's arguments (1996:146). Long fully embraces an interpretation of Parmenides that allows for thought and being to be distinct in a

[99] I do not think Parmenides would see *that* he is committed to a conceptual distinction, and he *certainly* would not see the proto-Fregean *solution* to the seeming confusion about maintaining that thinking and being are at the same time really identical and qualifiedly not identical. In chapter 3, I exploit this problem *against* Parmenides himself.

qualified sense that does not commit him to Skirry's consequent in P2. Long's argument relies explicitly on the token-type distinction mentioned above. That is, the concepts *thought* and *being* have the same referent, but they are distinct *qua* type: each carries its own semantic content, essence, or meaning. As Long says, "when Parmenides talks about 'thinking' (veridical thinking, I mean), his words refer to cognition; and when he talks about Being or that which is, his words refer to reality, the true state of everything." But there is, according to Long, no reduction of one to the other: ". . . veridical thinking and reality are *coextensive*."

More than this, thought/thinking, and being are also distinct types from the Eleatic principles of B8, according to Long. Responding to the objection that a distinction in types would violate the homogeneity of being, Long argues that it is "undeniable and uncontested" that *thinkable* is one of being's attributes. Thus, as he writes, "Parmenides' argument would be vacuous if he did not attach independent *semantic* value to 'thinkable' and to each of the other attributes of Being (ungenerated, indestructible, etc.), thus allowing Being to admit of many predications" (my emphasis).[100] But, Long argues, being is "all encompassing" and anything predicable of being must be so *completely*.[101] If being must be completely, and the goddess is telling the *kouros* (in B8) what she said (in B2) she would do, namely, show *that* or *how* (ὡς) being is, then by these passages from B8, it appears no part[102] of being can lack any attribute predicable of it. If thinking is one of those attributes, being must be thinking completely; being

[100] One objection here is that if, as I argued above, semantic value must be purely extensional for Parmenides, then 'thinking' and 'being' *would* mean the same thing, since on this view they have the same referent; but they do not mean the same thing. I do think that this is a confusion in Parmenides, as I argue in the next chapter, and is one point where Plato attacks him, as I argue in chapter 5. Regarding other monists, the issue is one that only later could be adequately addressed by someone such as Spinoza.
[101] Indeed, textual support for this can be seen in several parts of B8, for example, at B8.11, 8.22-25, and B8.32-33.
[102] The ban on not-being, of course, guarantees that there are no parts, strictly speaking, of being at all.

must be infused with thought through and through.

One objection to these considerations is that being seems to be broader than thinking, or physicality (if being is physical).[103] Moreover, thinking and physicality seem broader than Eleatic principles such as ungenerated, imperishable, continuous, etc. Surely, if these are *principles* of being, then alleging their coextension with being would seemingly be a category mistake: the principles of being are different from being itself. This objection tacitly assumes the non-identity thesis from the beginning; it is a virtue of that thesis that being is somehow independent from thinking, ungenerability, imperishability, and all the rest, for this allegedly better explains, for example, intentionality or the directedness of knowledge toward some object. On that reading, being is some object for a subject to access or think about. Aside from this, however, if being is all there is *qua* token, then a hierarchy of conceptually distinct types might not be a problem for Parmenides. That is, he can maintain that being is fully physical, fully thinking, and that this physicality and thought are themselves ungenerated, imperishable, etc. It is true that he seems to disallow degrees of being (e.g., at B8.22-25); but type-distinctions do not necessarily entail distinctions in degrees of being at the token level: being, the *thing itself,* can be completely physical, thinking, ungenerated, imperishable, continuous, etc.[104]

I turn now to another charge against the identity thesis, namely, that it allegedly commits Parmenides to a sort of proto-idealism: to *be* is to be an object of thought. And along these lines, the identity thesis also allegedly commits Parmenides to the quasi-Meinongian position that

[103] I argue below that we have good reason to think that being is physical for Parmenides.
[104] In chapter 3 I argue that Parmenides' own *Doxa* section seems to undermine most of these ontological issues, as *he* understood them. Specifically, if Parmenides is a "hyper-denotationist," then 'thinking' and 'being' cannot be semantically distinct.

whatever is an object of thought (including impossible objects, if they are possible objects of *thought*) has being of *some* sort. The argument for proto-idealism is simple enough to understand. If, in a Berkeleyan fashion, thought and being are the same, then whatever can be thought exists. Put another way, the class of existent things and the class of thought things have identical extensions.[105] Given the identity thesis, this class equivalence is straightforwardly attributable to Parmenides, but it does not follow that he is committed to anything like proto-idealism. The idealism charge typically takes thought as primary: whatever can be thought *thereby* exists. More importantly, however, proto-idealism is a reductionist theory: being—or more narrowly, physical reality—is reducible to thought. But if the identity thesis is correct, Parmenides, as argued above, wants the relation between thought and being to go both ways: something exists if and only if it is thinking/thought.[106] Given the arguments about token identity above, if being is physical, then by Leibniz's law, it is also thought or thinking.[107] Being is physical for Parmenides if, for example, it is spherical, which Parmenides implies at B8.43.[108] But if he is so committed—and he *is* committed, I argue—to being's identity with thought, then it follows that physical reality is thinking, and vice versa. This is not a form of idealism.

Proto-idealism is related to the Meinongian charges. First, it seems clear that Parmenides

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[105] Vlastos (1953:168) argues that for Parmenides, "thought and reality are coextensive," though he—like most others—sees a sort of idealism in this identity.

[106] Kahn (2009:165) argues that the identity of thought and being is asymmetrical, and issues in a sort of "neutral monism" where thought is reduced to being and not the other way around. I find asymmetries in either direction to be antithetical to what Parmenides says about reality in general, however.

[107] Coxon is one who wants to deny that being is physical for Parmenides, though he does not see Parmenides as an idealist. See 1986:214-15.

[108] I do not think that B8.43 should be understood literally, as if reality were a physical sphere. This does not mean reality is not physical, however; the arguments against generation and perishing may imply physicality but not sphericity, for example. For a bold defense of the literal reading, see Sedley (1999), who rejects the claim that the physical sphericity of being fails to square with Parmenides' denial of not-being because there would be no account of what lies beyond the sphere—nothing.

wants to *deny* that impossible objects, e.g., square circles, can be objects of thought. Since impossible beings are just that—impossible—and Parmenides identifies thinking and being, it follows that impossible objects cannot be thought. That they are literally unthinkable guarantees that they cannot have being of any sort. B2 straightforwardly supports this, since "the utterly inscrutable track" is the one "that it is not and that it is right it should not be." Thus something's being non-thinking/non-thinkable is necessary and sufficient for its being nonexistent.[109] At any rate, B2 disallows a Meinongian interpretation of Parmenides regarding impossible objects.[110]

What about possible objects? Possible objects are obviously different from actual objects since they strictly do not exist: Klara's future being-able-to-walk, while allegedly possible, is not actual. Can true statements be made about the possible state of affairs *being-able-to-walk*? For Parmenides, no, since, strictly speaking, the state of affairs that is possible does not *now* (νῦν at B8.5) *exist*, and truth is tied to (or the same as) the existent or real. According to Goldin—who accepts that *esti* carries with it an "availability"[111] aspect to the effect that whatever *is* is *available* (for discourse, reality, etc.)—Parmenides thinks that "in employing the potential [*esti*], Parmenides already signals that what is possible has the status of presence as available" (1993:26-32). Setting aside the obscure notion of "presence as available," Goldin's point is that, for Parmenides, possible beings already are beings of the relevant Parmenidean sort. He argues that the contentious B6.1-2—"it is right to say and to think that what-is is, for being is [or: it is for being][112]—gives an argument for the claim "that everything that can be is." That is, if we are

[109] Part of Parmenides' project, I take it, is the attempt to show that phrases like 'being nonexistent' are nonsense. Thus Parmenides would balk at Ketchum's claim that 'there are many things that do not exist' is a true statement.
[110] See Goldin (1993:29) for other reasons why Parmenides should not be considered Meinongian.
[111] Goldin takes availability as akin to or the same as potentiality.
[112] Goldin translates thusly: "it is necessary to say and to think what is for being, for it *is* for being, but it is not nothing."

committed to something's being possible, then, according to Goldin we "are already committed to its being real. The being of the thing already *is* in the availability of that being. So the thing itself already is." Moreover, he says that B4.1 gives evidence that Parmenides is committed to the reality of possible objects: "look at things though absent for the mind present securely."[113]

A glaring objection—that Parmenides cannot countenance *possibilia* on the grounds that they can *become* actual or are actualized at some later point—is offset by Goldin's contention that Parmenides eventually argues that the class of possible things is in fact empty. That the class of possible beings is empty is guaranteed, according to Goldin, by B8.22-25, Parmenides' arguments for the homogeneity of reality: there cannot be different ways of being, namely, possible and actual ways of being.[114] Nonetheless, Goldin argues that Parmenides, based on his use of the *esti* of availability/potentiality, thinks that *if* there are possible things, then those things must have being in some way. In this regard, Goldin likens Parmenides to Quine, who thinks that genuine *possibilia* must be able to be quantified over and individuated. But, according to Quine, since there can be no quantification over and individuation of possible things (such as Quine's 1961:4 possible bald man in the doorway), the very notion of *possibilia* is incoherent.[115]

Now, Goldin notes that Quine agrees with Aristotle in not identifying potential and actual

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[113] Goldin's translation: "see those things, though they are away from you, that are firmly beside your mind."
[114] Above I argued that Parmenides does countenance different ways of being, for example, as thinking, or as physical. Strictly speaking, being possible is *not* a way of *being* at all; *possibilia* share in not-being in the same way fictional objects do: there's nothing *there*. If *being possible* is a property attached to some object, it is by no means clear what sort of object that is, or even that there is one. The crucial issue is whether Parmenides can accept different ways of being at the level of *type* that do not thereby imply heterogeneity at the *token* level. Long, and I, following him, argue for this distinction as at least implicit, though possibly confused, in Parmenides. The issue does not seem to arise here, however, simply because the class of possible objects is strictly empty; we again have McX's "change of subject" when we start talking about possible *things* (since we are *really* talking about, say, ideas or concatenated memories, etc.).
[115] Quine, of course, champions the popular slogan "to be is to be the value of a bound variable," i.e. existent things are just things that can be quantified over. See, for example, Quine (1961:13-14).

being. Parmenides, however, *does* want to identify them. Goldin's point is that at the initial stages of the argument, Parmenides is committed to possible things having some sort of being. He is so because, as with Owen's interpretation, he is committed to the claim that what can be thought must exist. It is only later—at B8.22-25—that Parmenides rejects heterogeneity, and so, given that there is only one way of inquiry (into what-is), what *can* exist just is what *does* exist. But this is, in effect, to get rid of the notion of possibility altogether; as Goldin notes, to ". . . follow Aristotle . . . in defining the possible as that of which the contradictory is not necessary [Parmenides' view] is tantamount to the view that all being is necessary being."[116]

3.3 Paradoxical Ontological Results

The view of not-being as a rejection of (non-arbitrary) internal and external difference, the identification of thought with being, and the rejection of both impossible and possible objects, all show that Parmenides is committed to an ontology of monistic necessitarianism: the view that there is just one token and it exists necessarily. The position is radical. It is less clear that it is "crazy," as Schaffer (e.g., at 2007:181) claims of numerical monism. A coherent version of numerical monism depends on how we understand the sorts of things that exist *strictly speaking*.[117]

Strong monism does, as several commentators have noted, invite apparent paradox. I argue, however, that the most celebrated paradox—the initial requirement and subsequent denial

[116] Goldin cites Aristotle's arguments for these claims from *Metaphysics* Δ.12, 1019b27-35.
[117] I leave aside in this chapter the Platonic and neoplatonic objections that strict or numerical monists cannot countenance the existence even of a thing with properties. This is, I think, a serious problem for Parmenides, and it ultimately undermines his ontology.

of individual rational thinkers—is not as damning as it seems, and can be accounted for with certain issues in contemporary metaphysics. A more serious paradox has to do with the one reality's alleged individuality *qua* thing. But regarding the first paradox, Mackenzie (1982) argues that if Parmenides is a numerical monist (and he is, according to her), it is impossible for him to explain his or an interlocutor's existence as thinking beings, something the dialectical nature of his argument requires. Parmenides' dialectical philosophy ultimately concludes in there being no difference as such, so *a fortiori* no real distinctions between thinkers for any dialectical enterprise. Parmenides is committed both to distinct thinkers and to numerical monism; paradox results. Before examining Mackenzie's view more closely, I want to approach the paradox by briefly engaging in the Cartesian characteristics several commentators have found in Parmenides since, if these can be dispelled, the paradox is (somewhat) less threatening.

Owen says that "the comparison with Descartes' *cogito* is inescapable: both arguments cut free of inherited premises, both start from an assumption whose denial is peculiarly self-refuting" (1975:61). The activity of thinking *guarantees* the existence of something, in Descartes' case, the thinker, which "cuts free" from the radical doubt at the beginning of the first *Meditation*. Denial that one is thinking is, of course, an act of thinking, and guarantees that the denial is false.[118] Likewise, Guthrie argues that, starting in B2, Parmenides was concerned with "what it is impossible to believe" (1965:20). The answer: that "something exists." In Cartesian fashion, the very act of denying that something exists proves self-defeating.[119]

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[118] For Owen, Parmenides' starting assumption also shows that he was peculiarly removed from earlier thinkers on this score: they did not assume a close relation between thought and being.

[119] Robinson (1975:626-32) argues that viewing Parmenides as a Cartesian (or Hegelian) "seems to miss the mark completely." Robinson's argument is directed against those who take Parmenides to be talking about thinking (νοεῖν) at B3, whereas he thinks Parmenides is talking about the "acquisition and/or possession of *knowledge*, not about states of thinking." This interpretation has consequences for how he views the so-called identity thesis of

Gallop hints at other Cartesian elements, especially as a response to the challenge that just because the word 'nothing' does not have a referent, it does not follow that something (thereby) exists (1984:27-28). Instead, the guaranteed existence (of something) might follow in familiar Cartesian fashion because the goddess herself is thinking and speaking: even her pronouncements that 'nothing' does not refer would guarantee the existence of something; it is not *because* 'nothing' has no referent that existence is guaranteed, but because *we* are somehow denying that 'nothing' has no referent: the act itself guarantees that something exists. Gallop urges, however, that this line of reasoning would not do for mortals: we may be deluded *that* we are thinking and speaking.[120] Gallop is surely right that such delusions would not guarantee any sort of "Parmenidean reality" since they would, strictly speaking, be non-veridical for Parmenides—that is, the delusions would have no relation to *the real*. But stronger than this quasi-Cartesian solution is that, on strictly Parmenidean terms, Parmenides (or the *kouros*) would not exist either, "and so presumably could not really be speaking or thinking," as Gallop writes. Such a Cartesian solution to the referential problem outlined above is not sufficient, according to Gallop, to show that there is just one thing: "to secure a perpetual object, there would be need of a perpetual act of speech or thought."

These problems bring us back to Mackenzie. For her Parmenides does not start with the

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Long (which he would reject) on these grounds: the identification of thinking and being is "ludicrous" and this tells against taking νοεῖν as *thinking*. Instead, Robinson argues that Parmenides is discussing (what would later be) the standard epistemological position that there is a "necessary/appropriate nexus between knowledge or ascertainment and the real. . . ." Given what Parmenides says about reality in B8, however—namely, the monistic thesis—it seems thinking and being must be identical. My project in this chapter has been to show that this is not *prima facie* ludicrous and does not entail that reality must be "ideal" (Robinson notes that this is Vlastos's "mild inference" from B3).

[120] But in Cartesian fashion, this delusion itself would be an act or state of mind. Mackenzie (1982:10 n10) argues that in a dialectical context, what is put up for consideration, even delusions or falsities, need "not imply success." They *would*, however, apparently imply the *existence* of something.

Cartesian assumption "I think" and proceed from there, but with the *dialectical* assumption *you think* (1-2). That is, the goddess assumes of the *kouros* that he thinks, and thus can engage—*does* engage—in a sort of dialectical exercise with the goddess or later, presumably, with other unknowing mortals, about the nature of reality. The key is dialectic itself: it is clear that *my* assumption that *you* think would not guarantee your existence, as Mackenzie points out. But "*within a dialectical context*" such an assumption is required. For example, if you disagree with me about the assumption, as Mackenzie notes, "your very disagreement expresses ratiocination and is thus self-refuting." But there is a paradox for Parmenides if he requires this dialectical procedure as a means of deducing his strongly monistic conclusion *as against* the opinions of mere mortals, outlined in the *Doxa*. According to Mackenzie, the project of the *Aletheia* is to outline correct reasoning and its objects, and reason's main task is to discriminate (κρῖναι at B7.5) between disparate or non-identical things (6-7). But since the *Aletheia* must ultimately be distinguished from the *Doxa* (the methods of the *Aletheia* being used to pit being against not-being in general, concluding that there is just being), it follows that Parmenides must *use* discrimination (in the *krisis* and to reject the *Doxa*) to conclude that discrimination is impossible. Mackenzie contrasts these so-called Parmenidean thinkers with "unthinking mortals," who "are undiscriminating just because they make the distinctions which the *Aletheia* denies. They wander because they postulate generation and destruction, being and not-being, and because Cartesian-like, they suppose that they themselves are thinking and discriminating, when all there is is *to eon* [being or what-is]."

But Mackenzie rightly points out that *both* ways, the *Aletheia* and *Doxa*, are paradoxical: those who accept the arguments of the *Aletheia* are doomed because they start from reasonable dialectical premises that their conclusion undermines; those who accept the tenets of the *Doxa*,

however, start from unreasonable premises (e.g., that the opposite forms *light* and *night* combine in all things—at B9.1—and that being and not-being combine), in order to save *prima facie* reasonable conclusions, e.g., their own independent existence, and pluralism generally. Thus, as Mackenzie sums up: "if we think, then we cannot exist; if we exist, we are either irrevocably muddleheaded or our very existence is somehow illusory." The upshot is that *both* the *Aletheia* and the *Doxa* shore up the conclusion that *qua* thinker, human beings as veridical-thinking entities in their own right are doomed: on the one hand because, on strict Parmenidean principles, human beings do not exist, and *a fortiori* do not exist *as thinkers*; on the other hand, human thought (if humans *do* exist as determinate things) is totally wrongheaded because it combines being and not-being as if they were the same and not the same. This is Mackenzie's Parmenidean dilemma.[121]

This picture of the outcome of Parmenides' project seems right to me, and it shows that Parmenides could not possibly have been a quasi-Cartesian in the sense that Owen and others advocate. For the Cartesian conclusion to work, as Gallop notes, there would have to be distinct thinkers whose existence is guaranteed by the very acts of each of their thinking. Parmenides' conclusions do not entail discrete thinkers. Of course, as Russell famously argued, Descartes himself is not entitled to there being determinate *thinkers* that somehow *have* thoughts (1945:567). According to Russell, Descartes is only entitled to the claim that *thought exists*. Hume concluded similar things about the self but simply accepted the wholly deflationary

[121] The first horn—that humans/dialecticians do not exist—does not seem inimical to Parmenides' *ontology*; a Peter Unger (e.g.) might just say "so what?!" The second horn—about mortal opinion—is, I argue in chapter 3, a serious problem *for Parmenides himself*: distinctions within being are simultaneously outlawed and required if there is mortal opinion, and *false* mortal opinion *about appearances*.

account of the self he thought his skeptical philosophy entailed.

4. Conclusion

The preceding interpretive and philosophical considerations follow more or less traditional readings of Parmenides, but attempt to make explicit what Parmenides' ontological commitments entail. I have argued that they entail a particularly strong version of monism: there is just one thing, a token that exists according to Eleatic principles; this thing is the world or reality or being as such. It follows that things *not* constrained by Eleatic principles, strictly speaking, do not exist: the necessary and sufficient conditions for existence are *constraint by Eleatic principles*.

So can Parmenides "save the phenomena"? If phenomenal things strictly do not exist, then how should they be *explained*? Along Parmenidean lines, the pluralistic richness of the physical world that humans experience, including experiences of themselves, does not entail that the world *really* is divisible in the ways that human experience (or any experience) divides it up.

There are two components to this latter claim, the first metaphysical, the second epistemological. First, we might say that the objects of human experience are not independently existing things at all: sorites arguments implying a sort of *de re* vagueness for objects, which tell against objects having non-arbitrary individuation conditions, indicate that there is no non-arbitrary way to cut off, so to speak, any given object from any other object. This gives a contemporary way of showing how allegedly independent existing things fail to meet Eleatic standards for existence. And if so, then they (*qua* things) fail to *exist*. The result is numerical monism—given that *something* exists.

Second, one might argue that human experience is perfectly consistent with numerical

monism: the fact that human beings experience or approach the world in a certain way is not sufficient to show that their claims about the world are veridical. This, in fact, seems to be Parmenides' own position, since he has a fully monistic understanding of how the world *really is*, and yet he chastises mortals for not understanding this; mortals believe *falsely* when they believe that cats climb trees or that planets revolve around suns. In the next chapter, I argue that this second issue—the issue of human experience and Parmenides' admonishment of it—is fatal to his philosophy.

CHAPTER THREE

PARMENIDES: THE RELATION BETWEEN *ALETHEIA* AND *DOXA*

1. Introduction

Traditional accounts of the *Aletheia* section of Parmenides' poem present it as his positive philosophy, what he takes to be the fundamental truth about reality. Fragment B8 gives roughly four *signs*—what I call Eleatic principles—that act as constraints on being, and then presents arguments for each. These arguments, together with Parmenides' ban on not-being (e.g., at B2.5-8, B6.3, B7.1, B8.8-9), entail that a plurality of beings adhering to such principles is impossible: there is *just one* such being for Parmenides. As I concluded in chapter 2, Parmenides is, as the majority of scholarship has maintained, a numerical monist.

Far from stopping at giving arguments for the constraints on being, however, Parmenides also sets out to describe mortal opinion, in which there is, as his narrating goddess says early on, no true trust or reliance (B1.30).[1] In the final section of the poem—the *Doxa*[2]—Parmenides describes in more detail what it means for mortal opinions to be dubious: the sensible things of mortal experience, about which mortals have opinions, are said to be grounded in two fundamental principles, light (or fire) and night. Crucially, Parmenides' goddess depicts these principles (or fundamental beings) in language vaguely reminiscent of the language of unwavering and singular being found in B8. As a whole, the *Doxa* seems to concern cosmogonical, cosmological, doxastic, biological and other physical issues. Controversially, its

[1] Translations of Parmenides are from Graham (2010) unless otherwise noted. Graham's translations act as a baseline since several philosophical issues are issues that turn on translation. I deal with these issues as they arise.
[2] I rely on Diels' traditional and largely accepted ordering of the fragments, though fragment order has become a topic of concern recently. Cf. Cordero (2004, 2010, and 2011) for arguments against the traditional ordering.

main point is to present an uneasy cosmology of the *things*—everyday sensibles and their foundation—about which mortals have opinions.

Importantly, however, the goddess tells us that there is deception in her account of the mortal opinions and their objects; there is something deceptive about the *Doxa*. So, just as interpretations of the *Aletheia* are all controversial, it is similarly unclear how we should interpret the *Doxa*. In what, for example, does the deception consist? Is it in the goddess's presentation of mortal opinions (as she seems to say at B8.52), those opinions themselves, or both? What is the source of the deception? Because of the deceptive nature of the *Doxa*, interpreting its message is doubly problematic when compared with the *Aletheia*. While both are obscure, only the *Doxa* presents an allegedly dubious or deceptive picture of reality, one that mortals accept but apparently should not, given by a goddess who tells her tale with her own deceptive language.

One question that arises from these considerations is why Parmenides includes the *Doxa* section at all. That is, if the *Aletheia* presents Parmenides' own philosophical position, if *being is all there is*, it is unclear why Parmenides bothers with a cosmology based on dubious or false mortal opinions. As Sedley remarks, ". . . if the Way of Truth [i.e., the *Aletheia*] is true, cosmology must be false. So why join the game?" (1999:123). The tension between the two sections is most evident for those who interpret Parmenides as a numerical monist; such an interpretation of the *Aletheia* seems to make wholly irrelevant any cosmology that runs afoul of Eleatic principles.

In this chapter I explore what must obtain for the objects of mortal opinions—appearances or sensible particulars—given that Parmenides is a numerical monist. Invoking the arguments from chapter 2, I propose a resolution to the *Aletheia*'s uneasy relation to the *Doxa*,

one that accepts a *qualified existence* for sensible things.[3] But, I argue, this proposal must ultimately fail because the ontology Parmenides proposes has no room for the epistemological issues concerning mortal opinion with which he is concerned.

Briefly, the plan for the chapter is the following. In §2 I discuss some thorny linguistic and philosophical stage setting problems for the *Doxa*. In §3 I give my own interpretation, one that ultimately presents a best-case scenario for squaring the *Doxa* with the monism of the *Aletheia*. But, I argue in the final subsection of §3, this best-case scenario cannot be sustained by Parmenides' own lights. That is, the only way to salvage appearances is by subsuming them under Eleatic being. But if so then appearances fail to be the very things about which mortals are supposed to be so deceived: Eleatic being cannot countenance the possibility of erroneous mortal beliefs about a plurality of sensible particulars, though it is the only thing that could count as such an *explanans*, if being is all there is. Finally, in §4 I conclude by noting what would have to obtain for Parmenides' philosophy to be made coherent, and point to the ways Plato will attempt just such a correction. The correction, I argue, is nothing less than an attempt to find what amounts to a middle ground between hopeless pluralism and excessively austere monism.[4] That middle ground, I argue in later chapters, is structural division within a single being, what I call *structural monism*.

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[3] Making the best sense of 'qualified existence' for sensible things, given monism, is a chief aim of this chapter. I use the terms 'appearances', 'appearing-things', 'sensibles', etc. interchangeably. Some authors use 'phenomena', though I refrain from this more loaded term unless quoting another. As it turns out 'appearances' is also somewhat loaded for reasons similar to 'phenomena'. I discuss these issues in §3.

[4] Similar projects are undertaken by McCabe (1994) and Harte (2002), though their specific arguments pertain to individuals and part-whole composition, respectively. Of course, some of these issues crop up in my later discussions of Plato. See also the discussion of these issues in chapter 1.

2. Parmenides' *Doxa*: Some Linguistic and Philosophical Stage Setting

The *Doxa* begins at the tail-end of fragment B8, when the goddess announces that she will "cease from [her] faithful account and thought about truth" and teach the *kouros* "mortal opinions" (B8.50-51). What proceeds from there is, on its face, a somewhat elaborate albeit short description—in the guise of a fundamentally dualistic cosmology—of the way mortals attempt to understand the world they experience. The goddess, however, prefaces the entire section with the cryptic pronouncement that the *kouros* must "[hear] the deceptive (ἀπατηλὸν) order (κόσμον) of [her] words (B8.52)." It is unclear what this is supposed to mean or entail about what follows in the text.

What does seem clear is that the *Doxa* concerns, minimally, a description of the alleged foundations or principles of mortal opinion. It concerns both mortal epistemology and the cosmological principles which are (supposed to) ground mortal belief, in a way similar to how the *Aletheia* is concerned both with the only possible way for thought (epistemology) and just *why* it is the only way: because thinking is always thinking *being* (ontology). Before discussing the details of mortal cosmology and belief in §3, I turn to important but difficult issues of translation.

2.1. Issues of Translation

For ease of reference I want to first set out the fragments that I deal with most.

> **B1**: "**[28]** It is right for you to learn all things, **[29]** both the unshaken heart of persuasive Truth, **[30]** and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true reliance. **[31]** But nevertheless you shall learn this too, how beliefs **[32]** should have been acceptable, all things just being completely."
> **B8**: "**[50]** Here I cease from faithful account and thought **[51]** about truth; from this point on learn mortal opinions, **[52]** hearing

the deceptive order of my words. **[53]** For they made up their minds to name two forms, **[54]** of which it is not right to name one—this is where they have gone astray—**[55]** and they distinguished contraries in body and set signs **[56]** apart from each other: to this form the ethereal fire of flame, **[57]** being gentle, very light, everywhere the same as itself, **[58]** not the same as the other; but also that one by itself **[59]** contrarily unintelligent night, a dense body and heavy. **[60]** I declare to you this arrangement to be completely likely, **[61]** so that no judgment of mortals will ever surpass you."

B9: "**[1]** But since all things are called light and night **[2]** and the names according to their powers are applied to these things and **[3]** those, **[4]** all is full at once of light and dark night, **[5]** both equal, since neither has no share in it."

B16:[5] "**[1]** For as in each case . . . is the blending of the much-wandering **[2]** parts, **[3]** so is thought present in men. For it is the same thing **[4]** which the constitution of the parts of men, **[5]** each and every one, thinks: for the excess is thought."

B19: "**[1]** Thus you see according to opinion these things arose and now are, **[2]** and hereafter when they have been nurtured, will they pass away. **[3]** And on them men imposed a distinguishing name for each."

There are two threads to the following stage setting discussion, one philological and the other philosophical. Regarding philology, there are two passages whose meanings scholars have not been able to come to a consensus on but which seem important for understanding the *Doxa* and Parmenides as a whole. The first passage—strictly part of the opening sequence or proem—is B1.28-32, with lines 31-32 causing the most trouble. The second passage, B8.53-54, is problematic for understanding the content of the *Doxa* and its deceptive nature.[6] This passage concerns how light and night allegedly act as the foundation of appearances and mortal opinions and why they might be dubious as fundamental principles.

Regarding philosophical issues, Parmenides' meaning, and especially the meanings of

[5] Fragments B10, B11, and B12 all present some details of a cosmology. I shall discuss them when appropriate.
[6] Another problematic passage, B8.38, I discuss more fully in my interpretative section §3.

these two difficult passages, must be interpreted—once the philological issues have reasonably been dealt with—by placing them within the context of his overall philosophical intentions. This is problematic because the process of figuring out what Parmenides means by squaring his language with his philosophical intentions is unavoidably *circular*. It is impossible to know Parmenides' philosophical intentions without first knowing what his words mean, but it is often difficult or impossible to know what he means without first having an interpretive framework within which to work. Thus, as with every student of Parmenides, much of my own interpretation below depends to some degree on how I understand the *Aletheia*. None of this, however, is *viciously* circular; these problems are at the heart of any philosophical interpretive enterprise that rests in part on translation.

2.1.1. Language Issues in B1.28-32

In this section I focus on a small sampling of how some notoriously difficult expressions at the end of the proem have been translated.[7] The final passage of the proem begins clearly enough: at B1.28-29 the goddess tells the *kouros* that he will learn both persuasive truth and mortal opinions. But immediately she claims that mortal opinions have no true trust (πίστις ἀληθής), which should mean that when she switches from the *Aletheia* to the *Doxa* (at B8.50) there is something wrong with the latter, either the way she says it ("hearing the deceptive *order* (κόσμον) of my words" at B8.52) or its contents, or both. After scorning mortal opinion, however, she says at B1.31-32 "but nevertheless you shall learn this (ταῦτα) too, how beliefs

[7] I attempt as far as possible in §2 to divide the issues regarding the two problematic passages into linguistic and philosophical subsections. It is unavoidable, however, that matters of philosophy will sometimes coincide with linguistic concerns.

should have been acceptable, all things just being completely." This couplet has caused much trouble, and the first problem is that it is not clear what ταῦτα refers to; it either points back, as several commentators think, and refers to unreliable mortal opinion (βροτῶν δόξας in line 30), or it points forward and refers to the difficult line that follows.

If it points back, as Owen says, the goddess is telling the *kouros* that he will learn mortal opinions *despite* their utter falsity (1975:53). If it points forward, the goddess seems to be saying that there is some reality, acceptability, or genuineness for mortal opinions,[8] and the obscure phrase at the end of the proem explains why this is so. If we take ταῦτα to refer to the mortal opinions of line 30, however, not only does the goddess's statement seem redundant (she had already told the *kouros* that he will learn those opinions), but it imports a philosophical view of mortal opinions—that they are irredeemable as such (as opposed to being merely untrustworthy, as the goddess has claimed at this stage)—that can only be obtained *after* one reaches the conclusions of the *Aletheia*.[9] Indeed, the goddess only says *why* one should learn such opinions much later at B8.61, strangely as it may seem at *that* stage of her story, since by then she has already described a monistic—and *exhaustive*—ontology that, on its face, wipes out any veracity for mortal opinions. Moreover, this interpretation of ταῦτα leaves the final phrase somewhat otiose; if ταῦτα refers back to the mortal opinions of line 30, then it is unclear why Parmenides does not just repeat βροτῶν δόξας or some cognate thereof and leave it at that. Instead, he goes on to say something seemingly substantive (though obscure), using a new term altogether: he

[8] Or, as we will see below, genuineness for *appearances*.

[9] Such a strong interpretation of the hopelessness of mortal opinions is more than a mere foreshadowing of a strong interpretation of the *Aletheia*; it *assumes* such an interpretation *at this stage* of the poem. That is, it assumes a strong interpretation of the *Aletheia* as justification that we should, *at this stage*, take the goddess's censure of mortal opinions to mean that they are irredeemable.

now uses τὰ δοκοῦντα, which, as we will see below, is ambiguous between opinions and appearances.

Linguistically, then, taking ταῦτα to point forward[10] to the final phrase salvages that phrase as substantive and allows τὰ δοκοῦντα to be tied to something (we know not what at this stage) later in the poem.[11] This track, however, has caused much interpretative pain for Parmenides' *philosophy*, since it does not easily—or allegedly—square with the arguments of the *Aletheia*. It seems, in other words, to give some "reality" (plausibility, genuineness, legitimacy) to appearances/opinions, the reality of which is presumably rejected in the *Aletheia*. There are, then, contextual reasons for taking ταῦτα to refer to the line after it, even if there are allegedly better philosophical reasons for taking it to refer back to mortal opinions, i.e., to the phrase βροτῶν δόξας.

As for the difficult final phrase at B1.31-32, Hermann calls it "the most difficult line in the Poem" (2004:175). The most problematic part—philosophically and in terms of translation—is the clause ". . . how beliefs [opinions, appearances, appearing-things] should have been acceptable [genuine, real, etc.], all things just being completely." The difficulty is largely because the phrase seems less programmatic than the previous lines in this section, pointing to something substantive the goddess will bring up later in the poem. In addition to Graham's translation, other representative translations of the Greek ". . . ὡς τὰ δοκοῦντα χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντὸς πάντα περ ὄντα [or] περῶντα"[12]

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[10] Curd (1998:113 n49) too prefers taking ταῦτα to point forward, and explains that this is grammatically possible in Greek.

[11] In the main text I will early on use the term 'appearances/opinions' for τὰ δοκοῦντα as a way to talk about the content of the *Doxa*, noting that this is ambiguous and that it is controversial for scholars which one is at issue. Later, I will fall on the side of appearances.

[12] The two words περ ὄντα (roughly, "just being" or "indeed being") are sometimes rendered as the single word

are the following:

(i) Coxon (1986:50): . . . how it was necessary that the things that are believed to be should have their being in general acceptance, ranging through (περῶντα) all things from end to end.
(ii) Tarán (1965:9): . . . how the appearances, which pervade (περῶντα) all things, had to be acceptable.[13]
(iii) Schofield (1983:243): . . . how what is believed would have to be assuredly, pervading (περῶντα) all things throughout.
(iv) Cordero (2004:191): . . . how it might have been necessary that things that appear in opinions really existed, ranging over (περῶντα) everything incessantly.
(v) Long (1975:84): . . . how the things which seem had to have genuine existence, permeating (περῶντα) everything completely.
(vi) Curd (1998:113): . . . how it was right that the things that seem be reliable, being indeed (περ ὄντα) the whole of things.
(vii) Hermann (2004:167): . . . how it would be right for the things of opinion to be provedly things that are altogether throughout.
(viii) Mourelatos (2008:216): . . . how it would be right for things deemed acceptable to be acceptably: just being (περ ὄντα) all of them together.

As can be seen from the divergent possible translations it is not immediately clear how we should understand these expressions. Certain aspects hang together, notably that ὡς is translated throughout as *how*, and seems to indicate a *way* or *manner* in which something is. There is also a modal aspect (with χρῆν), which might be construed as historical (this is how things had to be for mortal thought), as counterfactual (this is how things would have been, given certain ontological constraints), or as something about the nature of mortal cognition, that is, mortals must (in some appropriate sense of 'must') take appearances/opinions in a certain way.[14]

περῶντα ("pervading," but see below). The latter is more widely accepted while the former is, as Owen (1975:50) notes, better attested.

[13] Tarán (214), in his discussion, tacks "to mortals" onto the end of his translation, indicating that appearances are acceptable to mortals, *even though*, according to him, they are totally nonexistent in themselves.

[14] Coxon (1986:170) and Tarán (1965:213-14) take χρῆν historically, whereas Mourelatos (2008:205-10) and Owen (1975:52) understand it counterfactually. Curd (1998:114) seems to take it as referring to something about human

More problematically, it is unclear how to understand the meaning of τὰ δοκοῦντα, its relation to the sense of necessity involved, how the term relates to the possible senses of δοκίμως (reliably, acceptably, genuinely, provedly, etc.), and how all of these relate to the problematic senses of διὰ παντὸς πάντα περ ὄντα/περῶντα. Interpretations of these expressions betray significant differences among scholars about how Parmenides should be understood as a whole, and indeed seem crucial for understanding how—or whether—the *Doxa* is or can be related philosophically to the *Aletheia*.[15]

The technical term τὰ δοκοῦντα is usually rendered as opinions or beliefs on the one hand, and appearances, appearing-things, the seeming-things, or sensibles on the other. At the heart of the issue for my purposes is whether, as several commentators think, τὰ δοκοῦντα refers to the same thing as βροτῶν δόξας in line 30. The clearer term, βροτῶν δόξας, is explicitly condemned as having no true trust, and is therefore the base by which several commentators interpret the more ambiguous τὰ δοκοῦντα. If τὰ δοκοῦντα means or refers to the same thing as βροτῶν δόξας, then this allows for the standard interpretation of the *Doxa* as setting out a description of deceptive opinions, given that the *Doxa* is supposed to fill out what is meant by τὰ δοκοῦντα.

But if τὰ δοκοῦντα means something different from βροτῶν δόξας, then one can drive a wedge between the untrustworthiness of mortal opinions on the one hand, and a cosmology of appearances on the other. On this reading the *Doxa* would still fill out what is meant by τὰ

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cognition. These three are representative of different ways commentators have taken χρῆν, and there is overlap among them.

[15] Barnes (1982:610 n2) rejects the notion that B1.31-32 is important for understanding the connection between the *Aletheia* and *Doxa*, though he does not explain why.

δοκοῦντα, but would afford a richer sense of how appearances had to be genuine or acceptable (δοκίμως) and all-pervading (πάντα περῶντα) on the one hand, or all there is or just being altogether (πάντα περ ὄντα) on the other.[16] In this way one might somehow redeem appearances—the *objects* that appear—without granting trustworthiness to mortal opinions *about* such objects. The issue of whether the two terms can be understood as conceptually separate must ultimately be decided by the philosophical concerns I address in §3.

The next linguistic issue—and one of the most philosophically problematic—is how to understand the adverb δοκίμως and the phrase διὰ παντὸς πάντα περ ὄντα (or περῶντα). Commentators usually take δοκίμως to mean something akin to *genuinely*, *reliably*, *acceptably*. Owen notes that the adjective δόκιμος can be used to describe the *reliable man*, "*not* one who measures up to some standards but fails the main test" (1975:51, my emphasis). In other words, the reliable man *passes* the main test; the adverbial form thus indicates something analogously positive about whatever it modifies. As used in our passage, the goddess seems to say about appearances/opinions that they pass muster somehow, that they *genuinely* are. Thus, Owen takes δοκίμως εἶναι to be "assuredly [or *reliably*, *genuinely*, *acceptably*, etc.] to exist." Mourelatos reformulates the passage counterfactually (with χρῆν): "Here is *how* [ὡς] the objects of your δοκεῖν would have to be . . . in δόκιμος–fashion" (2008:210, emphasis in the original). Both Owen and Mourelatos understand δοκίμως as saying something about how appearances/opinions would have to be in order to be genuine, reliable, or acceptable, but neither accepts that appearances/opinions *are* so. Owen takes the goddess as setting up a sort of denial; she tells the

[16] See Tarán (1965:211 n21) for a brief discussion against taking τὰ δοκοῦντα to mean something different from βροτῶν δόξας, and the interpretations associated with this view.

kouros how appearances/opinions could be reliable, only to later—after the force of the *Aletheia* has been sufficiently grasped—*deny* that they can be so at all (51). The point of the *Aletheia*, then, is to show this.[17] Mourelatos takes a different track; he argues that the force of describing appearances/opinions as being reliable/acceptable is not fulfilled in the *Doxa* at all, but in the *Aletheia* at B8.11: "it must be completely or not at all" (212).[18] Thus, appearances/opinions *would* exist genuinely or acceptably *if* they were *just being* (περ ὄντα), that is, if they were constrained by Eleatic principles.

Hermann's (2004:170-72) approach is altogether different from these (for philosophical reasons), though he, like Mourelatos, takes δοκίμως to pick up περ ὄντα to give us the "obvious" (his word) reading that for appearances/opinions to be "provedly" (=δοκίμως), they must be the "things that really are" (from περ ὄντα). But Hermann takes our passage to set up the possibility that something in the *Doxa* can be salvaged (this is his "positive" reading)[19] namely, that if the "unreliable things" (=τὰ δοκοῦντα) could somehow be unified in an account, then they would cease to be unreliable; that is, they would then exist, to use Mourelatos's term, in δόκιμος-fashion. They would pass the test the *Aletheia* sets up for inquiry into such things. All commentators generally translate these terms along these or cognate lines, and thus all understand δοκίμως as saying something positive about appearances/opinions. Whether the *goddess* attributes anything positive to them, however, is dependent for each commentator on whether the final phrase attributes reality (in an appropriate sense) to appearances/opinions, or

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[17] Schofield (1983:255 n1) explicitly says that the content of B1.31-2 is a *lie* the goddess tells the *kouros*.
[18] Here δοκίμως picks up the final περ ὄντα, which is why Mourelatos takes χρῆν counterfactually: appearances/opinions are genuine or acceptable *qua* "just being" only if they are so counterfactually against what they *actually* are, namely, *un*-acceptable.
[19] I will have more to say about Hermann's philosophical arguments for the positive and against the negative (with περῶντα) reading below.

merely sets up counterfactual conditions on their reality.

The final phrase, διὰ παντὸς πάντα περ ὄντα (or περῶντα), either says something about why appearances/opinions are taken to be genuine or reliable or acceptable for mortals (because, with περῶντα, they pervade mortal experience through and through and are somehow inescapable). Or it says something about how appearances/opinions could be or would have been genuine or acceptable (because, with περ ὄντα, they *would*—taking χρῆν to be counterfactual—be all there is, or altogether being, or just being, etc.). As commentators acknowledge, however, the text here is corrupt, so deciding on a translation will largely be an exercise of interpretation.

In purely linguistic terms, there seem to be equally good reasons for *rejecting* both περ ὄντα and περῶντα, though one of these surely must be correct. For example, Long says that "the Ionic dialect and the uniqueness of ὄν in a line which is partially corrupt are firmly against περ ὄντα" (1975:98-99 n14). That is, περ ὄντα does not fit with Ionic linguistic practices and, because the text is corrupt, it makes more sense to accept the περῶντα reading. On the other hand, Mourelatos, who gives the most extensive linguistic argument against περῶντα, claims that the prevailing translations—'pervading', 'ranging over', 'permeating', etc.— are not metaphorically tolerable as derived from the verb περάω, which means "to get through and to leave behind," or "to pass through and to get on the other side of" (2008:213). 'Pervading' and 'permeating' carry a sense of *staying around* and being somehow all-inclusive once initial contact has been made, which Mourelatos acknowledges is indeed a philosophically attractive metaphor for those who see Parmenides as chastising mortal cognitive efforts anyway (212).[20]

[20] By analogy, we might say that a marinade permeates or pervades the meat that soaks in it; the marinade makes

But, according to Mourelatos, περῶντα is closer in meaning to "traversal," which is clearly different from "pervading" or "permeating," since traversal implies that the traversed object is *left behind* in the traversal, after initial contact, indeed being *separate* from whatever traverses it (213). Thus Mourelatos claims that "the last thing we expect from the goddess is a revelation that the δοκοῦντα of mortals 'transcend all things'," and this is precisely what the verb περάω and its cognate περῶντα allow (214). These reasons for rejecting περῶντα are, however, linked to a certain philosophical understanding of Parmenides, one that relies heavily on an interpretation of this final phrase.

2.1.2. Philosophical Issues in B1.28-32

What from Parmenides' overall arguments can be brought to bear on whether we should accept περ ὄντα or περῶντα, and what would this mean in relation to appearances/opinions being altogether just being or pervading? The main philosophical reason for choosing περῶντα, according to some commentators, is that if Parmenides instead means περ ὄντα, the arguments of the *Aletheia* show that the goddess is flatly contradicting herself by claiming that appearances/opinions had to be reliable or genuine *because* they are all there is. But as her arguments in the *Aletheia* suggest, appearances/opinions belong on the path of not-being and are thus nonexistent or illusory, so *a fortiori* could not be all there is since strictly speaking they *are not* at all.

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initial contact and soaks deeply into the meat itself. Likewise with mortal opinions: once mortals have "made up their minds to name two forms" (B8.53), and have based their opinions about reality on the mixing of these two forms, such opinions permeate deep into the very fabric of their experiences. I discuss these *Doxa* issues more fully below.

There are a number of apparent ways out of this predicament. Owen, for example, argues that the goddess herself is not committed to her utterance, that "her promise to say how the appearances can have a sort of reality" is *not* a promise she herself is making *about* appearances/opinions (1975:53).[21] Or, again, with Mourelatos we might take περ ὂντα to properly be fulfilled counterfactually in the *Aletheia* and not say anything actual about the appearances/opinions of the *Doxa* at all. This too gets rid of the contradiction, since if B1.31-32 properly links to B8.11, then it concerns the B8 commentary on *being*, not how opinions or appearances are actually genuine in some way. That is, περ ὂντα, with χρῆν, sets up counterfactual conditions for the *manner* in which appearances/opinions *would* count as beings, i.e., by adhering to the Eleatic principles of B8. The *Doxa*, then, shows that what mortals *actually* think are genuine beings cannot be so: they run afoul of B8.[22]

Concerning the rejection of περῶντα, there is, along with Mourelatos's linguistic reasons noted above, Hermann's argument that accepting περῶντα leads to insufferable difficulties and to a "negative" reading of the *Doxa*. The negative reading, as Hermann understands it, "is that mortals have no choice but to confuse opinion with fact or appearance with reality because . . . they lack the faculties to determine which is which" (2004:172-73). Be that as it may, the possibility of mortal confusion in this way—even systematic and impenetrable confusion about reality—is no good reason to reject the negative reading as potentially *true*.[23] That is, περῶντα

[21] This interpretation relies on ταῦτα pointing back to βροτῶν δόξας, which is also partly why he accepts the περ ὂντα reading.

[22] Some commentators take light and night in the *Doxa* to be genuine entities according to the strictures of B8, since Parmenides says each is wholly self-identical and has its own determinate being. As we will see below, this interpretation is not obvious.

[23] After all, a skeptic might find this conclusion the only plausible one. It is true that Parmenides would not endorse this skepticism, since he says that the truth about reality *can* be known by humans (e.g., at B2.4, B6.1, and B7.5-6), given that the *kouros* is not some sort of Xenophanean-style divine knower.

should not be rejected for Hermann's pragmatic reason; if it is to be rejected, it should be because it issues in logical incoherence or, weaker, because accepting it would make Parmenides' motives for including the *Doxa* suspect.

In fact the περῶντα reading does not generate *logical* incoherence, since there is nothing logically incoherent about the Cartesian-style skepticism Hermann finds troubling.[24] But if περῶντα does allow quasi-Cartesian skepticism, where defective opinions "pervade" or "permeate" mortal thinking to such an extent that they are hopelessly inescapable, we are still left with two problems. First, as already noted, the quasi-Cartesian reading of περῶντα goes against Parmenides' own claim that mortals *can* know something, namely, being. Indeed, Parmenides' claim is stronger, since being is the only thing there is for thinking, that is, the only possible object of knowledge. Second, and more importantly, is the motivation question: why include in the *Doxa* a description of such incurably defective opinions, and think that they are *exhaustive* of what mortals can cognize? Indeed, why include the *Doxa* at all if mortal opinions are themselves mired in contradiction, as they must be, given that the objects of mortal opinions *are* and *are not*?[25]

The explicit textual answer to this question is found at B8.61: "*so that* (ὡς) no judgment of mortals will ever surpass [the *kouros*]." But exactly what this passage means depends on how one understands the status of mortal opinions: if the objects of mortal opinions—the appearing-

[24] It is not clear that it *does* generate such skepticism, however, at least in that extreme form. For even on Descartes' analysis there is, of course, something that is allegedly known, namely one's own existence. There may, in this vein, be parallels between the Cartesian ego and Eleatic being, though I shall not discuss these (seemingly) quasi-Heideggerian issues here.

[25] Such objects must *be* and *not-be* in the *same respect*, generating their contradictory nature, since the *Aletheia* bans as *real* any differing respects within being *by which* being might be said to be more here or less there, divisible, etc. He is essentially rejecting the well-known savior clause regarding *respects* that Aristotle mentions in the *Metaphysics* at 1005b19-21, since respects require differentiation.

things—are, as several commentators think, utterly defective (because they grow and decay, etc.) or nonexistent, then Parmenides need not have given any description of or treatise on mortal opinions about such things at all. In §3 I will have much more to say about this problem. For now I briefly note that it seems *prima facie* absurd to include a long and detailed description of utter falsehoods *for the purpose of* (which ὡς indicates) educating the *kouros* on matters of *truth*, if such a detailed description is *per se* dubious.[26] There would literally be no point in learning such a hopelessly defective tale. As I argue in §3, both the goddess's account of mortal opinions and the nature of what mortal opinions are supposed to be about (sensible particulars) are deceptive, but it is crucial for the education of the *kouros* to hear such a tale. Commentators who take the *Doxa* to be a treatise on hopelessly defective mortal opinions or appearances cannot explain why the *kouros* must learn them, *if* such commentators take—as they must—the *Aletheia* to be necessary *but also sufficient* for learning truth.[27] But this would leave B8.61 inexplicable; why not, to recall Sedley's remark above, just stop the lesson where the *Aletheia* ends?[28]

On balance, the final choice between περ ὄντα and περῶντα does not make a large philosophical difference, since both terms allow for interpretations that more or less amount to the same thing, especially when coupled with διὰ παντὸς πάντα. If this is correct, then the περῶντα reading cannot issue in the extreme skepticism or "negative" reading Hermann attributes to it, if it allows roughly the same conclusion as the περ ὄντα reading, which he

[26] Both Hermann (2004:173) and Curd (1998:111) correctly note this oddity. Hermann, however, argues that some opinions—namely, ones that can be unified in an evidential account (as he calls the process of inquiry in the *Aletheia*)—can be salvaged *as such*. Below I argue against this position.
[27] One suggestion, originally given by Owen (1975), is that the *Doxa* is simply a dialectical foil; it need not be true or accurate at all, but simply act as an exercise piece for the *kouros* to strengthen his reasoning about truth.
[28] In §3 I argue that the *Aletheia* is necessary but not sufficient for learning truth, *if* one is mortal.

accepts.[29] Long, who rejects the περ ὂντα reading, concedes that "ultimately both readings amount to the same thing" (1975:98 n14). Curd explains why: "mortals believe that the things that appear have to be genuine because they 'pervade [=περῶντα] all things' . . .; that is, the appearances are all that there is [=περ ὂντα]" (1998:114 n52). Setting aside nuances of philology, the philosophical point about this final phrase seems to be, as Hermann says, "the universality of the subject in question" (175).[30] Thus, whether one chooses περ ὂντα or περῶντα, διὰ παντὸς πάντα seems to require a universality for appearances/opinions, at least in some sense. But as we know from the *Aletheia*, there is only one thing—being—that can be universal in this way. As will be made clearer in §3, there is indeed a universality for appearances, *given*, and not *in spite of* the (truly) universal nature of being.

The next two philosophical issues—the possible equivalence between τὰ δοκοῦντα and βροτῶν δόξας, and the fleshing out of δοκίμως—have less to do with stage-setting and are more substantive. Thus I will deal with the significant philosophical issues surrounding them in §3. Here I simply want to mention the major issue regarding τὰ δοκοῦντα and βροτῶν δόξας. This issue is more vexed than it first appears because of the intimate relation, and at the same time fundamental *distinction*, between opinions and their objects, namely, appearances or sensible particulars. One attractive approach to understanding τὰ δοκοῦντα which seems to get at the heart of Parmenides' project, analogous to my reading of the fused sense of *esti* in chapter 2, is that the term is deliberately ambiguous between opinions (or beliefs) and appearances.[31] If so,

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[29] Hermann (2004:168) notes that both positions lead "to potentially troublesome conclusions."
[30] Hermann cites Mourelatos (2008:214) as a fellow traveler for this interpretation, though the two differ significantly on just *what* is or can be this universal subject. Again, Hermann argues that appearances/opinions can be this subject if given proper unification in an account (see, e.g., 176); Mourelatos, since he rejects the veracity of appearances/opinions, would not accept Hermann's conclusions here.
[31] In chapter 2 I argue for a fused sense of *esti* for the reason that Parmenides' project indeed seems to

translations such as Tarán's are too crude, since they lack the epistemological aspect that Parmenides surely will discuss in the *Doxa*; that is, Parmenides is not *merely* concerned with appearances *qua* objects.[32] Graham's translation as "beliefs" fails for the opposite reason; it does not take into account the appearances which are the *objects* of belief. Thus, translations that fail to account for the (necessarily) blurry line between the epistemological and ontological in Parmenides will miss something about what he is trying to say. Translations that somehow include the ambiguity between the ontological and epistemological aspects of τὰ δοκοῦντα best capture the overall spirit of Parmenides' project.[33] Translations such as Mourelatos's ("things deemed acceptable") or Cordero's ("things that appear in opinions") do capture this dual aspect of τὰ δοκοῦντα; Parmenides is talking about the way humans experience the alleged things *of* experience.[34] As I argue below, however, if τὰ δοκοῦντα is ambiguous between beliefs and appearances, then it cannot easily be connected to or identified with the meaning of βροτῶν δόξας.

2.1.3. Linguistic Issues Concerning B8.53-54

The linguistic issues in B8.53-54 are not as thorny as those in B1.30-32, since they

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comprehensively take epistemological, ontological, and linguistic aspects into his account of *being*. Thus one question for the *Doxa* is why it should be any less comprehensive as an account of human experience: humans *believe* (epistemological) something about *things* (ontological), which manifest themselves as appearances.

[32] Strictly, Tarán (1965:214) does not fall into this category since he equates "what appears to men" with "the beliefs of men."

[33] Mourelatos (2008:195-97) notes the ambiguity in the verb δοκέω and says there are both subject-(*expect*, *think*, *imagine*, *suppose*, etc.) and object-oriented senses for the word (*seem*). I discuss his arguments in §3, since *pace* Mourelatos I fall on the objective side of the reading.

[34] Mourelatos and Cordero have different views about the *Doxa*, indeed different in many ways from my own, which I discuss below. Their *translations* of τὰ δοκοῦντα, however, seem to get the ambiguity right.

largely concern a syntactic ambiguity that cannot easily be decided by semantic analysis.[35] Which disambiguation one chooses largely rests on how one interprets Parmenides' philosophy as a whole. I save the substantive philosophical discussion of B8.53-54 for §3, since there I discuss the problem of whether the *Doxa* has standards of being that are suitable for appearances/opinions, a deep and extensive issue about which this passage has significant bearing.

There are at least three ways to understand the Greek phrase μορφὰς γὰρ κατέθεντο δύο γνώμας ὀνομάζειν τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεών ἐστιν, with the last five words causing the most confusion. The first part is usually translated as Graham does above: "For they made up their minds to name two forms."[36] The next five words, however, can be translated in at least three ways. Long (1975:90) translates them thusly:

> (1) "One of which ought not to be named . . ."
> (2) "Not one of which ought to be named . . ."
> (3) "Of which a unity may not be named . . ."

Clearly these say different things.[37] I will focus on the two most prominent translations, namely, (1) and (2).[38] Which one is correct largely determines how we should understand how mortals have "gone astray," as the rest of line 54 says (ἐν ᾧι πεπλανημένοι εἰσίν), in naming these two forms.

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[35] Semantic analysis is not entirely irrelevant for understanding B8.53-54, as Mourelatos's interpretation, discussed in the main text, shows.

[36] This translation, though, is not without controversy. Mourelatos (2008:229), for example, argues that the sense of κατέθεντο δύο γνώμας is not one of decision or making up one's mind; rather it has the opposite connotation of vacillation between the two forms, of *not* making a decision at all. Mourelatos does note, however, that Parmenides possibly intended a tension between deciding/vacillating.

[37] In (3), Long also includes ". . . of which one may not be named without the other." The two translations seem to say opposite things, and not be similar disambiguations of the same thing.

[38] Translation (3), however, is addressed in the philosophical discussions in §3.

The first reading says there are two forms (μορφαί),[39] and *one* may be named *but not the other*. That is, it is wrong to name both forms, since only one of these is legitimate; in so naming both, mortals have gone astray. On this reading, favored first by Aristotle, the form that ought not to be named is (usually) night, whereas the legitimate form must then be light.[40] Light is sometimes taken to be identical to the being explicated in the *Aletheia*, and so mortals have gone astray by illegitimately naming night in a way that echoes how mortals go astray by illegitimately saying and thinking not-being (B6.8-9). Some have noted that Aristotle himself does not identify the two forms with being and not-being, saying something just shy of identification at *Metaphysics* 987a1: ". . . [Parmenides] now posits two causes or two principles, the *Hot* and the *Cold*, as if speaking of fire and earth; and he classifies [or *ranks*—τάττει] the *Hot* as the principle with respect to [κατά] being but the *Cold* as the principle with respect to non-being."[41] As Mourelatos claims, noting Mansfeld (1964), this may be little more than an analogy.[42]

One reason for rejecting the first reading is that it does not seem to make sense of the determinate language used to characterize *both* light and night. Parmenides assigns *equally determinate natures* to light and night, and indeed calls them "equal" (ἴσων) at B9.5. Light/fire is "gentle, very light, everywhere the same as itself, not the same as the other" (B8.57-58),

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[39] This term typically denotes *visible* form, as in shape or some other visible feature. I argue in §3 that Parmenides' choice of this word is important.
[40] See especially *Metaphysics* 986b30-981a2. Long (1975:92) argues that Parmenides distinguishes two forms and two opposites; being and not-being are the forms, and light and night are the opposites.
[41] The translation is from Apostle (1979).
[42] Mourelatos (2008:86) says, however, that Parmenides in the *Doxa* may not even intend a "ranking" of the forms with being and not-being, as Parmenides' language there is fraught with dualisms of all sorts. I mention this important notion below, taking it up in §3 as part of my argument, *pace* Mourelatos's own view, that Parmenides intends neither form to be named.

whereas night is "contrarily unintelligent night, a dense body and heavy" (B8.59). The first reading fails to account for the (equally) determinate nature of the second form: if the unnamable form is akin to not-being, then it could have no determinate nature.

As a rejection of the first reading, the second reading says that mortals go astray by naming both forms when neither should be named. One problem with this reading, however, is that it now apparently fails to make sense of the determinate language of *both* light and night, whereas the first reading ignores the determinate language of only one form. Long rejects the second reading because, according to him, it is unclear where mortal error is supposed to obtain in naming both opposite forms (90). His justification seems to be the historical claim that "no system known to us held this view," that is, no known system of presocratic philosophy held the view that error is the result of a basic cosmological dualism, such that dualism should be rejected.[43] Now, following Owen, if we take Parmenides' philosophy to be that of a "pioneer of the first water," such historical pronouncements on Parmenides' behalf should not significantly count as evidence for or against attributing to him any particular position (168).[44] But there are better, and substantively philosophical, reasons for accepting the second reading, which I discuss in §3.

Mourelatos offers a different analysis for why the first reading is preferable to others,[45] even though the first reading, as he acknowledges, slightly stretches the meaning of a key phrase, namely, τῶν μίαν. The first reading is objectionable to some, he says, because it "assigns to τῶν

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[43] This position also assumes that Parmenides is, in the *Doxa*, castigating the systems of other philosophers. It is not my intent to enter this historical controversy here, but see Graham (2002) and Nehamas (2002) for discussions about Parmenides' philosophical relations to others, especially Heraclitus.

[44] See chapter 2 for more on Owen's arguments that Parmenides did indeed mark a turning point in Greek philosophy.

[45] His target is mainly the "unity" interpretation, i.e., translation (3).

μίαν, [which means] 'one of which,' the sense of τῶν ἑτέρην, [which means] 'one or another of which'" (2008:81). That is, those—like Mourelatos—who prefer the first reading assign a sense to τῶν μίαν that is actually a proper translation of τῶν ἑτέρην, which is not found in the text. Now, Mourelatos argues that this presents only a "slight infelicity," and that such infelicity outweighs the strictly proper sense of the phrase because that sense wreaks havoc with well-known internal/external issues in the *Doxa* concerning precisely *who* is speaking for whom (81 n15).[46] On balance Mourelatos prefers stretching the meaning of τῶν μίαν to avoid these more problematic interpretative issues. As will become clearer below, following Curd's analysis of this problematic phrase, I accept the second reading, as it seems to fit Parmenides' overall project better than the first (or third) reading.

3. Interpreting the *Doxa*

It is not easy, and is probably impossible, to give any definitive interpretation of Parmenides. That said, the most important background assumption for my interpretation of the *Doxa* is Eleatic monism, which is itself a contestable interpretation of his positive philosophy. Monism, I argue, sets the standard against which Parmenides' philosophy as a whole must be understood. Crucially, this means that the Eleatic principles of B8 set the ontological standard for everything else in Parmenides. If the *Aletheia* sets out Parmenides' preferred ontology or his own philosophy, then it is through that philosophy—monism—that one must understand the *Doxa*, and whether or in what ways its contents might be salvageable.

[46] Very briefly, it is sometimes unclear whether the goddess is giving her own (i.e. the correct) views, or is stating the dubious views of mortals. See Mourelatos (209 n46) and Tarán (1965:211 n21) for arguments against Owen (1975:53), who argues that the goddess does not say *what* mortals believe.

In this section I examine several topics concerning what this relation between the *Aletheia* and *Doxa*—between monism and the plurality of appearances—must be like. In §3.1 I examine four sorts of standards that might apply to the contents of the *Doxa*. First, the *Doxa* might have its own, radically separate (non-Eleatic) standard(s) for grounding appearances/opinions. Second, it might be that the fundamental beings or principles of light and night are legitimate (i.e., Eleatic) dualistic standards for indirectly grounding appearances/opinions. Third, appearances/opinions might be salvageable *qua* appearances/opinions if they can somehow pass Eleatic muster. This would allow for a plurality of Eleatic beings/truths. Finally, they might just be subsumed under—that is, *identified with*—Eleatic being. I reject all but the last option: appearances/opinions can only be salvaged directly through monism.

In §3.2 I argue that the *Doxa* concerns in a primary sense appearances (or sensibles) over opinions. This argument is in two stages. First, I argue in §3.2.1 that τὰ δοκοῦντα and βροτῶν δόξας are linguistically distinguishable, *allowing* (though not yet compelling) the former to be translated as "appearances" (etc.). Second, to show that the *Doxa* is incoherent unless τὰ δοκοῦντα is understood as appearances/sensibles, I argue in §3.2.2 that since the *Aletheia* is a discourse primarily on *being*, the *Doxa* must by analogy primarily concern *purported beings*—that is, the things that appear to mortals—over our opinions about such things. Put more simply: since the *Aletheia* primarily concerns ontology (real things), and secondarily epistemology, the *Doxa* primarily concerns cosmology (things taken to exist), and secondarily our opinions about them. This analogical argument, I argue, compels the "appearances" reading for τὰ δοκοῦντα. Finally, in §3.2.3 I examine what follows for appearances from the previous two arguments: since τὰ δοκοῦντα is distinguishable from βροτῶν δόξας, and can be disambiguated on the side

of appearances given the reasonableness of the analogical argument, δοκίμως εἶναι —which modifies τὰ δοκοῦντα—is best understood as "genuinely existing." If this is correct, then the genuine existence of appearances must be understood, not counterfactually, not as pertaining to the historical acceptance of dubious opinions, and not as something about the dubious nature of human cognition. "Genuinely existing" means that appearances, as the goddess says at B1.32, are *just being* (περ ὄντα).

Overall, the arguments in §3.2 set up the best-case scenario of interpreting the *Doxa* through the lens of Eleatic monism. That is, §3.2 offers a view of what the contents of the *Doxa* would have to be like *given* an acceptance of strong Eleatic monism. In §3.3, however, I argue that this best-case interpretation of the *Doxa* must break on the rocks of mortal opinions. That is, mortal opinions, once they are divorced from their ostensible objects (discrete sensibles)—as they must be, on Eleatic grounds—are inexplicable *qua* mortal opinions. In other words, Parmenides cannot explain just what it is that mortals are wrongheaded *about*, because—as I argue in §3.2 (and chapter 2)—the only possible thing mortals could be wrong about turns out to be Eleatic being. But since being is indivisible, does not come to be or perish, and is wholly one, it cannot explain how dubious mortal opinions can go wrong, let alone arise in the first place.

3.1. Standards for the Existence of Appearances

A major bugbear in interpreting Parmenides is making sense of the ontological status of appearances.[47] For mortals, appearances *prima facie* come to be and perish and yet seem *real*.

[47] For simplicity, in this section I simply assume that the content of the *Doxa* has more to do with appearances than opinions. In §3.2 I argue for this claim explicitly.

If the *Aletheia* arguments are correct, then this mortal worldview cannot be, since by the *Aletheia*'s standards nothing whatsoever comes to be or perishes. Mortals, on that front, are mistaken about the things taken to be real; they are mistaken that those things are the very things they *seem* to be. But finding some sort of existence for appearances is still a complicated issue, since if appearances are totally nonexistent—a position taken by some commentators, especially Tarán (1965)—then it is unclear how mortals could be wrong about them or indeed just what it is they are wrong about: how does mortal error arise if its ostensible objects are nonexistent? Several commentators attempt various ways of salvaging appearances to deal with just this problem. In this section I discuss four ways appearances might be salvaged by exploring potential *standards* by which they can be said to exist in the very ways they seem to.

3.1.1. First Stab: Being and Appearances are Separate

At first glance, one attractive way of explaining the existence of appearances is to say that they exist in some way other than Eleatically. This can take two forms. The first is to accept outright that they are afforded no Eleatic reality at all, and exist entirely separate from being. This radical version of the separation of standards of existence in the *Aletheia* and *Doxa* is attractive because according to it, only being is constrained by Eleatic principles, and so monism (including weaker monisms, such as Curd's predicational monism) is shielded from the allegedly problematic existential arguments concerning appearances. That is, since appearances both exist (in some sense) and come to be and perish (and being both exists and does *not* come to be or perish), then the existence of appearances must be explained by something other than Eleatic principles; appearances must exist in some *other way* than Eleatically. It is unclear what this could mean, however, though this sort of interpretation of appearances is implied, sometimes

weakly and sometimes strongly, by several commentators on this topic. The second way is to say that appearances—strictly speaking—have their existence explicable on Eleatic foundations, though they themselves, or *qua* appearances, are not Eleatic entities.

The first of these ways I call radical separation (RS) because appearances are *radically* (or directly) separate from being; they have their own non-Eleatic standards according to which they exist. The second way I call indirect separation (IS) because appearances are *indirectly* separate from Eleatic being; appearances have ostensibly Eleatic being(s) as their foundation, though they themselves are non-Eleatic. In this section I want to consider some language used by commentators that seems to imply a commitment to something like RS or IS. Ultimately, I argue that RS and IS result in the same problematic conclusion.

3.1.1.1. Radical Separation

The RS position is one that few commentators—if any, were they pressed—actually endorse, though the *language* used by many commentators cuts along suspiciously RS lines. For example, much of what Nehamas says can be construed along RS lines. I want to quote several relevant passages from him—and another commentator below—to show what RS language often looks like. Noting the problematic couplet at B1.31-32, Nehamas says that "what lacks trust is the view that the things that seem (τὰ δοκοῦντα . . .) really are (δοκίμως εἶναι), since they are all there is . . . . Since mortals are unaware of Being . . . they attribute being to seeming. Their error is their *confusion of these two distinct realms*" (2002:58, my emphasis).[48] Later he says

[48] There may be a subtle difference between separation and distinction. At least in an Eleatic context, there seems to be no difference. Note too, however, that if mortals are totally unaware of being, then it is unclear how they confuse seeming *for* being, as Nehamas says.

somewhat more explicitly in describing these two realms: "Being never changes at all, and therefore *the changing things* of the *Doxa* are *other than Being*—δοκοῦντα" (59, my emphases). This seems to imply that one can or must make sense of the changing things in a way other than how one makes sense of being, or that the one standard cannot apply to the other. More importantly, it implies that there *are* such things as the changing things, though Nehamas says both that 'the changing things' translates τὰ δοκοῦντα, and that "τὰ δοκοῦντα are not,"[49] but that "changing things exist." He goes on: "they [the changing things] appear to be as real as anything can be. But that—however temptingly our senses dispose us to think otherwise—is merely appearance, and nothing else." It is evident from these passages that Nehamas takes the changing things—appearances—to be "mere," which is supposed to contrast them in some way with what is real, namely, being. They are merely appearances, and nothing *else*. Importantly, as we will see, they are nothing else *but appearances*.

An earlier commentator, who in many ways offers arguments similar to—but just short of—my later arguments for salvaging appearances, is Clark (1969). Considering some issues I take up in §3.2.1 and §3.2.3 (respectively, the difference between τὰ δοκοῦντα and βροτῶν δόξας, and how to understand δοκίμως), Clark says that the goddess either wants to afford reality to appearances, "or she will teach what sort of existence must *really* be assigned to 'phenomena'—and the force of the δοκίμως, particularly with B8.60-61 in mind, is to show that she offers to correct human understanding of the phenomenal world" (20, emphasis in the original). My interpretation of the *Doxa*, as will be seen, comports with Clark's statement: the

[49] As pointed out earlier, several commentators—as in the immediate quote from Nehamas—often *use* (and mention) the Greek itself.

goddess will indeed show the *kouros* what reality must be assigned to appearances (phenomena). Yet, like Nehamas, Clark argues that "in the phenomenal world, phenomena *are* everything and everywhere. This is not to assert that phenomena have the *same kind of existence* as Being; for Being is πᾶν and ἕν, while phenomena are πάντα and therefore many" (21, first emphasis, Clark; second emphasis, mine). Moreover, the use of εἶναι with τὰ δοκοῦντα, Clark argues, "means that phenomena, at least in some sense, exist." Here again we see a commentator affording existence to appearances. But it seems that for Clark this existence is supposed to be non-Eleatic. He is quite explicit: "when the goddess undertook to teach Parmenides how the phenomenal world really (δοκίμως) exists she undertook to give both (1) *a differentiation between the levels of existence* of ἐόν and δοκοῦντα, and (2) a correct description of δόξα, correct *qua* δόξα" (25, my emphasis). The 'qua' here is revealing: sensibles must exist in a way appropriate to themselves, and thus *inappropriate* for being. This just is the different levels of existence Clark mentions. Here we have what is perhaps the most explicit interpretation of Parmenides as endorsing two distinct realms, each having its own independent conditions for the existence of appropriate objects.

There are objections to this line of reasoning. One, which gets support from the text, is that Parmenides denies degrees of being (or existence).[50] For example, he says at B8.23-25 "nor is there any more here, which would keep it from holding together, nor any less, but it is all full of what-is. Thus it is all continuous, for what-is cleaves to what-is." It just goes against the text to invoke the sort of differentiation between levels of existence Clark has in mind. This

[50] Another, which I take up in a different context below, is that the interpretation is excessively anachronistic or "Platonizing."

objection, however, misses what is so attractive about RS-like interpretations: the denial of degrees of being only applies to *Eleatic* being. That is, it is not the case that Parmenides denies different levels (or types) of existence; he merely denies that Eleatic being has degrees or can be divided or be partitioned into more or less. But appearances exist in ways other than Eleatically. On the one hand, then, the gulf *between* appearances and being is not subject to the degrees of being problem. But neither are appearances themselves: whatever kind of existence they have, the problem of degrees of being or existence does not arise *as a problem* for appearances.[51] In other words, degrees of being obtain for appearances; they are just not a *problem*.

There are other problems, however, with the RS position. Perhaps the most important issue concerns what kinds of conditions are acceptable in Parmenides as identity conditions, and whether it is even possible for there to be appearances *qua* appearances. Nehamas claims, in effect, that appearances are nothing else *than appearances*, i.e., that they are self-identical. And Clark talks of sensibles *qua* sensibles, where '*qua*' is a condition on their being that marks their self-identity.[52] Now, in the B8 arguments for the Eleatic principles, Parmenides argues that being is self-identical, and that identity is indeed a *mark* of what is real: "remaining the same in the same by itself it lies and thus it remains steadfast there; for mighty Necessity holds it in the bonds of a limit, which confines it round about" (B8.28-31). If the signs for being in B8 (along with the denial of not-being, which is a cornerstone principle all others seem to be founded on), are each necessary but jointly sufficient conditions for a thing to be real, then self-identity is at

[51] One crude way to cash this out, perhaps, is that properties (yellow) and objects (cube) belong to appearances, but the latter has more "appearance-being" than the former. None of this sort of analysis is applicable, however, to *Eleatic* being, for which there are no degrees.
[52] These are indeed strong ontological markers. If '*qua*' (much later) is used in relation to talk of essences, and identity has something to do with essence, then the use of the Latin word by these modern authors is perhaps telling.

least a necessary condition for something to be real, that is, Eleatic. In other words, if something is Eleatic then it is self-identical. Of course, this does not yet rule out appearances (taken as a class or individually) from being self-identical, if self-identity is necessary but not sufficient for being.

What rules out appearances from being self-identical in the way this RS-like interpretation requires is that even though the Eleatic principles are each necessary and all jointly sufficient conditions for Eleatic being, they are, for Parmenides, also *jointly necessary*. He explicitly states that ". . . it is not right for what-is to be incomplete; for it is not needy; if it were it would lack everything" (B8.32-33). As some have advocated, each Eleatic principles seems to entail and be entailed by the others. Just to take completeness: it requires that if a thing is constrained by any one of the Eleatic principles, it is constrained by all of them.[53] In this way there can be no appearances *qua* appearances, such that they can appeal to one Eleatic principle but not others; even if appearances were self-identical, they would clearly violate the principles governing the rejection of coming to be and perishing, being single wholes, etc.[54]

One objection to this line of reasoning is that it is unclear why the Eleatic principles can never come apart. That is, might not appearances be self-identical (individually or as a class), but still, for example, be perishable or incomplete? Now, it is fairly clear to *our* ears (and Anaxagoras', Empedocles', Plato's, and Aristotle's) that such strict or strong principles ought to be separable; if they are inseparable, then it seems appearances just do not (and *cannot*) exist in

[53] Hermann (2004:230-31) makes similar observations. One might articulate the interrelations of the other principles; all and only complete things, for example, are ungenerated and imperishable.
[54] And even if appearances were a self-identical *class*, the class would violate Eleatic principles, since it would be *internally* divisible. The appearing-things, each of which is a part of the class of appearances, change. To account for this, appearances *qua* class would need to be internally divisible, which is impossible for Parmenides.

ways we take them to exist. If they exist at all, then their existence is *radically* unlike how they seem to us, as I argue below.

But this is just Parmenides' point. Moreover, the potential separation of these principles does not fit the text. For Parmenides seems to be making some sort of existential argument for being, one that follows from a crude principle of sufficient reason and the denial of not-being: "And what need would have stirred it later or earlier, starting from nothing, to grow? Thus it must be completely or not at all" (B8.9-11). A large part of B8 is taken up arguing that being must exist, since it is impossible to think of it as coming into existence (or passing out of existence). Now, since the arguments in B8 purport to be about being (or what-is), one might argue that they still do not show that appearances cannot be self-identical (e.g.) yet still come to be or perish, since the principles only apply to *being*. But Parmenides explicitly argues that "Nor ever from what-is-not will the strength of faith allow anything to come to be beside it" (B8.12-13). This seems to show that for Parmenides, there cannot be a "something else" alongside being that might have only some of the Eleatic principles (like identity) apply to it. And a further elaboration of the completeness principle, given several lines later in B8, seems to bolster these arguments by talking about what incompleteness would entail: if being lacked anything, then it would lack *everything* (B8.32-33). Moreover, as Parmenides repeats in relation to being's wholeness and immobility, "nothing else <neither> is nor shall be beside what-is, since Fate shackled it to be whole and unmoved."[55]

There are not, then, radically separate independent non-Eleatic principles—now taken as

[55] As I argue below, there *is* a sense in which appearances are self-identical: because they just are being. The point here is that appearances *qua* appearances are not self-identical.

all jointly necessary and sufficient for realness or existence—that could explain appearances *qua* appearances. The next question is: can appearances be explained by or grounded in principles that *are* in some sense Eleatic? Put another way: are appearances *qua* something other than themselves?

3.1.1.2. Indirect Separation: Appearances are Grounded in Light and Night

Another potential way of salvaging appearances is to (initially) take the goddess at her word that two principles, light and night (or fire and night),[56] are the legitimate sorts of Eleatic entities they seem to be as described at the beginning of the *Doxa*, and to explain appearances by the co-mingling of these two fundamental entities. As part of the general cosmology of the *Doxa*, the goddess mentions that light and night are two forms mortals take to be the real ground of appearances.[57] Mortals, she says,

> made up their minds to name two forms (μορφὰς), of which it is not right to name one—this is where they have gone astray—and they distinguished contraries in body and set signs apart from each other: to this form the ethereal fire of flame, being gentle, very light, everywhere the same as itself, not the same as the other; but also that one by itself contrarily unintelligent night, a dense body and heavy (B8.53-59).

Echoing the universality of διὰ παντὸς πάντα περ ὄντα/περῶντα from B1.32, the goddess later mentions that appearances are for mortals saturated with a mixture of light and night: "all is full

[56] Parmenides mentions φάεος (light) and νυκτὸς (night) at B9.4. No philosophical point for my interpretation hinges on whether he means fire or light.
[57] Or, if these two fundamental principles do not actually enter mortal consciousness, then they act as the philosopher's justification for a best-case scenario to explain change and appearance. Parmenides never mentions precisely who counts as a wrongheaded mortal.

at once of light and dark night" (B9.4).[58]

There are two important things to notice in the above passage, both of which impact any interpretation one might give for light and night as legitimate foundations for appearances. First, light and night are each understood to be self-determinate, complete beings: light is the polar opposite of night; each form is identical to itself and non-identical to its opposite. Hermann says that "alone, each principle is a perfect unity, as perfect as the objects of a Reliable Account. Only in *relation* to the other is each formula necessarily and entirely the contrary of the other" (2004:177, Hermann's emphasis).[59] Granger notes that light and night are (at least) constrained by perhaps the most important Eleatic principles: neither come to be nor perish (2002:105).[60] As the goddess herself proclaims, light and night both seem to adhere to the Eleatic principles of B8; they seem to be genuine Eleatic beings. If light and night are genuinely Eleatic, and their co-mingling grounds or explains the relative plurality of appearances, then perhaps appearances can enjoy an Eleatic foundation after all. Secondly, however, the goddess cryptically says that the naming of these forms is somehow not right, and that this is how mortals have gone astray, or indeed, deceived themselves about the nature of reality. As noted above, the concern in this passage is how to understand B8.54: ". . . of which it is not right to name one." In what follows I first examine the nature of the two forms, arguing that they cannot be genuine Eleatic entities. I then examine how the problem with naming two forms should best be understood: mortals go

[58] The meaning of this line is not yet clear. I argue below for an interpretation based in part on Mourelatos's literary analysis of the *Doxa*.
[59] For Hermann, a reliable account (or evidential account) is an account that survives the tests set out in B8; any opinion is, for Hermann, salvageable if and only if it survives the B8 tests. Note that he takes the *Doxa* to be concerned more with opinions than appearances/sensibles, but does acknowledge that sensibles are what those opinions are *of*. As I argue below, *pace* Hermann, light and night cannot be understood alone.
[60] But Granger does not think appearances themselves can be salvaged.

astray by naming both, since neither should be named. I follow up, finally, by showing that, based on the considerations in §3.1.1.1 and here, the RS and IS positions result in the same problematic conclusion.

If light and night are genuinely Eleatic, they must each adhere to the ontological principles of the *Aletheia*. This means that they must adhere to the Eleatic principles of B8 and the more general denial of not-being. Now, a strong reading of the latter immediately disqualifies the dualism of light and night from being a genuine Eleatic possibility, despite whether *each* form adheres to the B8 principles, since Eleaticism (in this strong sense) denies plurality *tout court*; it denies the *possibility* of more than one thing, since the nonidentity of two distinct things implies division within being.[61]

An objection to this point briefly examined above—and taken up by many commentators, e.g. Curd,[62] who allow Eleatic plurality—is that denial of division only applies *within* Eleatic beings and not *between* (as it were) such beings. In this weaker sense, it might be possible that neither light nor night flouts the denial of not-being, since each (allegedly) adheres to the B8 principles. The question, however, is whether light and night actually *are* internally complete and indivisible (and not just "divided off" from each other externally by being non-identical). Curd gives compelling arguments that they are indeed internally divided in some sense.

Before examining Curd's considerations, I want to note some deeper background issues in play. The problem of the nature of light and night, and the reality of appearances their co-

[61] As Granger (2002:106) says, ". . . it is the indivisibility of Being that rules out pluralism." Indivisibility is guaranteed by the denial of not-being.
[62] Note, however, that Curd does not take light and night to be legitimate, though she does not preclude that there *is* a plurality of genuine Eleatic beings. See below for an extended discussion of these issues.

mingling purportedly gives, belies a greater tension between the *Aletheia* and *Doxa*. For one thing, the former illustrates *truth* whereas the latter is *deceptive*. What does this mean? Several commentators argue for something like the resemblance of *Doxa* to *Aletheia*. For example Granger argues that "the most deceptive cosmology will be the one *closest to reality*, the one that gives the *best appearance* of being reality and *resembles* it the most" (2002:102, my emphases). Mourelatos also takes the *Doxa* to *somehow* resemble the *Aletheia*, this resemblance being the cause of the deception (2008:226).

It is unclear, however, what it could mean for the story of the *Doxa* to be a close—indeed the *closest*—description of reality, for it to be the best appearance of reality, resembling it most.[63] Since the *Doxa* presents a dualism of light and night, and the *Aletheia* presents reality as a monism of being, does "closest to reality" mean that dualism is as close to monism as one can get? This is akin to Sedley's interpretation: the issue is one of "arithmetic," as he says, because "it seems likeliest to be saying that two, although the minimum for rescuing cosmology, is one too many," given that Parmenides is a monist (1999:123-24). In one sense, this is obviously correct, since *qua* pluralism, dualism is closer to monism than is any other pluralism. But this sort of closeness does not square with the notions of appearance and resemblance someone like Granger urges, especially if dualism is the *best* appearance of reality. Indeed, the notions of appearance and resemblance invoked by Granger and others is unclear on this score, since it is not easy to see how dualism is or could be an *appearance* or a *resemblance* of monism, especially in Sedley's "arithmetic" sense. Thus, appearance and resemblance must be doing

[63] Similarly, Hermann (205) argues that the *Doxa*, while deceptive and methodologically unreliable for getting at truth, can still issue in a *plausible* cosmology.

work other than the notion of "closeness to reality" *qua* number of fundamental entities. But what could this possibly be?

For something to be the appearance *of* another thing or to resemble it, it has to share some features of the resembled thing and fail to share other features; if they shared all features they would be identical, and thus *one* could not resemble or be an appearance of the *other*. This sharing and failing to share can clearly come in several varieties and not all are relevant to resemblance. But dualism *qua* dualism (i.e., where we are merely interested in the *number* of fundamental entities) does not seem to share relevant features with monism so as to count as a "best appearance" of monistic reality; it only shares the property of having a relatively small number of fundaments (*one* versus *the next highest number*). That is, the relevant feature they *do* share—the closest proximal number of fundaments—has nothing to do with whether one is a *resemblance* of the other, let alone the *best* resemblance.

But resemblance does indeed seem to be key to the goddess's deception. Thus, it cannot merely be dualism that figures in the deception of the *Doxa*; after all, if it were, the goddess could simply tell the *kouros* that there are not two fundamental beings but instead one, and any cosmology that confronts him with two (or more) fundaments is mistaken. There must be something precarious *about* the dualism (or pluralism) that figures in the deception. But as we will see, this does not by any means entail that a dualistic *Doxa* issues in the best or closest appearance to or resemblance of being in the way a dualism that is close to monism by sheer number of fundaments would require (since, again, "arithmetic," *pace* Sedley, is irrelevant). Curd (1998:101 n12) notes that Mackenzie (1982:10-11) questions whether intrinsically wrong cosmologies can even be ordered from best to worst. One can imagine better cosmologies—ones that come closest to reality (by relevant resemblance)—in that they share more features with

reality than do other cosmologies. But there are two problems here. First, Eleatic monism is intrinsically featureless since it is indivisible.[64] To make a somewhat crude analogy, it is not that Eleatic being is blue and appearances are purple, which resembles blue more than does, say, yellow. Second, and this is where Curd's analysis becomes valuable: light and night are only *deceptively* Eleatic. They *seem* to resemble Eleatic beings.[65] But that is the deception: they are not Eleatic at all. If this is the case, as I argue below, it is not the number of fundamental beings that is relevant *qua* deception, but the *nature* of the fundamental beings in question.[66]

Curd's analysis of light and night focuses on them as *enantiomorphic* opposites, *mirror-image* opposites that "cannot be made congruent" (107). Importantly for light and night, as Curd notes, "any complete account of the one includes, necessarily, a reference to and account of the other; and the account of the other will be in negative terms, no matter how positive such terms may seem at first glance." Curd also notes that, for example, left-handedness and right-handedness are not to be understood "as attributes of some underlying thing." If they were, it might be possible for such opposites to be unified under a more general concept, such as being. But light and night (to return to the text) are each described in quasi-Eleatic language at the beginning of the *Doxa*, negating this possibility. In the *Aletheia*, being is the most (and the only)

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[64] This, of course, sounds paradoxical: monism's "features" are the Eleatic constraints on being, which are perhaps more properly understood as *meta*-features. There are issues here, too, with whatever Eleatic features Plato's forms might have, which I discuss in the next chapter. One question: do meta-features (by being meta) invoke degrees of being? This may indeed be a crucial problem for Parmenides and Plato. West (1986:137) also uses the term 'featureless' to describe Eleatic being.

[65] As will become clear in §3.3, this "seeming" is problematic.

[66] There is, however, an important role for dualism (or any pluralism) to play in the deception insofar as dualism itself impugns the natures of light and night (as we see in the immediately following analysis): it is opposition among fundaments *as such* that disqualifies them as being fundamental. Still, the relevant resemblance issue is ontological (in that it has to do with the natures of the fundaments), and not arithmetical (since it is irrelevant whether there are two or two thousand fundamental beings).

basic or general concept or thing, so if light and night are to be understood as akin to it, they cannot be attributes of some other thing.

Now, light and night, if they are enantiomorphic, must be understood partially in negative terms. That is, to understand *what* light and night *are*, one must be able to grasp negatives. As Curd says, "to be up just is to be not-down, and *vice versa*; to be light is to be not-dark, and *vice versa*" (107-8).[67] The fact that enantiomorphism is, as it were, a two-way street (viz. *vice versa*) means that *both* enantiomorphs are partially defined in terms of what the other is not; both enantiomorphs include in their essences the not-being of the other. Indeed they are not merely *defined* so, they—in our deceptive *Doxa* context—*are* so: part of what it is to be light is that it *is not* night, or has not-night as part of its very essence. In this way, then, the (alleged) *being* of both light and night, which are (deceptively) described in the deterministic language of Eleaticism, dissolves into *not-being* by way of its opposite: one cannot understand light in purely positive or determinate terms, since the very *being* of light requires the not-being of night, and *vice versa*. But since not-being is banned by Parmenides—and is *especially* banned as something that could ever figure in the essence (or being) of something, and so cannot even be thought—the two fundamental principles of mortal opinion thus fall apart or dissolve into not-being. Thus, we cannot understand the (alleged) natures of either light or night. For they have no natures at all; the quasi-Eleatic language used to describe them is part of the goddess's deceptive description of mortal cosmology. If this is correct, then light and night—*because* of how they (allegedly) exist—cannot be a legitimate (i.e., Eleatic) foundation for derived non-

[67] Curd (108 n32) is careful to note that light and night are not linguistic or logical opposites; the opposite of light is not night (since it is darkness). In the discussion below, it turns out that this is not entirely relevant since it is opposition as such, I contend, that is Parmenides' real target.

Eleatic things (appearances), since each fundamentally is a *non-being*.

There are objections to this analysis of light and night. The most compelling are ones that do not reject Curd's analysis of opposites but *expand* it to cover more cases. Nehamas, for example, argues that *every* non-identical entity, not simply different types of opposites, would have to be deemed problematic in the sense Curd takes enantiomorphs to be problematic (61).[68] Noting Curd's own analysis of Parmenides as a predicational monist—that if *x* is *F*, then *x* is all and only *F*—Nehamas says that "what is *F* is not *G* and conversely, even if '*F*' and '*G*' do not denote opposites" (2002:61). His example: what earth is—its very *being*—will also *be* what fire *is not*. Earth and fire are not opposites, but the one must be defined in terms of what the other is not (in the same way Curd's analysis of enantiomorphs requires), given her commitment to strong predicational monism.[69] This objection seems correct when pointed in the right direction; all it does, in other words, is undermine Curd's position on Eleatic monism, *not* her analysis of light and night. Her analysis of light and night as enantiomorphs is just a species of Parmenides' more general denial of opposition/distinction. Since I reject her reading of Eleatic monism as predicational (in chapter 2), this objection does not undermine my acceptance of her analysis of light and night. In other words, one can accept Curd's analysis of light and night *and* Nehamas's objections to it. Accepting Nehamas's objections regarding general opposition, however, is tantamount to accepting strong monism.[70]

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[68] Note that Nehamas probably would not endorse this claim *for* Parmenides, since it leads directly to strong monism, which he thinks is an ambiguous conclusion of the text. See his 2002:51.

[69] Nehamas is using Curd's predicational analysis, coupled with enantiomorphism, against her (since he sees these as inconsistent).

[70] I should note that Nehamas's 2002 is, in effect, designed to articulate how Parmenides could be seen as a legitimate cosmologist *via* his proclamations in the *Doxa*. This view is counter to how I read Parmenides. Nonetheless, several of Nehamas's points, like those against Curd's *general* position, are relevant and illuminating.

There are other reasons, however, for taking Parmenides to be telling a story about the intrinsic dubiousness of opposites'—or distinctive things in general—being fundamental principles or entities. Indeed, if he *is* concerned about showing why light and night are *not* genuinely Eleatic, then, given the above considerations from Nehamas against Curd, it would seem to tell against Curd's analysis of Eleatic being more generally, and would answer a second objection Nehamas has to Curd's analysis: if Parmenides could have provided an Eleatically sound cosmology (based on, say, Curd's Eleatically construed predicational monads) why did he not do so (61)?[71] The Nehamasian analysis seems to topple Curd's interpretation of Parmenides as one who might build a credible cosmology *on* predicational monism, since he (correctly by my lights) places her predicational monism on the same footing as her rejection of enantiomorphism: according to Curd Parmenides is *only* against cosmologies grounded in dubious enantiomorphic principles, not (her) proper predicational monads.[72] But Parmenides, as we saw, seems to take *all* distinction (*F* is not *G*, etc.) to be dubious. If this is the case, Parmenides would reject cosmology as such, not just the dubious one he happens to put forth. Be this as it may, there is other evidence in Parmenides—largely literary or poetic—that shows he is concerned to undercut opposition and distinction as inimical to being in general.[73]

Mourelatos has been an important advocate for the philosophical import of literary (and

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[71] Granted, we do not have all of Parmenides. But the *Doxa* fragments, as I interpret them, give the general thrust of a denial of the *real* distinction between opposites and other things, which indirectly is an argument *for* monism. Below, in the discussion of the naming of light and night, I argue that this is *not*, as it may seem, evidence that light and night should, *qua* opposites, be "unified."

[72] Curd argues late in her book (228-41) that Plato's forms could be construed as proper predicational monads. If Nehamas's analysis is correct, even predicational monads must be rejected (by Parmenides) because they are *generally* opposed, not merely opposed as opposites. I engage Curd's analysis of Plato in chapter 4.

[73] This literary or poetic evidence is important, I contend, for understanding just why (indeed *how*) the *kouros* must learn an intrinsically problematic cosmology.

philological) analysis in Parmenides, though his thoroughgoing analyses have evolved considerably over the years. I will focus on some specific cosmological passages where opposition certainly appears rampant. Such opposition, I submit, is used by Parmenides in a poetical or literary sense to emphasize the dubious nature of any appearance or sensible that could be derived from light and night, indicating further that such principles are themselves ontologically unstable. Parmenides, in these passages, is *showing*—through a specific use of oppositional language—*how* mortals "wander two-headed."

Take, for example, Parmenides' descriptions of the moon. As many note, he is possibly the first in Western thought to write that the moon's light does not originate with the moon itself, which many rightly take as a major astronomical contribution.[74] Parmenides says, poetically: "[moon] shining by night,[75] wandering around earth with borrowed light. Ever peeking toward the rays of the sun" (B14 and B15). Earlier, at B11, he says he will show how these characteristics of the moon "were set in motion to *come into being* (γίγνεσθαι)" (B11.3-4). There are two levels of opposition here. First, the alleged nature of the moon displays a sort of uneasy paradoxical (or perhaps ambiguous) dualism in that it shines brightly but has borrowed light, light *not* of itself. Secondly, this alleged nature of the moon—that it shines not of itself—is something Parmenides wants to show comes into being. The first point is a specific thesis about the moon, whereas the second is a general cosmological principle set against the very tenets of

[74] There is a caveat to pronouncements such as these. Nehamas (2002:60) asks whether Parmenides *really* wants us to "not believe that the moon revolves around the earth," as we should if the *Doxa*'s statements are deceptive or false. He claims that were Parmenides to require us to learn the *Doxa* even though it is deceptive, this would be "bizarre, if not outright incoherent." I address these concerns below, since—with caveats of my own—I largely accept the Parmenides he rejects on this score.

[75] 'Moon' in the text is implied, but the crucial compound word here is νυκτιφαὲς, "shining by night," or "shining *like* night" (my emphasis), as Coxon (1986:245) has it. Mourelatos (2012:41) calls Coxon's translation of the term "a crucial mistake."

the *Aletheia* itself. Mourelatos puts it most strongly: "Parmenides wants to tell us that there is some kind of unreality, inauthenticity, or falsehood about the moon" (2008:224). Linguistically, as Mourelatos (225) notes, Parmenides seems to say that the moon is a light-dark thing, and its light is not of itself (ἀλλότριον φῶς at B14.1). The goddess's double-talk seems deliberate: she is describing the *specifically* paradoxical nature of the moon in a way meant to correspond to or indeed mimic the *general* two-headed wandering of mortals mentioned at B6.5. Her specific example—an intrinsically light-dark thing (since it does not have its own light)—also pits the whole *Doxa* against the *Aletheia* (since *qua* pseudo-light thing, it is enveloped by greater darkness).

Mourelatos has more recently mounted a challenge to his 2008[76] reading of B14 and what we are supposed to take away from Parmenides' description of the moon. His main task now is to challenge the widely accepted five centuries old emendation by Scaliger of part of Plutarch's quotation of Parmenides in the *Reply to Colotes*. Addressing Mourelatos's main astronomical and lexical points would take us far afield, so I will stick to the very specific point about whether the Plutarch MS or the later emendation to it should be accepted on philosophical-rhetorical grounds. As a foil, Mourelatos gives five "exegetic considerations" (i.e., objections to his own position) in favor of the Scaliger emendation, the first three of which he notes are weak or obvious, the last two being substantial enough for him to spend a great deal of time refuting (2012:37-38).[77] But the first—and weakest, according to Mourelatos—is precisely his 2008

[76] Recall that Mourelatos (2008) is a reprint of his 1970 book, so his recent challenge is to a position, still influential, that he endorsed decades ago.

[77] I will deal exclusively with the first exegetic consideration (the weakest), since it is precisely the old Mourelatos version I *accept*. The last two objections against emendation (38)—the ones he (now) considers substantial—are, first, that the Scaliger emendation (i.e., νυκτιφαὲς against νυκτὶ φάος) is "more poetic" and likely is closer to Parmenides' own language than Plutarch's "rather flat and prosaic" use of νυκτὶ φάος; secondly, the redundancy in

position, which I accept:

> The lexical components in the adjective *nuktiphaês* are precisely the two constitutive forms in Parmenides' "Doxa," *phaos* [light] and *nux* [night] . . . . The compound adjective very aptly reflects *at the lexical level* the pervasive mixis, "composition, mixing, blending," of contraries, which is the "governing" mechanism of generation in the cosmos . . . (my emphasis).

Mourelatos notes (n31) that he accepted the compound adjective νυκτιφαὲς in 2008, and quotes in a footnote the (2008:24) passage quoted in the paragraph above, regarding the moon's unreality. Now, Mourelatos is quick to point out that, against this first and weakest exegetic consideration, "there is absolutely no loss in the connection with the dualistic cosmology of the 'Doxa' if we should accept the reading of the MSS," i.e., Plutarch against the emendation (39). This is a rather important consideration: the dualism of the *Doxa*'s cosmology is an important point Parmenides makes in that section of his poem, but it is actually the *deceptiveness* of that dualism that is at issue. "The *only* effect that would be lost," regarding choosing Plutarch's version over the emendation, Mourelatos argues, "is that of *having the compound nature of the moon mirrored in lexical synthesis*" (39, my emphases). But if that very nature is *not* mirrored in lexical synthesis—that is, if the nature of the moon is not somehow mirrored in the words the goddess uses, in this case a compound adjective comprising light and night cognates—then it is difficult to makes sense of why the goddess's cosmos, spun in *words*, is supposed to be deceptive. The so-called lexical mirroring seems to be a *feature* of what the goddess hopes to accomplish in her cosmological tale, since it is precisely the mirroring in words of the deceptive

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the Plutarch MS of φαος and φῶς is "unacceptable." Both these points come from correspondence between Mourelatos and M. Laura Gemelli Marciano.

nature of the cosmos itself that the goddess announces at B8.52.[78]

Mourelatos's overall reasons for rejecting the emendation in favor of the MSS's νυκτὶ φάος is that Plutarch's categorization of various ontological elements, which mimic certain things Plato says, also seems to fit what Parmenides says. For example, Plutarch begins (in his own words) the passage in which he quotes Parmenides:

> The fellow who says that the picture of Plato is not Plato does not deny its existence as image and its perception as an image. Rather, he points to something that exists on its own, and (also points) to the difference from the latter of something else [the image] that has come into being in relation to it [the original]. (Brackets in the original).[79]

Summing up his position in a chart regarding these ontological issues, Mourelatos places Plato, fire, the Platonic form of human, and the strong light of the sun, all on ontological par; against these are the derived entities, respectively, of the image of Plato, iron that has been in fire, a particular human being, and the derived light of the moon from the sun (56). What this means, it seems, is that Mourelatos now, like Plutarch, does *not* deny the existence of the derived entity; the light of the moon—though not its own—has nothing to do with the nature of the *moon itself*. The moon simply reflects the powerful light of the sun, which *is* of its own nature. If anything, these considerations from Mourelatos, based in part on some thoughts from Plutarch, seem to be highly anachronistic, since Parmenides—though he does (as I argue below) have affinities with Plato—certainly did not have a robust articulation of original and derived entities *such that* the derived entities had anything like real existence, somewhat on par with the reality of the things

[78] Mourelatos (2012) offers a rather drastic contrast to his original arguments. He seems eager to give veracity to several astronomical observations in Parmenides' *Doxa*. A similar project emerges in his 2011 article.
[79] The translation is Mourelatos's (2012:29-30).

from which they are derived. Plato certainly did; but, as I argue in later chapters, the reason Plato had the more complex ontology Plutarch cites is because he is *correcting* some errors or naiveties in Parmenides. Shortly put, Plato's notion of forms-particulars is *not* to be found in Parmenides; such a theory exists indeed because of Parmenides' *mistakes*.

In any event, some of the considerations Mourelatos makes about the sun in 2008 seem to agree, by analogy, with taking the moon to be a paradoxically dualistic pseudo-thing. The sun is, according to Parmenides, an object that has its *own* light. But as the goddess proclaims at B9.3 is the case with all appearing-things,[80] there is, in a way, "dark night" in the sun. The goddess tells the *kouros* at B10.1-3 that he "shall know the ethereal nature and all the signs in aether, and the *unseen* (ἀίδηλα) works of the pure torch of the *blazing/effulgent* (λάμπαδος) sun." The important word here is ἀίδηλα, and Mourelatos notes the rich literary paradoxical dualism it seems to evoke. He asks rhetorically "how could anyone describe the works of the sun in the same sentence as 'pure, clear, effulgent' *and* 'unseen, obscure'?" (2008:238). Once again Parmenides seems to deliberately use language in the *Doxa* to mimic mortal two-headedness. Noting Guazzoni Foá (1964), Mourelatos takes, as she does, ἀίδηλα to be deliberately ambiguous, though Mourelatos prefers retaining certain paradoxical elements in the ambiguity, especially the word's connotation of destructiveness (239).[81]

Putting all this together, the sun both illuminates and is the source of all light, but also *darkens* by making those who gaze into it blind, and indeed blotting out all other objects in the

[80] Including, it would seem, the moon.

[81] The LSJ entry has as part of the active sense of the word, "making unseen, annihilating, destructive," and as part of the passive sense—"unseen, unknown, obscure"—both of which Mourelatos and Guazzoni Foá accept are in play in Parmenides' use.

sky, as Mourelatos notes. As the thing which makes other things grow,[82] it also can have a destructive effect: it can, as Mourelatos says, "scorch the land, and burn the skin, and give sunstroke." The giver of life can also be its destroyer. And similarly to the different layers of paradox with the moon, Parmenides uses the description of the sun's nature (as a mixture of light and dark night) to make both specific and general points: the sun is itself a paradoxical or unreal thing, but this paradoxical nature is used to further emphasize the contrast between the unstable objects accepted by mortals (*Doxa*) and the stark stability of *being* (*Aletheia*). Mourelatos rightly says that the idea that the sun can be too bright and powerful (i.e., destructive and darkening by being too bright) contrasts with the *Aletheia*'s ban on degrees of being (240). So again, Parmenides seems to be using paradoxical language to emphasize both the instability internal to the things in the *Doxa*, and the precarious relation between the *Doxa* and *Aletheia*.

Most commentators attempt to make some historical sense of these aspects of the *Doxa* by linking them (or denying a link) to critiques of Parmenides' near contemporaries, most notably Heraclitus. I want to focus, however, on what Parmenides might be trying to do with these layers of paradox. Recall that we are attempting to see whether light and night can act as proper Eleatic foundations for appearances. Curd's analysis of light and night paints them as enantiomorphs, mirror image opposites that must partially be defined or known in terms of what the other is not. Now, they are initially described in quasi-Eleatic terms, as we saw. But this, it turns out, is deceptive, though the goddess does not *mention* that it is deceptive.[83] Rather, I submit, she *shows* the *kouros* the deception, which is given by mimicking two different aspects

[82] A point Plato puts to good use—though in *contrast* to Parmenides' paradoxical use of the sun—in the *Republic*.
[83] She merely says that the ordering of her words will be deceptive (B8.52) and does not point to anything specific.

of the *Aletheia*. On the one hand, the goddess uses quasi-Eleatic language to describe light and night. On the other, in her descriptions of the things that are allegedly derived from light and night, she uses heavily paradoxical language to mimic the two-headedness of mortals, first described in B6; indeed, the goddess's mixing of Eleatic language and mortal language is itself a *mimetic* instance of mortal two-headedness. Now, these aspects are related: it is *because* light and night are only *quasi*-Eleatic[84] that the things derived from them are paradoxical. Thus, the goddess is teaching the *kouros*—through the story of mortal opinions about various things such as the sun and moon—why light and night cannot be proper Eleatic entities: anything derived from a dualism/pluralism of (allegedly) Eleatic entities results in paradox. The goddess *shows*, albeit indirectly through the minimalist cosmological story of the *Doxa*, that light and night can never ground a proper cosmology, because there can *be* no proper cosmology. In a way, the cosmological discourse of the *Doxa*, since it is inherently dubious by the tenets of the *Aletheia*, indicates a more general shift in Greek philosophy from cosmology to more abstract ontological matters.[85]

If the above arguments are plausible about the paradoxical nature of light and night and the things derived from their co-mingling, then it is difficult to see how one form (either light or night) or both (*qua* unity) can be named. Mortals go wrong by naming either one or both since mortals name things, as B8.36-41 seems to show, always as a way of attempting to capture or assert *being*:

> For nothing else <either> is nor shall be beside what-is, since Fate

[84] A better description is perhaps *deceptively* Eleatic, since 'quasi' seems to bring in all the problems inherent to the concept of *resemblance* discussed earlier. As we will see in §3.3, however, deception fares no better.
[85] I cannot argue for this historical claim here, but see Mourelatos (1965) for a discussion of these issues.

> shackled it to be whole and unmoved. In relation to this have all things been named, which mortals established, trusting them to be true: coming to be and perishing, being and not being, changing place and exchanging bright color.

This is, as is common in Parmenides, a rather problematic passage, one that is, however, fairly clearly tied to the later passage on the naming of two forms at B8.53. The part of the present passage that is problematic, unfortunately, is also the most important, namely, B8.38-39: . . . τῶι[86] πάντ'ὀνόμασται, ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ.[87] Graham's translation goes against an older-grained translation, namely, "Therefore all things mortals have laid down . . . will be a name."[88] The issue seems to be whether the things to which mortals are ontologically committed are merely *names*, or whether mortals somehow confuse real being(s) with dubious beings *by* the very act of naming. That is, naming for mortals is a sort of act of reification for things they experience. Parmenides seems to want to show that mortals attempt to illegitimately bridge real being (whole and unmoved) and what they *take* to be real—appearances—through the act of naming; mortals name light and night, which the above analysis argues are each an illegitimate mix of being and not-being, and they name the sensibles derived from light and night, which are all coming to be and perishing, changing places, and exchanging bright colors. But they name all these things as *beings*. The act of naming, for mortals, imparts on the changing things an artificial being that the *Doxa* shows (only to an *initiated kouros*) is illegitimate, since neither light nor night can *legitimately* be named as beings at all.

Arguments for the unification of light and night—which is a position superficially or

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[86] This is often written with the iota as subscript: τῷ.
[87] There are several problems with the text in this passage, many of which have to do with the so-called Cornford fragment (so-called because it was Cornford (1935) who initially proposed a new fragment). See Woodbury (1958) and more recently McKirihan (2010) for some of the linguistic issues involved.
[88] The translation is from Mourelatos (2008:xv), who nonetheless does not endorse it in his own analysis.

allegedly consistent with a monistic reading of Parmenides—suffer from a similar problem. Above, I argued that Parmenides wants to deny real distinctions among things generally, but that this might be taken to be an argument for the unification of opposites. In other words, if there is no *real* distinction between light and night, then they might be unified under some more general concept. As I will argue below, this is in *some* sense correct, since light and night (each not being real *qua* light or night) are—as is everything in the *Doxa—just being*, since there is "nothing beside what-is." But again, naming light and night as a unity has ontological import, since unifications are always unifications *of* distinct things; the unification desired by those who favor a unity reading is always such that light and night (somehow) retain their identities. It may, however, be that the unity of light and night is merely something to be done in analysis; that is, they are not *really* distinct, though we can analyze them separately as distinct concepts. This, I submit, is to fall prey to the deception in the goddess's story: even "mere" analysis must, for Parmenides, be grounded in *being*, since there must be something about being that allows for the analysis of light and night as distinct. Ontology drives all for Parmenides. Since being is indivisible (and so not divisible into light and night), there is nothing about being itself that could allow for the analysis.[89] But if so, then (as we will see in §3.2) there is nothing about being that allows for *deception*.

The final issue from the previous two sub-sections is whether IS and RS readings result in the same conclusion. Recall that the conclusion for RS was that there are no ontological standards for appearances that are radically separate from or outside of those for Eleatic being.

[89] The point that there must be something about being that allows for analysis is, I think, crucial to Plato's project, and how he ostensibly "corrects" Parmenides, especially in *Parmenides* and *Sophist*.

If there are appearances *qua* appearances, then appearances must be self-identical. But self-identity is one hallmark of Eleatic being, and as we saw, if something is constrained by any one of the Eleatic principles, it must be constrained by all. The IS position takes light and night to be Eleatic, and thus anything derived from them (appearances) to be indirectly Eleatically grounded. Again, however, light and night fail on closer analysis to be Eleatic at all, and so they too cannot support appearances. The RS position cannot sustain the deceptive self-identity of appearances, whereas the IS position cannot sustain the deceptively Eleatic nature of its foundational principles. The former flouts the completeness requirement for being, whereas the latter flouts the denial of not-being, since each principle, light and night, is essentially imbued with the not-being of the other. Both positions, then, issue in the same conclusion: appearances must be grounded in something completely and non-deceptively Eleatic. Is this possible?

3.1.2. Second Stab: Appearances are Grounded in Eleatic Being I

The final dubious way of grounding appearances is to do so by directly appealing to Eleatic principles: whatever passes Eleatic muster is acceptable. I want to discuss this way of grounding appearances only briefly since most of the arguments against this reading are applications of my arguments against Mourelatos and Curd from chapter 2 (in a slightly different context). I will, however, give some special focus to Hermann, since his interpretation of relevant aspects of Parmenides is similar in some respects, but different enough to warrant a closer analysis.

The key issue for the present interpretation is fleshing out what "pass Eleatic muster" means for those who take this sort of position, and for understanding what *sorts* of things might pass muster. Mourelatos, Curd, and Hermann, all generally fall within this category, and so the

position is largely grounded in their interpretations of the *Aletheia*. Now, Mourelatos, Curd, and Hermann all rightly claim that anything I have called "appearances" could not pass Eleatic muster. That is, medium sized dry goods, such as people and plants (and sun and moon), are non-Eleatic by nearly all commentators' standards. Mourelatos and Curd do not think, however, that Parmenides rejects the possibility of a plurality of ultimate cosmological or ontological elements or parts, each of which passes Eleatic muster.[90]

Thus, recall that Mourelatos's analysis of what might survive Eleatic inquiry results in the cosmological sentence frame of *speculative predication*: *X* is *Y*. The 'is' here is largely predicative, though according to Mourelatos there is a strong element of *identity*: it is meant to link in a strong way the predicate with the subject.[91] Similarly for Curd: if some object *x* survives Eleatic inquiry, then it has, in an ontologically strong way, some predicate *F* such that *x* is all and only *F*. As noted in chapter 2, one major difference between these two accounts of what it would take to survive Eleatic inquiry is that, for Mourelatos, the sentence frame is *asymmetrical*, whereas for Curd, '*x* is *F*' expresses "actual identity, although an informative identity" (1998:40 n46). She says, strongly, that even though *F* expresses the nature of *x*, and not *vice versa*, the two "could be used interchangeably in claims about the world."[92] These sorts of analyses—ones that allow a plurality of Eleatic entities, once such entities survive the tests of

[90] Hermann's analysis is pointed toward (initial) opinions, which—after having been thoroughly tested by the constraints on proper inquiry laid out in the *Aletheia*—can (thereby) pass Eleatic muster. He is less interested in ontology.

[91] The predicate is, according to Mourelatos, a *thing* for the ancient Greeks, on an ontological par with the subject. Recall from chapter 2 one example from Xenophanes (B32): "What they call Iris, that too is in its nature . . . a cloud." The translation is Mourelatos's.

[92] In chapter 2, I argued that it is not easy to see what this might amount to but, as noted earlier, it is clear from the last part of Curd's book that she takes Plato's forms—at least as construed in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*—to come close to Eleatic beings (predicational monads, as it were).

inquiry—tend also to be, as I argued in the last chapter, the sorts of interpretations of Parmenides where ontology takes a back seat to explicating the nature of inquiry. But as I also argued in the last chapter, these sorts of analyses can at most give partially correct interpretations of Parmenides since they allow pluralism. I have argued that the denial of not-being for Parmenides disallows the sort of pluralism countenanced by these sorts of analyses, since there is nothing internal to Eleatic being that could explain the *differentiation* between isolated Eleatic monads, a point central to Nehamas's critique of Curd noted above.

Hermann's "positive" approach to Parmenides is his argument that it is better to see in Parmenides ways of salvaging ostensibly unreliable opinions than to cast them away, as so many commentators have.[93] Hermann takes Parmenides as setting out two different ways of inquiry, one that is reliable (*Aletheia*) and one unreliable (*Doxa*). The key point to his positive interpretation is that some opinions might survive Eleatic inquiry: an opinion survives if and only if it can be *unified* in a *reliable account*. The central obstacle for Hermann is how to bridge the gap between truth and opinion (174-75). His solution: "we do it by using an evidential procedure [sc. that provided in the *Aletheia*] to prove whether or not a thing is real, this is to say, whether an *account* of it is reliable or true" (emphasis in the original). Recalling the last lines of the proem, Hermann argues that surviving Eleatic inquiry requires that "the things of opinion . . . would have to be 'the things that really are, that actually exist'." There is, however, something slippery about how Hermann (and others) articulates these issues here: he wants to know how to get "from fickle opinion to factual truth," but then slides into talking about how the *things* of

[93] In a similar vein, Clark (1969:25) points out that no matter how one takes B1.28-32—as being from the mortal point of view or the goddess's—it would render that passage "nonsense" if opinions/phenomena did not *somehow* exist or were not *somehow* true or reliable or genuine, etc.

opinion must be to be considered reliable, namely, that they must actually exist. The problem is the slide from opinions to the *objects* of those opinions.

What exactly does it mean to give a unified reliable account of *things*? Ostensibly our opinions *about* them would have to strongly track truth, rendering them no longer unreliable mortal opinions but indeed Eleatic truths, which are in some sense *identical* to their objects (e.g., at B3). But if we must start with opinions, testing them for reliability by using an evidential procedure, it seems we must already have some way of being able to determine when an opinion tracks truth and when it does not. For Hermann, of course, this just means testing opinions against the strictures laid out in B8. But—as noted in chapter 2—the Eleatic principles of B8 are strictures on *being*, so it is not easy to see why they should apply to opinions *first and foremost*. That is, it is not clear how opinions are supposed to be things that are ungenerated, wholes of single kinds, etc.

The rejoinder, perhaps, is that we in fact must start with purported things—sensibles—and see whether they can be reliably unified in an account, that is, whether an account (which starts out as opinions) can be given of sensibles that is internally consistent. The problem with this is that there are probably infinitely many ways of giving an internally consistent account of our experience of sensibles. Call this the Many Kants problem: there are many ways of being Kant that are inconsistent with *each other*, but not *internally*. Which is the one that tracks *truth* (or, to stay with Kant, tracks noumena *as it is*)? Parmenides' problem (and Plato's problem with the cave myth) is, as it were, a noumenal problem: what are the marks that do *in fact* bridge the gap between opinion—seen here as the way we interpret reality—and truth, *such that* we know when we have the latter? Hermann's positive account assumes that unification in an account is sufficient for bridging the gap. But it is far from clear whether internal coherence/unification is

sufficient for getting at or understanding the very nature of the thing(s) into which we inquire. Hermann's more epistemological, coherence-based positive approach to Parmenides suffers, it seems, from ontological problems from the very beginning.

3.2. The Onto-Cosmology of the Doxa

I now want to argue that approaching Parmenides from a more or less ontological perspective in the first instance offers the best case for relating the *Doxa*'s appearances to the *Aletheia*'s solely existing being. I call this the onto-cosmological approach. In this section I give two arguments to show that the *Doxa*—ostensibly a description of various mortal beliefs—is best understood as a description of the nature of their *objects*, i.e., appearances or sensible particulars. That is, the *Doxa* at its root concerns the dubious nature of the ontological or cosmological foundation of mortal opinions. The upshot of these arguments (§3.2.3) is that δοκίμως ought to be translated as "genuine" or "really" (etc.), which means that sensible particulars are—*pace* most commentators—*themselves* genuine, albeit *qua* monism. I am aware of no ontologically inclined commentator who takes the contents of the *Doxa* to be genuine *qua* monism, since a typical view on this score is that strong monism immediately casts sensibles to the ontological dustbin: they are nonexistent *tout court*. In other words, the contents of the *Doxa* is nonexistent *by* monism. I argue the opposite: sensibles for Parmenides exist by monism, there being no other way. The rub is that they do not exist *qua* sensibles. I later argue, however, that this ultimately creates epistemological confusion.

3.2.1. βροτῶν δόξας and τὰ δοκοῦντα are Conceptually Distinct

The first argument in favor of taking the *Doxa* to concern ontology/cosmology as a

ground for epistemology asks whether it is possible for βροτῶν δόξας and τὰ δοκοῦντα to be disambiguated between opinions/beliefs and their objects. The key issue concerns the latter term, since it is ambiguous between the two, whereas the former more clearly means "mortal opinions." If τὰ δοκοῦντα can be disambiguated on the side of objects, then this wedge between opinions and their objects might show how the latter can be genuine (B1.32), whereas the former have no true trust (B1.30).

Mourelatos notes that several commentators vacillate between "beliefs/opinions" and "appearances" in their translations of the various δόξα-words (as nouns) in Parmenides, though the distinction he says is by no means trivial (2008:195). As noted, "mortal opinions" unambiguously translates βροτῶν δόξας at B1.30. "The things deemed acceptable" (Mourelatos) or "the things that seem" (Curd) ambiguously translate τὰ δοκοῦντα at B1.31. Such translations of τὰ δοκοῦντα are ambiguous because it is less clear with the things deemed acceptable than with mortal opinions (as such) just how much of the "deeming" originates with us rather than with the objects themselves. The question comes to a head in the notion of error or deception: how much of human error is due to what we *do* versus the nature of the opined objects themselves, the things about which we are apparently in error?[94] Put another way: does the reason I erroneously take the oak tree in the quad to be such and such have to do more with how *I* take it, or does it have to do more with *its* nature? I am wrong (or deceived) about it either way; but what is the *source* of the error?

To start, we should note that Mourelatos gives a very comprehensive analysis of

[94] I restrict my discussion to the things Parmenides addresses, and not errors such as "I thought that was Jim, but instead it is Bob." Eleatic error concerns what we think we know about the *natures* of the things we take to exhaust reality, namely, the plurality of sensibles.

Parmenides' use of δόξα- and δοκ-words, arguing that understanding Parmenides requires a thorough semantic (and etymological) analysis of such words. I will not retread his study here.[95] There are, however, significant issues regarding the interpretation of these words that have bearing on the content of the *Doxa*, so I will here critically assess some of Mourelatos's main points.

Mourelatos shows in brief compass that a major source of ambiguity regarding δόξα- and δοκ-words stems from the verb δοκέω, which can be split into subjective and objective interpretations (195–97). The former, he says, are rendered with words such as *expect, think, suppose*, etc., whereas the latter can be rendered as *seems*. As he says, δοκοῦντα falls more on the objective disambiguation of δοκέω. But the objective rendering ('seem') can, according to Mourelatos, further divide into more or less ambiguous subjective and objective versions, since 'seems' is often ambiguous between a subjective and objective interpretation. Noting the construction δοκεῖ μοι with an infinitive, Mourelatos says this could either mean something like "methinks" (subjective) or "it appears to me" (objective). The latter is linguistically akin to φαίνομαι, which explicitly means "to appear."[96]

Mourelatos claims, however, that even if the constructions δοκεῖν τινι and φαίνεσθαί τινι—both rendered as "to appear to one"—are "virtual synonyms" (his words), there is evidence from both Homer and the Classical period that allows for or encourages the *separation* of the subjective from the objective nuances in these phrases. Thus, according to Mourelatos, δοκεῖ μοι carries with it a (subjective) sense of "reflection and judgment," whereas a more explicitly

[95] See especially the whole of his (2008) chapter 8.
[96] This Greek word is related to the English word *phenomena*. See Mourelatos (2011:181-84) for a fuller discussion of problems with appearances *qua* phenomena. I discuss these problems below.

objective construction, such as φαίνεταί μοι carries with it an empirical sense as if something is appearing to one from the outside.

He contrasts these two readings as having on the one hand a "phenomenological" nuance (φαίνεταί μοι and φαίνεσθαί τινι) and, on the other, a "criteriological" nuance (δοκεῖ μοι and δοκεῖν τινι), and he suggests they are passive and active, respectively. Mourelatos prefers the criteriological sense of δοκ-words (δοκοῦντα and δοκίμως) and says, "Parmenides' δόξα is *first and foremost* 'opinion' or 'supposal,' rather than 'appearance'" (my emphasis). He does not entirely discount the notion of appearance for δοκ-words. But as used by Parmenides—i.e., criteriologically and therefore as having to do with active deliberation—such words should not *primarily* be understood in a passive or phenomenological sense. And this preference for the subjective/criteriological reading of δοκοῦντα aligns with his overall interpretation of the *Aletheia* as primarily setting out criteria for proper inquiry: if one is to inquire into the things deemed acceptable to test their acceptability, one must use the strictures of B8 as criteria for acceptance. Moreover, recall that Mourelatos sees B1.31-32 as pointing to B8 and not to the *Doxa*: the things deemed acceptable *would* (χρῆν) have acceptance only if they adhere to the B8 strictures.

The critereological reading is not, however, entirely innocent of importing objectivity, even given Mourelatos's overall interpretation of Parmenides. For example, the criteria for proper inquiry have nothing to do with the nature of opinion or mortal thought, as such. The criteria for proper inquiry, on Mourelatos's and related interpretations such as Curd's, just are the B8 strictures on *being*, and those strictures apply to *things*. The salient issue, then, is how one is supposed to—or whether one *can*—bridge the gap between understanding the strictures of B8 as guides for saying on the one hand something true about being or beings and, on the other, for

determining the relative correctness or incorrectness of opinions. What, in other words, is the correlation between the objective and the subjective? If an opinion is *about* some object that passes Eleatic muster, then it is no longer (strictly speaking) an opinion; but the guide for determining this is, as B8 argues, the *thing itself*, not our way of opining about it, which may or may not adhere to Eleatic standards. In other words, an opinion is acceptable if and only if its object—an appearing-thing or sensible—passes Eleatic muster.

Mourelatos has more recently continued to argue against the appearances reading. With somewhat stronger language, he argues that "it is of paramount importance to note that the 'Doxa' is not intended as a phenomenology of the 'given,' as a purely descriptive account of appearances" (2011:181). He further notes that Parmenides never uses cognates of φαίνομαι, opting instead for the technical term τὰ δοκοῦντα, which has for Mourelatos, as we saw above, a much more subjective or deliberative than objective or empirical sense. All of this is ostensibly evidence that Parmenides does not mean to talk about appearances, and Mourelatos explicitly says that "the *dokounta* . . . must be things that are '*taken* (to be thus and so),' or things 'deemed *acceptable*,' or 'approved,' or 'assumed'—not things simply given to our senses" (emphases in the original). These more recent arguments can be seen as an extension of his earlier arguments for the criteriological reading of τὰ δοκοῦντα.

Now, Mourelatos's objections to taking τὰ δοκοῦντα as appearances are *a fortiori* arguments *for* taking the term to mean *opinions*. I want to stress that Mourelatos's analysis of τὰ δοκοῦντα as appearance in the sense *he* understands actually agrees with my position. The disagreement on this score is verbal. One way of seeing this is that Mourelatos compares τὰ

δοκοῦντα to the theoretical notion of *phaenomena*[97] (or *Erscheinungen*) in Kant: both technical terms are, according to Mourelatos, theory-laden in the sense that τὰ δοκοῦντα for Parmenides and *phaenomena* for Kant are such that they always point to something within experience that is conceptually rich, something that requires a conceptual scheme not there in pure phenomenology (2011:182). The things we experience are always things deemed to be *as* something, and thus τὰ δοκοῦντα cannot refer to or mean a *purely* (or phenomenologically) descriptive notion of appearances. The relevant modern contrast Mourelatos perhaps has in mind is that the *Doxa* should not be understood as a crude precursor to Husserl's phenomenology, or even the early Russell's theory of knowledge.[98]

In response to Mourelatos's objection: it does not follow from the fact that the *Doxa* does not concern, as he says, "a *purely* descriptive account of appearances" (181, my emphasis), that it *thereby* concerns only opinions. As noted at the outset of this subsection, the issue that would distinguish appearances (in the sense of sensible objects) from opinions is whether our taking something to be *as* something or *as* acceptable (*qua* sensible object) has more to do with us than with the object itself. *Why* does it *seem* that there is a plurality of sensible objects that have the very features or natures they (seem) to have? Does this have to do with the objects (an externalist reading) or us (an internalist or Kantian sort of reading)?[99] Sensibles, as Mourelatos

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[97] As opposed to *phenomena*.

[98] In *The Problems of Philosophy*, for example, Russell (1912:46) says that knowledge by acquaintance is knowledge having to do "with anything of which we are directly aware, without the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of truths." What we are directly aware of is whatever is phenomenologically given to the senses, what he calls "sense-data." It does seem clear that *that* is not what Parmenides has in mind in the *Doxa*, where he speaks of fairly standard *objects*—individual things—such as the sun and moon, and does not give a description of rounded-yellow-brightness, for example.

[99] This is, it seems, a deep issue in Parmenides, since it seems to mark the difference between pure solipsism and something like pure Quinean naturalism. On the latter reading, there is strictly no "internalism" at all, since the human brain is just as much part of the natural order of things as the oak tree growing in the quad.

would agree, are real *for mortals,* since—as he said above—that is how they take them to be. But mortals are, for Parmenides, radically deceived about the things they take to be real. Further complicating things is that mortals are themselves just such sensible objects, and mortals take *themselves* to be such and such in precisely the same way they take other sensibles.[100] As I argue in the next subsection, however, Parmenides wants to show that every sensible object—inanimate things like rocks and planets, for example—are flawed *qua* appearance in just the same way an animate, subjectively construed, actively deliberating human being is: *qua* sensible, they are all ontologically incoherent for B8 reasons.

In any event, Mourelatos is correct that Parmenides is not construing appearances in a purely phenomenological sense. Indeed, such an approach would make no sense of the error Parmenides attributes to mortal opinion; it does not seem possible, as many later philosophers would observe, that we can be wrong about what sense data appears to us or *how*. So if the *Doxa* did concern a purely phenomenological description of experience, it can hardly be supposed that mortals would be so radically in error about that very description.[101] Instead, the goddess is clear at B8.50-51 that what follows (i.e., the *Doxa*) is *not* part of the truths she had previously argued for: "Here I *cease* [παύω] from faithful account and thought about truth; from this point on learn mortal opinions . . . ."[102] Thus, to claim that the *Doxa* concerns the things of

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[100] As any Freudian or moral psychologist knows, there can be radical deception in how we understand even ourselves.

[101] For Parmenides to invoke mortal error at all, there must be a disconnection between relatively complex and propositionally construed mortal beliefs (e.g., *that* there are people, planets, and pillows) and the objects of belief as they really are. Mourelatos's line of argument countenances this, but does *not* disallow an appearances reading as I have construed such a reading. But as I argue below, Parmenides' own ontology cannot sustain his invocation of mortal error even in this sense.

[102] Some commentators, such as Dorter (2012:51) argue that the goddess must mean that the *Doxa* contains truths in *some* sense. But that sense cannot regard *content*. If anything, the truths of the *Doxa* are second order truths *about* the false content.

appearance does not imply that it concerns those things merely as phenomenologically given. Mourelatos's objection to the appearances reading, then, targets a variant of that reading I too find objectionable. It remains, however, that his criteriological/subjective analysis does not mean that the *Doxa* is merely about opinions.[103] What is needed to push the largely linguistic issue of disambiguating τὰ δοκοῦντα—away from the strict opinions carried by the phrase βροτῶν δόξας, and toward the objective side of things—is to place what τὰ δοκοῦντα is supposed to convey within the larger context of Parmenides' philosophy.

3.2.2. τὰ δοκοῦντα as Appearances

It must immediately be conceded that all commentators recognize that the *Doxa* is in *some* sense a cosmological discussion about things—sensible particulars or appearances—as well as of dubious mortal opinions.[104] Thus, the issue is not *whether* Parmenides discusses sensibles; it is, rather, what role such things are supposed to play in the *Doxa* and what the relation between sensibles and mortal opinion is supposed to be, and how all of this relates to the being of the *Aletheia*. As we have already seen, Mourelatos, to give just one example, has a lengthy discussion about the sun and moon, arguing that both (or at least one) teeter on the ontological precipice between being and not-being. I argued above that this discussion is meant to be a general lesson for the *kouros* about the nature of the world of mortal experience, and

[103] Clark (1969:19) also sees the ambiguity of τὰ δοκοῦντα, going so far as to pose the crucial question few authors ask: "can we equate the δοκοῦντα with βροτῶν δόξας, as some commentators do, or is this to confuse the physical *objects* which are the object of sense-perception, with the resultant *understanding* which is based on a study of the phenomenal world?" (emphases in the original).

[104] Parmenides' language can hardly be ignored: he talks about such things. But the question is largely one of interpretation, i.e., whether one takes Parmenides' project more epistemologically as having to do with inquiry, or ontologically as having to do with the nature of the things under investigation. My argument falls on the ontological side, since I see the objects under investigation as *determining* whether our thoughts about them are correct.

indeed is a sort of *mimetic showing* to the *kouros* of the very instability of that world: the goddess explicitly mimics the language of the *Aletheia* and *mixes* it with the language of mixture itself, mimicking the very way mortals go wrong. Moreover, as we saw in the previous subsection, Mourelatos takes this mortal activity to be an active doing: mortals *take* things to be thus and so, and this taking is itself (for him) the ground of dubious mortal opinion. In this regard Mourelatos justifies taking τὰ δοκοῦντα to concern opinions and not appearances or the sensibles themselves.

But there is a deeper issue, mentioned in the previous subsection, behind the discussion of the meaning or reference of τὰ δοκοῦντα. Mourelatos's arguments about how mortals take things nicely indicates the problem. The question is as old as philosophy itself: what is the cause of the wrongness or rightness of mortal opinion? Specifically, *why* is it that mortals take the objects of their experience in the very ways they take them to be? Is it something about mortals themselves, or something about the alleged things about which mortals have opinions?[105]

I submit that this is the central issue about how we should understand τὰ δοκοῦντα: is Parmenides more concerned with how it is that mortals go wrong from their point of view, or is he more concerned with explaining the problem with mortal opinion from the side of the things those opinions are supposed to be about?[106] And can this divide even be sustained? The quick

[105] This issue is, of course, central to Plato's *Theaetetus*, a dialogue where Parmenides is not a central figure, but is referred to as "venerable and awesome" at 183e, thereby invoking (but not spelling out) a sort of negative or inverse context to the discussions in that dialogue about mixture, change, and flux.

[106] There are, at least, crude intuitions about *when* error occurs: we are in error when our beliefs about *x* somehow do not "match" *x* itself. But this intuition belies very great difficulties. For example, what is the ontological status of an erroneous belief, one that is *not* in fact about *x* at all? Just *what* is it a belief *of*? If it is a partial belief "about *x*," then what does this mean if the intentional relation between believer and object targets only part of the object? Are there parts of objects such that my belief concerning them is thereby sufficient for me to claim that I have a belief about *x* itself? Are there beliefs about other parts where this is insufficient? There are familiar *Meno* problems involved in these questions.

answer is that Parmenides is concerned with both, since much of his language clearly indicates that mortals go wrong by *doing* such and such. But if that is the case—that Parmenides is concerned with both mortal opinions (a subjective interpretation) and their objects (an objective interpretation), then it is reasonable that he would use two terms to cover the distinction. In fact, it is much more complicated: if, as I argued in chapter 2, Parmenides' project is supposed to cover the blurry lines between ontology, epistemology, logic, and language, then it seems a single term could be used to cover the necessary ambiguity. But the text disallows this, since Parmenides uses both βροτῶν δόξας and τὰ δοκοῦντα to talk about these cognate topics. The latter term—the problematic one—carries the weight of the entire *Doxa*, so it is crucial that the weight of the *Doxa,* and its relation to the *Aletheia* be brought to bear on its interpretation.

What, precisely, does this mean? I argued above, siding with Mourelatos against a purely phenomenological reading of the *Doxa*, that the sensibles mentioned in the *Doxa* ought to be understood as things taken to be such and such (sun, moon, etc.). Whether τὰ δοκοῦντα refers to or means such things is the issue. I further argued, however, that τὰ δοκοῦντα and βροτῶν δόξας can sustain linguistic separation, i.e., can be seen to refer to or mean *different* things. Here I argue that placing τὰ δοκοῦντα within Parmenides' larger project shows that it should indeed be disambiguated on the objective side of things. The argument is as follows: if the *Aletheia* sets the standards by which anything must *be* and be *known*, then the *Doxa* too must be understood against the standards set up in the *Aletheia*. If the *Aletheia* concerns ontology and its associated *truth*, then the *Doxa* by analogy should concern *purported beings* and their associated *opinions*. If it is reasonable to understand Parmenides' project in this way, then the meaning of τὰ δοκοῦντα should be *weighted* on the side of appearances (taken as sensibles) rather than on that of opinions, even though, as we have seen, it is ambiguous between them. At least some of that

ambiguity must—and probably rightly or intentionally—remain intact. And if τὰ δοκοῦντα can be so weighted, then the *Doxa* should be understood as a description of the onto-cosmological foundation of dubious mortal opinions. Its main concern, then, is to explicate mortal opinion in light of the problematic nature of its objects.

The most pressing and controversial issue for the above argument is what justifies the claim that the *Aletheia* must be taken as the standard by which we should judge the contents of the *Doxa*. As argued in §3.1 the *Doxa* has no internal standards for the grounding or ontological justification of its content. But this means either that the content is thereby nonexistent (the most common interpretation for ontologically minded commentators), or it exists Eleatically. What considerations can be brought to bear on taking the *Doxa* in the latter sense?

The goddess's *Doxa* tale, as I argued above, is a mimetic rendering of two-headed mortal discourse about the plurality of sensible objects that come to be and pass away, i.e., the world they take to exhaust (or more strongly, be *identical* to) reality. Moreover, recall that the goddess warns against mortal opinion quite early on at B1.28-30. And at B8.50-51 she explicitly says that she will "cease from faithful account and thought about *truth* [ἀληθείης]." The claims at B1.28-30 (that mortal opinions are dubious) and B8.50-51 (that she will suddenly stop talking about truth) indicate that what follows the former passage and precedes the latter is to be taken in *stark contrast* to the story she tells from B8.50 onward. The contrasted section just is the *Aletheia*. There must be a reason why the *kouros* should be warned early about mortal opinions, such that the goddess is explicit enough to say *later* that she has ended her discourse on truth.[107]

[107] Though it is true that Parmenides' audience is ultimately different from the goddess's—namely, the *kouros*—the *kouros* is not so different from mortals at this stage of the poem. This assumes, of course, that the proem is the first part of the poem, and that the rest of the fragments more or less follow Diels.

In this vein Parmenides seems to require that dubious mortal opinions be contrasted with something ostensibly not dubious. Moreover, the contrast at B8.50-51, between what the goddess *had been* talking about and what she *will* talk about, seems to require something categorically similar to the former. In other words, if the goddess is talking about one kind of thing in the *Aletheia*, then it seems reasonable that she should talk about what purports to be the *same kind* of thing in the *Doxa*.[108] But she seems to *explicitly* recall the B1.30 mention of mortal *opinions* (βροτῶν δόξας) when she uses δόξας…βροτείας at B8.51.[109] Now, this seems to be evidence that we should indeed take τὰ δοκοῦντα (and with it the contents of the *Doxa*) to be rendered more as opinions than as appearances, since the goddess says she will be discussing such opinions. If at the outset of the *Doxa* the goddess says she is now turning to mortal opinions, and the *Doxa* is about the meaning or referent of τὰ δοκοῦντα, then βροτῶν δόξας and τὰ δοκοῦντα ought to be co-referential or mean the same thing, *pace* my §3.2.1 arguments. All this seems good evidence that the contrast between the *Doxa* and *Aletheia* should be weighted along epistemological/subjective and not ontological/objective lines.

This is well and good if the *Aletheia* primarily concerns something categorically similar to the mortal opinions mentioned at B8.51, such as various knowledge or inquiry claims, rendered propositionally.[110] And it must be conceded that Parmenides in the *Aletheia* (and the

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[108] As I argue below, the subject matter of the *Aletheia* is first and foremost *being*, or *what is*, indicated by the word 'it' (supplied in English) throughout B.8. This *it*—whatever it is—is the thing constrained by Eleatic principles. In the *Doxa*, the goddess fills out, as it were, the *Aletheia*'s variable with various appearing-things, such as sun and moon. In this sense, then, the subject of the *Aletheia* should be considered analogical with the subject matters of the *Doxa*. But only one sort of talk ends up being legitimate.

[109] Gadamer (2000:100) makes a similar observation.

[110] I state this somewhat awkward phrase because it is clear that *belief* (or opinion) in Parmenides must be propositional: mortals believe *that* the sun is pure light, and *that* real things come to be and change. It is far from clear that knowledge of the being of the *Aletheia* is propositional, however.

proem) uses several terms that are concerned with correct and incorrect thinking, learning, and inquiry, which indicates that he is indeed concerned with such epistemological issues. For example, the goddess tells the *kouros* that *mortal opinions* (βροτῶν δόξας), which he shall *learn* (πυθέσθαι), have no true reliance (B1.28-30), that there are two ways of *inquiry* (διζήσιός) for thinking (B2.2), and that mortals "are borne both deaf and blind, dazed, undiscerning tribes, by whom to be and not to be are *thought* (νενόμισται) to be the same and not the same . . ." (B6.6-9). A major aspect of what Parmenides hopes to accomplish is the idea that mortal thought—by way of or given through mortals' beliefs or opinions—is somehow wrongheaded. But just what does it mean to say, specifically in the *Aletheia* context, that mortal opinion is wrongheaded, and does Parmenides' heavy use of epistemic terms in that section mean that his primary overall focus is mortal knowledge and belief? If it is, what justifies his saying that these things are wrongheaded?

I submit that the goddess at B8.51, when she explicitly censures mortal opinion, recalls the mortal opinion admonished at B1.30. So part of what we get in the *Aletheia* are necessary but *not sufficient* teachings or lessons for the *kouros* (or any mortal) about why mortal opinions are not to be trusted.[111] They are necessary because if the *kouros* wants to learn truth, he must learn what the goddess says in the *Aletheia*. Part of what she says there, of course, is that mortals wander two-headed because "to be and not to be are thought to be the same and not the same. . ." (B6.8-9). Not only will the *kouros* learn the truth about reality (largely covered in B8), he will also learn *something* about mortal opinion, such as from B6.8-9. But such lessons are not sufficient for his *education* since he is, after all, a mortal and not a god. The *kouros*, like all

[111] The content of the *Aletheia*, however, is both necessary and sufficient for the *being* of anything.

mortals, thinks that the relative stability that *seems* to exist for sensible things is *real* stability. The arguments of the *Aletheia*, however, show that what the *kouros* and all mortals take to be real stability is mired in contradiction and indeed total *instability*, were those things to be *qua* the things mortals *take* them to be. It is necessary for the *kouros* to go through the exercises of the *Aletheia* to understand what real stability amounts to; but this does not mean that he will not at times revert to believing that the things of sensible experience are entirely stable.[112] But he must additionally be shown—indeed *experience*—the dubious story the goddess gives. It is through her mimetic discourse that he experiences the instability for himself. In this way he is prepared (as much as a mortal can be) to meet with dubious opinions when he finds them.[113]

But what about the contents of the *Aletheia* on this picture? Again, is it largely epistemological? The language Parmenides uses throughout indicates that it is not. To see this, we must ask why he uses the epistemological language he uses. As we will see, in nearly every context such language is actually grounded in *ontological* claims. Consider a few specifics.

First, the goddess starts out the *Aletheia* in B2 by telling the *kouros* that he will receive knowledge from what she tells him (B2.1). Note again that she will later in the *Aletheia* tell him about mortal opinions, from which it seems he will *also* gain knowledge, namely, a knowledge of how mortals err. But what she immediately tells him in B2 is that there are two ways or paths of inquiry, and that only one is, and cannot possibly *not* be (B2.2-3); "the other [path]," she tells

[112] Hence, my argument above about how to interpret the difficult B8.38-41: mortals seem (already) to take something like Eleatic being to apply to the ever-changing world of sensible experience. And they name their foundational principles accordingly. But in so doing they are supremely misguided because those very principles are themselves conceptually unstable.

[113] Compare the reasons for teaching logical fallacies: it seems that learning good argument forms would be sufficient for fending off bad reasoning. It turns out, however, that logic students—and indeed senior philosophers—are but mere mortals. I make a similar observation in chapter 5 regarding combatting sophistry.

him, is "that it is not and that it is right it should not be" (B2.5).[114] All of these claims—except the modal aspects—are seemingly justified at the end of B2 when the goddess says "for neither could you know *what is not* [τό μὴ ἐὸν] (for it cannot be accomplished), nor could you declare it/point it out" (B2.7-8). The justification for the epistemological claims about knowing which way of inquiry is acceptable rests on the claims about their *objects*: the one path, *that it is*; the other, *that it is not*.

Now, one objection, perhaps, is that it is unclear what the referent of 'it' is: is it the path of inquiry itself or the (ostensible) object of the (alleged) path? If it is the path, then the sense of the passage becomes confusing, since it seems possible that the path of not-being exists at least in terms of inquiry *as such*: I can inquire into things I think exist, though they do not. That is, I can embark on a search.[115] Such a search is an epistemological (or more properly *doxastic*) adventure, since it is unclear what 'that which does not exist' or 'what does not exist' could signify ontologically, as I argued in chapter 2. Of course, no one deliberately sets out on a search for things they *know* do not exist. But some search for nonexistent things nonetheless. For example, many paths of inquiry existed into the nature of the *aether* as a sort of substantial medium by which light (for example) travels. These inquiries were futile. But why? Because

[114] For those who want a more modern version of the two paths, Wedin (2014:15) formalizes them: (x) ([x is $\wedge$ x necessarily is] $\vee$ [x is not $\wedge$ x necessarily is not]). Note—as Wedin does—that this seems obviously false and is indeed the source of the great modal controversy in Parmenides: he seems to go from a simple assertion of the law of excluded middle, i.e., (x) (x is $\vee$ x is not), to imbuing each disjunct with unwarranted necessity. Wedin, however, reconstructs the *Aletheia* in such a way that there is no modal fallacy (his "modal extension" argument). Dealing with his careful analysis here would take us too far afield.

[115] One objection to this idea, perhaps, is that if there are no objects of my inquiry (unbeknownst to me), then what I am doing is not properly an inquiry at all. One is reminded of television shows such as *Ghost Hunters*, etc. If there are no ghosts, then the paranormal searchers are merely traipsing about in graveyards with fancy equipment. This does not seem correct, however, since part of the *point* of inquiry is that we do *not* know (precisely) that into which we inquire. Again, there are *Meno* problems here. See also Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* 1.1.

there is no *aether*. To generalize, it is conceivable that inquiries into nonexistent things (again, whatever that means) can themselves exist, and are not contingent *qua* inquiry upon whether their alleged objects exist. One could hypothesize that there is only one possible explanation for the existence or nature of certain things (e.g., light) and that the *aether* is the only possible thing to explain them. Why would such a hypothesis be overthrown? Because the hypothesis eventually fails to fit into more generalized hypotheses (or theories) that *do* fit with one another; there comes along better explanations for the nature of the thing in question.

In any event, *things*—purported or otherwise—drive these sorts of discourses. Our explanations for some things we can clearly "know" in some sense (that light exists, for example) rest on our taking as existing other things (the *aether*) we may be less clear about. This seems to be the gist of what the goddess notes in B2: the *kouros* will never get anywhere if he inquires into nonexistent things, even if he does not *know* this, and especially because nearly all the things he takes to exist *are not.*[116]

Other *Aletheia* fragments fare similarly.[117] For example, B4 seems, at first glance, to be epistemological, since the goddess says "look at things though absent for the mind *present securely*" [παρεόντα βεβαίως] (B4.1). The rest of the fragment, however—like B2—justifies this ostensibly epistemological claim with what seems to be a very ontological claim: "*for* [γὰρ] you will not cut off what-is from clinging to what-is, since it is neither completely scattered everywhere in the world nor combined" (B4.2-4). This is an obscure fragment, especially given

[116] The *Aletheia* is supposed to show him why this is so; the *Doxa* is supposed to guard him against slipping, or at least guard against the possibility that what he is inquiring into does not, in fact, exist.
[117] B3, the thesis about the identity of thought and being, is perhaps a sort of clincher for the objective-over-subjective view, though this is not obvious to most interpreters of Parmenides, who take such identity to issue in proto-idealism. I argue against that view in chapter 2.

what is said in the second line: how is it that if what-is is *clinging to* [ἔχεσθαι] what-is, it is not *thereby* combined with what-is? The answer comes in B8: there is no differentiation within what-is (B8.22-25), so there is nothing (separate) to combine. Again, however, the γὰρ seems to present an ontological justification for the initial epistemological claim: some things seem to be absent from the mind, though they "present securely" *because* there is no differentiation within being such that they *could* be absent from thought. B4 as a whole seems to expand upon (in an obscure way) the goddess's repeated claim that the *kouros* must always be testing his thoughts; if he truly tests his thoughts about things that are "absent," he will realize they are in fact *not*. B4 is both an explanation of B3's identity claim between thought and being and a precursor to the main show—B8—which will explain just why such things are not absent: because there is nothing but being.

In B6 we again get an ontological ground for an epistemologically loaded fragment, though this time the ontology is present at the outset: "it is right to say and to think that what-is is, for being is/it is for being, and nothing is not" (B6.1). The rest of the fragment echoes previous epistemological claims, especially from B2, about which paths of inquiry are correct, which are incorrect, and *why* they are incorrect. The reasons spelled out in B6.1 are ontological. Finally, B7 is similar to B6 in placing its ontology at the forefront: "never shall this prevail, that things that are not are." The rest of the fragment implores the *kouros* to forgo a path of inquiry—a path of *purported knowing*—that somehow starts from (or concludes with) the existence of such dubious *entities*, namely, things that *are not*.

What does this discussion about the ontological character of the *Aletheia* mean for the content of the *Doxa*? It means, I argue, that the *Doxa*'s content must similarly—or by analogy—be mostly concerned with matters of *alleged* ontology, i.e., with purported or deceptive beings,

the beings that are taken by mortals to exist *in the very same way* as Eleatic beings. It is these things about which mortals are in radical error: they make a grave mistake in taking unstable things to be stable things. The point of the *Aletheia* is to show, finally, what the nature of stable things must consist in; the point of the *Doxa* is to show that the things one believes in do not have that stability.

One way to summarize the position I take on the contents of the *Aletheia* and *Doxa* is that the central issue concerns appearances versus reality more than it concerns thought versus opinion. The latter, I have argued, are supposed to be grounded in the nature of the former. But a general objection to such an interpretation is that it is simply too anachronistic, i.e., too Platonic. This objection, most recently from Cordero, is that the appearance-reality problem did not become a problem until Plato discovered or articulated it. Thus, Cordero claims that Parmenides, in the *Sophist*, "seems to adopt a 100% platonic dichotomy (appearance vs. real being) but only to deny *one* of the elements of the dichotomy, appearances (237a)" (2011:103, my emphasis). Furthermore, as Cordero notes, there seems to be rampant polarizing in presocratic thought, as found in Pythagorean oppositions and the Heraclitean distinction between "visible and invisible harmony."[118] But in all such cases, Cordero notes, *neither* of the poles are denied as real. He continues: "the whole thing is different in Plato, to whom, *in order to reject sophistry*, everything that belongs to the realm of sensation (i.e., all 'physical' realities) belong to the realm of 'appearances' . . ." (my emphasis). Cordero seems to imply that Plato applies his own practice of adopting one side of an opposition as real, the other as unreal, *in order* to cast

[118] Note again, that Curd sees light and night as a certain kind of opposite, one that is not the same sort as the Pythagorean or Heraclitean opposites. As argued above, all opposition for Parmenides is problematic.

the sophist to not-being. That is, Plato wants to oppose the sophist to the real being of the philosopher, and so he employs a uniquely (at the time) platonic scheme of appearance (unreality) versus being (reality), for the purpose of dropping one and saving the other.[119] Cordero's overall point, as he indicates, is that the sort of opposition Plato foists upon Parmenides is in many ways "taken as an antecedent of the divided line of the *Republic*."

It is unclear, however, whether, from these considerations of Plato's discussions of the appearance-reality divide, we can attribute something akin to Parmenides. Cordero seems to further suggest that philosophers who were interested in the nature of physical things would not have articulated a philosophy that totally denies their existence. Thus, if Parmenides was a doctor, which Cordero notes is possible, he would thereby be in no position to "consider a patient as something purely 'apparent'." But this possibility—that Parmenides was a medical doctor who helped patients—cannot be evidence against Parmenides' accepting numerical monism *philosophically*. To invoke the famous Hume anecdote, when Parmenides put on his scrubs he was helping patients; but in his study, he followed his arguments to their logical conclusions. Indeed, Hume seemingly thought he was doing worthwhile political philosophy even though his epistemology forced him to think—*in the study*—that there was simply no credible evidence that human selves, to which political philosophy applies, *exist* as such, nor the causal factors in, say, political revolutions.[120]

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[119] I will have more to say about this issue in the *Sophist* in chapter 5, since I oppose this reading of these issues, indeed taking a completely opposed view of the nature of the sophist, as understood by Plato.

[120] Dorter (2012:50) notes this analogy between Parmenides and Hume, but claims that Parmenides' rejection of change "would be a far greater incoherence than Hume's since Parmenides denies not merely the objective basis of a perceived relationship (cause and effect) but the objective existence of any changing being including, by implication, Parmenides himself." Similar thoughts are provided by Mackenzie (1982). As I noted in chapter 2, however, Unger (1979) provides arguments that dispel such alleged incoherencies. I cannot defend the coherence (or Unger) here, but I find these so-called paradoxical claims in Parmenides to be not paradoxical (in the strict

In any event, Cordero's claims of anachronism for those who accept an appearances-reality reading for Parmenides are not particularly strong; they certainly do not rule out that Parmenides was indeed preoccupied with that (and many other) dichotomies. Textual evidence of Parmenides' preoccupation with dualisms, dichotomies, and paradoxes—much of it rehearsed above—seem to point toward, not away from, an appearance-reality reading. Moreover, Cordero himself unwittingly points to an appearance-reality reading: "indeed, in Parmenides, only the discourse is 'like' (ἐοικότα, 8.60): it is *similar* to the true speech" (103-4, my emphasis). If the discourse is *like* or *similar* to the true speech, then one is true and the other is something *else*. Cordero does point out, however, that the discourse is merely words; for him, the subject matter of the discourse—sensibles—is *not apparent*, i.e., it is *real*. "In fact," he says, "a discourse can be deceptive even when it refers to what is real." This is true; but what makes it both true *and* more likely an appearances-reality reading, is that βροτῶν δόξας and τὰ δοκοῦντα mean or refer to different things, and δοκίμως means genuine.

3.2.3. δοκίμως as Genuineness: Appearances are Grounded in Eleatic Being II

This subsection briefly summarizes how we should interpret δοκίμως, given my previous arguments, including those of chapter 2. In general outline, the argument is this:

(1) βροτῶν δόξας strictly refers to/means mortal opinions, whereas τὰ δοκοῦντα can be interpreted as referring to/meaning the (alleged) objects of those opinions (§3.2.1)
(2) The *Aletheia* sets the agenda for the poem as a whole: if it concerns being, then the *Doxa* should, by analogy, concern purported beings (§3.2.2)
(3) The *Aletheia* sets the only ontological standard by which

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sense). Strange, yes. Paradoxical, no.

existing things must be judged to really or genuinely be, ultimately issuing in strong monism (§3.1 and chapter 2)

(4) If the *Doxa* largely explicates the nature of τὰ δοκοῦντα, then it follows from (1) and (2) that τὰ δοκοῦντα should be interpreted as referring to/meaning the (alleged) objects of mortal opinions
(5) If so, then βροτῶν δόξας and τὰ δοκοῦντα have distinct referents/meanings
(6) δοκίμως εἶναι modifies only τὰ δοκοῦντα
(7) If so, then δοκίμως εἶναι does not modify βροτῶν δόξας
(8) οὐκ . . . πίστις ἀληθής (B1.30) concerns only βροτῶν δόξας
(9) If so, then οὐκ . . . πίστις ἀληθής does not concern τὰ δοκοῦντα
(10) From (3), (4), and (6), it follows that appearances exist δοκίμως
(11) From (3) and (10), it follows that appearances genuinely or really exist (i.e., premise 3 compels the 'genuine' translation of δοκίμως)
(12) The text confirms (11) with περ ὄντα at B1.32: appearances genuinely exist because they are just being
(13) From all this it follows that appearances genuinely exist whereas opinions have no true trust

Now, if appearances genuinely or really exist, and the monism argued for in chapter 2 obtains, it follows that appearances are nothing more than being itself; they are *identical* to the one truly/genuinely/really existing thing.[121] This does not, as some have thought, afford appearances the sort of reality mortals believe them to have; that is, the identity of being and appearances does not legitimate appearances in the *way* mortals take them to be, just as the identity of thought and being (in B3) does not make Parmenides a quasi-Berkeleyan idealist.

Dorter seems to invoke such a reading for being itself (2012:48). He gives an analogy between B4 and the "permeates" (περῶντα) reading: "just as there is no body without its constituent limbs, there is no Being without the things that appear and permeate everything."

[121] According to Mourelatos (2008:83 n20), Schwabl (1953) interprets the *Aletheia* as achieving a unification of contraries. On my interpretation, however, there can be no contraries to be unified.

This seems to get things backwards, unless he too accepts a strict identity between the appearing-things and being.[122] It is, rather, that there are no appearing-things that permeate everything *without being*. The reason, as I have argued, is because there is only being.

There are two ways to understand this problem: either being is "spread out" among the appearing-things, such that each one is a part of being. Or the appearing-things are entirely subsumed under being. The former, as I have argued here and in chapter 2, runs afoul of the denial of not-being, since it countenances plurality. It also runs afoul of Parmenides' claim at B4.4 that being is not scattered everywhere. Dorter does seem to accept the subsumption reading when he continues, "and just as our limbs *lose their separateness* in the realm of life as part of a living person, all things that appear to our senses lose their separateness in the realm of the timeless and spaceless" (my emphasis). Notice, however, that Dorter invokes the problematic language of separate realms: if the *Aletheia* guides Parmenides' philosophy as a whole, then its standards apply to *everything*. If so, then they are the standards for the existence of appearances. But if so, then appearances just are being. There is no middle ground, no limbo state whereby appearances have pseudo-being. Dorter appears to accept that there is a middle ground (a third way for appearances), and yet that appearances "lose their separateness" in the realm of Eleatic being. As I have argued, there is only one realm.

If Eleatic monism obtains, and appearances genuinely exist, then the only possible way to reconcile the *actual* genuineness of the *Doxa*'s contents with the guiding ontology of the *Aletheia* is to eradicate the *dubious* genuineness of appearances *qua appearances*. And if the

[122] He does not. For Dorter (52) appearances exist in a sort of limbo state between Eleatic being and total not-being. That is, they have (or have to have, though he does not explain how) their own independent standards for existence. As I argued above, appearances for Parmenides cannot have such independent existence standards.

doxastic language Parmenides uses at the end of the proem can be parsed into distinctly meaningful linguistic chucks—βροτῶν δόξας from τὰ δοκοῦντα—then it is possible to see how appearances can be genuine and opinions *about them* false.[123] Appearances are genuine by being identical to being; opinions *about* appearance are false because there strictly are no appearing-things. Mortals go wrong by naming two forms by which the myriad appearing-things can allegedly (but falsely) be explained. But naming and opining about such objects is for naught. And the best way for a mortal like the pre-initiated *kouros* to come to understand reality as it is, is both to learn the nature of that reality and to experience a mimetic performance of mortal two-headed wandering *from the very one teaching him about truth*, i.e., the goddess. In the end, it takes an immortal's teaching of truth and her mimetic performance of mortal *error* to set the *kouros* on the right path. After all, why would he believe the tales of his mortal fellows? The goddess *qua* one with access to timeless truths is the only one who could teach the *kouros* about truth *and* error. The final question is whether any of this is coherent.

3.3. The Status of False Belief in Parmenides

Thus far I have argued that one upshot of separating and disassociating the semantic content of βροτῶν δόξας from τὰ δοκοῦντα allows for the identity of appearances and being. Appearances genuinely exist, but our opinions and beliefs about them are entirely false. The disambiguation of τὰ δοκοῦντα on the side of appearances—sensible particulars—also allows for

[123] It is misleading to think of opinions about appearances as inadequate because the latter are only *partial* aspects of being. For Parmenides this cannot obtain: in order to explain the alleged inadequacy of opinions as *resting on* the partiality of appearances would require that the only possible thing that could explain inadequacy—being—is divisible.

the content of the *Doxa* to be analogously similar to the content of the *Aletheia*: if the latter concerns the nature of being, then for consistency across the poem, the former ought to be seen as a discourse on the purported or alleged beings that figure in mortal opinions.[124] Thus, Parmenides' poem ought to be considered a treatise on onto-cosmology in the first instance, and one on epistemic-doxastic issues secondarily. It is the force of the *Aletheia* as a guide for what counts as real that compels this reading: *all* and *only* those things that adhere to Eleatic principles are real. It turns out that there is just one such thing. My reading also, then, allows appearances to genuinely exist and yet monism to be *true*; that is, my reading finds a place for appearances within Parmenides' preferred ontological framework, i.e., numerical monism. This may seem paradoxical, but it is not.[125] It does, however, compel internal inconsistency within Parmenides' project as a whole.

Now, as far as other paradoxes, dilemmas, and problems alleged with Parmenides' philosophy go, perhaps the one that gets the most play is the idea that if Eleatic monism is true, then not even Parmenides himself can exist. As I argued in the last chapter, Parmenides on this score joins several contemporary metaphysicians who take the position that ordinary objects, including themselves, do not exist in ordinary or common sense ways. Of course, a lot of hedging and qualification goes into these arguments. The same qualification and hedging must be done in Parmenides as well, in order to say that appearances do *not* exist. As I have argued, it

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[124] Above I noted that the *Aletheia* sets out to argue for constraints on an Eleatic *it*, and I noted that 'it' acts as a sort of variable. The *Doxa* attempts to put meat on this *it* by giving actual examples—of both foundational and derived entities—of what *seem* to mortals to be capable of meeting (at least some of) the criteria for *it*. In effect, an interpretation of the *Aletheia* as issuing in Eleatic (numerical) monism is *enhanced* by the problems in the *Doxa*: the variable 'it' is exceedingly barren; but the *Doxa* at least shows—negatively—what sorts of things could *not* fill the variable.

[125] That is, it is not paradoxical to say that many alleged things "really are" just one thing, if the reduction can successfully obtain.

is only in the sense of appearances *qua appearances* that they do not exist; they *do* exist *qua* Eleatic being.

What are we to make of mortal opinion on this picture? Ostensibly mortals believe in a plurality of sensible particulars and, given Eleatic monism, all of their beliefs about such things are *prima facie* wrong, since there *is* no plurality at all. Take any purported individual sensible and Parmenides will show in just what ways it is ontologically unstable; it is so unstable that its *being* can no longer be countenanced, since its instability guarantees that it is no more itself than any other purported individual thing (which is likewise unstable, *ad infinitum* down the list of individual particulars).[126] As noted in chapter 1, if the many lose their grip (as it were) on ontological stability, such that they fail to have stable conditions of identity and individuation, but there still exists *something*, then it follows that there is only one thing. The subsuming of the many appearances under the one Eleatic being is complete.

Now it is clear that most of us mortals, pre-goddess, do *not* believe that the manifold of plural sensible particulars we experience really is just one immovable, unchanging whole of a single kind. But now a thorn in Parmenides' side begins to stab: *why* do we believe in plurality if there is just one thing? The salient answer is that *we* make the fundamental mistake of naming two forms and deriving our sensible particulars from their inter-mingling. If, however, ontology drives all in Parmenides, as I have argued, and the analogy between being in the *Aletheia* and purported beings in the *Doxa* holds, then there must be something about the nature of the purported beings that compels us to have the very opinions we have *about* them. But this is

[126] The discussion of sun and moon, I argued, is meant to show the *kouros*, and mimic in language, this very instability.

impossible: there is nothing *more* to sensible particulars than *being*. That is, since sensibles are totally subsumed under being, and indeed identical to it, there is nothing about being that could compel our having the very opinions we do have—opinions that are as varied and as complex as their alleged objects—since being cannot be divided in such a way as to explain that complexity. But that is precisely the role being would *have* to play in order to explain why we have those very opinions. Put simply: being would have to be divisible.

One objection here is that being would not have to be divisible for us to *mistakenly* take it to be divided amongst the alleged sensibles we in fact experience. And that is precisely Parmenides' point: the fact that mortals have mistaken beliefs about reality has nothing to do with the nature of being. This objection, however, assumes that the ontological nature of Parmenides' *Aletheia* can, in some sense, be divorced from the beings of the *Doxa*. That is, the objection assumes that mortal error can be explained by its own internal standards. What this amounts to, however, is precisely the problem addressed in §3.1 regarding whether the *Doxa* has independent standards for explaining the reality of its contents. As I argued there, there are no intra-*Doxa*, non-Eleatic standards by which the existence of appearances could be explained. *A fortiori*—if the content of belief is indeed determined by the nature of its objects, as I have argued is the case for Parmenides—there are no corresponding intra-*Doxa* standards for determining whether some belief is true or false. The truth or falsity of a belief must align entirely to the *Aletheia*, since it is *being*—and *only* being—that could possibly act as the determining factor. But if that is the case, since being is not divisible into the very parts that would ostensibly explain the complexity of mortal belief, it cannot *thereby* explain how mortal error is possible. The upshot is that being is the only thing "there" to act as an explanation for how mortal error is possible, but it cannot do that important job, given the austerity of Eleatic

ontology.

4. Conclusion

What the *Doxa* is supposed to be about, and indeed its overall role in Parmenides' poem, has been a point of contention since antiquity, and continues to be a very problematic issue in Parmenides scholarship. As noted in the introduction, the *Doxa* clearly has cosmological elements and somehow concerns mortal opinions. The pressing issue of how the *Doxa* is or could be related to the *Aletheia* on philosophical grounds is not simply a question of how two seemingly disparate sections of a poem are supposed to relate to one another *qua* subject matter. I submit that the issue concerns nothing less than an early statement about how knowledge—and likewise false belief—is possible. Parmenides' answer is boldly *ontological*: the constraints on what *can* be known are entirely up to what counts as a *thing* or *object* of knowledge. Ontology drives epistemology. Moreover, what counts as an object of knowledge is that which is constrained by the principles argued for in B8. As I argued in chapter 2, there is only one such thing that so counts. The *Doxa*, however, purports to show the other side of the coin: mortals, who think they know, attempt to explain the world they experience by appealing to seemingly stable ontological principles. They cut up *actual* (i.e., B8) "stable being" in a variety of ways, none of which are acceptable because none are *real*; reality cannot be understood as being "cut up" in *any* way. The final upshot is that Eleatic ontology cannot sustain the epistemological censure Parmenides hopes to make against mortals: the very ontology he accepts *bars* mortals from having the very false beliefs he attributes to them.

One final point. I have argued in this and the last chapter for a picture of Eleatic ontology that roughly squares with Plato's very brief descriptions of it in the two dialogues—

Parmenides and *Sophist*—where is he bent on *challenging* that ontology. There are two potential problems here. First, my interpretation may be overly anachronistic. I have, however, tried as far as possible to interpret Parmenides strictly from what he says and what can be deduced from what he says. Clearly it is possible that a Platonic interpretive framework compelled me to accept certain interpretive tropes. Even so, however, it is clear that Plato was influenced by Parmenides on ontological matters, and that any charge of anachronism—since the two philosophers were not far apart in space and time—is weaker than saying, for example, that Aristotle anticipated the ontology of E. J. Lowe. Secondly, my interpretation might be circular, in the sense that I am simply giving the interpretation that Plato's two dialogues allow. Again, however, if we stick just to what Parmenides says, it is certainly possible to glean the more or less strongly monistic interpretation from the text. Plato says very little about the features of Eleatic monism. But it is possible to articulate Plato's version by simply looking at what Parmenides says. In the next two chapters I examine in detail Plato's response to Parmenides the monist.

CHAPTER FOUR
PLATONIC *ELEATICA*: FORMS, PARTICULARS, AND THE *PARMENIDES*

1. Introduction

In the last two chapters I argued for an interpretation of Parmenides as a numerical monist, and for what must follow for his own philosophy if we take his numerical monism at face value. I argued that his ontological principles are too strong for his critique of mortal belief: it is not possible for mortals to believe the things he takes them to believe if reality *is* as he says it is, since such beliefs are themselves not allowed by that very ontology. They are not allowed by it, I argued, because such beliefs must be grounded in an ontology that allows for internal division within reality.

In this chapter I find Plato confronting Parmenides (and in a way Heraclitus) regarding these issues. Plato takes it that the sensible world is explicable. Indeed, one prominent reason for introducing forms seems to be a recognition that the sensible world *requires* explanation in some sense. Otherwise, it would make little sense to argue about, with the hope of gaining some knowledge about, which actions are truly just, which actions are really pious, or whether two sticks are, in fact, equal. The sensible world requires explanation; but if so, it needs to rise to an ontological level Parmenides forbids.

In §2 I discuss the various ways Plato's forms can and cannot be taken to be Eleatic-type entities. I largely follow Curd's 1998 discussion, where she explicitly ties Plato's forms to her understanding of Parmenides as a predicational monist. I concur on some points of her analysis, while simultaneously showing that upon that very analysis, Parmenides cannot be the sort of monist she takes him to be, and that Socratic inquiry cannot be akin to Eleatic inquiry.

I then discuss the thorny issue of the separation of forms. Following, in part, Fine's 1984 (2003) analysis of separation, I largely accept her thesis that nothing in the texts shows that Plato is committed to separation. But it does not follow from such an analysis, I argue, that Plato does not discuss or *use* the notion of separation. I argue that Plato does indeed use the notion, especially in the "greatest difficulty argument" (GDA) at *Parmenides* 133a, as a heuristic device to begin the arduous and hitherto neglected discussion of just what his own Eleatic commitments amount to. The GDA showcases, I argue, a fundamentally Eleatic *problem*: that if being and becoming (or forms and participants) are radically separate, then they must be governed by their own incommensurable principles. But if they *are* radically separate, then Plato will fall into the same trap Parmenides fell into: the problem Plato raises in the GDA is precisely Parmenides' problem of how the *Aletheia* relates to the *Doxa*; and if Plato unreflectively accepts a sort of Eleaticism about forms, he must confront the issues that arise in the GDA.

In §3 I take these issues a step further and argue that the second part of the *Parmenides* is a full-on examination of just what it would mean for being and becoming to be related, both to themselves and one another, in various ways. That they must be related is something Parmenides and Socrates agree on; but just *how* this is possible is unclear. Indeed, by the end of the *Parmenides*, it is only clear, I argue, *that* being and becoming (or the one and others/many) are related, though it is unclear how. The surprising upshot of the chapter is this: forms and participants are *mutually dependent* on one another, but only *as such*.

In §4 I briefly conclude by summarizing the arguments of the chapter.

2. Plato's Eleaticism: Forms

It is relatively uncontroversial that Plato was influenced by Parmenides, especially in matters epistemological and metaphysical. But the extent and type of influence has been and remains a matter of controversy. Other than the namesake dialogue and sections of the *Sophist*, there is no consistent or explicit invocation of Parmenides' *philosophy* in other dialogues, and it is not even clear that the *Parmenides* itself deals with historically Eleatic issues, rather than a stripe of Eleaticism as Plato understood it. Rarer still are explicit *mentions* of Parmenides, though when Plato does mention him, the context is always of some philosophical importance. For example, Parmenides is mentioned at *Theaetetus* 183e5, in a context where Socrates says he "respect[s] those who say that the universe is one and at rest," and that he "wouldn't want to investigate them in a superficial way" (183e2-4).[1] Parmenides is deemed "venerable and awesome" at 183e6, though Socrates does not want to examine Parmenides within the broader context in that dialogue of tackling Protagorean and Heraclitean arguments about sense perception, change, knowledge, and the nature of sensibles.[2] But in the *Sophist*, the same Parmenides who, in the *Theaetetus* is respected for thinking that the universe is one, is denigrated for precisely the same reason.[3] Plato's Eleatic tendencies, though acknowledged by commentators, are not easy to understand very precisely.

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[1] *Theaetetus* translations are from McDowell (1973) unless otherwise noted. Other places Parmenides is mentioned are *Symposium* 178b, in Phaedrus' speech, several places in the *Sophist*, where the context has to do with being and not-being, *Theaetetus* 180e, in contrast to Heraclitus' philosophy, and 152e of the same dialogue in a similar context. I will have more to say about this last context below.

[2] Parmenides is also deemed "quite venerable" at *Parmenides* 127b.

[3] McDowell (1973:185) argues that the mention of Parmenides at *Theaetetus* 183e2-4 does not foreshadow the *Sophist*, since the discussion in the former has to do with Socrates' refusal to discuss Parmenides on change. The *Sophist*, says McDowell, concerns not-being. This is true. But Socrates explicitly states that he "respect[s] those who say that the universe is one and at rest . . . ." In the *Sophist* such positions are handily refuted. The "patricide" in the *Sophist* is, however, committed in the name of making sense of not-being, not in refuting monism.

The historical question of whether Plato himself construed his own metaphysical and epistemological work as influenced by Parmenides is more controversial than the fact that Eleatic inclinations can be derived from his dialogues. There is, however, evidence from various metaphysical and epistemological passages in the dialogues that Plato had Parmenides in mind at least as a framework for whatever the dialogue's interlocutors are discussing.[4] That is, there are discernable elements of Eleatic philosophy across several dialogues, especially when the discussion turns to Plato's metaphysics and epistemology, even, many suggest, in Socratic dialogues, where these topics are less developed.[5] In this section I discuss ways in which Plato can be seen to accept Eleatic ontology. As we will see, however, some of these ways are at loggerheads, and indeed, such problems come to a head in the *Parmenides* itself.

2.1. Plato's Forms as Eleatic Entities

Plato describes forms in a variety of ways in the dialogues, using a variety of terms that are supposed to capture the nature of forms, the nature of the form-participant relation, and by extension the nature of participants. None of the ways Plato describes forms, participants, and the form-participant relation are particularly satisfying or seem to rise to the level of a technical theory.[6] Most commentators take the various ways the form-participant relation is described in

[4] Issues regarding Plato's own Eleatic tendencies are complicated by the fact that it remains next to impossible to foist secure philosophical positions onto Plato himself; he wrote dialogues, and what characters—such as Socrates—say in one dialogue often conflict with, or are at least ambiguous with regard to, what those same characters say on similar matters in other dialogues. It is largely unhelpful to take what characters say as Plato's own secure theories, assuming he had any.

[5] In this and subsequent chapters I will use the term 'Socratic' for what were once called "early" dialogues, the term 'constructive' for "middle" dialogues, and 'late' for what most agree are late dialogues. There are some borderline cases between Socratic and constructive and constructive and late (e.g., *Meno* for the former, and *Theaetetus* and *Timaeus* for the latter). Nothing in my arguments especially hinges on the ordering of these dialogues.

[6] Gonzalez (2003) argues against the notion that there is a single *theory* of forms, and for the idea that Plato

the first part of the *Parmenides* as representative of how they are described in other dialogues. The first part of that dialogue, then, is taken to be a summary of the various ways Plato posits the nature of forms and the relation between forms and participants.[7]

Since our task in this chapter is to give a first look at Plato's confrontation with his own Eleatic commitments (especially but not exclusively as they stand in the *Parmenides*), it should be noted immediately that there seem to be at least two clear senses in which Plato cannot be construed along Eleatic lines: he accepts a plurality of beings (i.e. forms), and he seems not to strongly disdain, at least in the same way as Parmenides, sensible reality; sensibles, for Plato, need explanation, not eradication. This latter problem will be a major focus of this chapter, since it is precisely this problem, namely, the form-participant relation, where I argue Plato *specifically* attacks the stronger ontological commitments that make Parmenides' philosophy—the version argued for in the last two chapters—ultimately untenable.[8]

A first question, however, is whether and in what ways forms themselves can be construed along Eleatic lines. Usually, the Eleatic construal of forms is said to mean that Plato

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introduces the various form-participant relations for dialogue-specific issues, saying (42) that the *Parmenides* "attacks all characterizations of [the form-participant] relation we find in the dialogues . . . ." Rickless (2007) gives a meticulous defense of the notion that there is a single, more or less coherent theory of forms, arguing for this position from the first part of the *Parmenides* to corroborating evidence from other dialogues' descriptions of forms.

[7] Coxon (1999:102-3) notes that Socrates at *Parmenides* 128a-b is taken to be familiar with Parmenides' poem, and that there are several places in the corpus Plato seems to summon Eleatic notions: at *Phaedo* 78d Socrates mentions forms as having Eleatic-like characteristics; at *Phaedo* 99d-e, Socrates excoriates sense perception as a guide to truth; at *Phaedo*102d, Socrates invokes the Eleatic ban on not-being by saying that forms can never contain their opposites, etc. Coxon also notes that Eleatic-like characteristics for forms are invoked at *Timaeus* 37e and 52a, and at *Phaedrus* 252c. The former passages clearly invoke Eleatic notions, while the latter at least implies them.

[8] Coxon (1999:103) argues that Socrates' first question to Zeno (*Parmenides* 127e) shows "that a primary purpose of his theory [sc. of forms] is to refute Parmenides' denial of any reality to phenomena." But Coxon also notes (104) that Parmenides and Socrates have different ways of construing the being of forms: Parmenides takes them to be names of the one being, "or of an indefinite plurality with only nominal being," and that for Socrates (and Plato), *each* form is a *something* with its own, intrinsic nature unrelated to anything else. As I argue in the final chapter, Socrates will (eventually) re-invoke Parmenides to resolve problems involved in *this*—the *Parmenides*—understanding of forms.

appropriates to the nature of forms some or all of the Eleatic principles for being that Parmenides argues for in B8. Thus, forms are ungenerated, imperishable, each singular in its own kind, immovable or indivisible, and complete. Many of these characteristics fit what Rickless calls "other theorems" that are derivable from a whole array of what he calls central axioms, some auxiliary hypotheses, several fundamental theorems, and an additional proposition, regarding forms (2007:42-43).[9] Several of these are themselves imbued with a certain Eleatic flair. The "other theorems," however, seem to be directly Eleatic: forms are *changeless* (i.e. ungenerated, imperishable, immovable, indivisible), *eternal* (i.e. ungenerated and imperishable), *indivisible*, and *non-sensible*.[10]

Within the framework set up by Curd's analysis of Parmenides' legacy, Parmenides gives to Plato all the essentials for his forms.

2.1.1. The Eleatic Nature of Forms: Curd's Plato as the Last Presocratic

Curd focuses on passages from Socratic and constructive dialogues to showcase the Eleatic nature of forms Plato apparently had in mind (1998:228-41). Her chief example is the form of beauty from the *Symposium*. In her speech Diotima describes beauty in language that is indeed strikingly reminiscent of the Eleatic principles Parmenides lays out in B8. Beauty (or the beautiful)

> . . . always is and neither comes to be nor passes away, neither

[9] The axioms, hypotheses, and theorems are gleaned by Rickless from the first part of the *Parmenides* and other—mostly constructive—dialogues, and form what he calls the "higher theory of forms." For a concise description of all of Rickless's claims about the higher theory, see his abbreviations (2007: xii–xiv).
[10] See chapter 2 for a discussion of these terms, which are the *semata* (signposts) of being in B8. Note also that whether forms are non-sensible is questionably Eleatic, since it is unclear whether Parmenides took reality to be physical.

> waxes nor wanes. Second, it is not beautiful this way and ugly that way, nor beautiful at one time and ugly at another, nor beautiful in relation to one thing and ugly in relation to another; nor is it beautiful here but ugly there, as it would be if it were beautiful for some people and ugly for others (211a2-7).[11]

Curd is quite explicit about the Eleatic framework of Plato's forms, saying that ". . . Plato *takes over predicational monism* from Parmenides in the notion that a form is single-in-genus, while accepting that this is consistent with a plurality of forms" (73, my emphasis). The Eleaticism Curd sees Plato endorsing, then, is her own predicational monism, or something very close to it. Recall that predicational monism, as Curd defines it, is that "each thing that is can be only one thing; it can hold only *the one predicate that indicates what it is*, and must hold it in a particularly strong way" (66, my emphasis). Sometimes she parses this out as the notion of *genuineness*: the *F* is a genuine entity if it is all, only, and completely *F*.

Curd ties the notion of genuineness—the particularly strong singularity-in-genus requirement—to Plato's notion of self-predication. For forms, Curd says "there is but a single way to be that thing [*F*], and what is *F* must be so unchangingly, wholly, completely" (233). The singularity of being for each *F* disallows anything that might take away from its completeness in being *F*; it follows that *F* cannot change in any way, since any change would destroy its completeness. Rickless finds two Eleatic notions of changelessness in Plato (2007:42). On the one hand, forms do not come to be or perish; on the other, they are always in the "same state," i.e., they are internally indivisible. Moreover, as the passage from the *Symposium* indicates, the Eleatic nature of beauty (and allegedly of all forms) amounts to the notion that forms are completely perspectivally neutral:[12] since there is only a single and complete way of being *F*, a

[11] Translation by Nehamas and Woodruff, in Cooper (1997).
[12] See Curd (231) and Mourelatos (2008:129-30) on perspectival neutrality.

way the form itself *is,*[13] any sensible things we call *F,* any *f*-thing—since they *do* change—must be deficiently *F*. Curd explicitly ties the deficiency of sensible beauties to the fundamental distinction in Plato between being and becoming: "Plato," she says, "clearly links that distinction, and the claim that forms are genuine realities, with Eleatic requirements" (230). She further claims that this fundamental distinction in Plato is just a development of Parmenides' rejection of not-being.

Curd presents a picture—one that has become fairly standard—of how Parmenides influenced Plato's conception of forms, though she also sees the former's influence in Socratic dialogues, which is a more controversial position. For example, she cites Socrates' search in the *Euthyphro* for "that *form itself* (αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος) that makes all pious actions pious" (6d9-10) as evidence that Socrates has in mind something like Eleatic entities as the objects of his inquiries.[14] She claims that "it is evident that Socrates has a clear conception of what the pious, or courage, must *be like*" (235, my emphasis). That is, such things must be something like Eleatic entities, since, for example, "all pious actions [are] pious through *one form* (μιᾷ ἰδέᾳ)" (6d10-e1). Other Socratic dialogues have similar examples.[15] On this construal, even in Socratic dialogues, which typically do not have the more pronounced discussions of forms found in the constructive dialogues, Socrates is depicted as searching for things that are at least crudely or vaguely Eleatic. In much of the literature, he is said to be searching for definitions, an approach that is, in my view, too narrow.

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[13] Gonzalez (2003) discusses the self-predication issues to which this formulation may give rise.
[14] Translations of the *Euthyphro* are from Grube, in Cooper (1997). See also Allen (1971).
[15] Curd cites the *Laches* and *Meno*. As she notes (236), Socrates' answer to Meno about the singular nature of shape (at 74d5-e3) is a statement of the general Eleatic principle that "has been at work in the earlier dialogues as well," namely, that Socrates is always searching for *one nature* that will cover all cases *named after* (προσαγορεύεις ὀνόματι) that one nature (as Socrates himself says at 74d4).

Let us grant that Plato construes forms in Socratic dialogues along quasi-Eleatic lines. Curd, in a brief final section, further develops these and other ontological links between Plato and Parmenides. However questionable, these allow us to see more clearly two aspects of Curd's analysis of Plato's Eleaticism that remain open questions.

The first point is historical. Curd argues that Plato's construals of Eleaticism as numerical monism in the *Parmenides* and *Sophist* are more his own construct than an acknowledgment of Parmenides' historical position. That is, *since* Empedocles and Anaxagoras did not get numerical monism from Parmenides, and *did* get predicational monism from him, it is likely that Plato—whom she calls the "last presocratic"—also did not take Parmenides to be a numerical monist. But it is also possible that Empedocles, Anaxagoras, and Plato *did* take Parmenides as a numerical monist, and saw that his position wipes out what they thought *requires* explanation, namely, the sensible world. If so, this would partly explain why, in the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*, Plato characterizes Parmenides as a numerical monist.[16] Moreover, if Plato did indeed see Parmenides as a numerical monist, then he did not simply take over predicational monism from him. Rather, Plato can be seen as further developing—in radically new and non-physicalist ways—Anaxagoras' and Empedocles' quasi-Eleatic responses to Parmenides, responses all three seem to have thought preserve salient features of Eleatic ontology, while allowing for the reality of sensibles.

The second issue is philosophical, and deals with the way both Curd and Mourelatos understand Eleatic inquiry. Curd explicitly ties the notion of Eleatic inquiry to Socratic inquiry. One issue I discussed in chapter 2 regarding the alleged relation between the two sorts of inquiry

[16] Plato may also have used this interpretation of Parmenides to frame his own issues and arguments.

bears repeating—and a little finessing. The issue is Curd's and Mourelatos's emphasis on the *search* for truth in Parmenides. For example, Curd argues that for Socrates there are (at least) three requirements an object of inquiry must possess if it is to adequately answer *what is F?* questions: the thing "must be one, must function as a paradigm, and must be explanatory (237)."[17] These three characteristics of Socratic objects (i.e. forms) are indeed found throughout the Socratic and constructive dialogues, though it is far from clear what each is supposed to mean or entail about such objects. Nevertheless, Curd argues that the three requirements are heavily in debt to Parmenides. The oneness requirement is clear, since Parmenides, as noted, requires that genuine entities be single in kind. That a genuine entity must act as a paradigm if one is to have knowledge about disparate cases that fall under the paradigm is less clear as an *Eleatic* requirement, though Socrates surely accepts some such principle in several dialogues.[18] The paradigm and oneness requirements seem, moreover, to be related: if there is a paradigm against which to judge derived cases, then there must be *one* paradigm, since if there were two, there would be no way to judge which of two incompatible cases *called F* are *really F*; both cases might really be instances of *something*, though it would be absurd to *call* them instances of the same *F*, if the two cases are incompatible.[19] Related to all of this is the final requirement: there is *one* explanation for why *f*-things are *F*.[20] That an object of inquiry must be explanatory is, Curd argues, a function or development of the Eleatic denial of not-being: for Socrates, a

[17] There are problems with understanding forms as paradigms, since if they are paradigms, they seemingly must be in the same ontological category as their participants.
[18] In addition to the *Euthyphro*, see also *Laches* and *Lysis*, among others.
[19] Prosecuting one's own father for murdering a murderer, as Euthyphro does in the *Euthyphro*, might be an instance of some *F*; Socrates' arguments are simply meant to show that it is not an instance of piety.
[20] See, for example, the sight-lovers' explanation of beautiful things at *Republic* 479d: it "tumble[s] around somewhere between what purely and simply is not and what purely and simply is." The latter are forms, whose oneness is entailed by their purity and simplicity (εἰλικρινῶς at d5). The translation is Rowe (2012).

genuinely explanatory entity, *F*, cannot in any way be not-*F*. That is, since forms ostensibly make *f*-things derivatively *F*, then the *F*-ness of *f*-things cannot in any way be *caused by*—and therefore *explainable in terms of*—anything but *F*.[21]

But now what about Socratic inquiry? Both Curd and Mourelatos explicitly endorse the notion that for Parmenides all inquiry on the path of not-being is fruitless, a path from which no tidings come. And the *aporetic* nature of the Socratic dialogues certainly indicates that no tidings have come from the interlocutors' inquiries, an issue Curd (238) is careful to note. But the expressly *non*-Eleatic difference, as I argued in chapter 2, is that it cannot be that *no* tidings come from Socratic inquiry, as they might from strictly Eleatic inquiry. At *Theaetetus* 210b10-c1 Socrates tells Theaetetus that any future theories or notions about knowledge they might engage will, because of "what [he is] pregnant with . . . be the better for [their] present investigation." Sedley further notes that Theaetetus' "future pregnancies" will be *better* as a result of his and Socrates' "wind-eggs" (ἀνεμιαῖον at 151e7); it will either make him more modest in discussion, because he will then know his own ignorance, or indeed will later result in birth (2004:36). The notion of future pregnancies, however, seems to indicate that it is possible to come closer to the truth about *F* at various *elenctic* stages of Socratic inquiry, and not merely to make the interlocutor a more humble inquirer. Similarly, in the *Meno*, a geometry-ignorant slave is questioned by Socrates on a geometry problem, slowly coming to an understanding of something about which he was previously ignorant. Were he allowed to *practice* geometry, he would be able to master it as anyone else. Useful or worthwhile tidings, then, obtain on the

[21] This is one of Rickless's (2007:xii) "auxiliary principles," NCC (no causation by contraries): for any property *F* that admits a contrary (con-*F*), whatever makes something be (or become) *F* cannot itself be con-*F*.

Socratic conception of inquiry, one that involves weeding out bad theories. That is, Socratic inquiry requires discussing—within a dialectical framework, and ultimately throwing out—anything that is not-*F* as an understanding of *F* itself, and as an explanation for the *F*-ness of the many derivative *f*s.

One objection here is that even though Socratic inquiry in fact proceeds by testing what turn out to be wrong candidates for *F*, it is still false that any non-*F* could ever figure in an explanation of the *F*-ness of the many *f*-things, and certainly not the nature of the *F* itself.[22] This is akin to the difference I have stressed in chapters 2 and 3 between the epistemological aspects of inquiry and the ontological aspects that (allegedly) *ground* inquiry.[23] That is, it is perfectly reasonable to engage in inquiry into nonexistent things.[24] So, while it is misleading, perhaps, to say that Socratic inquiry follows along Eleatic lines (because it does have positive value even along the negative path), it is still Eleatic in the *relevant* sense that, as Curd argues, nothing that is not-*F* could, in the final analysis, be included in an account of what the *F* itself is, or why the many *f*s are *F*.

As noted above, the issues here can be split along epistemological and ontological lines, though they are both interrelated and problematic in Plato. Regarding epistemology, one question is whether it is possible for an *aporetic* inquiry—one that fails to produce an account of

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[22] In the Socratic and constructive dialogues Plato seems committed to the principle that there can be no compresence of opposites in forms, and so no account of what a form is would ever include its opposite. This is especially clear, for example, at *Phaedo*102d-e.

[23] See also *Charmides* 166a4-6, where Socrates makes the distinction between a science and what the science is *of*. Ostensibly, what the science is *of* grounds the very nature of the science, i.e., the *way* inquiry in that science proceeds.

[24] These are presumably the wind-eggs of the Socratic dialogues, though there are deep ontological issues regarding precisely *what* the wind-eggs are, if anything. If they are nonexistent, *what* is Socrates investigating? If inquiry is an intentional activity, we might compare Chisholm (1973:252) who notes statements such as "John fears a ghost." If there are no ghosts, what exactly does John fear?

F, and either discards or shows the limitations of many non-*F*s in the process—is still *thereby* productive of knowledge of the *F* itself. Socrates seems to accept that by discarding or exposing the limitations of non-*F*s, we are somehow closer to understanding the *F* itself: we will be in a better position regarding *F because of* our discarded/limited wind-eggs. In the movie *Star Wars*, Obi-Wan Kenobi uses a "Jedi mind trick" to convince Imperial Stormtroopers that Luke Skywalker's droids are not the droids they are looking for. Philosophy is presumably no Jedi mind trick; yet we too are *somehow* convinced that the many non-*F*s are not the *F* we are looking for.

If so, however, we presumably have to either know each wind-egg in such a way as to know that it is not *F*, or we would have to know the *F* itself; but knowing the *F* itself is *sufficient* for knowing that other candidates are wind-eggs, and so we are presented with a *Meno*-style problem about inquiry: why bother at all if we already know the *F*? This is apparently where recollection is offered as an explanation for how we can conclude that the wind-eggs are not *F*: knowledge of *F* is somehow *a priori* but cloudy.[25] Plato cashes this out in the *Phaedo* by arguing that knowledge of forms—which is *a priori* and not cloudy—can still be obscured by other things, for example, our bodily prisons. Still, it is a problem, I take it, that we apparently are not *so* epistemically in the dark, since we are able—especially in the Socratic dialogues—to reject or see the limitations of many wind-eggs without further ado. Perhaps one objection here is that we are *a priori* equipped with logic so that simply putting candidate *F*s to logical examination—i.e. whether candidate *F*s are inconsistent with one's own beliefs—tests them.

[25] I find Leibniz's interpretation of recollection in *Discourse on Metaphysics* §26 attractive: it is a solid doctrine about *a priori* knowledge if we purge it of its mythological notions of the unembodied preexistence of the soul. Of course, I cannot defend the nature of *a priori* knowledge here.

This would mean that we can in fact be just as epistemically cloudy as the Socratic interlocutors are. One question that then arises, however, is why logical concepts and rules should be exempt from Socratic inquiry.[26]

Another objection is that interlocutors never entirely *reject* or *discard* non-*F*s. Rather, they are almost always simply showing that non-*F*s are *inadequate* to answer *What is F?* questions. A clarification is in order. I suggest a token-type distinction to show that, in fact, *both* happen in the dialogues. Usually when Socrates rejects non-*F*s, he is rejecting *tokens*. For example, in the *Euthyphro*, the first attempt by Euthyphro to say what the pious is (5d8) is rejected because the *token* is deemed incoherent: Euthyphro claims that prosecuting his father is what piety is. At the same time, the *example* Euthyphro offers is deemed the wrong *type* of thing *adequately* to answer the question of what piety is. In this case, Socrates is showing the inadequacy of that type of thing to answer the sorts of questions he typically asks. Even so, the salient point remains for both tokens and types, but for different reasons: if tokens are rejected, the *Meno* problem of knowing the *F* remains; if some types are shown to be inadequate to answer Socratic questions, then Socrates already has in mind the type of answer that *would* be sufficient. This is a *Meno*-style problem, now directed at methodological adequacy.

Regarding ontology, Curd says "it is worth noting that Socrates does not treat [his acceptance of Eleatic] criteria [for forms] as open to question or revision" (238). He never, in other words, takes there to be something wrong with the Eleatic conception of forms at work in

[26] Although this may seem an *ad hoc* reply, it is a pragmatic necessity that Socratic inquiry must move along already agreed upon logical lines. Similarly, Scolnicov (2003) argues that the positing of forms is pragmatically necessary for the salvation of philosophy itself in the *Parmenides*. This "pragmatic necessity" is, however, somewhat philosophically unsatisfying, though it is clear that we already find ourselves *doing* philosophy when we question its very assumptions. For a similar problem in the historical Parmenides, see Mackenzie (1982).

the background of his inquiries; he always assumes that there is something wrong with the interlocutors, himself included. But might it not be the case that the *aporia* in Socratic and other dialogues are a function of assuming that the objects of inquiry must be Eleatic?[27] Curd maintains that Plato's eventual rejection of historical Eleaticism (for forms, at least) is that Parmenides' ontology is too strong, and that it (somehow, therefore) collapses into numerical monism (240).[28] But is this the case for *forms*? Forms would have to be *entirely austere*—to borrow a term from McCabe (1994)—for them to collapse (by the identity of indiscernibles) into numerical monism; i.e., they would all have to be completely indistinguishable because they are all of the same nature in a strong sense. There are, however, two sets of "properties" that characterize forms. There are general properties they all share *qua* forms; these are their Eleatic properties. There are also their individual self-predicating properties.[29] These latter would (or should) be sufficient to distinguish each form from all others.[30]

In any event, one other aspect of accepting an Eleatic basis for forms gives rise to a greater difficulty for Curd's analysis, one that brings out a feature of Socratic inquiry that cannot, I argue, be accommodated to Parmenides' overall project, and thus shows that Socratic inquiry is different in important ways from Eleatic inquiry. Indeed, I maintain that it further shows that Curd's analysis of Parmenides as a predicational monist cannot be right.

To bring out this feature more sharply, note that Curd argues that Parmenides' arguments

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[27] As I argue below, such Eleatic assumptions about forms are indeed challenged in the *Parmenides*. Whether the challenge succeeds is still an open question.
[28] This is a strange claim for her to make, since for her Parmenides is not a numerical monist, and she seems to take Plato's claims about Parmenides' numerical monism as at best heuristic for his own argumentative purposes.
[29] Again, see Gonzalez (2003) for a general discussion, Rickless (2007:33-36) for a discussion of why self-predication is innocuous, and Cohen and Keyt (1992) for a denial that there is self-predication of Platonic forms.
[30] This is actually problematized in the *Sophist*. See chapter the chapter 5 for a discussion about this issue.

against coming-to-be and passing away are grounded in the *krisis*, the rejection of not-being (230). But she goes on to say that for the *historical* Parmenides, growth and decay are *impossible*—a feature of Eleatic ontology I have stressed in the previous two chapters—and that such things (as growth and decay) "are aspects of growing and living things, mortal things that are subject to coming-to-be and passing-away." It is unclear what Curd means to say here, since if growth and decay are impossible, then there *are* no such things as growing and living things; there is only being. Granted, there may be more than one being. But even on predicational monism it is unclear whether there are or could be such mortal things, since the only possible things are predicational monads. So as to not beg any questions against Curd for her analysis on this point, I have independently argued in the last two chapters that predicational monism is incoherent on Parmenides' own terms, since the denial of not-being collapses all alleged predicational monads into a single Eleatic being: Parmenides rejects both internal *and* (ostensible) external division, which disallows a plurality of beings. But even if predicational monism obtains (for Parmenides), it does not follow that the alleged "things" that obtain by the intermingling of predicational monads *are* in the requisite Eleatic sense.[31] That is, either there are such things as mortal things (which grow and decay) or there are not. If there are, then they must exist by some standard that is non-Eleatic, for example, because they mix together and intermingle in various ways. There must be *principles of mixture* for the monads that somehow explain not only the fact of a plurality of derivative things, but why *this* plurality of such things

[31] There are other problems as well. Plato's forms are not the sorts of Anaxagorian or Empedoclean things that intermingle to form what appears to us. Curd does not think that Plato's forms *are* such things, so it remains unclear in what sense Plato's forms, if they are predicational monads, are supposed to explain the natures of their participants. It is not the sort of mixture we find in Anaxagoras and Empedocles (and Democritus, and later, Lucretius). Even if these philosophers are incoherent for deep reasons, they are at least naïvely coherent: newly *appearing* things obtain when fundaments mix together.

as opposed to another, why *this* intermingling rather than another. At any rate, as I argued in the previous chapter, Parmenides' ontological commitments prohibit him from accepting principles *other than* the Eleatic principles of B8; and these disallow plurality *tout court*.

But there's the rub: the "mortal things" are *not* denied by Plato as they are by Parmenides. Indeed, as I argue below and in the next chapter, Plato's ontological project is grounded in the first instance on the idea that the seeming things need to be accounted for; their existence—and what that amounts to—needs to be shown to be *possible*. But, I argue, Plato's Eleatic tendencies (at one point, it seems) compel him to accept something akin to what post-Eleatic thinkers accepted, albeit in non-physical terms: there are non-physical things that ground the precarious (but *not impossible*) existence of derivative entities, namely, participants.[32] These non-physical things are Plato's forms, those things that fit some aspects of Curd's predicational monism, but cannot be the sorts of things Parmenides himself would have accepted.

In sum, on Curd's analysis, as corroborated by most commentators, Plato's forms are Eleatic in two distinct sorts of ways: they are indivisible, unchanging, timeless, and singular, and this singularity is guaranteed for each form by the fact that it is all and only the precise form that it is. One way to think about forms that strays somewhat from Parmenides is that Plato, unlike Parmenides, fills in the "it" that is the basic centerpiece of the arguments of B8: each form conforms more or less to the signposts for being stated at the beginning of that fragment, but instead of not filling in the subject matter constrained by those signposts, Plato replaces "it" with a *what* that is constrained by the Eleatic principles: justice, beauty, goodness, etc., and later,

[32] I say "derivative" here because Plato often claims that participants are "named after" the forms they are related to by the notion of participation.

sameness, difference, being itself, and one.[33] It is, in a way, the filling in of the subjects that are constrained by Eleatic principles that allows Plato the plurality denied by Parmenides. Of course, Parmenides would be unable to countenance *any* difference between what fills Plato's subjects, since his ontology strongly prohibits internal and external difference, via the ban on not-being. As I argue in the next chapter, Plato's struggles with the Eleatic nature of forms (their oneness, indivisibility, etc.) is partly a struggle with trying to make sense of Parmenides' ban on not-being. The results of that struggle, and of the arguments of the second part of the *Parmenides*, are conceptions of what it means to be one, indivisible, etc., and of what not-being amounts to, that clarify the incoherence found in the historical Parmenides' initial offerings.

2.1.2. An Eleatic Issue about Plato's Forms: The Problem of Separation

As I argued in the last chapter, if Parmenides wants to admonish mortals' opinions and their associated appearances, he needs to be able to account for such appearances (sensibles), either by positing one or more non-Eleatic principles for them as a whole (that is, sensibles-only principles), or by taking Eleatic or Eleatic-like principles and relating them to appearances (either being itself or light and night). Neither can he do, for his ontological commitments disallow it.

In this section, I argue that Plato inherits an altogether similar problem, one that is exemplified in the murky participation relation between forms and sensibles. Indeed, I argue that it is the *same problem*, though with the special caveat that Plato is an heir to a legacy that sought

[33] These last four seem to be far more problematic than other forms, since they all have the same *extensions*: anything that is a thing participates in all of them.

to retain certain Eleatic elements while granting *some* reality to sensibles.[34] Plato seemingly recognizes that Eleatic ontology cannot account for what needs an account, since it casts such things to unreality. But Plato himself often struggles to fit sensibles into his ontological picture. Thus, I argue that the central Eleatic problem for Plato is how the beings can be related to the becoming things. This can be construed both as an issue regarding the relation of the one to the many, as Harte (2002) construes it, or as an issue about what individuation amounts to, as McCabe (1994) construes it.

But in a related fashion, these issues can also be construed, as I do, as concerning how the principles that ostensibly govern the one domain of discourse (oneness/individuation) are related to the principles that (ostensibly) concern the other domain (being many or being in relation to others). This alleged relation is precisely the one denied by the historical Parmenides' own ontological commitments; that is, Parmenides could not show how being *explains* sensibles or the fact of their relative (seeming) stability, since his strong ontological commitments preclude adequate explanations of such things. Adequacy requires the internal complexity of being itself. For Plato, the relation is usually called *participation* (μέθεξις), though he too struggles with what this amounts to.

The notion of the *separation* of forms, i.e., whether forms are separate from their

[34] This is a thorny issue, since Plato represents sensibles as, as McCabe (1994:30) says, "cognitively unreliable." But the point of introducing forms may be to provide a way to know when some sensible is an instance of *F* and *not G*, i.e., truly an *F*-instance. The explanatory requirement immediately seems to grant some sort of reality to *f*-things, since they can seemingly be quantified over, and as such, can be distinguished among themselves *and* from everything else: they can apparently be individuated, though ostensibly on grounds more shaky than forms. Cresswell (1972:152 n4) makes a similar point, against Allen (1960), who argues that since particulars have no independent existence, they cannot be referred to in any proper sense. But this seems to oppose Plato's point in introducing forms. I discuss some issues about the non-independent existence of participants below.

participants, and what this might mean, is crucial here.[35] Separation seems to evoke one way of understanding Plato as committed to some aspects of Eleatic ontology, though the concept of separation is many-faceted. In this section I examine different types of separation, and conclude that Plato is only committed to the *difference* between forms and participants, though he does explore separation as a heuristic device in confronting his unexamined Eleatic tendencies.

2.1.2.1. Varieties of Separation

The issue of the separation of forms from participants is one Aristotle often mentions in arguments against the coherence of the form-participant relation. Recently, separation has come to the forefront again, largely as a challenge to the so-called two-worlds thesis about Plato's fundamental ontology.[36] That is, if forms are separate (in some suitable sense) from participants, then forms and participants are supposed to exist in two "separate worlds." It is far from clear what this is supposed to mean, though on weaker interpretations it just means something like the distinction between abstract and concrete objects. But, taken to an extreme, the two-worlds thesis is bizarre, since the whole point of Plato's introduction of forms is to *explain* why *f*-things are *F*, and to effect such an explanation, the *f*-things have to have *some* (suitably robust) relation to the *F*.[37] It is unclear whether such relations are possible on the two-worlds reading.

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[35] In the end, however, Plato does not accept separation, and indeed argues that forms must (somehow) be immanent. In this way, I argue in the final chapter, Plato can be seen as an Eleatic about the ontological structure of the cosmos itself. In other words, Plato can have a quasi-Eleatic position about the cosmos, though he has to clarify what the Eleatic features of forms really mean or really amount to. By understanding Eleaticism in a new way, we might conclude that Plato's late quasi-Eleaticism is not the Eleaticism of his Father Parmenides.

[36] I say "so-called" because, as Nails (2013) shows, the translations used to describe the alleged position often import "worlds language" where none is found in the text. Thesleff (2009) offers a lengthy attempt to reduce the two worlds to two levels.

[37] I take it that separation itself is not a suitable relation between the *f*-things and the *F* if *F* is supposed have a relatively robust explanatory function.

Proponents of the two-worlds thesis, on some of the more prevalent interpretations, make ingenious attempts to get around this problem.[38]

It is unclear just how Plato characterizes the relation between forms and participants, and the question whether Plato is committed to any version of separation is a symptom of that lack of clarity.[39] In her seminal article, "Separation," Fine says that the most common notion of separation in Aristotle's discussion of the "Platonists" is *capacity for independent existence* (IE): "*A* is separate from *B* just in case *A* can exist without, independently of, *B*" (2003:254). Typically, *A* is taken to be a form, and *B* is taken to be an *A*-participant: "to say that the form of *F* is separate is to say that it can exist without, independently of, *F* sensible particulars." Fine 1993 spells out what separation means a little more clearly and succinctly. She says separation is a modal notion, so "*A* can be separate from *B* even if *A* never actually exists when *B* does not" (51). And this means IE separation is also relational: to be separate just means to be separate *from* something else.[40]

But is Plato, said by Aristotle, committed to this sort of separation? A stronger separation concept than IE is one that exploits *ontological dependence* (OD), which entails but is not entailed by IE. This is akin to what Aristotle says about substance being *prior in nature* to

[38] One of the most prominent ways is to defend what Allen (1997) calls "immanent characters," which are essentially form-copies that are found in us. See *Phaedo* 102a-e for a passage defenders of this position use to indicate Plato's alleged commitment to immanent characters. See Devereux (1994) for a defense of the immanent characters reading. I discuss immanence more in chapter 6.

[39] Fine gives several near knock-down arguments against the idea that Plato is ever committed to separation, or is even concerned with it on the several occasions in the dialogues commentators typically think he is. But Devereux (1994) still sees separation, with some nuances, as does Rickless (2007), with various caveats. Gonzalez (2003) and Nails (2013) largely concur with Fine. Nonetheless, more than thirty years after her watershed, the issue remains.

[40] Again, the separation *relation* entailed by IE—a non-symmetrical separation in that separation is strictly neutral about any sort of dependencies that may or may not exist between *A* and *B*—is quiet on how *A* might be explanatory.

other things: at *Metaphysics* 1019a3-5, Aristotle says "others [i.e. objects] are called [prior or posterior] with respect to nature or *substance*, when some things can exist without the others, but not conversely—a distinction used by Plato."[41] It seems, then, that Aristotle thinks Plato is committed to the ontological dependence of the *B*s on the *A*s, or the ontological independence of the *A*s from the *B*s: if *B* is ontologically dependent on *A*, then—since OD entails but is not entailed by IE—then *A* can exist independently of (i.e., separate from) *B*, but not the converse. If Plato is committed to OD, then he is committed to IE, since the former entails the latter.

Traditionally, the most prominent version of separation associated with Plato seems to be OD, since participants are dependent for their existence/being on forms. If so, then this means that participants are both dependent on forms and that forms can exist without there being any participants. Focusing just on the notion of separation, however, several commentators have Plato in the constructive dialogues committed to something like IE or OD as a sort of doctrine. This position is succinctly put by Vlastos, who says "so there is good reason to accept the equivalence of [the proposition that forms exist 'themselves by themselves'] and [the proposition that forms exist 'separately'] as *authentic Platonic doctrine*" (1987:194, my emphasis).[42] Vlastos further claims that this position—found here in his analysis of the *Parmenides*—is precisely what Plato is committed to from (at least) the constructive dialogues through (at least) the *Timaeus*. The Vlastos and Fine analyses clarify ways Plato might understand various technical terms, such as χωρίς and αὐτὸ καθ'αὐτὸ. But with their divergent analyses granted—i.e., that Plato is either committed to separation or not—it seems that Plato at least discusses the

[41] Translations of the *Metaphysics* are from Apostle (1979).
[42] The bracketed phrases are his P and Q at the beginning of his article, though I have taken the liberty of adding 'the proposition that', since Vlastos, as quoted, means P and Q to be semantically equivalent.

concept of separation, though, as Fine shows, his language does not clearly commit him to accepting it as a doctrine or theory. As I argue below, Plato discusses the concept of separation for very specific dialectical reasons.

There is a still weaker version of separation. It is a somewhat more difficult position to pin down, since it comes in several varieties, with some advocates preferring to call variants of the position *difference*, rather than separation, since 'difference' connotes something weaker, and apparently more amenable to Plato's texts. Fine is one of these proponents, noting that most alleged cases of separation entail nothing more than that forms are *different* (in various ways) from their participants. Perhaps the weakest sense of difference—and least informative regarding the relation between forms and participants—is that they are *non-identical*. Non-identity, it seems, need entail nothing more than that forms and participants are *somehow* different, *not* that one of them—forms—enjoys independent ontological existence or that the other enjoys dependent existence. For all we know, forms and participants might depend on one another. Indeed, noting the so-called affinity argument at *Phaedo* 78b4-84b8,[43] Fine says "even if it is true that forms cannot fail to exist, it does not follow that they are separate; it might only follow that then sensibles must exist too. If forms cannot fail to exist, then *the world is such that they cannot fail to exist*; and one of the conditions of the world this might necessitate is that sensibles cannot fail to exist either" (288, my emphasis). Fine is careful to note that this line of reasoning applies only to *all* sensibles as a group, and not to some sensible or other: some sensible or other can, of course, fail to exist, grow and decay, etc.; but this does not apply to

[43] The argument says, in short, that the soul, unlike the body, is akin to forms in that it is non-composite, and therefore is not necessarily destroyed or "scattered about" as a body is at death. As soul is one way and body another, soul is separate from body; so, too, are forms separate from their participants.

sensibles *as such*. In any event, one condition that might necessitate that forms and participants rise and fall together, it would seem, is the participation relation, the relation that is somehow supposed to link the non-identical (i.e. different) forms and participants. It is unclear at this stage precisely how participation would necessitate this, however.

Rickless takes separation in the constructive dialogues as stronger than difference (IE or OD), but argues that Plato abandons the strong version in the *Parmenides*. Building on the idea that Socrates accepts as an axiom about forms in the constructive dialogues that each is itself by itself, he first acknowledges that it is unclear what this technical phrase is supposed to *mean*. Rickless's interpretation of the phrase is that "a form's being itself by itself amounts to its being (*or being distinguishable as*) separate, in some sense of 'separate'" (2007:17-18, my emphasis).[44] Note that *being* and *being distinguishable as* are not necessarily the same thing or necessarily related, since something might *be F* but be distinguishable *by us* as *G*.[45] Now, Rickless, like Fine, maintains that separation means at least that forms are non-identical with participants, though he says itself-by-itself entails separation in a stronger sense. He considers *Phaedo* 64c2-9, 66e-67a, and 67d to be evidence for this claim. At 64c2-9, Socrates famously argues that in death, "the body comes to be separated (χωρὶς) by itself (αὐτὸ καθ'αὐτὸ) apart from (ἀπαλλαγὲν) the soul, and the soul comes to be separated by itself from the body." This is a somewhat curious example for Rickless, however, since both separation (χωρὶς), and itself-by-itself (αὐτὸ καθ'αὐτὸ) are said of both the soul *and* body, even though it is acknowledged in the *Phaedo* that bodies—and sensible things in general, *as opposed to* forms or soul—come to be

[44] Rickless (18 n10) mentions his indebtedness to Vlastos (1987) on the matter of separation.
[45] For Parmenides, as I argued in the previous chapter, they must be related, since all distinctions one can perceive—rightly or in error—must be grounded in *being*.

and decay.[46] That is, Plato is here using what many take to be a technical term indicating forms' separation to describe a *non-form*. Thus, itself-by-itself seems less clear cut as a technical term applicable only to forms. In any event, it is also unclear whether the later arguments (66e-67a and 67d) entail that forms can exist independently of their participants: the former indicates that the soul can only come to know forms when it is "by itself apart from the body" (67a1), whereas the latter similarly says that "this release and separation of the soul from the body is the preoccupation of philosophers" (67d8-9), i.e., those for whom knowledge (of forms) is utmost. As we have seen from Fine, however, these sorts of arguments do not entail anything like IE for forms.

I want to suggest a different way of looking at separation in Plato. Even if Plato is not committed to separation, it does not follow that he does not (at least) use or explore the concept. One thing I acknowledge immediately, however, is that Fine's analysis of separation in Plato certainly does fit the *framework* she sets up in order to analyze it. Fine's analysis of separation in Plato attempts to see whether Aristotle was correct in attributing something like IE to him; after poring over the textual evidence, Fine rightly argues that Plato is neither concerned with separation as IE, nor, especially, is he *committed* to it. This is an important historical, albeit largely Aristotelian, exercise. But it is, I suggest, a somewhat misleading way to understand Plato's use of the concept of separation in the dialogues, which is clearly there in at least two places: the GDA starting at *Parmenides* 133a, and the "friends of the forms" (FOF) argument at *Sophist* 248a. Both arguments are controversial for a variety of reasons. But the key, for my purposes, is to understand that Plato indeed invokes the concept of something like IE separation

[46] See, for example, the *Phaedo* discussion of equal sticks versus the equal itself at 74d-75c.

for forms (or kinds) in these sections, though he does so, I argue, for specific—and Eleatically construed—dialectical reasons. [47] One thing to note is that when Plato is specifically entertaining separation for dialectical purposes (in the FOF and GDA arguments) the separation involved is not necessarily the non-symmetrical IE that Fine explores; in these arguments, Plato seems to be concerned with *symmetrical* separation (SM): *A* exists independently of *B* and *B* exists independently of *A*. The symmetrical version entails that there is no crosstalk at all between the *A*s and the *B*s. Again, these arguments do not, however, indicate that Plato himself is committed to this (or any) separation the arguments themselves explore.

To summarize the varieties of separation that are or may be in play at various places in the dialogues:

IE: *A* is separate from *B* just in case *A* can exist without, independently of, *B* (non-symmetrical; neutral about relations between *A* and *B*)
OD: *A* is separate from *B* just in case *A* can exist without, independently of, *B*, but not conversely (asymmetrical; non-neutral about dependence relation)
SM: A exists independently of *B* and *B* exists independently of *A* (symmetrical, mutual separation; non-neutral about lack of dependence or other relations)

In what follows, I contend that the primary version of separation Plato is concerned to discuss in a dialectical framework is SM.

In the FOF argument, starting at *Sophist* 248a, the Eleatic visitor sets up the problem by asking the hypothetical friends at 248a6 "you people distinguish (διελόμενοι) coming-to-be and

[47] One historical conjecture regarding the *concept* of separation in Plato is that associates in the Academy, perhaps Aristotle included, were getting from Plato's constructive dialogue discussions of forms something *like* IE separation. Thus, Plato might be exploring what his associates were saying about forms, only to ultimately dismiss them.

being and say that they are separate (χωρίς)?"[48] Then, at 248a9, he asks "and you say that by our bodies and through perception we have dealings with coming-to-be, but we deal with real being by our souls and through reasoning?" Then the Eleatic visitor contrasts the friends' position with the "giants" or earth-bound: for them, "a sufficient definition of *beings* [is] that the capacity (δύναμις) be present in a thing to do something or have something done to it, to or by even the smallest thing" (248c4-6). The power/capacity to affect or be affected is, in other words, a *mark* of true being for the earth-bound. The friends respond by claiming that "coming-to-be has the capacity to do something or have something done to it, but that this capacity doesn't fit with being." The power or capacity to affect and be affected *only* concerns the things that come to be and pass away, according to the friends. So χωρίς, in this context, indicates a radical gulf, a separation, between the coming-to-be things and being or beings; the former are ever-changing, while the latter are entirely static and have no contact whatsoever with the coming-to-be things. We know that this gulf is radical because the Eleatic visitor *tells* us—on behalf of the friends—that is it: being, for them, can neither affect nor be affected. As Fine notes, however, the fact that Plato applies separation in this passage to forms or kinds need not indicate that he is committed to IE, especially since the separation here is symmetrical: being and becoming *each* have nothing to do with the other (2003:274). Another way of putting Fine's point is that nothing in this passage indicates Plato is himself a "friend of the forms" *qua* the SM separation we find here. But this is not to say that there *is* no separation being discussed in this passage.

Plato here puts into the mouth of the friends a position that pits two radically different types of entities against each other, such that neither has any "dealings with" the other. The final

[48] The translation is from White (1993).

refutation of the FOF, however, rests on the assumption that forms can be known (something the friends agree with). But if so, says the Eleatic visitor, forms cannot be as austere—i.e. removed from the world of becoming—as the friends suppose, since *by being known*, they are *affected*.[49] But a similar treatment of separation is given much starker handling by Parmenides in the GDA, where the *conclusion* is that our knowledge of being—forms—is impossible.[50]

At *Parmenides* 133c3-5 (here with standard Platonic anti-Eleatic assumptions about the plurality of beings), Parmenides asks whether Socrates "or anyone else who posits that there is for each thing some being, itself by itself (αὐτὴ καθ' αὑτὴν), would agree, to begin with, that none of those beings is in us." Socrates, invoking itself-by-itself as the justification, agrees that such a being could not be itself by itself if it were *in us*, apparently because then it would be in relation to us, and the itself-by-itself can have no such relation—to us or anything else. As Scolnicov notes, "the separation can be nothing less than total . . . [for] being in itself is precisely this: not being in (or in relation to) something else" (2003:70). Just as in the FOF argument, the separation between forms and the coming-to-be things (which are such that they *are* in or among us), is SM separation.

The separation invoked in the GDA—the last of a series of objections to Socrates' positing of forms as an argument against Zeno's denial of the many[51]—is, I argue, a starkly

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[49] This change or affection may just be a "Cambridge" change, however, which would challenge Plato's argument. If the circular field at the center of the Lambeth Bridge roundabout in London has the property *being endlessly driven around by Clark W. Griswold*, is it the case that the field changes by Clark's bad driving? See Mackenzie (1986:145-47) for arguments against invoking Cambridge change as a challenge to Plato.

[50] It may be that the *Sophist* treatment of the similar problem represents an advance, or at least a posited solution to, the GDA.

[51] See 127e1-128e4 for the exchange between Zeno and Socrates. Socrates is attempting to refute Zeno's claim that things cannot be many, because if they were, they would be both like and unlike; but this is impossible. Socrates' introduction of forms as a solution to this "defense of Parmenides" (from the denial of the many, rather than arguing for the one) starts at 128e6.

Eleatic *problem* that Plato seems to be explicitly raising. The previous objections Parmenides gives to Socrates' forms all questioned what possible *relation* forms could have to participants, and both immanence and separation arguments are seen as problematic. With each successive objection, the participation relation allegedly becomes increasingly incoherent. By the time of the GDA, Parmenides argues that there can be no relation between forms and participants, and therefore there can be no knowledge (by us) of forms, and no knowledge (by the gods) of us. At 133c7 Parmenides lays down the critical idea thusly: "and so all the characters that *are what they are in relation to each other have their being in relation to themselves but not in relation to things that belongs to us*." Moreover, "these things that belong to us, although they have the same names as the forms, are in their turn *what they are in relation to themselves but not in relation to the forms*; and all the things named in this way are *of* themselves but not *of* the forms" (133d3-6; my emphases throughout). In sum, the two types or categories of things—forms and participants—have their own, incommensurable sets of principles.

These two passages have caused commentators concerns, mainly because, in the first passage, it is unclear whether Parmenides, in saying "and so all the characters that are what they are in relation to each other..." means to refer to *all* forms, or to a specific *subset* of forms; that is, are there certain forms that are what they are in relation to each other (i.e. form-pairs), and other forms that are not so? Commentators who advocate the subset reading typically take Parmenides' argument here to be somehow mistaken, though it is contentious precisely how it is mistaken.[52] Forrester argues "that this part of Parmenides' polemic [against forms] contains a subtle, but discoverable error," in opposition to Cornford (1939), for whom the argument is

[52] Even those who take the argument to be about all forms find problems with it (see below).

"almost grossly fallacious" (1974:233, quoted in Forrester). For both Cornford and later commentators, the errors come somewhere in the lines where Parmenides shifts, by analogy, from talking about the forms of mastery and slavery to the forms of knowledge and truth. The errors in the argument are such that what the argument apparently does *not* show or entail is the standard interpretation that Parmenides means to conclude that there can be *no* relation between *any* forms and participants. For example, Forrester argues that Plato could have had Parmenides argue analogously from the mastery-slavery argument (133d9-134a2) to the knowledge-truth argument (134a4-134b8) that, since the former is defined specifically by a relation *R* that holds only between mastery and slavery, the latter too is defined by a relation *R* that holds only between knowledge itself and truth itself, whatever the latter happens to be (234-5). Were Parmenides to do this, according to Forrester, he would not have been able to argue for the conclusion he in fact submits. As Forrester says, "just as Slavery cannot be mastered by humans, Object-of-Knowledge [i.e. truth itself] cannot be known by humans" (235). But it does not follow, according to Forrester, that humans cannot know *other* forms which are non-identical to Object-of-Knowledge, "but which *are* particular objects of knowledge" (his italics).

Why does Forrester think this is a good way Parmenides could have argued? It is unclear what work object-of-knowledge, as the proper counterpart to knowledge itself, is supposed to do. That is, object-of-knowledge seems superfluous, since all constructive dialogue forms could seemingly fill in the right side (truth) of the knowledge-of-truth relation. For Forrester, the reason is this: the mastery-slavery argument cannot be used to show generally that *other*, non-relational forms, cannot be masters or slaves; the argument only shows that other forms, such as justice, cannot be masters of slavery itself or slaves of mastery itself (234). This is, of course, strange: no one would think that justice (etc.) could be a master or slave. As Forrester says, the

fact that no one would think other forms could be masters or slaves "stems from the particular nature of the master-slave relation, *not from the general characteristics of Forms of relations*" (my emphasis). Thus, as he says, "it would be illegitimate to use the Mastery-Slavery example in an attempt to show generally that the only Forms related by a given relation R are those Forms defined by R (i.e., those corresponding to the places of the relation)." In other words, some forms *not* defined by a relation *R can* be related to forms defined by *R*; this is why the mastery-slavery relation does not prevent justice from being a slave (or master), absurd as that sounds. It only prevents justice from being a slave of mastery *itself* (or a master of slavery itself). So Parmenides cannot legitimately use the mastery-slavery argument to get the general ban on knowledge of forms, because the relation *R* that holds between knowledge and object-of-knowledge/truth does not prevent forms other than truth (which is specifically related only to the form of knowledge) from being known. Thus, the conclusion Parmenides wants from his analogy—that forms cannot be known—is dead in the water. As Forrester notes, "our knowledge, which does not reach to Object-of-Knowledge, *does* reach to objects of knowledge—and such objects of knowledge may well be forms" (235, my emphasis).

There are strange goings on here, seeming sleights-of-hand in both the dialogue and in commentators' analyses and responses. Those who take up the issues in this passage after Forrester use him—for or against—as a baseline for how to understand the passage, and all have similar readings about its logical structure.[53] It has remained unclear to some recent authors, however, whether the general thrust of the argument hinges on the logical structure of this

[53] See, for example, Lewis (1979), Peterson (1981), McPherran (1986), and Yi and Bae (1998). All of these articles are technical and focus specifically on the various ways Plato's Parmenides gets right or wrong the various relations between knowledge and truth, and their participants.

passage as a whole. Specifically, Parmenides is focused on what relation is possible between any of all forms and any of all participants. In other words, the argument seems to concern the ontological status of each category, forms and participants, and not the status of specific relational forms and their alleged participants.

That Parmenides is not introducing new arguments about specific subsets of forms is indicated by the fact that all arguments against forms prior to the GDA have been about form-participant relations generally. Why, one might wonder, would Parmenides introduce the final argument—one that concerns both the ontological status of forms and our epistemic access to them—as the *greatest difficulty* for forms? The previous four arguments aimed to show, respectively, that forms cannot be in participants, either in whole or part (130e-131e), that if forms have relations to participants, they must seemingly have the same relation to themselves, by which they are what they are, and so an infinite regress follows (132a-b), that forms cannot be thoughts, since if they were, participation is incoherent (132b-c), and that another regress results if we take participants to be likenesses of forms (132c-133a). Whether these arguments, all or some, are devastating to forms is one thing;[54] they are certainly meant by Parmenides to be devastating, or at least to be a challenge to the young and naïve Socrates. The final argument presumably covers the same scope as the previous arguments, i.e., forms generally.[55]

Several recent commentators follow a similar line of reasoning. Gill,[56] who accepts

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[54] Several commentators take the arguments to be *not* devastating. See, for example, Sayre (1996).
[55] Gill (1996:46-6 n74) notes, against the "subset" commentators, that by 134b-c, where the form of beauty is mentioned, Plato means to include all forms. Similarly, the quoted passages with which we began (133c3-5) indicates that Parmenides is interested in *whatever* can be said to participate in *any* form.
[56] See also Prior (1985:53), who argues that even if the GDA is invalid or a misrepresentation of the form-participant relation, it may still have value in raising issues about forms Plato must address. McCabe (1994:91) also accepts what Peterson (1981:3) calls (and rejects) a "divorce thesis": "the two orders [of forms and participants] are *completely* separate."

against Fine that forms are separate in the constructive dialogues (though, as I argued above, this is largely irrelevant for accepting separation talk in the GDA), argues that in the GDA, forms and participants are mutually ontologically independent; they are SM separate, in other words. She says separation in the GDA, where forms "are . . . ontologically independent of us, and we and things that belong to us are ontologically independent of them . . . is a direct consequence of Socrates' failure in the *preceding arguments* to provide an acceptable account of the relation between physical objects and forms" (1996:46, my emphasis). Thus, the greatest difficulty—given the general failure of the arguments to relate one category of things to another, even though the one is explicitly introduced to *explain* the other—is that they are SM separate. And if they are SM separate, we can have no knowledge of them; if we have no knowledge of or access to them, then there is no reason to think they exist.

Plato here invokes, against Parmenides, a denial of his B3 fragment: thinking and being are the same (or, weaker, that they are coextensive or *for* or *of* the same things).[57] In such a way, he uses Eleatic principles against Parmenides himself. If this is correct, then with the GDA Plato sets up a dialectical exchange with Eleatic ontology generally, invoking the notion that if Eleatic ontology obtains—either as monism or as monadism about forms (i.e. some version of Plato's own constructive ontology)—then being and becoming must be entirely separate, and the former must fail as a foundational explanation for the latter. To put it into the Eleatic terms I used previously: the *Aletheia* section of Parmenides' poem can have no bearing whatsoever on

[57] Note, too, that the GDA in effect divorces entirely the two sides of the divided line in the *Republic*: if the GDA obtains, then ontology and epistemology cannot be coextensive: opining, thinking, reasoning, and knowing, *cannot* follow being. The divided line seems to be, indeed, a visual and far more nuanced version of Parmenides' B3 fragment, blunt as that fragment is as we have it. I might say that the divided line, similarly to B3, seems to show that thinking and being are two sides or aspects of a single reality.

anything (purported to exist) in the *Doxa*. Such an outcome—the wiping out of sensibles—is problematic for Parmenides, since he explicitly *invokes* sensibles as the very things about which mortals are in error. Plato's use of Eleatic notions for forms puts him in a similarly precarious position, though it is a position that obtains only for one who, like Plato, *already* accepts sensibles: if forms are Eleatic entities, then they cannot do the explanatory work they were always meant to do. In the GDA, Plato in effect moves in the opposite direction from Parmenides: he *starts* with doxa-things (participants/sensibles) and moves to conclude that there is no sense—if there can be no relation between participants and forms—in positing *being* at all.[58] Recall that Parmenides starts with being, and (implicitly) concludes that there can be no sensibles, the very things about which mortals are supposed to be in error. We have two epistemic starting points (sensibles for Plato, and the *krisis* for Parmenides) that lead to two ontological conclusions (forms do not exist for Plato, and there can be no sensibles for Parmenides); neither starting point nor conclusion are coherent for either philosopher.[59]

We find in the GDA Eleatic ontology taken to its logical conclusion, but within the framework of Plato's own basic ontological commitments, namely, his desire to explain the existence or nature of sensibles, however precarious. Plato's conclusion is that the two types of things, forms and participants/sensibles, *must have their own respective principles*: there is a way forms are related to one another, and there is a way participants, or the becoming things, are related to one another. There is no crosstalk. And this, as I argued in the last chapter, is

[58] This is the hint of Heraclitus I mentioned earlier.

[59] This claim must be taken in the context of the GDA, for Plato. His epistemic starting point, sensibles, cannot in the GDA reach being but, if so, then there is no point in positing being. Likewise, Parmenides' starting point, the *krisis*, is too strong so, by his ontological lights, there can be no sensibles. To put it simply: for Plato's GDA being fails to exist; for Parmenides, sensibles fail to exist.

precisely what Eleatic ontology cannot countenance; there is only one set of principles or constraints—those that concern being—and, as such, there cannot be (for Parmenides) anything *but* being. With the GDA, Plato shows that *given* Parmenides' ontology, and *given* that sensibles require explanation, there can be no *such* Eleatic basis for the explanation of sensibles.[60] It does not matter with which category one starts: if one starts with sensibles, one will fail to reach their *explanans*; start with forms, and one will fail to explain anything. The GDA represents, as it were, a profoundly Eleatic failure: the *Aletheia* and *Doxa* can have no contact, which is precisely what the historical Parmenides himself *required*.

One crucial aspect of Plato's confrontation with Parmenides, and thus with his own vague acceptance of the quasi-Eleatic nature of forms (especially in the Socratic and constructive dialogues, where such acceptance is taken for granted), is that Plato is not necessarily overturning Eleatic ontology by *changing* what the Eleatic constraints on forms *mean*. That is, Plato's confrontation with Eleaticism does not entail that forms cannot have many (or all) of the Eleatic characteristics he applies to them across the dialogues, even if the arguments of the first part of the *Parmenides* do in fact set up serious challenges to forms.[61] In other words, although Plato in the *Parmenides* confronts the Eleatic nature of forms, and does challenge what it means for forms to be Eleatic entities, the challenge does not entail that forms are *not* one, *are* divisible, *not* timeless, etc. Plato is, rather, exploring *how* forms might be one, indivisible, eternal, etc.; he is examining what these predicates *really* mean. Indeed, the exercises of both parts of the

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[60] Recall that forms are supposed to *be* the explanation for the nature of sensibles, so "crosstalk" of some sort must exist if such explanatory power is to obtain.

[61] Rickless (2007) says that the arguments of the first part of the dialogue are decisive against the "higher theory," since they all rest on assumptions that will be rejected in the second part of the dialogue. Prior (1985) also takes the first-part arguments to be serious challenges to forms, though resolvable in the *Timaeus*. Sayre (1996) argues that the first part arguments are not serious challenges to forms.

Parmenides on the whole seem to be akin to Plato's (Socrates') argumentative strategy throughout much of the corpus: Fine notes that Plato's strategy in most dialogues has nothing to do with changing the meanings of the predicates at work in our various preanalytic beliefs about things, such as justice or beauty (2003:314). Rather, the point is to uncover what was *really* meant by such terms all along. In this way, too, Plato's confrontation with Parmenides does not mean that if Eleatic oneness or indivisibility is incoherent, then forms are *not* one or indivisible.[62] As with other targets, Plato's arguments purport to show or make clearer the source of the incoherence, and that Parmenides could not have presented such concepts in the ways he argues for them, as constraints on being. So not only is the *Parmenides* an indictment on Socratic and constructive dialogue notions of the Eleatic nature of forms, it is also, *through its very arguments*, an indictment of Parmenides.

This is just good Plato (or Socrates). For example, if Euthyphro thinks prosecuting his father is pious (or an instance of piety itself), then he is using or understands the term incorrectly. Earlier I noted that Socrates never gives up the idea that forms have to be Eleatic in some sense. But it is not until the *Parmenides* that this Socratic and constructive dialogue background assumption is raised as an issue *as such*: what could it possibly mean for something to be an Eleatic entity? Such an inquiry results not in a change in the meaning of Eleatic principles, but in a discovery, as it were, of what the obscure historical Parmenides—were he thinking consistently—must have meant by such principles. If I am right that the best way to understand Parmenides is as a strong monist about being, then his philosophy is unsuccessful as a challenge to mortal beliefs. Plato seems to be the first person to undertake the explicitly *philosophical* task

[62] I address this in relation to the *Sophist* in the next chapter.

of confronting Parmenides by *questioning* what his Eleatic principles could possibly imply about reality[63] But to say that Parmenides was wrong about what it is for something to be one (an austere principle Plato himself seems to have accepted, but grappled with) does not mean that the concept itself is incoherent. The *Parmenides* represents, I submit, Plato in conversation with the historical Parmenides.

A closely related problem regarding the Eleatic split between two mutually incompatible sets of ontological principles, one that gets to the heart of Plato's confrontation with Eleatic ideas, is nicely posed by Gill: why should we care about a radical gulf between forms and participants—things only the gods can know and deal with, and things only we can know and deal with (1996:48)? It is true that Socrates thinks that if it turns out that the gods have no relation to us or the things in our world, the argument is just "too bizarre" (134e7). But the issue seems more serious. Indeed, Gill notes that we might be "empowered within our own realm" if forms are completely irrelevant to us, since we have our own sort of knowledge that is only relevant to what belongs to us (134a9-10). Yet, as Gill points out, something does seem lost if we can have no access to forms. She argues that such a loss of access will mean that our knowledge will be less precise, more nebulous (49). In fact, I take it, the problem is much greater than a loss of epistemic precision, and Gill argues too that if there is a break in the causal link between forms and things (or their immanent characters, at least),[64] then the *being* of those

[63] Others, such as Empedocles and Anaxagoras, simply took those principles and tried to build from them a cosmology consistent with sense experience.

[64] As Gonzalez (2003:39) notes, the notion of immanent characters might itself be superfluous, since—like forms—there is no satisfactory way Plato or later commentators can explain the relation between immanent characters and forms. That is, invoking immanent characters just pushes the problem of participation further back. As several commentators note, it is difficult to reject immanent characters because of what Socrates says in the *Phaedo*. I discuss immanence more in chapter 6.

things—not merely our access to them—will be inexplicable.

It is unclear why this might be so, since it is unclear what the being of participants actually amounts to. For example, in the *Phaedo*, Plato seems to indicate that some participants have essential properties. At 102c1-3 Socrates says "it is not, surely, the *nature* (πεφυκέναι) of Simmias to be taller than Socrates *because* (γάρ) he is Simmias but because of the tallness he *happens to have* (τυγχάνει)?" Thus, Simmias has a nature *qua* Simmias, and that nature does not include the accidental property of tallness.[65] If so, participants such as Simmias are not *bare particulars*, as White claims: they are not entirely empty entities that get their being exclusively by participating in some form or another (1977:196). Indeed, it is far from clear just *what* a bare particular could be, outside of participation. But if Simmias has essential properties, does this mean that Simmias has properties *qua* Simmias in a *pure* sense, such that there are properties Simmias has outside of participation in forms? It may be that Simmias participates in some forms essentially (human being, for example), and some accidentally (tallness). But these essential properties, no matter how many there are, seem insufficient for demarcating or individuating *Simmias*, so Simmias must have some properties besides participation in forms.

In other places Plato represents all participants as bare particulars. As White notes, Plato seems to countenance something like bare particulars in the *Republic* V discussion of what knowledge and opinion, as powers, are set over (197). Opinion, according to Socrates, is set over things that straddle the line between being and not-being (479d-480a): those who care about beautiful things and not the beautiful itself care only about the many beautiful things that *also*

[65] This is somewhat odd, since *everything* that is physical is tall in the sense that it is extended in spacetime. But even if everything is tall in that sense, Simmias is not Simmias in respect of that (relative) tallness.

appear ugly, that straddle the line between being beautiful and not being beautiful (through ugliness). No such thing has an *essential nature*, as White notes.[66] Thus, it is unclear just what the ontological status of *things* that participate in forms is supposed to *be*, and what the source of that being is. On the *Republic* construal, forms are the only *beings*—the only things that are *essentially* what they are—and so no essential properties can be afforded to participants: there can be no sensibles that are what they are in any essential way. But if that is the case, then it is unclear what participants are supposed to *be*, prior to participation. In this way, they end up just as otiose as forms in the GDA: if there is no access to them (since access to some *x* seems to require that it has *some* feature *F*), then it is unclear that we should countenance their existence at all. In this respect, participants, construed outside of participation (in some or another form), end up being as inexplicable as forms, construed outside of any epistemic or causal relation (with some particular or other).

The salient point of the GDA, summed by Parmenides at 134d, is that there is no crosstalk between forms and participants; each category has its "power" in relation to itself, and has no relation with the other. But if participants are bare particulars, and forms are entirely separated from participants, the GDA implies that *neither* forms *nor* participants are explicable, regardless of whether each has its own set of powers or principles.

Setting aside the problems with participants just discussed, I want to suggest a further, historical, point about the issues that seems to arise from the GDA. Assume that participants and forms have no relation. It seems, then, that participants will be wholly unstable, since any stability they might enjoy—such that they might enjoy *some* cognitive reliability—must be had

[66] See Allen (1960) for similar arguments.

by their relation to that which is wholly stable, forms. In this case, participants (whatever they might "be") will be in *complete flux*: a complete lack of stability entails, as Socrates seems to say at *Theaetetus* 152d2-e2, complete flux. He says that if nothing is one—if there is no *one*—then "as a result of movement, change, and mixture with one another, all the things which we say are—*which is not the right way to speak of them*—are coming to be; because nothing ever is, but things are always coming to be" (my emphasis). Even the language of "things coming to be" and "with one another" is misleading, since if there is *just* movement and change, there can be no coming-to-be. Coming to be *what*, we might ask. Coming-to-be implies a time *t*, such that when *x* becomes *F* at *t*, then *x is F* at *t*; flux prevents this. And this means there are no *things* at all. So things that belong to us (sensibles, etc.), if such things abide by their own principles, end up being entirely incoherent for reasons other than, or in addition to, the problematic nature of participants noted above.

Forms fare no better. What could it possibly mean to say that forms "have their power" only in relation to each other? Now, Plato *does* suggest something like the interrelation of forms in the highly obscure passage at the end of *Republic* VI.[67] There he tells Glaucon at 511b-c that after the philosopher has grasped the unhypothetical principle of the all, he or she will make use of the principle to gain *nous*—true philosophical understanding—"without making use of anything visible at all, but only of forms themselves, moving on from forms to forms, and ending in forms."[68] This clearly implies that forms not only are interrelated in various ways, but that minds can grasp that interrelation. The GDA, as we have seen, separates the grasping from the

[67] I postpone for now the discussion of the interrelation of forms in the *Sophist.*
[68] The translation is from Grube, revised by Reeve, in Cooper (1997). Compare, also, what Parmenides says to Socrates at 135e3-5:

being. Still, it is not clear just in what *ways* forms are interrelated, since in some constructive dialogues (e.g., the *Republic*) forms are assumed to be themselves by themselves, whereas others, such as the *Symposium* at 204e, take some forms (e.g., the beautiful and the good) to be interchangeable.[69] As we saw above, the itself-by-itself cannot remain so and be in relations with other things, including other forms. Just as any purported relations between sensibles falls apart if they are completely unstable (since relations "between things" require *things* to be in relations), it seems that *complete stability* similarly disallows relations among forms, if each really is itself-by-itself, i.e., an Eleatic entity as historically conceived.

The historical point alluded to earlier is this: by separating being and becoming in the GDA, Plato appears to begin a conversation among, we can surmise, those figures prominent in his own philosophical upbringing. It has already been noted that Plato is heavily influenced by Parmenides on a number of fronts, and seems to be confronting the man himself in his namesake dialogue. Aristotle tells us that Plato was also influenced by Heraclitus and Cratylus, "having in his youth first become familiar with [their] doctrines (that all sensible things are ever in a state of flux and there is no knowledge of them) . . ." (*Metaphysics* 987a31-3). Recall that in chapter 1 I mentioned that Plato seems to be trying to find a philosophically sound middle ground between Eleatic being and Heraclitean flux, or pure plurality. Starting in the second part of the *Parmenides,* Plato is, I suggest, attempting to find that middle ground between these two

[69] It is unclear what justifies Plato's taking forms to be austere in some dialogues and as either interchangeable or as mixing somehow in others, or both intra-dialogue. Some, like Gonzalez, argue that different contexts demand different ways of talking about forms. But it is often conceded that Plato speaks *metaphorically* about forms in constructive dialogues. As I argue below, in the *Parmenides*, Plato begins the process of "getting out of the metaphors," as it were, confronting his own technical language (itself by itself, e.g.) on these issues. Such a confrontation seems to demand the strenuous exercise of 2P as a sort of intellectual space clearing.

incoherent extremes.[70] The problem, however, is finding a *principled* way to find such middle ground: where is the ontological demarcation between pure being and pure becoming supposed to obtain?

3. A Discussion of the Second Part of the *Parmenides*

It is far from clear, as nearly all commentators agree, how one should interpret the difficult and bare-bones second part (2P) of the *Parmenides* (137c-166), and how, if at all, it relates to the dramatically rich first part (1P).[71] Recent scholarship has tended toward taking 2P to resolve some or all of the criticisms Parmenides launches at Socrates' failed arguments for forms in 1P.[72] Setting that issue aside for now, I argue that in 2P, Plato examines the highly problematic relation between being and becoming through the concepts of the one and many, respectively. He does so largely because the issues that arose in the GDA—while not detrimental to forms—indeed force him to confront just what the relation between being and becoming (forms and participants) is. Put another way: the GDA as a heuristic device sets up a discussion that begins in 2P and extends to other dialogues, about Plato's long-neglected assumptions about the Eleatic nature of forms, and what that nature entails.

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[70] In other dialogues Plato discusses how this might look. At *Phaedrus* 265e Socrates tells Phaedrus that there are "natural joints" along which things in nature are collected and divided; similarly, in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, Plato discusses collection and division, which too must proceed along natural dividing lines. I discuss these issues more fully in the next chapter, though the salient Eleatic point (supported at length in chapter 3) is that, if such divisions in nature are to be intelligible, then they must already be *there—in nature* or *in being*; it is nature or being that grounds what we can know about it.

[71] It is not my intent to rehearse interpretations of the second part. For useful overviews of the literature on these matters see Sayre (1996, Introduction, which includes the historical reaction to the dialogue from the neoplatonic tradition onward), Turnbull (1998:189-199), and Scolnicov (2003:1).

[72] Rickless (2007) is the latest to defend this position. See also Scolnicov (2003). Ambuel (2007) and McCabe (1994) agree with Allen (1997) in holding 2P to be *aporetic*, though Ambuel's concern is the *Sophist* and McCabe's is the problem of individuation. Gill (1996) sees several logical fallacies in 2P, though Rickless and Harte challenge some of her arguments and assumptions on this score.

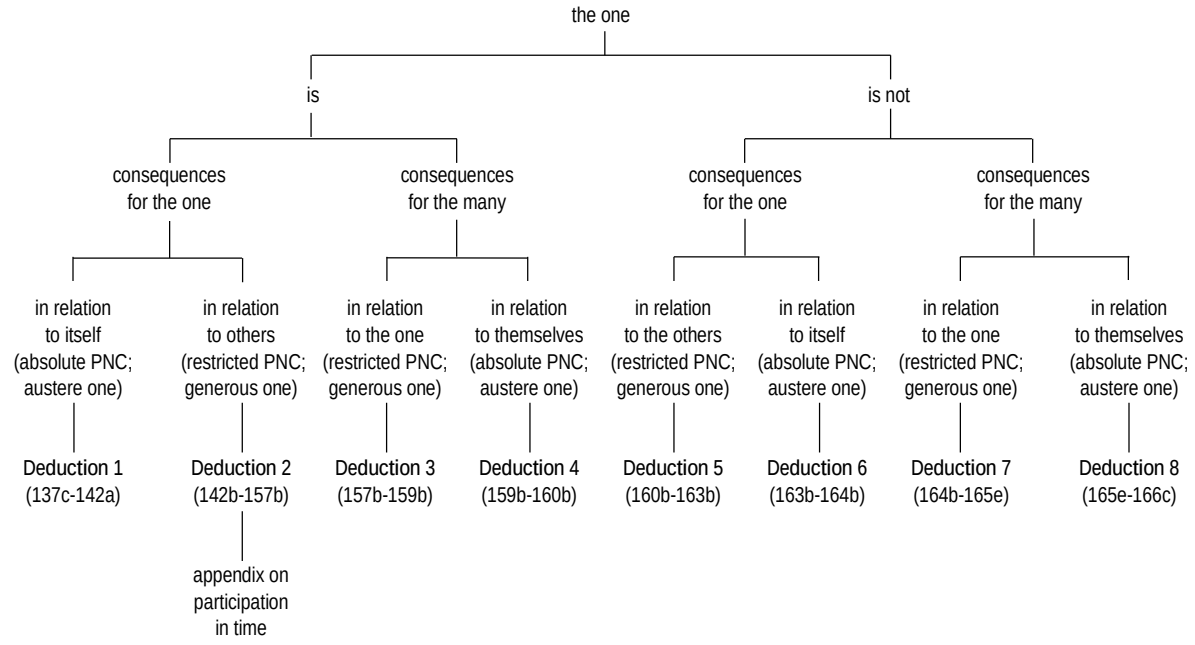

Figure 1. The structure of the deductions in 2P adapted from Scolnicov 2003:28 and McCabe 1994.

3.1. The Deductions of the Second Part of the Parmenides[73]

The first deduction (D1 from 137c-142a) examines what the one's relation to itself and the others (the many) is if it exists/is one, where the emphasis is placed on its oneness as such. D2 (142b-157b) examines the one in relation to itself and the others, if it exists, where the emphasis is placed in its *being* one. Surprising and incompatible conclusions are reached for each deduction. Now, Parmenides claims at 137b3-4 that the "strenuous game" he and young Aristoteles are about to play should start with himself and his own hypothesis. Thus, D1 is typically taken to concern the historical Parmenides' being (or oneness, i.e. monistic being). It is

[73] Following Rickless (2007) and Gill (1996), I use D1, D2, etc. to denote each deduction in 2P.

less clear whether the rest of the deductions have this one as the topic, however, or even precisely what the topic is, or whether it is the same throughout. Rickless takes the topic to be straightforwardly the form of oneness in all deductions, and argues that it is a mere placeholder for any topic. Sayre's view is far more complex: D1 and D6 (163b-164b) are the historical Parmenides' one; D2 and D5 (160b-163b) mainly concern Pythagorean notions of number; D3 (157b-159b) and D7 (164b-165e) concern a concept of oneness found mostly in the *Philebus*; and D4 (159b-160b) and D8 (165e-166c) concern oneness as Plato understands it in 1P and his constructive dialogue discussions of forms (1996:121-23).[74] Scolnicov finds two different types of non-contradiction at work in the deductions, absolute (Eleatic) and restricted (Platonic). McCabe (1994:105) does not (necessarily) see the form of one under discussion, but a more general discussion about what individuation amounts to, whereas Harte (2002:74) sees different "attitudes" to the concept of oneness being discussed: it is taken mereologically in D1, and as a whole identical to its parts in D2.[75]

There are merits and misgivings about all of these interpretations. Taking the one to be a form throughout, as Rickless does, allows the two parts of the dialogue to be more unified in purpose and, as such, allows an interpretation of 2P as resolving the challenges to forms in 1P. But this is difficult to square with what Parmenides says at 137b3-5,[76] and, as Harte notes, the initial Parmenidean one seems to be "not the form One, but . . . the kind of thing 'one might think to be a form'," as Parmenides says at 135e, in response to Socrates sticking to his guns and

[74] Sayre's strategy is to make the deductions non-contradictory, and so part of that project is to find various senses of 'one' that do the trick.
[75] McCabe has a similar notion about different attitudes being taken: the one in 2P is taken either *austerely* (i.e. as such or without regard to properties) or *generously* (i.e. with regard to properties).
[76] There Parmenides asks Socrates "is it all right with you if I begin with myself and my own hypothesis? Shall I hypothesize the one itself and consider what the consequences must be, if it is one or is it is not one?"

not capitulating to discussion of visible things (76).[77] But if we *do* take D1 to concern Parmenides' hypothesis, then it is unclear why, in D2, there would be a shift to a totally non-Eleatic concept of one. Indeed, there is controversy at the very outset mainly because the Greek that sets up D1 is ambiguous: εἰ ἕν ἐστιν could either mean "if the one is" or "if the one is one." Harte's suggestion, following Brown (1986)—with which I am sympathetic—is that it does not matter, since "there need be no semantic shift involved in the move from something being to its being somehow qualified" (75).[78] That is, there is a connection between something's being one and something's *being*.[79] In any event, my reading of the general thrust of 2P countenances a sort of synthesis between McCabe's and Harte's readings: 2P explores at a very general level what it means for something to be *one*. As noted, McCabe and Harte seem to accept similar positions on the one in question, though they call these by different technical terms. McCabe's notion of austerity is the same as Harte's notion of the mereological nature of the one, whereas McCabe's notion of generosity is akin to Harte's notion that ones are both *one-and-many*, given that composition is identity.[80]

It would take us too far afield to give close dissections and analyses of even the first two deductions, let alone all of them. Thus, I shall paint with broader strokes. The initial arguments in D1 almost necessitate its somewhat shocking—and utterly anti-Eleatic—conclusion.[81]

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[77] The discussion of 2P is abstract, though it is not clear that "visible things" are excluded from the arguments. I argue below that nothing prevents their inclusion.
[78] Against this, see Gill (1996:65-71), who explicitly opts for the complete predicate reading "if the one is one."
[79] A similar issue comes up in the *Sophist* at 237d8.
[80] She argues that composition-as-identity is a background assumption at work in at least D1 and D2. She argues—and this plays a significant role in my interpretation—that, beginning in D3, Plato seems to be moving away from composition as identity.
[81] D1 concludes with an anti-Eleatic one, whereas D2 starts with an anti-Eleatic one, though they are anti-Eleatic for (seemingly) different reasons. See, however, below.

Parmenides, in the first few lines, says that since the one is (one), then it cannot, by the assumed definition of mereological/austere oneness, be many. Immediately he concludes that there can neither be parts of it nor can it be a whole. Now, one background assumption, according to Harte, for the support of such a view, is that Plato accepts—at least here and for the sake of argument—the notion that parts *pluralize* whatever they are parts *of*: "if some single object has parts, then . . . that single object is many—just as many as its parts" (53). Key here is the idea that some *x* is a *single object* and is also *just as many as its parts*. That is, it is a *paradoxical* many-one, as she says (62).[82] But D1 denies this possibility on grounds that an austere one would not be one were it to have many parts. And from the assumption that the one is (austerely) one, all and sundry conclusions seem to follow: it cannot have shape, be in any place, at rest or in motion, be the same as itself or another thing, or different from itself or another thing, be equal or unequal to itself or anything else, be older, younger, or the same age as itself or anything else, and thus cannot be in time, or come to be or even *be*. And so the one in no way is, can have no name, cannot be known, perceived, or even opined about. The assumption that the one is (one) leads to it being nothing at all, not even *one*. This is an *ontological* corollary of the *epistemological* claim about forms in the GDA. In the GDA, if forms cannot be known, there is no *sense* in thinking that they exist. But in D1, if the one is not, that it cannot be known is entailed. It seems Plato is approaching the GDA's epistemological claim from an ontological point of view, and indeed, one that starts with a *decidedly* Eleatic hypothesis.

What could this mean? Why might Plato begin this long and strenuous "game" with the Parmenides character announcing that the first examination should be of his (ostensibly the

[82] The paradox is that if something is one, then it cannot *also* be many.

historical Parmenides') own hypothesis, only to subsequently undermine it in total? One possibility, which seems in keeping with Parmenides' transitional acquiescence to Socrates' *initial* positing of forms to resolve Zeno's puzzles (at 135b-c), is that Plato is *showing*, with ontological argumentation about the nature of the Eleatic one, what one side of the GDA separation must amount to in itself (and not merely as regarding our failure to know it). In other words, Parmenides himself had chiseled away at Socrates' initial arguments to such a degree that the final conclusion was complete separation in the GDA. But almost immediately after they reach this conclusion, Parmenides says that forms must be as Socrates says they are, at least roughly, for fear that discourse and philosophy would otherwise be impossible. This is quite an odd thing to say after such whirlwind argumentation *against* forms. But to *show* how GDA-separated forms must be not merely epistemologically inaccessible, but *ontologically incoherent*, D1 starts from the very description of forms at work in 1P: they are austerely one because they are themselves by themselves. The conclusion is that such entities cannot exist, let alone be known. If sections of 2P concern forms or form-like things, so much the worse for their allegedly Eleatic nature. Parmenides and Aristoteles conclude that none of these things can be true of the one, and they move on to D2.

Whereas D1 takes the one in its pure, austere or mereological sense, D2 emphasizes the assumption that the one *is*, and homes in on the relation of the one to its *being*. Again, surprising results ensue; in D2, as Gill notes, everything (and more) denied of the one in D1 is here seen to follow from the assumption that the one is (1996:76). 'One' and 'is', according to Parmenides signify something different, and if the one is to escape the D1 consequences, it must partake of being (142c5-8). But if it partakes of being, then *one* and *being* are *parts* of the object hypothesized, "the one that is" (142d4). Again, as in D1's hypothesized pure one, all and sundry

conclusions follow from an impure one, a one that somehow has being as a part. The problems in D2, as many note, obtain because the one eventually is shown to have any and all—including contradictory—properties, that follow from the hypothesis that the *one is*.[83] In contrast to D1, then, the one of D2 ends up being, as Gill notes, "everything indiscriminately" (85). The one of D2, on Harte's reading, is a paradoxical many-one: it is a one that *is* (also) a many, and it is a many that seems to be *thoroughly* pluralized. The notion that the one of D2 can be pluralized *ad infinitum* is in stark contrast to other things Plato, especially in the constructive dialogues, takes to have parts or to be things-that-are-many, namely, participants. As McCabe notes, things that can be pluralized in the way the one of D2 is pluralized "hitherto reflected the contrast between particulars (which are generously endowed with properties of all sorts) and forms (which austerely are just what they are)" (104). And, she notes, such a difference is, in other dialogues, one of *ontological level*: participants are, as noted above, somehow defective because they are derivative. But this distinction is missing here, since it is an *abstract* one that is being tested.

So, does D2 treat the one under consideration *as if* it were akin to a participant? On McCabe's reading of 2P, there is no ontological commitment to whatever the subject matter under consideration might happen to be, as there is in 1P. It is a purely abstract exercise in figuring out a prior question: what is it to be one, to be an *individual*, and there are two aspects (or concepts)—austerity and generosity—by which one can engage the question. D2 engages the question, according to McCabe, by considering the one as having parts; Harte and Gill, too, consider D2 in this way. But, as McCabe herself notes, *previously* only particulars had been

[83] D2 is by far the longest deduction in 2P, but it can be compared usefully as a whole with D1, and the overall movement and point of D2 can thereby be appreciated. I return to this topic below.

treated in the generous way the one is treated in D2. Moreover, it seems clear that *previously* only forms had been treated the way the one of D1 is treated. Thus, the two ways in which one can feel one's way through the arguments regarding individuation in 2P are, apparently, just the ways forms and particulars have, on other occasions, been treated. The first two deductions seem to be, then, two different ways forms and particulars can be treated, even if, as Parmenides seems to indicate, the entire 2P exercise will concern abstract objects alone. And this is the salient question: if one cannot treat forms austerely, as D1 indicates, then what happens when one treats them as if they were akin to participants? D2 shows us what ensues: they become mired in contradiction, where every property is predicable of them.

D2, I argue, does indeed show us what it is like to treat any given object (abstract or otherwise) as if it were the sort of naïve version of *as such* participants Plato discusses on other occasions, especially in *Republic* V, as we have seen. D1 gives us a one as if it were an *as such* form; D2 gives us a one as if it were an *as such* participant. And in this way, D2, like D1, can be tied to the GDA: it is a working out, as it were, of the participant side of separation. Indeed, if D1 considers a completely austere one, and D2 considers a completely generous one, and these objects can be tied to the forms and participants, respectively, of the GDA, then it is not difficult to see how GDA-separation is symmetrical: there is a *logical* gulf between the purely unmixed and the variously mixed. The principles governing each "realm" in the GDA, we might surmise, are nothing less than the hypotheses that kick off D1 and D2: pure austerity, on the one hand, and the allowance of parts to the one, on the other. What this gives us is a dialectical description of how forms and participants—in isolation from one another *qua* GDA—act according to *their own* principles, which is precisely what Parmenides offers there. Here, the outcome for each is ontological incoherence.

One thing other commentators have not much addressed is the idea that the conclusions of D1 and D2 are, in a sense, the same.[84] Now, most commenters see D1 as issuing in total non-being: if the one is austere, then it cannot *exist*. Moreover, the one of D2 is said—since it can have any and all predicates—to constitute everything; and *everything* is the opposite of *nothing*, which means the two conclusions are contradictory. But, it seems, the *everything* of D2 is more akin to a Heraclitean sort of everything: if the one is pluralized by even contradictory properties, then it results in a nothingness all the same. And this is a nothingness—a *no-thing-ness*—that Plato discusses, as noted above, at *Theaetetus* 152d2-e2.[85] It is absurd to say that anything exists if every (purported) "thing" can be pluralized *ad infinitum*; pluralization on this model may be tantamount to pure flux, since every "thing" is always also its opposite, and so never really any *thing* at all. So, both D1 and D2 issue in nothingness.[86] And, if they can be tied to the GDA, by extraction, purely austere being and purely generous plurality too issue in nothingness: there is nothing *there*, on either side of the GDA, for the mind to latch onto, as it were.

That the outcomes of the first two deductions issue in more or less equally untenable conclusions is not surprising. That they issue in roughly the same untenable conclusion *is* somewhat surprising. It should be less surprising, however, once we understand that not-being (nothingness, non-being, etc.) just means the absence of either being or beings. The conclusion of D1 is that *positing a fully austere being* entails its own *not-being*. The conclusion of D2 is

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[84] Gill (104) comes close by noting that the one of D2 is "everything indiscriminately," and so nothing really or determinately.

[85] See also *Theaetetus* 181c-182c.

[86] Gill (93), in discussing the conclusion of D4—that "the one is all things and not even one" (160b3)—notes that this is just a reiteration of the conclusions of D1 and D2, with D3 completely left out. But she summarizes the two conclusions by saying that D1 issues in not-being, and D2 issues in a one that is everything, and "if it is everything, it is an *impossible object* with incompatible properties" (my emphasis). Thus, *both* conclusions end in not-being, one way or another.

that *positing a fully-endowed being* entails *no beings* at all, since something with any and all—including contradictory—properties, cannot *be* a *thing* in any coherent sense. The two conclusions, though somewhat different, exemplify the two sides of the GDA, but from an ontological point of view: if we take form-like things and participant-like things in isolation—that is, as things that have their own, totally separate, rules or governing principles—then we end up with ontological incoherence. The total separation of the two distinct types of things or ways of being leads, on the one hand, to strong Eleaticism, and on the other, to strong Heracliteanism, both of which are intrinsically ontologically untenable. This is, then, the *ontological* aspect of accepting strong separation: one certainly cannot know what one does not have access to; but one has no access to *either* side of the GDA, *because* both sides end up in not-being. And the first two deductions show how this is so.

If forms are to be salvaged, as Parmenides and Socrates think they must be, there must be some way of bridging being and becoming, the one and the many.[87] Starting with D3,[88] Plato begins to examine how this might work, though he is not entirely successful in the *Parmenides*.[89] What ostensible advance is made in D3 that is not present in the first two deductions?

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[87] The notion that forms must be saved so that philosophy and discourse can be saved is what Scolnicov (2003:25) notes as a pragmatic assumption.

[88] Gill (86) notes that the discussion of time in the Appendix to the first two deductions is perhaps offered as a solution to some D1 and D2 problems. But the notion of an *instant*—where some *x* neither is nor is not—seems to run afoul of the law of excluded middle (at the expense of saving the principle of non-contradiction): *x* must either be or not be. Thus, this does not seem to be a live solution.

[89] Like other *aporetic* dialogues, however, each deduction seems to further advance us toward something like the correct answer; each deduction may produce wind-eggs, but it is simply false that the exercise has no merit, and indeed, merit outside of mere gymnastics. Parmenides and Aristoteles seem to be doing serious metaphysical exploration, not merely playing a "strenuous game," and so the *aporia* of 2P ends up being more like what Scolnicov (2003:8-9) calls *euporia*: the "free passage" that opens up for future argument. Scolnicov (165) also notes that 2P only offers the bare skeleton of a metaphysical system.

3.2. The Third and Later Deductions

D3 is problematic and controversial, since several commentators find at least two fallacies in the arguments. Like so much of the *Parmenides*, however, these problematic passages apparently have little bearing on the basic argument of D3 as a whole. The most problematic passage occurs at 157d4-5, where Parmenides says "and if [some *x*] is not part of each [of many *y*s], it will be part of none of the many [*y*s]." Rickless (2007:200) notes that this claim is obviously false, and Gill (89) concurs: "if something fails to be part of each of the many, we cannot conclude that it is not part of any of them: it could be part of some of them." But both Rickless and Gill point out that this claim is not fatal to the argument because it plays no role in getting the conclusion of this section of D3, namely, that if the one is, then the others are also one, and that if the one is, then the others are a whole. It also plays no role in the main—and most important—conclusion of D3, that a part cannot be a part of a many. There is, however, some tricky business going on here, and both the promising and problematic nature of D3 rests on the notion that the others must somehow have a share in the one (157c2-3).

Harte breaks down the issues in the passage from 157b7-c8 by noting that there seems to be an assumed dual aspect to the notion of oneness in the argument (124). Parmenides says explicitly at the beginning of D3 that "since [the others] are other than the one, the others are not the one" (157b9-10) and the others "are surely other *because they have parts*" (157c4, my emphasis). The contrast at work, then, is that the one cannot have any parts whatsoever, and that the others are such *because* they have parts. As Harte notes, the one in question here must—by virtue of a lack of parts—be mereological or austere (or at least quasi-austere). But Parmenides immediately goes on to say that parts are always parts of some whole, and "yet the whole of which the parts are to be parts must be *one thing* composed of many" (157c7-8). So wholes are

ones, though they *too* have parts, by definition. Note that the first one in question, being mereological, seemingly must suffer the fate of the one in D1, since that argument's point is to explicitly examine the nature of such a one in isolation. And the results are damning. But if a one is to have parts, as D2 shows us, there seemingly is nothing to stop it from having *all possible properties* (as parts). But if that is the case, then it is unclear how these parts are parts of a *whole*, since the ostensible whole is, by virtue of its having all properties, wholly *indeterminate*. The D3 argument, as Harte says, requires two ways of understanding oneness—a mereological one and another that is a whole-of-parts, a *complex* one. What is the justification for allowing this?

Gill argues that D3 moves into rather positive territory and indeed "is the most constructive section of the whole" of 2P (86). The very constructiveness of D3 sets it apart from the other deductions, but the question is precisely *why* it is constructive or what allows it to be different (especially given that D4 is meant to more or less undermine the conclusions of D3, even though D4 assumes again a pure or mereological one). Gill takes it that Parmenides simply ignores what Harte (53) calls the "pluralizing parts principle," which is a staple of Plato's (sometimes) assumption that composition is identity: if *x* has parts, then *x* is just as many as its parts; *x* is *identical* to its many parts (87).[90] But if Parmenides suppresses this assumption in D3, the (one) whole is *not* (in D3) necessarily many because it has parts, i.e., its having parts does not render it many. In D3, then, composition must *not* be identity, and wholes-of-parts are somehow more than the aggregate of those parts.

[90] See for example, the discussion of syllables at *Theaetetus* 203a-206c, and the discussion at *Sophist* 244d6-245d6, which challenges the pluralizing parts principle against the monists.

But does D3 contain an *argument* for the idea that composition is not identity? That is, is it the case that Parmenides is *merely* ignoring the pluralizing parts principle? A central conclusion Parmenides wants—that a part cannot be a part of a many—cannot be extracted from the fallacious section noted above. But, say Rickless (200), Harte (128), and Gill (89), the conclusion follows *regardless* of the fallacy. As Harte deftly shows, given the assumption that nothing is a (proper) part of itself, if we take some part *p* of the many, then it follows that *p* "is not one of the many of which it is a part." That is, it is somehow a member but not a part of the many. And so on with all the other members. Thus, the many will have no parts. As Harte says "no part will be one of the many of which it is part; and no many will include any of its parts. *The moral is clear . . . : a part cannot be part of a many, one of which it is*" a member (my emphasis). She concludes that this consequence follows only if we reject composition as identity; that is, since a whole is assumed to be identical to its many parts (in other sections of the corpus), and (by the D3 argument) a part cannot be part of a many, it follows that manys cannot be identical to wholes, and so composition cannot be identity.

An important aspect of this line of argument is the notion of a bare plurality: what could a *bare plurality* possibly be? We know, by D3, that a bare plurality (a many) can have no parts. So a bare plurality cannot be a whole, if wholes necessarily have parts. And since manys cannot have parts, and wholes must have parts, manys (as we saw above) cannot be identical to wholes. So what *is* a many, what *is* a plurality? We can, from an interpretation of D3, introduce a corollary to Harte's pluralizing principle: *no pluralizing without principles*. That is, D3 seems to show us that there can *be* no plurality of things *without* some sort of organizing principle that, as it were, gathers the many into a single, unified thing. But if that is the case, then the single unified thing will be a whole, composed of but not identical to its many parts. This is what Harte

argues Parmenides offers us, at least in D3: "a single form: one complete thing created out of all the parts" (128). Indeed, Plato's Parmenides, toward the end of D3, seems to offer something of great metaphysical importance: the notion of a *limit*, by which the parts and wholes can be related to one another *qua* part and whole, and not *merely* part-to-whole, in a composition-as-identity sense, but as a *structured* part-whole relation, where the relation is not haphazard. Parmenides says: "furthermore, whenever each part comes to be one part, the parts then have a limit *in relation to each other* and *in relation to the whole*, and the whole has a limit in relation to the parts" (158c10-d2, my emphasis). Now, this is crude metaphysics, to be sure, since it is unclear precisely how this limiting works. But Plato *recognizes* structure, here; in order to resolve the Eleatic ontological problems about how being can relate to becoming or to the doxa-things, he recognizes that there must *be* structure, in order for us to claim that we know anything about how the *f*-things are *F*.

The dichotomous notions of a mereological one and bare plurality are crucial for understanding how Plato means to resolve the GDA issues. Recall that the two sides of the GDA ostensibly have their own principles, and that these two sides represent beings and the becoming things. I argued above that these can be mapped onto the one and others/many of 2P, *given* that the arguments in 2P are more or less barren of determinate subjects: following McCabe, the arguments should be considered an exploration of what it means for something to be one, regardless of whether such things are abstract.[91] And D3 gives us a somewhat surprising result if we take its constructive nature seriously: bare pluralities are incoherent as such, whereas the

[91] Gill (105-6) notes that by D7 and D8, Parmenides does indeed seem to be talking about both abstract entities *and* sensibles, and she ties D7 directly to the GDA issues (see below).

mereological one is coherent only insofar as it explains how the many can be gathered into structured wholes, that is, insofar as it is understood as a *limiting principle* for the relations parts and wholes have to each other, and that parts have to other parts. As a limiting principle, it is a *structuring principle*.

But the surprising upshot is this: the mereological one is only epistemically coherent *in this limiting/structuring role*. In other words, we lesser beings can only understand something like an austere one within the context of trying to get clearer about the apparently structured nature of the *sensible world*—the one we have immediate access to—that is, within the context of trying to understand the *f*-things as being *truly F*.[92] This 'truly' signifies that, though the *f*-things are wholes with parts (as Socrates claims himself to be at the beginning of the *Parmenides*), they are not hopelessly pluralized; *f*-things do not, as it were, degenerate into an indefinite Heraclitean flux: *something* holds them together as individuals, such that they can be quantified over, referred to in propositions, etc. Thus, the *f*-things should not, for Plato, be cast as nonexistent in the historical Parmenides' sense; showing *how* this is possible just is showing how to bridge the gap between being and becoming (one and many). But neither should the *f*-things be lionized. They are cognitively unreliable *to some degree*.[93] And since they are explainable (to just the extent of their cognitive reliability), they can safely enter Plato's ontology.

The last five deductions show, in various ways, either a world where the one has (again)

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[92] Such knowledge might be non-propositional, in ways similar to how Gonzalez (2003) understands that notion.
[93] Again, if the *f*-things were totally cognitively unreliable, then it would be folly for Plato to introduce forms as a way of coming to some cognitive reliability *about* the *f*-things; it is, in other words, forms that *make* the *f*-things as cognitively reliable as they are. But if this is so, then there must be some connection between forms and participants. As we will see below, D7 and D8—which I take to be thoroughly Eleatic—show *that* this must be the case (without showing explicitly how).

no contact with the others/many (D4), or a world devoid of the one in different ways (D5-D8), and what such an absence of the one might mean for itself and for the others. D4 oddly concludes with a reiteration of the conclusions of D1 and D2. Harte, however, takes it that D4 does confirm a central feature of D3, namely, that wholes-of-parts must be *ones*: since the one of D4 is entirely separate from the others/many, the others/many cannot be wholes or parts in any sense, since, as D3 shows, *if* something is to be whole (necessarily with parts), *both* whole and part must participate in the one (130).

In the final four deductions, the assumption is that the one does *not* exist. The notion of not-being (and what it means specifically for the one itself) is examined in D5 and D6, but is given two different analyses. In D5, not-being is cashed out via the incomplete 'is' as some *x*'s not-being *F*. In D6, the notion of not-being is absolute.[94] But the final two deductions get to the heart of more historically problematic Eleatic issues, issues that were also seen in the GDA. Thus, the final two deductions are, I argue, the culmination of exploring the relation between being and becoming that the GDA kicks off, with the final deduction (D8) offering the starkest possible conclusions.[95]

In D7, the issue of bare pluralities comes up once again: what properties might the others have if the one is not (164b5-6)? Key to the argument is that if they are discussing the others, then the others must be different from the one; 'different' and 'other' apply to the same things, here. But "the different is different from a different thing, and the other is other than another

[94] I will explore more fully D5 and D6 in relation to the *Sophist*'s arguments about not-being in the next chapter.
[95] I agree with Gill (104) that D8 has two conclusions, one that offers a clue about the connection between being and becoming that the GDA initially undermines, and the other that shows what would happen if the first conclusion were *false* (see below).

thing" (164c2-3). If so, then the others must be other than *something*. Typically in 2P they are taken to be other than the one; but here the one is not, and so the others must be other than themselves: "so they are other than *each other* (αλλήλων) . . . or else they are other than nothing" (164c5-8). Since nothing cannot be, they must be other than each other, and they must be other to each other as multitudes, since the one is not (164c9-10). The final conclusions here, to sum up, are that each of these others will only *appear* to be other *as masses*, and not as ones (or wholes), since the one is not. But if that is the case, contradictions follow: the many *qua* masses will appear like and unlike (165c7), the same as, and different from, each other (165d6-7), in contact with, and separate from, each other, moving in all ways, and similarly at rest in all ways, and becoming and ceasing to be, and neither of these things (165d7-10).

D7 is a strange argument, since throughout Parmenides seems to assume that, even if the one is not, then the notion of a *mass* is coherent. But masses, taken as chunks of an unlimited multitude, are, it seems, discernible from other masses. But if so, then, since determinateness (and thus discernibility) requires oneness, such masses would have to participate in a one. But the one is not. The salient point, it seems, as Scolnicov notes, is that if we take some chunk of the others and try to relate it to some other (each in their otherness, since we have already seen that others have to be other *than* something), it follows—since the one is not—that any analysis of how some other can be other than another presupposes "an arbitrary point of reference . . . [that can] only be taken from the others themselves, in the absence of a one that is something *in itself*" (160, my emphasis). Since there is no limiting/structuring principle (i.e. the one), the others are indeterminate in themselves, and all ostensible relations between them are *negative*: some arbitrary other *is* what it is in relation to what any and all others *are not*. As Scolnicov notes, "the one being indeterminate, there can be no criterion of individuation for the others.

Hence, unities are arbitrary and *merely relative to each other*" (my emphasis). If this discussion can be mapped onto the GDA, then it seems that D7 shows us precisely how the others/many would have to be in relation to each other, totally separate from being.

These ways of speaking, in and about D7, are incomprehensible, since without a determinate one, there can be no such thing as *each* or *other than*; such distinction requires joint-cuttingly real division, which requires structure, which in turn requires a limiting principle. This is, perhaps, why Parmenides concludes that the others will only *appear* to be such as they say they are in D7 (164d3 for the first mention of *appearing*). But without the one, Parmenides concludes, all the others will even appear contradictory, as noted above. Notice that we are now in the similarly precarious position of the historical Parmenides: it is unclear how the others can *appear* to be anything at all, if there is no principled way to ground the apparent divisions D7 takes us to see. And this brings us to the final, destructive deduction.

D8 argues that if the one is not, then neither will the others be, nor will they be many, and indeed they will be nothing at all (165e3-7). Moreover, the others will not *appear* to be one or many (165e10), nor can they even be *conceived* to be one or many, if the one is not. The final conclusions come in two forms, one positive, one negative. The positive conclusion, as Gill notes, comes at 166c: "then if we were to say, to sum up, 'if one is not, nothing is,' wouldn't we speak correctly" (104)? This seems to be a deeply Eleatic conclusion, though it really is only quasi-Eleatic, and indeed opens a *euporia* for further examining Parmenides' philosophy in other dialogues. For the historical Parmenides denied not-being and was led to the one; Plato here denies the one and is led to total not-being. But Plato also *asserts* the one and is led to precisely the same conclusion: that the one *cannot even be* (141e in D1). The negative conclusion of D8 follows up on this fact and sums up all the arguments: "let us say this—and also that, as it seems,

whether the one is [D1–D4] or is not [D5–D8], 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." Assert the one and be led to incoherence; deny the one and be led to incoherence. Something is amiss in Eleatic ontology indeed.

3.3. Some Conclusions about The Second Part

I have argued thus far that 2P presents an examination of how being and becoming (or one and many) can be related to each other, and that this exploration is deemed appropriate *because of* the alleged devastation of the GDA: there, forms and participants are entirely separate from one another, and this separation leads to unacceptable consequences. Following Fine, it seems evident that Plato is not committed to separation, but is also not particularly clear about the relation between forms and participants (2003). The GDA, I argued, is a heuristic device to set up a dialogue, as it were, between Plato and both Parmenides and Heraclitus in 2P, which examines how the one and the many can be related to one another in all sorts of logical combinations. The most important conclusions from 2P, I suggest, come in D3 and D8. In D3, in order to effect some sort of relation (participation) of the many in the one, Plato assumes that such participation is possible (at 157c3) and is led there to understand the one as a sort of *limiting principle*: it demarcates parts from one another (and so each is a one), and shows how wholes can be ones that *have parts*. As Harte argues, such a move is a move away from the notion that wholes are just *sums* of parts; if they are identical to their sums, then they are (contradictorily) one and many. D3, in effect, points toward a relation between whole and part that is, as Harte says, not ontologically innocent (138). Wholes are (somehow) *more than* the sums of their parts. Plato does not, in the *Parmenides*, explain how this might be possible,

though it seems that with D3, if Plato wants to afford some cognitive reliability to sensibles, he must be able to show that they are wholes of parts, and *explainable* as such. But in order for this to be the case, sensibles must—first and foremost—participate in the one.

D8's positive conclusion, that without the one, nothing at all is, is more abstract than the somewhat pragmatic conclusions of D3. Both Scolnicov (165) and Gill (103-4) argue that D8 shows that the one is a *precondition for being*. But *which* one, the austere or mereological one, or the structured one of D3? Scolnicov argues that it must be the former, and this seems correct, since it is by participating in absolute oneness (in D3) that wholes are such, that is, that they have (and are not identical to) their many parts, each of which is itself one. Gill argues that "the one not only determines boundaries between entities and structures them into integrated wholes; the one is also a *precondition for the existence of items to be so organized*" (my emphasis). Without such a one, as she notes, there is nothing at all. This must mean that without such a one, there are *neither* forms *nor* participants, if without it, there is nothing. This, however, implies that forms themselves must be structured entities, if the one determines boundaries between things.[96] This, I take it, is an advance made in the *Parmenides*: forms have to be structurally complex but *also* one; their structural complexity cannot detract from their oneness, and D3 gives us a way forward on this issue.

But did not D1 completely annihilate this austere one that is apparently (now) doing all this work? As I argued above—and as most commentators argue—the one of D1 is an austere

[96] In the next chapter, I argue that the one *qua* limiting principle is incoherent without a coherent notion of not-being: in order to claim that some *F* is not-*G*, it must be the case that it is wholly intrinsically *F* and *also* that it *is* not-*G*. But the 'is' that allegedly relates a being with a not-being causes confusion in D5; the *Sophist* picks up these issues and attempts to clarify the relation between being and not-being.

one *taken in isolation*, i.e. taken *as such*. If we can take the one completely as it relates to itself, then it ends up as neither one nor as *existing*. But why should we take it in complete isolation? It may indeed be that we *cannot* take it in complete isolation from the others. I suggested earlier, with Fine that forms and participants *might* stand or fall together, if ontological independence for forms is false (2003:288). The consequences of examining the one and the others in myriad logical relations seems to bear this out, if the one and the others can be mapped onto form and participant relations.[97] For, recall the final positive conclusion of D8: if we "speak correctly" (166c2), and the one is not, then neither are the others.

The salient conclusion is that both the one and the others *must be*. This can only work if the arguments of D3 are taken seriously. Granted, the one of D3 is an odd bird, quasi-austere: it is one *because* it completely lacks parts, thus making it austere. But can it be completely austere if the others somehow participate in it (without partitioning it)? It is not clear.[98] Even so, if the D3 one does exist, then the others by participating in it are automatically wholes-of-parts: the others exist as individuals, and *thereby* not as hopelessly fluxed non-beings. So if the one exists, the others exist in the only possible way the deductions show us that they *can* exist: by being wholes-of-parts. And if the others exist (again, as wholes), then the one *too* must exist, since there would be no explanation of the others' being wholes if it did not. D3, in effect, offers a *euporia* for showing that being and becoming—the one and the many or forms and participants—exist if and only if their counterparts exist. In my final chapter, I will argue that

[97] Again, it certainly seems that the 2P discussion *can* be so mapped, though that it *need not be*. If it is a general discussion about oneness or individuation, then it can be.

[98] It is not clear partly because it is unclear whether the others must be understood as *parts* of the one. If they are, and the one still maintains its structural integrity, then it must be a whole-of-parts. But then it cannot be the thing that, *qua* limiting principle, makes wholes-of-parts of the *others*, unless it somehow explains its *own* wholeness.

this can be made more coherent on a monistic interpretation of Plato.

4. Conclusion

I have argued that Plato takes up elements of Eleatic ontology and epistemology, crudely in the Socratic dialogues, and in a more refined way in the constructive dialogues. But he runs into trouble precisely on account of his unexamined Eleaticism: it is unclear—just as it was for the historical Parmenides—how being can relate to becoming, i.e., how forms can relate to the things that allegedly participate in them.

Regarding these issues, I further argued that Plato does indeed take up the concept of separation, though it cannot from the dialogues be concluded that he is committed to one version of it, namely, the separation associated with the notion of ontological priority Aristotle attributes to Plato: capacity for independent existence. Nevertheless, Plato does take up the concept of separation, I argued, as a *heuristic device* for setting up the initial foray into a long-neglected examination of the Eleatic nature of forms he had perhaps been assuming. He does this most effectively in the GDA.

The second part of the *Parmenides*, I further argued, should be understood as a sort of response to the problems encountered in the GDA, at least on one level. Siding with Fine, and concurring that Plato does not take the GDA as a serious challenge to forms, he *does* take it to set up a way for attempting to get clear about the implicit Eleaticism of forms and Heracliteanism of participants, *taken in isolation*. The upshot of these arguments, I argued, is that forms and participants cannot exist apart from one another; there is mutual dependence, but it occurs in the way Fine (2003:288) cashes out that notion: forms *as such* are dependent on participants, and participants *as such* are dependent on forms. It is still true, however, that any given participant is

dependent on some form(s) or another. It is clear from the fact that forms and participants are ontologically distinct—they are different sorts of entities—that there can be dependence relations at the individual level. That is, since Simmias is tall and short, and comes to be and passes away, though no form can become its opposite or come to be or pass away, then Simmias and the forms he participates in are categorically different. It does not follow that forms *tout court* are *not* dependent on participants *tout court*, and vice versa. Indeed, as I argued, 2P shows the ontological consequences of taking being and becoming (one and many) to be coherent in themselves. The conclusion was that they are not: they must somehow be understood as mutually dependent.

CHAPTER FIVE

PLATO'S *SOPHIST*: HOW NOT-BEING *IS*

1. Introduction

In the *Sophist* Plato does an astonishing variety of things, all centered on the main point of the dialogue, namely, trying to understand the nature of the sophist. Sophists—the most famous of whom were paid great sums to teach elite males how to win arguments—are often confused with ordinary teachers and with philosophers, and one purpose of the dialogue is to come to an understanding of what a sophist is, such that Plato might then contrast in no uncertain terms the sophist with the philosopher.[1]

In this chapter, I focus on the problems of being and not-being and how wholes and parts are related.[2] These issues are continuous with the issues from previous chapters, especially the problem of appearances in Parmenides. I argue that the *Sophist*'s discussion of not-being is a first step in Plato introducing structure into his ontology. I argue specifically for structure in the final chapter, and tie structure to an interpretation of Plato as a quasi-Eleatic monist.

2. Plato on Not-Being: *Parmenides* D5 and D6, et al.

The issue of not-being comes up as a topic in Plato in several places, especially in late dialogues. In the constructive dialogues, it notably comes up at *Republic* 476e-478d, in a discussion about knowledge and opinion. There Socrates asks whether, when someone knows

[1] At *Apology* 19e1-4, Socrates mentions Prodicus, Hippias, and Gorgias—all sophists—as those who practice a "fine thing" in their teaching. The sophists Plato seems bent on addressing are those who charge large sums of money for teaching *merely* how to win arguments in court. The translation is G. M. A. Grube in Cooper (1997).

[2] Some issues about the nature of images and false statement are also discussed, since they pertain directly to Eleaticism.

something, that person knows something or *nothing* (οὐδέν at 476e7).[3] Glaucon answers that one knows something, whereupon Socrates asks, something that *is* or something that *is not* (οὐκ ὂν at 476e10). This seemingly innocent and short question and answer provides some clue as to how issues of not-being are dealt with in both the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*: Plato seems to be distinguishing a more or less absolute sense of *nothing* from a less pure sense of *something* that nonetheless *is not*. The distinction will become important, especially in the *Sophist*, and will, I argue, be a decisive advance in the understanding of not-being initiated by Parmenides' arguments in his poem.[4]

2.1. Parmenides D5 and D6

In the second part (2P) of the *Parmenides*, D5 and D6[5] are the first deductions that concern the negative hypothesis, *if the one is not*, and they seem to mirror the two ways mentioned above from the *Republic* on how to construe not-being: in a strong sense as *nothing* (D6), and in a weaker sense, that of *something* that *is not* (D5). The *Republic* uses the stronger sense. Since D6 discusses just this sense, and is akin to an early argument about not-being in the *Sophist* (and is much less dense than D5), I will examine it first.

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[3] Translations of the *Republic* are from Rowe (2012). As I note below, οὐδέν and μηδὲν at *Sophist* 237e2 (et al) are cognate, meaning something like *not one* or *not even one*, from which several commentators get *not anything* and thus *nothing*.

[4] This is a more or less traditional reading of the *Sophist* that is (or has become) controversial. See Ambuel (2007) for an *aporetic* take on the dialogue. My understanding of the advance Plato makes regarding not-being is, I argue, situated within the larger framework of attempting—post *Parmenides*—a more cohesive ontological picture than he gives in the constructive dialogues. This more cohesive metaphysics has, I argue in the final chapter, monistic leanings.

[5] D5: *If the one is not, what are the consequences for the one in relation to itself and the others; restricted principle of non-contradiction (PNC), with a generous one*. D6: *If the one is not, what are the consequences for the one in relation to itself and the others; absolute PNC, with an austere one*.

D6 purports to show what follows for the one if the one is not, where 'is not' is taken to mean 'absence of being' (οὐσιάς ἀποθσίαν) at 163c3. Here, this means "without qualification that what is not *is in no way at all* (ἔστιν οὐδέ) and does not in any way partake of being" (163c6-8). Parmenides concludes, much as he had in D1[6] for the one that *is*, that the one that is not (anything at all) cannot partake of anything, and that "nothing that is belongs to it" (163e10). Recall from the previous chapter the final conclusion of the *Parmenides*: if the one is not, then *nothing at all is*. Here, however, beings are presupposed, such that the one that in no way is cannot "belong to them." It takes D8[7]—the final deduction—to show that such a presupposition is (ultimately) unwarranted, since if the one in no way is, there could not *be* anything for it to belong to; the one seems to be (by the end of the dialogue) a necessary condition for something to be anything at all.

In the *Sophist*, an early discussion of not-being shows some affinities with the claims of D6 (and D8). At 237d5-8, the Eleatic visitor claims that "a person who says *something* has to be saying some *one* thing," and that "*something* is a sign of *one*."[8] *Something* (τι) seems to have affinities with being, or what is, and if it is a sign (σημεῖον) of *one*, then it is (at least) a sufficient condition for some *x*'s being one: if *x* is a *something*, then *x* cannot fail to be *one*. But *x* cannot be a something *without* being one, so oneness is (at least) a necessary condition for *x*'s being something (or anything at all, in the language of the *Parmenides*). Note the causal issues here:

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[6] D1: *If the one is (or is one), what are the consequences for itself and the others; absolute PNC, with an austere one.*

[7] *If the one is not, what are the consequences for the others in relation to the one and themselves; absolute PNC, with an austere one*.

[8] Translations of the *Sophist* are from White (1993) unless otherwise noted, and all italics in the *Sophist* quotes are in the translation unless noted. The same does not hold for italicized quotations from other dialogues, which are—unless noted—mine.

somethingness seems to be an *effect* of oneness, even though it is a sufficient condition, which—in most causal claims—gives the *cause*; for example, the dam's breaking is sufficient (but not necessary) for the town's being destroyed. But compare: if there is smoke, then there is fire. Smoke guarantees the presence of fire, even though fire (a necessary condition for smoke) causes smoke. In fact, however, the claim seems stronger: *x* is something if and only if *x* is one (smoke is present if and only if there is fire). But the asymmetrical *causal* chain is still intact (e.g., smoke does not cause fire), though, we might say, the *existence conditions* are symmetrical or mutual: the existence of smoke guarantees the existence of fire, and vice versa. In the final chapter, I argue analogously that the one is a cause of the being of anything else, though the existence conditions (as it were) of ones and beings are symmetrical.[9]

In any event, the implications about how the one is at least a necessary condition for the being of anything at all (seen in D8), is also applied in the *Sophist*. But in this early passage, the notion of not-being at work is closely associated with the historical Parmenides, and is akin to the notion at work in D6: not-being means *that which in no way is* [μηδαμῶς] (237b8).[10] Now, the Eleatic visitor tells Theaetetus that "if you can't apply [*that which in no way is*] to *that which is*, it wouldn't be right either to apply it to *something*" (237c10-11). Thus not-being in this strong sense fails to apply to any being, as it similarly fails to apply in D6.[11] Conclusions about

[9] This parsing out of ontological notions from causal notions is crucial for the structural monism I attribute to Plato in the final chapter, and is indeed akin to the mutuality relation I argued for between forms and participants in chapter 4. Forms exist if and only if participants exist, *even though* the *being*—the what-it-is-to-be-ness—of the latter depend on the former. I will have more to say about these complex issues in the final chapter.

[10] At 237a8-9, the Eleatic visitor quotes (or paraphrases) Parmenides' B7.1-2: "Never shall this prevail, that things that are not (εῖναι μὴ ἐόντα) are. But you, withhold your thought from this way of inquiry. . . ." Translations of Parmenides are from Graham (2010).

[11] Similar arguments regarding number specifically come about shortly after this discussion in the *Sophist*. So, the Eleatic visitor argues that neither one nor plurality apply to that which is not (238e1-2). As several commentators have noted, the puzzles of D6 and of this and other passages in the *Sophist* have affinities with 20th century puzzles

the one (and about not-being) are, by the end of the *Parmenides*, only indirectly resolved: the one is a necessary and sufficient condition for being something. What this amounts to, however, is not taken up in the *Parmenides*.

In D5, the notion of not-being is less strict, having some affinities with the way not-being is characterized in the later not-being arguments in the *Sophist*.[12] However, it too brings up several puzzles. D5 claims early on that, were one to say "one is not," one would be committed to the notion that the one is *different* (ἑτερον at 160c4) from the others. In uttering "one is not," Parmenides then explicitly says that our interlocutor "speaks of *something* (τί), in the first place, knowable, and in the second, different from the others, whenever he says 'one,' *whether he attaches being or not-being to it* (εἴτε τὸ εἶναι αὐτῷ προσθεὶς εἴτε τὸ μὴ εἶναι); for we still know what thing is said not to be, and that it is different from the others." Clearly, the one of D5 is not the unknowable characterless one of D6.

One thing to note here is that there is a contrast between the something that is not (i.e., the one) and the *Republic* notion of what can be known. In the latter, Glaucon tells Socrates that when one knows, one knows something, and that this must be something that *is*: "how could something that *is not*," he wonders at 477a1-2, "be known?" But in the *Parmenides* passage, the one that is not *is* knowable—whether one attaches being or not-being to it. So *neither* its being *nor* its not-being precludes it from being known. A clue for why this is so is given by Parmenides, in a sort of wave to a future Russell: we know what it is we are talking about when

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about existence. See, for example, Russell (1905) and Quine (1961). Some of these issues were noted in chapter 1.

[12] Allen (1997:328-29) argues not only that the notion of not-being discussed in the *Sophist* is not the notion of not-being discussed in the *Parmenides*, but that the *Sophist*'s version is incoherent, and therefore is not meant to be a solution to any puzzles in the *Parmenides*. Allen is in agreement (at 329 n175) with Ambuel (1991) on this matter. Ambuel (2007) is a reworking of his 1991 dissertation, which Allen cites in n175.

we say that the one is not, something Parmenides reiterates at 160d5-6: if there is no knowledge of the one that is not, then "we don't even know what is *meant* (λέγεται) when someone says, 'if one is not'." But the one's not-being, here, is not pure: it is not the nothingness (the no-thing-ness) Socrates alludes to at *Republic* 467e7 (nor the similar notion of not-being in D6). But D5 is, in relation to the other deductions in 2P's negative sequence, the longest and most complex, so its arguments need to be cashed out in more detail.

D5 is packed with many apparent similarities to how the Eleatic visitor in the *Sophist* will, in various places, argue for a version of not-being.[13] At 160e4-8, Parmenides argues that the one that is not must partake of *something* (and that demonstratives such as *this* and *that* must be applicable to it) in order for it to even be mentioned. Stronger still, Parmenides declares at 161e3-162b10 that the one that is not must *participate in being*, and indeed that "the one *is* a not-being" (162a2). The reason is that the one "must be in the state we describe; for if it is not so, we wouldn't *speak truly* (ἀληθῆ λέγοιμεν) when we say that the one is not. But if we do speak truly, it is clear that we *say things that are* (ὄντα αὐτὰ λέγειν). There is a connection between what *is* and what is *true*. As Scolnicov notes, the one must be something *definite* (a *something*, *this*, or *that*); for if it were not, any and all statements would apply to or be true of it (2003:153).[14] Notice, however, that speaking truly is here concerned with a one that *is not*. Nonetheless, the one that is not must—if we are speaking of it (which necessitates its determinateness)—*be* something. In D5, 'is not' is understood as 'is not-*F*': since not-being in

[13] One aspect Scolnicov (2003:148) notes is that not-being in D5 must be argued for indirectly.
[14] Recall that neither the one of D1 nor D2 were definite, but for different reasons: the former because its existence was wiped out, the latter because it contained all properties indiscriminately. Both deductions issue in not-being, neither of which can be the *type* of not-being in D5, a type only worked out or clarified in the *Sophist*.

D5 is weaker than the nothing-at-all of the *Republic* and D6 (and the early foray in the *Sophist*), it is cashed out here as aligning to an incomplete predicate version of 'is', and the predicate not-*F* is just as determinate as *F*. As we will see in the *Sophist*, this notion is crucial to how Plato moves away from Parmenides on the strictness of not-being. Here, however, Parmenides potentially becomes entangled in complex difficulties.

What are these difficulties? The problems start by taking the one to *be* a not-being. Parmenides is trying to say that, since the phrase 'the one is not' contains 'is', its not-being somehow must be, since again, the one participates in being. And he cashes out 'is' and 'is not' as a *bond* (δεσμὸν): "So if [the one] is not to be, it must have *being* a not-being as a bond in regard to its not-being, just as, in like manner, what is must have *not-being* what is not, in order that it, in its turn, may completely be" (162a5-8). This appears dense, though it says that if the one is not (*F*), then 'is' simply signifies a way the one *is* (i.e. not-*F*). In like manner, the one that is must not be not-*F*, and is thus simply (or "completely") *F*. The exercise at this point seems to be, as Sayre says, "piling negation on negation" (1996:261). But the potential trouble starts with what the notion of a *bond* is supposed to entail.

Gill (1996) finds in this passage a serious problem: understanding being and not-being as a bond or link between something and its properties, she argues, issues in a Bradley-style infinite regress. If we use Gill's example—that largeness is one—we must analyze it along with the proposals about being and not-being offered in D5. If so, then to explain the truth of 'largeness is one' we must understand the sentence as claiming that largeness partakes of being in relation to the one. The key problem for a Bradley regress is what a relation amounts to: if largeness is one, then three things obtain, *largeness*, *oneness*, and the relation of *partaking in being with regard to*. But on D5's bond/link theory, it seems that anything that *is* (or *is-not*) anything, must

be so by being linked to a predicate by being or not-being.[15] If so, however, then largeness, for example, would seemingly have to be linked to *being* by some participation relation. To say that largeness is one, then, we end up saying that largeness participates in being in relation to participating in being . . . (*ad infinitum*), in relation to oneness. As Gill notes, "if we treat all relations as though they were properties, an object must partake of an infinite number of properties to partake of any" (99). This is clearly a problem, *if* this section of D5 indeed issues in a Bradley regress.

Other commentators do not see such a regress, however. Scolnicov, for example, argues that *x* does not participate in the *ousia* of *F*,[16] but rather in the *ousia* of *being F*, or for brevity, *F*-ness. This is clearly the case, or is at least clearly implied, in all discussion of forms across the dialogues: *x* does not (indeed *could* not) participate in *all* of *F*, since, as Scolnicov notes, *F* has certain properties it has *qua* being a form (eternality, indivisibility, etc.), and forms require that no participant can participate in its *formal* properties. It is only the *F*-ness of *F* that some *x* participates in.

Neither Rickless nor Sayre see anything particularly alarming about this passage. Rickless (218-9), in his reconstruction of 161e3-162b8, notes that the argument is plainly valid (given certain background restraints), and moves on to the next section. Sayre says "the point of it all is to show why, and in what respect, the nonexistent one of [D5] must nonetheless have a share of being (*ousia*)" (262). It is not clear, then, that an infinite regress problem obtains in D5,

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[15] This assumes that anything that is anything at all must be what it is in relation to some property or set of properties. D1, recall, set out to show that if something does *not* participate in being (as the one there was said not to, since if it did it would fail to be austerely one), then not only could it not participate in anything else, it ends in complete nothingness. So for any *x*, it is what it is by being some *F* or other.

[16] I use the transliteration of οὐσία (*ousia* or *substance/being*) simply because it is a common philosophical term.

and *a fortiori* that, as Gill (99) says, "the moral of this observation [of regress] is that Socrates had better work out what a relation is before he posits a theory of forms." Now, it is *true* that Socrates must do this, since the quintessential relation in the theory of forms is *participation*, and it is far from clear what that is. It is another thing, however, to claim that D5 showcases the problem, or indeed that the *point* of D5 is to showcase the problem.[17] In any event, as we will see, many of the claims about not-being in D5—especially the claim that not-being is *something*—are on full display in the *Sophist*.

2.2. Not-Being and Related Issues in the Sophist

As noted above, not-being is but one of many topics explored in the *Sophist*, though it looms large over nearly all the others. Of importance is the idea that the discussion of not-being is related to a challenge to traditional Eleatic philosophy. And parts of that discussion are several other topics, all of which swirl around not-being. For example, the overall topic of the dialogue is the search for the sophist, who, as Ambuel notes, relies on the possibility of resemblance, i.e., *imitations* or *image-making* (2007:81). The sophist is cast as "a wizard whose magic is appearances drawn in words." But the appearance/image issue relates to not-being—and the specific *Eleatic* problem of not-being and appearances—because appearances *are not* their originals: they are distinct from or divided off from their originals.[18] And this is precisely the problem that confronted Parmenides: what is the difference between being and (deceptive or

[17] Incidentally, Gill omits any reference to the *Sophist* regarding D5, finding instead links to that dialogue in D6.
[18] 'Appearances' translates φάντασμα, for example, at 236b4. Recall from chapter 3 that Parmenides does *not* use φάντασμα for appearances, but the ambiguous τὰ δοκοῦντα, which I argued at length ought to be interpreted as appearances.

faulty) appearance, if there is *only being*, which is indivisible? If there is a *real* distinction, what does this entail about what reality must be like?[19] Secondly, the whole-part problem is an issue not only for positive Eleatic philosophy (since Parmenides calls being or reality a 'whole' and compares it to a sphere), but also for negative Eleatic philosophy, i.e., the denial of not-being. The whole-part relation seems to run afoul of Eleaticism since wholes are divisible into parts: *that very division* requires some notion of not-being, against Parmenides. These are the two subordinate issues I discuss in relation to the larger problem of not-being.

2.2.1. The Earlier Arguments about Not-Being

The earlier arguments about not-being, starting around 236e, arise within a discussion about the sophist's alleged art: the deceptive appearance-making art, which produces appearances that are not likenesses (236c4).[20] Now, owing to the slipperiness of catching the sophist's nature—by 231b the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus have already found six distinct and unsatisfactory definitions of 'sophist'—sophistry crucially also relies on the *denial* that deception through appearance is possible. It seems all sophistry is, as it were, *positive*, since sophists are those who can *successfully* argue in any situation on any topic.[21] The very

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[19] This is a problem for Plato's ontology as well as Parmenides', since participants have been described on several occasions as images of forms. Thus, the problem of not-being relates to the problem of separation discussed in chapter 4. Indeed, if forms are not separate but *different* (or distinct) from participants (no matter the metaphor we use for the relation), the *Sophist* problem of not-being *qua* Eleatic problem about reality seems to obtain: if forms and participants are part of reality, then the relation between them seems to require that reality is *actually* divided in ways Parmenides disallows. The notion of difference is *problematized* in the *Sophist*.

[20] Appearances, unlike likenesses, are deceptive.

[21] See Aristophanes' *The Clouds* for deft dramatic descriptions of sophistry, especially lines 115-18, where the Inferior Argument is described, line 158, where the character Socrates is described as pursuing an important scientific matter: "whether the hum of a gnat is generated by its mouth or its anus." Translation is from Meineck (2000). See also the lengthy exchange between the Superior and Inferior Arguments (889-1110); the Inferior Argument wins. See also Plato's *Euthydemus*, 272a1-b1 for a description of sophists.

possibility of this trick relies on at least the *appearance* of the impossibility of deception, and thus the impossibility (or its appearance) of *falsehood*. For the successful sophist cannot, on his own grounds, really admit truth *or* falsehood. All arguments are "won" or "lost" merely on the pretense to truth or falsehood.

Now, one overall question in interpreting the *Sophist* is why Plato chose the "venerable and awesome" Parmenides as a background figure in a dialogue aimed at defining sophistry.[22] That is, it is striking that Plato uses the basic philosophical position of the well-respected Parmenides, whose arguments in the *Aletheia* mark a strong link—indeed one of *identity*[23]—between truth and reality, to ground something as dubious as sophistry. In a number of dialogues Plato treats sophistry with derision precisely because it does not concern *truth* at all. What, then, is the alleged connection between sophistry and Eleaticism? Indeed the alleged Eleatic basis of sophistry—which deceives through images while simultaneously denying that deception is possible—should strike us as odd, since Parmenides clearly thought that most of us *are* deceived, and thus that deception is possible. Plato is indicating by his use of Eleaticism in the analysis of the sophist, I suggest, something like the problems surrounding Eleatic appearances I argued for in chapter 3: on Parmenides' own philosophy, there is no room for images, and thus no room for the deception they ostensibly entail.

In any event, the passage that marks the transition to the present (i.e., early) discussion of not-being begins with the problem of how appearances are related to falsehood. At 236e, the Eleatic visitor claims that

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[22] Recall that Socrates uses this epithet at *Theaetetus* 183e6, but holds back from discussing the man he calls "the one being," so as not to treat his philosophy superficially. The translation is McDowell's (1973).
[23] See chapter 2.

> . . . this appearing and seeming but not being, and saying something but not saying something true, all of this has always been full of perplexity in earlier times and it is now too. For how to construct an expression to say or believe that falsehoods really exist and to utter this without contradicting yourself, Theaetetus, is altogether difficult.

The problem, according to the Eleatic visitor, is that "the statement [that falsehoods really exist] assumes that which is not is" (237a). Thus the linguistic problem of uttering a falsehood, here taken to be contradictory, seemingly has an ontological corollary in the problem of not-being: saying something false requires that that which is not, *is*. The sophist grounds the rejection of falsehood—the very grist for the sophistic mill—on the Parmenidean rejection of not-being: if, as Parmenides claims, it is impossible to think or utter that which is not, and falsehood requires us to do so, then falsehood is impossible. The sophist wins again, but this time on venerable and awesome Eleatic grounds.

In any case, the connection Plato sees between Eleaticism and sophistry is, I suggest, more complex than most commentators have surmised. It is controversial whether Plato commits "patricide" against Father Parmenides, as the story commonly goes, in order to make room for not-being.[24] The traditional view is that Plato does commit metaphorical patricide for this very reason, and that doing so is a necessary condition for understanding the nature of the sophist.[25] There seems to be a connection between the patricide of Parmenides (i.e., the rehabilitation of not-being) and the allowance for the sophist to *have* a nature at all (the rehabilitation, as it were, of the sophist). But what is this connection?

[24] See Bossi (2013) and Ambuel (2007).
[25] Moreover, it is a necessary condition for resolving some of the problems in the *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus*, on the traditional view.

Recall, first, the one of *Parmenides* D2[26] (and its attendant version of not-being that I advocated in chapter 4): it was found to have any and all properties. But, I argued, the one of D2—*just like* the one of D1—ends up having no nature at all, *because* any and all properties are predicable of it. Similarly, the sophist's nature is slippery or hard to catch because he can argue for any conclusion, contradictions included, and it is far from clear just what the sophist thereby *does*—what the sophist's craft or art is—since the stability guaranteed by truth seems to be no part of his game. He fits neither with philosophers (who attend to truth) nor with artisans, who have deliberate *technē*.[27] But if 'sophist' is definable (and being definable implies that the definition somehow captures the nature or essence of the thing defined),[28] then this leads—unlike the one of D2—to the possibility that the sophist can be recovered from the shadows of not-being. But this implies that the sophist is *not* like the one of D1 or D2, and should perhaps be understood as analogous to the one of D3: a one that participates in being, but is not *thereby* pluralized beyond definability, as it were. If so, the sophist is no less a determinate (even though thoroughly pluralized) thing than the one of D3. This point largely seems overlooked: sophistry's alleged Eleatic connection might show that Plato sees something *positive* about sophistry. How might this work?

Surely it seems suspicious for Plato to link the revered and the downcast. In the *Sophist*

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[26] D2: *If the one is, what are the consequences for the one in relation to itself and the others; restricted PNC, with a generous one*.

[27] Thus, arriving at a definition of 'angler' is far easier than arriving at a definition of 'sophist'. The sophist's "craft" moves around to any and all subjects, and to any and all statements *and* their contradictions.

[28] Cordero (2013:192) sees this explicitly: he argues that one aim of the *Sophist* is to make ontological room for images *so that* "the result of the sophist's work, his 'product', really exists. Otherwise, *it makes no sense to criticize him, if there is no difference between sophistical and philosophical theses*" (my emphasis). I concur with Cordero on this important point, and note the parallel to Plato's desire (supported in chapter 4) to give *some* stability to sensibles: in order to say true things about sensibles, they must be somewhat cognitively (and ontologically) stable. The question is *how*.

he seems to do so. The sophist—like the image—must have some sort of ontological status, since sophistry, portrayed as an *image* of philosophy and often confused with it, poses a challenge to philosophy's own legitimacy as an activity that searches for truth.[29] Otherwise, we might wonder (with Cordero) why Plato spends so much energy arguing against sophists and their dubious positions across the dialogues. Indeed, Plato must spend considerable time arguing against sophists, not because their activity poses any *logical* threat to the legitimacy of philosophy *as such*. After all, between philosophy and sophistry, only the former concerns *truth*.[30]

On this note, recall the "close enough" cosmology Parmenides allegedly presents in the *Doxa*: Parmenides' *kouros* must learn defective mortal opinions so that they will not outstrip him, or so he will not be misled by them. Similarly, Plato must deal with sophistry because it threatens truth, but is—like mortal opinion—persuasive. That is, Plato has to address the deceptive imagery of sophistry, *not* because it has any legitimate (logical) claims against philosophy, but because appearances *as such* are deceptive, and deceptions are often persuasive. For Plato, appearances cannot entail total unreality, as Parmenides thought. If the sophist is to be

[29] Theaetetus, at 240b9, notes that likenesses *really are* likenesses, though they *are not* the things they are likenesses *of*. This is the vexed issue on offer: what is the ontological status of an appearance or likeness, such that it *is not* what it is an appearance or likeness of? Analogized (as in n22) to Plato's metaphysics: what is the ontological status of the sensible? Put another way: what allows for the division between the likeness and that which it is a likeness of? What *justifies* the Platonic difference between forms and participants, participants and participants, and forms and forms?

[30] Compare fallacious and sound reasoning. The former is a non-logical but serious threat to the latter precisely because it is often more persuasive. In the same way, sophistry is "positive" in the sense that sophists are *worthy opponents*, worthy enough to pay attention to for the purpose of defeating. One need not respect one's opponent as a person to respect the way he or she conducts business. Patton wanted to destroy Rommel; that does not mean that he did not respect the magnificent bastard's game plan (he "read his book!"). The sophist's being *more real* is more threatening to philosophy than his being *less real*—hidden in the shadows of not-being—and this is at least some motivation for Plato to want to discover the *real* nature of the sophist, and indeed, to want the sophist to *have* a real nature. This last notion, that Plato might want the sophist to have a real nature, *such that* he can discover what it is, indicates that he is not simply shadowboxing. The sophist is no wind-egg.

captured, it is the *as such* nature of images that Plato must confront: images *qua* images. This, I argued in chapter 3, is something Parmenides could not confront, since the only reality for him is that which is bound by the constraints of the *Aletheia*. Plato's confrontation with the *as such* nature of images, then, represents a decisive turn away from Eleaticism.[31]

Now, going by purely Eleatic standards, the sophist as image of the philosopher is *entirely* not-being, there being no weaker version than absolute not-being, according to the Eleatic. At this stage in the *Sophist*'s argument (i.e., the early discussion of not-being), not-being is understood in the Eleatic sense as the *contrary* of being.[32] That is, like the *Parmenides* D6 argument, not-being is understood here in absolute terms.[33] As we saw above in the comparison with D6, the argument after 236e takes on a more general tone, with the Eleatic visitor insisting that that which (absolutely) is not cannot in any way be applied to that which is.

But this is precisely where the problems start, namely, the seeming fact that we cannot talk about that which is not, though we do so at the very moment we *mention* the phrase or concept at all. And this is why the Eleatic visitor asks Theaetetus whether he sees "on the basis of the things we said that *that which is not* even confuses the person who's refuting it in just this way, that whenever someone tries to refute it, he's forced to say mutually contrary things about it?" (238d5-8). It is impossible to talk about not-being even in order to say that it is not. This self-refutation, however, presupposes an Eleatic notion of not-being; recall that in B2 and B7 of

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[31] I reiterate a point from chapter 4 that Plato's Eleaticism in the Socratic and constructive dialogues is largely assumed.

[32] See 240b7 (among other places), where *not true* is taken to mean *contrary to true*.

[33] In the *Sophist*, the term used for the contrary of being is μηδὲν, for example at 237e2. White notes that this is often translated as 'nothing', but that it really means something like 'not even one' (1993:26 n32). Duerlinger (2005:34) notes, too, that "from an etymological point of view, [μηδὲν] means 'no-one at all'." These considerations are important because *being* is said in the earlier arguments to follow or be coextensive with oneness, and thus the denial of oneness entails the denial of being anything at all (as it does in D8 of the *Parmenides*).

Parmenides' poem, the path of not-being is barred for exactly these sorts of reasons, reasons the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus have already explicitly agreed to abide by at 237a.

It is, however, this discussion of the nature of images that sets off a turning point in the dialogue. By 240b, Theaetetus is perplexed about the nature of the image, claiming that it is *in a way*, since it "really is a likeness," even though the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus had agreed that images are not "true" because they *resemble* true things, and thus cannot be the things that they resemble. The acceptance of an Eleatic notion of not-being (as contrary to being) finally leads Theaetetus to claim at 240c1-2 that "maybe *that which is not* is woven together (συμπλοκὴν)[34] with *that which is* in some way . . . it's quite bizarre." The Eleatic visitor then claims that the sophist is somehow *using* the notion of interweaving to force the pair to agree that not-being somehow is.[35] All of this discussion eventually leads to the famous passage where the Eleatic visitor begs forgiveness for appearing to commit patricide against Parmenides: "in order to defend ourselves we're going to have to subject father Parmenides' saying [i.e., his own fragment B7 or *Sophist* 237a] to further examination, and insist by brute force both that *that which is not* somehow is, and then again that *that which is* somehow is not" (241d5-8). Unfortunately, as the pair discover, this argument is not quite as simple as it seems.

One potential objection to my "rehabilitation thesis" for the sophist comes from Ambuel. Since the sophist himself is presented as a sort of image of the philosopher, Ambuel argues that

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[34] Plato has Theaetetus foreshadow, with the term συμπλοκή, the concept of the weaving together of forms or kinds that comes later. See n64 for other terms used for roughly the same concept.

[35] This is again strange, since on the traditional view, the allowance for not-being to somehow be is precisely the solution to the puzzles of not-being found here and in other dialogues; and it is the *sophist* who "forces" the interlocutors in that very direction. The Eleatic visitor even claims they are "unwilling" to say that that which is not, is (240c4). So either Plato is giving some ground to the sophist, or this is irony and the dialogue should (or does) end in *aporia* (since Plato would never give the despicable sophist so much ground). Ambuel argues that the dialogue is *aporetic*, though not for these somewhat rhetorical reasons.

grasping the nature of the sophist is impossible, at least along the dialectical path the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus employ (2007:9). He argues that, similarly to how Socrates and Theaetetus conclude in the *Theaetetus* that it was wrong of them to attempt an analysis of false opinion before reaching an adequate understanding of knowledge (200c-d), *so too* in the *Sophist* it is not right to attempt to understand the sophist without first understanding the philosopher; falsehood is, by analogy, a mere image of the truth. As Ambuel says, "the sophist is an image-maker, himself an image of the philosopher, and his definition requires an explanation of false opinion." But in order to understand false opinion, they must first understand knowledge, which they failed to do in the dramatically prior conversation in the *Theaetetus*.

It is unclear whether this is correct. First, it may be that the *Sophist* is not *aporetic*, as Ambuel thinks, and so the analogy would not work. One reason for thinking this is that in the *Sophist*, the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus do embark on a discussion of being (which can be analogized to the nature of the philosopher),[36] only to end in perplexity. They end in perplexity because after introducing the notions of change/motion and rest in their search for a compromise between the friends of the forms and earth-bound giants (starting at 248a),[37] they realize (at 249e6-250a2) that someone might make a similar argument against them as they made earlier against dualists. Dualists, we are told, take *hot* and *cold*, for example, as the two basic principles, but by doing so, they cannot strictly admit that the hot and cold *are*; otherwise they fail to be dualists, since the introduction of *being* indicates the introduction of a third thing. Similarly, the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus realize they cannot posit motion and rest—two

[36] See 254a8.
[37] See the relevant discussion in chapter 4.

"completely contrary" principles (250a7)—without also positing that both are and thus each is. But this *being* now presents a problem, just as much as not-being had in the early conversation, since two completely contrary principles *both* partake of being.

Now, if being can be analogized to philosophy, and not-being to sophistry,[38] then the confusion the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus find themselves in holds for both sides of the coin; they decide they cannot analyze being in isolation from not-being (and *a fortiori* one *prior* to the other). This is *not* analogous to the *aporetic* notion of knowledge and false opinion in the *Theaetetus*, where knowledge was said to be the prior notion in need of investigation. Perhaps one reason the *Theaetetus* ends in *aporia* is this *failure* to acknowledge that knowledge and false opinion must be investigated together. Indeed, the perplexing discussion of being eventually leads the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus right back to confusions about not-being, *such that* they agree to investigate not-being in a new way.

2.2.2. Intervening Discussion: Historical Monism

Before discussing how the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus investigate not-being in a new way, it is important to examine an earlier passage against monism. This section contains two arguments often thought to be decisive against the Eleatics. It is not clear whether they are.

The decision to insist by brute force that that which is not somehow is, and vice versa, leads the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus to a discussion of the nature of *being*, considered more generally. This begins with a discussion of some historical (presocratic) positions, including Eleatic monism. They purport to examine what the notion of being *means* to these historical

[38] See 254a4.

figures, such that the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus might become clearer on the terms the presocratics use to explicate their concepts, terms such as "*are* or *have become* or *are becoming*, or when another one speaks of hot mixed with cold and supposes that there are separations and combinations" (243b6-7).[39] Regarding monism, there are two arguments the Eleatic visitor gives against them: we can call one the *name argument* and the other the *whole-part argument*, both of which aim to show that monists countenance inconsistencies.

2.2.2.1. The Name Argument

The initial arguments against monism appear deceptively simple. McCabe (1994:200) sets up the basic position thusly: if monism holds, then there is just one, and the one *is* (244b). On the one hand, we seem to have immediately introduced *two* things: the one and being (one *is*). On the other hand, 'one' and 'being' might just be two names for the same thing. The Eleatic stranger argues at 244c8-9 that if monists assert that *only* one is—that the one somehow exhausts all of reality—then it is absurd that they would accept *two* names. The two names are either two distinct names for a *third* thing, or—if there is just one name—it must be the *same* as the thing named, if the one is exhaustive; the name, in this case, just collapses into the one itself. But if the name is the same as the thing named, then it is the name *of* nothing (244d), and indeed would cease to be a name at all. But if the name is *not* the same as the thing named, then it is "the name only of a name," since "the one is one only of one" (244d).[40] Either the one and its

[39] I argued in chapter 4 that one central theme in Plato is the notion of examining the clarity of concepts, and that in the *Parmenides* one concept he is aiming to get clearer about is *oneness*. Here—from about 242c through the discussion of pluralists, dualists, and monists—the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus *explicitly* seem to be doing just this sort of exercise. Plato is examining closely the *foundational* issues that are supposed to ground the theory of forms.

[40] The text of these passages, as some have noted, is corrupt and it is unclear how the passages should be understood. The questionable text is: Καὶ τὸ ἕν γε ἑνὸς ἓν ὂν μόνον καὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὖτὸ ἓν ὄν. See McCabe

name are distinct, and there are two things, or the name is empty.

McCabe argues that the name argument is decisive against the monists, and that Plato attacks Parmenides using three principles of naming. She argues first that names are always *of something* (2000:69). But since monism countenances just one, then the name either fails to do its job (since if it exists, then it is the only thing there is and so names nothing) or it names itself, and fails to *name* at all—it is vacuous. Second, however, if the name is *of* something, then it seemingly must be of something *other than* itself (70). That is, the name must be distinguishable from the thing named. Monism, by disallowing principled distinction, fails to show that the name is different from the thing named. Third, names are *asymmetrical* with what they name.[41] That is, naming is an *ordered* relation, and it follows that there must be *two* things: ordered relations require more than one thing. McCabe claims that this name argument is lethal to the monist, for two reasons (71). First, if the monist wants a name for being, then monism immediately falters. Second, however, the monistic picture is absurd from *our* non-monistic point of view; "it would," she says, "be absurd *for us* to accept his unacceptable account of names." She concludes that the first problem moves the monist to speechlessness, while the second "prevents us from talking to him."

Are these arguments fatal to the monist? As argued in chapter 2, the Eleatic will conclude that *all* speech, including talk about being, is meaningless, since speech (allegedly)

(2000:68 n33) for a spirited rundown of the issues concerning the text. She also discusses her preferred interpretation of this passage (66-73).

[41] McCabe (2000:70 nn37-38) cashes this out with the modern notion of disquotation: 'Heidi' is the name *of* Heidi, but Heidi is not (somehow) *of* 'Heidi'. Naming, she notes, is "monodirectional." This is somewhat confusing since most would agree that 'Heidi' is the name of itself, namely, the *word* 'Heidi', and that Heidi is the name of a *person*. Her point, however, is to highlight the asymmetry. There are complexities here, since any time one mentions a word, he or she also uses it (*as* a mentioning).

about being must itself be structurally complex. Similarly, if—as McCabe argued earlier (Mackenzie 1982)—Parmenides' conclusion prohibits the very existence of even the human beings allegedly engaged in dialectic, then it is not of real consequence to conclude the (weaker) claim that speech is meaningless or nonexistent. That is, interlocutors do not *really* exist; *a fortiori* neither does anything that comes out of their mouths.

Note that the monistic one under consideration here is McCabe's *austere individual* (Harte's mereological one), or something akin to the one of D1 in the *Parmenides*. One question is this: if the one is an austere individual, and it is the only "thing" there is, why can it *not* have a name or properties? As I discussed in chapters 2 and 3, this depends on what counts as a *genuine thing*, and whether names or properties (or medium-sized dry goods, for that matter) so count, since it is unclear whether a *conceptual* distinction for characterizing something marks a *real* distinction. Similarly, it is unclear whether the distinction between a thing and its name marks a real distinction; if not, then the thing and its name (or properties) would be consigned to the same *category* of being—the name would be subsumed under being, as it were.

Now, McCabe contends that one mark of something's being is its being *countable*.[42] Thus, if 'one' is the name of being, it is unclear in what *sense* there are (now) two countable things, which is what Plato requires in order to attack the monist. To take a sort of Moorean common sense view, if there are two oranges on a table, one named 'Heidi' and the other 'Klara', we would not normally say that there were thus *four things* on the table. It is true we do not normally *say* this, but is that relevant? There are a number of issues here, and they can be multiplied to absurdity. For example, do each of the four quadrants of an orange constitute a

[42] This is echoed in the *Sophist* at 237d5-9.

thing? Can those have names? Of course an orange can be further divided.[43] There is also a compositional issue here: in some sense, for there to be a single object composed of, say, the number three, the Atlantic Ocean, and love—call it 'Grandpa'—then each of these things must be *somethings* for there to be a *sum* of them in the first place. But it is exceedingly unclear whether any of these are either *things* (since at least the Atlantic Ocean and love lack clear boundary conditions), or whether they *are* in categorically similar ways (since the number three is an abstract object, if it is anything).[44]

These issues concern whether properties (or names) *pluralize* what they attach to, and in what sense they do. In some sense, if properties (or names) pluralize their objects, then they too must be countable, and, by McCabe's (or Plato's) lights, *beings*. That is, pluralization is inherently a "counting" exercise, since if properties *F*, *G*, and *H*, pluralize some object *a*, then—given a certain unrestricted version of composition—we say that *a* just *is* "as many" as its properties. And for us to say that *a* just is as many as its properties, those properties need to be countable. This works, too, for restricted composition, since properties need to be distinguish*able* in order for us to talk about *each* of them, even if they do not pluralize, in Plato's

[43] For mereological purposes, it is unclear whether an orange cut into four "badly cut quadrants" constitutes something that has been cut into four quadrants. So, what is the difference between a whole cut into four unequal parts, and one cut into four equal parts? Is equality-of-partitioning *relevant* for metaphysical division? This invokes what Plato says at *Phaedrus* 265e1-3 about the joint-cutting nature of reality. But he also says this about music scales; are oranges like musical scales? Oranges—like musical scales—can be cut along arbitrary continuums. So, would Plato reject, say, Gamelan, or 19-tone music? Of course he would. But would it not be *ad hoc*?

[44] Frege (1980) discusses these issues in some detail. The most abstract concept—*thing*—is in a sense useless as a counting term; "how many things are in the room" is, it seems, unanswerable. But the concept of *thing* also seems to allow for what was called earlier a *bare plurality*. A bare plurality is just one that adheres to the dummy counting term 'thing' and indeed *can* answer the previous question; that is, where is a bare plurality? Anywhere one uses 'thing' as a counting term. But Plato, in the guise of trying to get at what are the *fundamental* units of being, would seem to balk at this suggestion. A proper answer to the question might only countenance certain specific things, forms, for example. Indeed, getting clear about *thinghood* as ontological category—as opposed to linguistic usage concept—seems to be the point. These are difficult issues to pursue another time. See also Penner (1987:342 n43).

sense, but are parts of a unified whole. But if being and its name or properties are categorically distinct, then, on a historical Parmenidean analysis, names and properties are strictly speaking unreal, if being is the only thing that fits the Eleatic principles of fragment B8, i.e., is the only category that counts as real. This, however, runs afoul of the apparent fact that names and properties are countable. If being and being countable (i.e. something akin to individuation) are inseparable, and properties are countable, then Plato here seems to be explicitly invoking divisibility as an important ontological feature of being, and is thus arguing against the historical Parmenides.

One might argue, however, that Parmenides is entitled to the weaker claim that there is only one *genuinely* real thing, namely, being, which might allow for *non-genuinely real* things.[45] Included here would be any way *humans* (or other animals) cut up the world, these being entirely arbitrary on Eleatic grounds. Such arbitrary division is not precluded by Parmenides' ban on degrees of being at B8.23-24, since the dividing activity does not come from nor is applicable to being *as such*. That is, *sub specie aeternitatis*, human beings, trees, stars, and planets, and their properties and names, are not *really* distinct—are not *really* there at all—since all of these run afoul in one way or another of the Eleatic principles of B8.

As I argued in chapter 3, however, Parmenides is not—by his own philosophy— entitled to this sort of hedge: the thrust of Eleatic ontology is such that it cannot allow for *anything* that is not genuine. Now, this is not to say that some other—weaker—philosophy could not allow for such a hedge, and indeed, it is precisely this sort of hedge that Plato is after: he seems to countenance an ontology that permits real distinctions, and for several reasons. As I argued in

[45] In effect, I countenanced this possibility in chapter 2.

chapter 4, Plato (and other post-Eleatics) saw the need for sensibles to be explicable. But Plato also wants to be able to distinguish, for example, justice from piety—two things of the same kind, *virtue*—and the good from the bad, or the beautiful from the ugly i.e., *opposites* (see *Republic* 476a and 491d). This attempt to justify divisions at the abstract level is part and parcel to Plato's recognition that the sensible world requires explanation; for the variety and distinctions endemic in the sensible domain, there must be something akin in the explanatory domain. This, I argued in chapter 3, is something Parmenides simply cannot countenance.

Let me address an important objection that relates to Plato's confrontation with Eleatic philosophy. The objection maintains that if thinking and being really are one and the same—the identity thesis interpretation of fragment B3 argued for in chapter 2—then distinctions and explanations are a part of our human illusion. All thinking just *is* being (or, on the weaker thesis, whenever we *think* we think *of* being). This implies that when we make distinctions and attempt explanations, we are strictly speaking not thinking at all; we are *in error* about being.

But this is where Parmenides runs into trouble. For the identity thesis implies that there is no thought that is not either identical to or of being. If being for Parmenides is akin to or the same as truth, then all thought is true. And if this is the case, then no thought can possibly be in error. So no mortal thought (opinion being a species of thought, presumably) can be in error. Is the rejoinder that *strictly speaking*, there are no erroneous thoughts (i.e., opinions) because all thoughts must be about being-truth, a reasonable one? This is unclear for two different types of reasons. In terms of the poem itself, this is simply not Parmenides' position, for he countenances combating mortal error as part of the very *motivation* for the goddess's learning journey with the *kouros*. But on Eleatic grounds, it is difficult to tell whether the proposition that *there are no erroneous thoughts* is true or false. If it is true on such grounds, then Parmenides' whole poem is

an exercise in futility. If it is false on such grounds, then not all thought is identical to or of being. If Parmenides *could* countenance division within being, then he would be able to account for error. The trick—one I think Plato attempts in the *Sophist*—is to show against Parmenides that real division does not involve an acceptance of not-being *qua* contrariness to being.[46]

All of these problems seem to issue from Parmenides' monism and Furth's notion that Parmenides is a "hyper-denotationist," i.e., subscribes to what Fine calls a referential theory of meaning (1993:125). On this view, the meaning of a term just is whatever the term refers to. "For suppose," Fine argues, "that the content of my thought is a proposition." She continues:

> If there is real content here, the proposition must be meaningful: a string of meaningless noises will not secure a genuine thought. But a proposition can be meaningful only if its terms are; and on a referential theory of meaning, the meaning of a term is its extra-linguistic referent. So for a thought to have content, it must have extra-linguistic referents, since such referents just are the content of the thought.

Now this referential theory of meaning, to which Parmenides subscribes, must be conjoined to his monism; if there is just one thing that *is*, then all thought must be *about it*. But again, this leaves no room at all for error. And this, as we will see, is a significant place where Plato can make inroads into addressing his own Eleatic tendencies.

In any event, the name argument seems to be a toy argument against the Eleatics, though it does trade on the sort of ontology the Eleatics—by their own arguments, I maintain—must accept. It sounds incredible to our ears, since we do not take names and the things named to be on the same ontological par, and so we would not take the arguments to be decisive. There is,

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[46] I would further argue that, whether Plato's analysis is correct or not, his realization that Parmenides must be wrong on precisely this matter—and that an analysis of the problem requires *abstract* notions—is a massive step in philosophical thinking, one with which we still are not in agreement about specifics.

however, another argument against the monist.

2.2.2.2. The Whole-Part Argument

A more decisive argument against the monist concerns the relation between wholes and parts, partly because this argument is indeed related to the historical Parmenides more than is the name argument, since Parmenides himself claims at B8.4 and B8.38 that being is a *whole*, and at B8.43 that it is a *sphere*, two things Plato exploits against monism. Plato frames the argument as a dilemma Eleatics must face. The dilemma, stated at 244d but worked out from 244d-246a, asks whether the Eleatic thinks "the whole is different from the one being or the same as it." There are problems for either horn, but only, it seems, for Eleaticism. As such, the dilemma shows that one or the other horn must be acceptable, though the *Eleatic* can accept neither. This is supposed to be sufficient for showing that Eleatic ontology is incoherent, or more strongly, *impossible*.

Harte (2002:103) sets up the dilemma by claiming the inconsistency (for the monist) of the following three claims:

(1) being and the one are identical
(2) being and whole are identical
(3) whole and the one are identical

According to Harte (102), monists require all three positions to be true, and this does seem to be what the historical Parmenides was after: if *being* is all there is, there is just *one* thing, namely, the *whole* of reality. But as Harte says, "if, as per the monists' own preferred version, the many parts of being are simply swallowed up into it, there will be no real substance to the claim that monist being is a whole of many parts; *that it is a whole at all*" (111, my emphasis). Similarly

with the name argument, however, the Eleatics might simply deny that parts are *real*.

One might offer an objection against the Eleatics on this score. If parts are not real, then it seems the whole cannot be real either, *if* a whole must be a whole *of parts*. Eleatic response: we are now treading into Parmenidean *Doxa*. 'Part' is a word *mortals* use to (erroneously) divide up the world from a mortal perspective; 'whole' is a word mortals use to (erroneously) abstract *from* the erroneously divided parts, to create a unity (of mortal *experience*). Rejoinder: this problem is on par with the final paradoxical conclusions of chapter 2: if there are, strictly speaking, no medium-sized dry goods (taken as parts or real discrete chunks of being), then there is no whole *of* those parts, and reality—the one being—ceases to be the very thing Parmenides claims it to be at B8.4 and B8.38; it ceases to be what it apparently must be, an individual (a *one*) *qua* whole. I have argued that for Parmenides, there can be no parts internal to being. So if there are no parts, and thus no whole, monism of an Eleatic stripe seems paradoxical, if the main conclusion of Eleaticism is that there is *just one thing*: the one *whole* of reality.

To undermine the monist's position, the Eleatic visitor argues that if Eleatic being had parts, namely, the various parts of a sphere, then, according to the Eleatic visitor, "nothing keeps it from having the characteristics of being one in all its parts, and in that way it's all *being* and it's also *one whole*" (245a1-3).[47] The whole—even if it had parts (which Parmenides must reject if being is not divisible (B8.22), though it is unclear how he would do so *if* he accepts that reality is literally a sphere)[48]—is not prevented from being *one* whole being. This position is one the

[47] Note the similarities of this description of being (as one whole) and the one of D3, especially at 157c.
[48] See Sedley (1999:117-18) for comments on the literalness of being's spherical nature. Most commentators, including myself, take the spherical nature of being to be metaphor for the singularity and completeness of being. These notions may be related to the perfection of being, since the Greeks took the sphere to be the most perfect shape. Nothing especially hinges on any of these issues.

Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus can entertain as plausible, but the *monist* cannot, since, according to the Eleatic visitor, the one—whatever binds the parts together into a whole—is a property *not identical* to the whole (245a5-6).

Note, however, that being's literally being a sphere is actually irrelevant for undermining the monist, since nothing in the present argument depends on being's alleged spherical nature. If being, whole, and one—any or all of them—are truly distinct, the monist must falter. The monist's ontology fails the austerity requirement: as with the name argument, it admits more than one thing, the whole-of-parts *qua* entity, and the one itself *qua* binder-of-parts. The whole-of-parts is not the one *itself*, since "a thing that's truly one, properly [ὀρθὸν] speaking, has to be completely without parts" (245a8-9).[49]

The Eleatic visitor then argues that if being is one but *not* a whole, being will somehow lack something of itself, and "will turn out to be less than itself" and so "*that which is* will be *not being*" (245c2-4). Being, therefore, must by *reductio* be *tantamount* to wholeness—either they are identical or related strongly in some other way, since if being is *not* a whole, being somehow *is not* since it fails to be what it is—it fails to have any identity whatsoever. The conclusion for the monist is, once again, that "everything will be more than one" (245c8), since being and wholeness are, by hypothesis, distinct or non-identical.[50] Secondly, however, if wholeness does *not* exist, then the same conclusion follows: being will not be what it is, and could never *become* what it is, since "whatever becomes has at some point become as a whole" (245d4). A previous

[49] It is not clear what "properly speaking" means, or what the "right account" (as Ambuel translates), of the one would be, such that it is rightly said to be "completely without parts." Indeed, it is not at all clear whether the one, austerely understood, could have an *account* at all. These issues are echoed the *Parmenides*' D1.
[50] Many of these topics are echoed in D2 of the *Parmenides*.

argument—from 237c-e—is now brought to bear on the current one: whatever is whole has number and is a whole *of* that number or quantity (245d9-10). The dilemma is complete: the monist can accept neither that being is a whole that is one, nor that being is one but not whole, nor that the whole does not exist. By this account, Eleatic monism is impossible, since no ontology can *fail* to be pluralistic in at least these minimal ways; if being is whole, then it is one *in virtue* of the (ontologically distinct) property of oneness.

The most important question for my purposes regarding this newly found pluralistic requirement is *how far down* it goes and what such pluralism entails for Plato's overall ontology. There are two very basic issues involved here. First, what justifies the joint-cutting divisions within being, such that we can have the ontological explanatory objects (forms, kinds, etc.) the sensible world requires? Call this the anti-Parmenides problem, since it seeks to carve up the world. Second, what prevents joint-cutting from being infinitely and arbitrarily divisible? Call this the anti-Heraclitus problem, since on his relativism, nothing prevents total flux.[51] The whole-part argument is important in these respects. Following Harte, I argue in the last chapter that if Plato can find a way to make composed objects, as she says, *not innocent* (innocence is the position that composition is identity), then this same sort of project can be applied to the cosmos. And if so, then Plato can have what I call a *structural monism* about the cosmos. But Plato must show both how being can be divided and how pluralism can be restricted. The later arguments about not-being are key to how this can be done.

[51] The doctrine of total flux is Plato's attribution to Heraclitus. Heraclitus himself, however, accepts a guiding principle, namely the *logos*. See Nehamas (2002) for the notion that Parmenides and Heraclitus are not far from one another because of the latter's notion of the *logos*.

2.2.3 Restrictions on Pluralism: An Initial Attempt

The whole-part argument against Eleaticism is used to show that an austere one, as the Eleatics understood it, cannot exhaust all of reality; that is, the argument in the *Sophist* is chiefly designed to show that *reality* cannot be austerely one.[52] But the nature of the whole-part relation also has affinities with later arguments that are, in some ways, anti-austerity. These are the arguments that purport to show how forms/kinds can combine with one another. This middle section of the dialogue is significantly complex in that most of the arguments that eventually lead to an attempt to understand false statement are increasingly complex sets of stage-setting for that final attempt. And most of these stage-setting arguments are philosophically significant in their own right. I shall focus more narrowly on communion/combination and not-being.

At 251d-e, the Eleatic visitor asks whether nothing, everything, or only some things, combine.[53] If nothing combines, then, for example, motion and rest will not *be*, since to be anything at all, they would have to combine with being (251e-252a).[54] The Eleatic visitor further argues that any theory that has everything in motion (perhaps Heraclitus is a target here), or has "everything an unchanging unit" (monism), or takes forms in absolute isolation (the friends of the forms at 248a-249d and the "late learners" at 251b are the targets here), must fail, if nothing combines.

The late learners argue that nothing combines in the sense that one cannot say "man is good" but only "man-man."[55] That is, their issue is cashed out in terms of the problem of the

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[52] Liberally reading τὸ πᾶν (the all) at 244b6 to designate something like all of reality.
[53] The Eleatic visitor is restricting his quantifiers to forms or kinds.
[54] The affinity with the arguments of *Parmenides*' 2P should be clear.
[55] The translation "man-man" is strange, but the Greek puts more force to the concept Plato is addressing: ἄνθρωπον ἀνθρωπον (251c2). "Man is man" is not quite right, since the late learners would balk at 'is'.

one and many: ones cannot be manys and manys cannot be ones, and it is a mistake to say even that some one thing can be called by many names.[56] But, as Duerlinger (2005:56) notes, the mistake these late learners make is that they "confuse things that are other than one another because they have different natures, on the one hand, with things that are other than one another because they have *contrary* natures" (my emphasis). In other words, the late learners deny all but identity statements because they confuse difference with contrariety, which is the Eleatic assumption about not-being in play at this point. This step—distinguishing what is *different* from what is *contrary*—is important in the later arguments, since Plato seems to move away from not-being as contrary to being, and here he uses the late learners to mouth this "most ridiculous account" (252b8).

Those who think nothing combines, as well as those who think everything combines, have unsustainable positions, according to the Eleatic visitor, because "all of these people apply *being*. Some do it when they say that things really are changing, and others do it when they say that things really are at rest" (252a8-10). Moreover, as Ackrill argues, the statement that nothing combines is self-contradictory, since "the statement . . . necessarily presupposes [its own] falsity" (1955:204). That is, to make the statement at all requires that forms or kinds combine.[57] As Ackrill points out, the statement "only one thing exists" presupposes that more than one thing exists. But if everything combines, as the Eleatic visitor points out, then other absurdities, such as that *motion rests*, would immediately follow. Ackrill too points out that the (apparently)

[56] Ones cannot be manys and vice versa because being so would destroy their *nature*, according to the late learners. Recall the extreme austerity of D1 of the *Parmenides*.
[57] Recall the Eleatic visitor's complaint that he cannot even mention not-being without (apparently) contradicting himself.

contradictory nature of such combination rules out the possibility that all things combine (201). By elimination, only one option remains: some things combine and some do not.[58]

If the Eleatic visitor is bent on metaphorical patricide, he appears here to be offering an alternative that suffers from neither extreme's misfortunes—a *middle ground*—between the Parmenidean no-combination thesis and the Heraclitean all-combination thesis. But how exactly should we understand this middle ground? The stark choice between no-combination and all-combination just is, I suggest, McCabe's distinction between D1-like austere individuals, which the whole-part argument has already shown to be incoherent, and D2-like hopelessly generous individuals, which have infinitely or indefinitely many properties and relations: they are *pluralized* to the point where they lose their identity in a wash of contradictory properties and relations, and cease to be individuals at all.[59] So the pluralism on offer must in some way place restrictions on either extreme: it must be a *principled* pluralism. And the communion of kinds offers something of a way to understand how this might work.

Note first an important transitional comment the Eleatic visitor makes at 253a5-7. Since some things combine and some do not, the Eleatic visitor likens this to the nature of combining letters of the alphabet. He claims that "more than the other letters the vowels run through all of them like a *bond* (δεσμὸς), linking them together, so that without a vowel no one of the others can fit with another." This passage is striking for several reasons. First, the notion of a *bond* is

[58] By 256b7-8, however, the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus argue that change can be resting in some sense. See McCabe (1994:205) on the notion that motion and rest combine in some *respect*. McCabe's analysis of motion and rest also takes them to act (metaphorically) as identity conditions for the objects of the friends of the forms and earth-bound giants. Ambuel (152) distinguishes things in motion and at rest from the kinds *motion* and *rest*; only on the former interpretation is there a blatant contradiction.

[59] Ambuel (130) notes this issue: "if you can attribute anything to a subject, then you can attribute nothing." This, in effect, is the extreme pluralization "no-thing-ness" of D2 in the *Parmenides*.

familiar from the analysis of being (and not-being) in D5 of the *Parmenides*. As we saw above, the notions of *oneness* and *being* are tightly bound together in the *Sophist*. And recall D8 from the *Parmenides*: *without* the one, then *nothing is*. Similarly, *without* the vowel, none of the other letters (consonants) fit together. Vowels seem to be likened to being, which "runs through" all letters and binds them together.[60] Consonants, we might say, are likened to not-being; indeed, in the *Theaetetus*, most consonants have "neither voice nor noise" (203b7). They are *unutterable* without vowels.[61]

Secondly, this passage indicates that there are *rules* for combining letters and that only an expert grammarian will know these rules. If there are rules for combination, then failure to follow those rules results in arbitrary combinations that are, in a sense, *unreal*: they are not *real* instances of combination.[62] The Eleatic visitor argues that just as there are non-arbitrary ways of combining letters, there are non-arbitrary ways in which *kinds*/*forms* combine: the expert who will know this will "know whether there are any kinds that run through all of them and link them together to make them capable (δυνατὰ)[63] of blending, and also, when there are divisions, whether certain kinds running through wholes are always the cause of the division" (253c2-5). Moreover, this expert will know whether there is one form spread out through other forms which

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[60] Harte (153) notes—against Moravcsik's 1992 view—that vowels may be *necessary* but not *sufficient* for the combination of letters (or by analogy, kinds), and so are not *directly* responsible for principled combination. As she says, "they do not *by themselves* bring about such combination" (my emphasis). Vowels "make possible" combination, but are not sufficient for it.

[61] As we will see below, not-being too "runs through" everything. An important question is whether being can be *without* not-being, an utterly non-Eleatic notion indeed.

[62] This, however, teeters on question begging, it seems: why are they unreal? Because they are not real.

[63] This term is cognate with *capacity* or *power* (δύναμις) that plays a central role in the friends of the forms (FOF) argument discussed in chapter 4. The notion of *capacity* plays a role, too, in the combination of forms later on. Ambuel—I think incorrectly—argues that power/capacity is akin to the *aporetic* arguments about knowledge as perception in the *Theaetetus*, and so concludes that the FOF solution—that being is power—commits Plato to a sort of Protagorean relativism. I cannot engage these arguments here, but see McCabe (1994:202-5) for an indication of how I think power/capacity should be interpreted.

are separate from one another, different from each other, and which forms are included within others, etc. (253d1-10). The Eleatic visitor is likening the expertise of a grammarian to an expert dialectician—a philosopher—who will know the *correct* collections and divisions of things within being.

It is important to see that Plato is here giving an initial description of the interweaving of forms—*that* forms interweave. Ambuel (138-40) argues, however, that such a description of kinds/forms obliterates the familiar theory of forms. He says "if the ideas enter in the relations described, then they are not ideas; they are not realities, separate and individual. If this is a modification of the theory of forms, then it is an outright *rejection* of the theory of forms" (my emphasis). It is unclear that this is the case. First, Gonzalez (2003) has given ample argument to the effect that there is no single theory of forms found in the dialogues, and so it is not easy to argue that describing forms/kinds as mixing in these ways abolishes the theory. Second, even in the *Republic*—as Ambuel acknowledges (123)—there is at least an "outline" of "a relation among being, becoming, and not-being."[64] Third, the *Parmenides*' 2P suggests that some forms or form-like objects (e.g., the one) must combine in *some* sense with other things (e.g., the many); if not (as D3 shows) there can be no many *qua* many if the one does not combine, and (as D8 shows) there can be nothing at all if there is no one. As I argued in chapter 4, it is in keeping with Plato that he puts others' principles to the test to become clearer about what their concepts entail. Just so, it is not inconsistent to see Plato doing this with what may be taken to be his own

[64] Ambuel argues that the combinations offered in the *Sophist* can only obtain between becoming things. See, for example, *Republic* 476a6-9 and *Symposium* 211b1-2 for examples of how forms *do not* combine. But note, too, that at *Republic* 511b8-c1, forms are at least *related* to one another somehow, and that at *Symposium* 201c2-5, what is beautiful is also said to be good, and what lacks beauty also lacks goodness, so beauty and the good are at least co-extensive (and one may participate in the other).

notions. Plato's arguments here need only entail more *precision* about the nature of forms; they need not entail outright modification or indeed rejection.

2.2.4. Restrictions on Pluralism: Combination, Not-Being, and Falsehood

The Eleatic visitor begins the discussion about how forms might combine[65] by selecting three forms they had been discussing since the friends of the forms-giants argument: *that which is*, *change/motion*, and *rest*.[66] What sets the discussion off is the recognition that two—change and rest—do not blend with each other, but that both blend with that which is. And since there are three items, the Eleatic visitor proclaims, each is different from the others though the same as itself (254d). Hence, now there seem to be two more kinds—sameness and difference—and they agree to discuss five "most important" kinds.

The delicate work comes once they have agreed on the five and seek out the possible relations among them. Note that the relations among these greatest kinds—already hinted at when the Eleatic visitor proclaims that motion and rest do not combine with each other but *do* combine with being—will adhere to the rule the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus argued for in the previous section: that some things combine and some do not. We can expect, then, some complexity in the combinations.

After going through a short argument that purports to establish that there really are five kinds under consideration (255a1-c10), the nature of the different is placed on full display, and

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[65] At 254b6, the word is κοινωνεῖν (associate); at 254d7 the word is μεικτὸν (blend); and at 254e4 the word is συμμεγνυμένον (comingle, mix together, blend).

[66] I will use 'that which is' and 'being' interchangeably, and 'motion' and 'change' interchangeably. The former translates ὂν αὐτὸ (among other words and phrases), while the latter translates κίνησις, all at 254d3.

ends up being the real workhorse in this discussion. Let us look at it carefully. First, the Eleatic visitor claims (255c) that some of *those which are* are said by themselves (αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτά), and some are said only in relation to others (πρὸς ἄλλα). Difference, however is always said in relation to others. To mark the complete distinction between *that which is* and *difference,* the Eleatic visitor remarks that things in themselves and things in relation to others both belong to being, whereas the latter also belongs to difference; otherwise some different things would be different in themselves (and *not* different in relation to something other), which is impossible (255d). The different thing must be *what it is* (ὅπερ ἐστὶν εἶναι)—i.e., different— only "*from* something that's different."

The Eleatic visitor is, more or less, explicating the logical nature of the different, i.e., that it always concerns things that are different *from other things*. But the different—like being, change, and rest—pervades everything, "since each of them is different from the others, *not because of its own nature* but because of sharing in the type of the *different*" (255e4-6). This is a key claim: being, change, and rest, are not different from each other because of their own essences; that is, the nature of change is *not sufficient* to differentiate it from the nature of rest. They are different from each other (and everything else) by combining with the different. The different is, as it were, a mediation by which things *are* different. As we will see, the different is that by which things *are not* that from which they are different.

The next stage of the argument has the Eleatic visitor claiming that since change is different from rest, it is not rest; but in a sense it is, since change shares in being. Similarly, change is different from sameness, though it still combines with sameness, since change is the same as itself. Therefore, "*change* is *the same* and not *the same*," though when they claim that it is—apparently to escape contradiction—they are not "speaking the same way" (256a9-b1).

What this means is that change is the same as itself by combining with sameness, though it is not identical with sameness as such, and is not identical with sameness *because* it combines with difference. The upshot here is that change *itself* can, in some respect, be seen to be at rest (256b7-8).[67]

Next, change is different from being, and so change "really is both something that is not, but also a thing that is since it partakes in *that which is*" (256d4-8). From this a general conclusion is supposed to follow: that which is not is, since for any given form *F*, difference makes *F* not-be, by making *F* not-be some *G* or other (i.e., some being or other). In the same way, all forms *are not*, even though by combining with being, each of them is (256d10-e4).

The bold and perhaps obscure conclusion from all of this comes at 256e6-7: "as applied to each of the forms *that which is* is extensive, and *that which is not* is indefinite in quantity." It is unclear why this is taken by so many to be obscure. It seems to say that some forms will combine with other forms through the mediation of being (and these combinations will be extensive in quantity), even though, since *all* forms combine with difference, not-being will (*as such*) be indefinitely many. That which is will (*as such*) be extensive through combination, though it will *not* be indefinite; in other words, we might say that there are a determinate number (however extensive) of beings. Only not-being will be indefinite, in the sense that each form, by participation in not-being, *is not all other being*.[68]

An important first anti-Eleatic notion that follows from this discussion is that being

[67] Presumably because being at rest is akin to being self-identical, i.e., as combining with sameness.
[68] One way to think about this notion is by comparison with negative definition: what is the definition of 'horse'? Well, it is not a parking lot, it is not candy, it is not the number three, and so on. If (real) definitions capture essences (what a thing *is*), then what a thing *is not* will indeed be indefinite in number.

itself—in being different from the others—*is not*. Indeed, at 257a4-6, it seems to be claimed that *since* forms *F*, *G*, and *H*, *are* (they combine with being), we can conclude that being *is not* (since it is not *F*, *G*, *H*, etc.); being's not-being follows from the being of the others. Not only this, however: the Eleatic visitor claims that being, "for not being those [others], it is itself one, but again, it is not the countless number of others."[69] Similarly with not-being, as we will see, there is a sense in which being is one, while also (by combining with the different) *is* not countless other things. The parsing of how to understand how something can *be* not-many-things is a central task of this section, D5 of the *Parmenides*, and in general of committing patricide against the Father.

Crucial to our metaphorical patricide, however, is—as was agreed at 237a—figuring out how not-being can *be*, how it can have its own nature.[70] The Eleatic visitor thus compares difference with knowledge, in that both are "chopped up" into different parts. But, says the Eleatic visitor, "knowledge is a *single thing* [μία] . . . but each part of it that belongs to something is marked off and has a name peculiar to itself." That knowledge is a single thing even though it has many parts runs afoul, as Harte has argued, of the way, for example, syllables are understood in the *Theaetetus*, and the one is understood in the D2 *Parmenides* arguments. Both assume that any whole with parts is just as many as its parts.[71] So at *Theaetetus* 204a8-11, Socrates says that "it is necessarily the case that the whole is all its parts. Or do you say that a

[69] This translation is Ambuel's. Duerlinger translates "for while [being] is not these [others], it is itself one thing, and again, it is not the others, which are unlimited in number." White's translation is missing a crucial 'not': "since, not being them, it is one thing, namely itself, and on the other hand it is [not] those others, which are an indefinite number." The 'not' is necessary because it had just been established that that which is is *extensive* but not *indefinite*.
[70] Analogously, this is precisely what the characters are, in a roundabout way, trying to do with the sophist.
[71] Recall that this is Harte's *pluralizing parts principle* (2002:53), and is based on the notion that composition is identity, i.e., is unrestricted.

whole, too, is some *one kind of thing* which has come into being out of the parts and is different from all the parts?" An indication that Plato in the *Sophist* is not attending to the notion that wholes just are their parts (which is explored in earnest in 2P of the *Parmenides*) is that even though there are many kinds of knowledge (such that different people might be said to have different kinds of knowledge at 257d2-3), it is the case that all of these distinct people have a single thing: *knowledge*.

Similarly, the nature of difference is one thing with many parts, for example the part of difference placed over the beautiful (the not-beautiful), and the just (the not-just). By partitioning out the nature of difference in a way similar to how knowledge is partitioned, Plato attacks Parmenides by arguing that not-being nonetheless *is*. Recall that not-being as contrary has been abandoned. It is now understood more as not-being in D5: not-being *F*. Thus, all legitimate not-being must nonetheless *be*, since all not-beings are merely parts of the different, something that *is*. And this is precisely what the Eleatic visitor says at 257e2-4: each not-being is marked off within the form of difference, and is thereby set over another one of those which are (namely, its opposite). A form is set over its opposite by combining with difference, in other words.

All of this, *pace* Parmenides, brings the dreadfully vexed not-being into being, since all not-beings are parts of a form (difference). This analysis also, I argue, allows the sophist to come out of the darkness of not-being (254a), because it captures the nature of falsehood, and so the nature of sophistry, now as *against* Eleaticism. The sophist can no longer ground his trickery on still venerable (but now downgraded) Eleatic philosophy.

2.2.4.1. Falsehood and Sophistry

The Eleatic visitor finally commits patricide in a way few have examined: he captures the nature of falsehood, which is something Parmenides requires for his philosophical claims, but nonetheless cannot countenance for ontological reasons. It takes the rehabilitation of not-being (and a general commitment to accepting that sensibles require explanation) to combat Eleatic philosophy on these grounds.[72]

The analysis of the patricide recalls Parmenides' own B6. Parmenides claims that for mortals,

> [5] . . . helplessness in their [6] breasts directs a wandering mind;
> and they are borne [7] both deaf and blind, dazed, undiscerning
> tribes, [8] by whom to be and not to be are thought to be the same
> [9] and not the same, and the path of all is backward-turning.

As we have seen, wandering mortals, who do not follow the path of what is, but think appearances or images *are*, are hopelessly confused and in radical error about what really is, that is, the one being. Mortal thought is mired in contradiction and Parmenides, at B7—reprimanding such thought—says "never shall this prevail, that things that are not are." Parmenides is here echoed by the Eleatic visitor's pronouncement at 237a, where thinking that falsehoods really exist "rashly assumes that which is not is." According to the Eleatic visitor, falsehood *requires* some notion of not-being, if to think falsely is to think either of things that are, that they are not, or, of things that are not, that they are (240e).[73]

Falsehood is possible, according to Plato, if two conditions hold, both of which are necessary but only jointly sufficient. First is a sensible non-Eleatic construal of not-being. As

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[72] Indeed, it seems Parmenides himself must be committed to requiring an explanation of sensibles or appearances—the very things he takes mortals to utter falsehoods about—since he accepts a version of the principle of sufficient reason at B8.9-10.

[73] Aristotle explicitly takes this up as a definition of 'falsehood' at *Metaphysics* 1011b25.

we saw above, the absolute notion of not-being is abandoned by the Eleatic visitor and Theaetetus, since they agree that they must accept by brute force that not-being somehow is if they are to solve the problem of false statements and opinions. As we saw, by 258c not-being is given a nature and was agreed to be among the things that are. Secondly, falsehood requires, as Denyer (1991:146) notes, some way for predicates to be applicable to subjects so that they can be denied. Plato achieves this by distinguishing names, verbs, and sentences. The distinction rests on the communion of kinds: as the Eleatic visitor notes, "the weaving together of forms is what makes speech possible for us" (259e5-6).

Part of Plato's analysis of falsehood shows that declarative statements, *true or false*—for example, Parmenides' statement 'the all is one'—require structural complexity. If 'the all is one' is true, then it is true *by virtue* of the fact that it has *distinct parts*, and these distinct parts are somehow *ordered* (e.g., at 261e). But if the statement is false, then this requires a coherent notion of not-being, one that allows the predicate to obtain for certain things, but be *misapplied* to others. The example in the text, 'Theaetetus flies', the falsity of which relies on there being a perfectly reasonable predicate—applicable to some things—to be misapplied to others. That is, the linguistic aspect of falsehood echoes the notion, adopted in the discussion about the combination of kinds, that some kinds combine and some do not.

Analogously,[74] some linguistic chunks combine and some do not, and this takes two forms. First, significant—or *meaningful* (σημαίνοντα) at 261e—claims cannot be *lists*, either of names (262c) or verbs (262b); they need to be *structured combinations* of both (262c).

[74] In fact it may be stronger than analogy: language combines in the way it does *because* kinds combine in the ways they do. For this analysis to work, there must be, it seems, a structural isomorphism between the communion of kinds and the language that relies on the communion. See Sayre (1969:193) for a discussion along these lines.

Secondly, some perfectly syntactically well-formed statements are neither true nor false, since they fail the combination rule: Chomsky's famous sentence 'colorless green ideas sleep furiously' has no meaning, partly (at least) because it has no possible truth conditions, guaranteed by the erroneous combination of the first two words. The combination is erroneous, on the present analysis, *because* contradictory kinds cannot combine: the kind not-colored, which is a part of the different that is set over colored things, cannot combine with any (lesser) form that falls under the form *colored*. And green is just such a form, we might surmise. That is, this string of words cannot combine for *semantic* coherence,[75] which is a function of how forms can and cannot combine.[76]

Father Parmenides is thus attacked here on two fronts: given strong monism, he cannot allow true statements, since they require structural complexity; this fact about language is echoed by the other arguments against monism regarding names and the whole-part relationship. And given the absolute ban on not-being, Parmenides cannot allow *false* statements, though his own philosophy requires it. On this score, Plato's attack exploits an internal incoherence in Parmenides—that he cannot allow for false opinion by his own lights—in order to show how false opinions and statements are possible. But if they are possible, Plato argues, then *being itself* must be divisible into the very things that make complexity in speech possible, namely, kinds or forms. If kinds and forms are not real divisions within being, then they could never

[75] There is a deeper issue here that I cannot explore: what are the semantic values of kind terms, *especially* greatest kind terms? On some interpretations of the greatest kinds, everything falls under them (sometimes, in the case of rest and motion, metaphorically). But if so, then their semantic values cannot be extensionally determined, since then the five greatest kinds would all have the same meaning. But if they are intensionally determined—somehow by their own natures, etc.—then this seems to run afoul of the notion that they are different, and that their meanings differ *only* by combining with the different (at 255e4).

[76] See Ambuel (164-165 n183) for a discussion of how some have seen either a correspondence notion of truth, or a Tarskian notion of *fit* in these passages.

combine in the first place, and language (and philosophy) would be impossible (259e3-4).

3. Conclusion

Plato's *Sophist*, I have argued, expands upon some of the discussion about not-being in the *Parmenides*, specifically by explicating the notion of not-being brought up in D5. Not-being, it is argued in the *Sophist*, must somehow *be*, but in order for it to *be* in the requisite sense, it must be on par with all other beings, namely, forms. This is a crucial step, I argued, in Plato's confrontation with Parmenides, since only by allowing not-being to be could Plato make sense of the very thing Parmenides' philosophy required but could not countenance: falsehoods.

CHAPTER SIX

PLATO'S STRUCTURAL MONISM: A RETURN (OF SORTS) TO ELEA

1. Introduction

It has become less controversial in recent Plato scholarship to deny that Plato held onto a deep ontological dualism, and to see him espousing what might be called—to contrast the position with its nearest counterpart—a *one-world* thesis. Such an interpretation of Plato still is, however, relatively controversial. Its counterpart—the two-worlds thesis—can be gleaned in various ways from accepting either the separation *or* immanence of forms from or in participants, respectively. Several commentators still adhere to this basic notion in Plato's metaphysics.[1] The two-worlds thesis, as we saw in chapter 4, seems to follow most clearly from separation, since most proponents of separation take forms and participants to be different enough to occupy separate ontological realms. Immanence, too, can entail a two-worlds thesis, depending on how one understands it. For example, if the immanence thesis makes form-copies the things that we learn from the *Phaedo* are "in us," then these are nonetheless separate from the forms of which they are copies. On this picture, the immanent largeness in us is separate from largeness itself. But if it is forms themselves that are in us, we run into several of the problems explored in the first part of the *Parmenides*.

In this final chapter I offer a more or less programmatic challenge to the ontology that surrounds the two-worlds thesis, which is largely a position commentators extract from

[1] McCabe (1994) sees a two-worlds thesis at work in at least Plato's constructive dialogues; Rickless (2007:43 n47) accepts a more or less traditional understanding of separation, and thus accepts two worlds as well. Recently, the position has been challenged by Nails (2013) and Alican and Thesleff (2013).

constructive dialogue discussions of forms. I will argue against two-worlds theses by looking at how Plato might be seen as a champion of a one-world thesis. I profess to offer only a preliminary (and rather speculative) discussion of the latter. Such a programmatic discussion must include an examination of the nature of forms, participants, and the relation between the two, this last being what Kahn calls the most intractable problem of all (2007:38).[2]

My project largely focuses on providing a tentative solution to some thorny issues surrounding the form-participant relation, a solution that sees Plato endorsing a sort of modified monism in response to the challenges to Eleatic ontology in the *Parmenides* and *Sophist*. The nature of and relation between forms and participants is an unusually stubborn problem in Plato, given that this relation is supposed to be the centerpiece of his entire metaphysics. The central claim of the chapter is this: *given* that there is or must be some sort of relation between forms and participants, they must be understood as occupying the same ontological space, and this sameness of ontological space is, I argue, best understood as a sort of monism—*structural* monism. To put the claim another way, forms and their participants are two ways of understanding the same single reality, since their alleged mutual dependence (argued for in chapter 4) turns out to be a relation of *reduction*: participants are bundles of forms, though not *mere* bundles.

One way of understanding the broader strokes of my project is by way of Wilfrid

[2] Kahn 2007 deals with the relation between Plato's constructive metaphysics and his late metaphysics. He proposes, for any study of Plato's late ontology as a reformulation of his constructive tenets, the same three questions noted in the text. Whether Plato's late ontology is strictly a reformulation of his constructive dialogue metaphysics, or whether it is a "filling in" of missing details, is not germane at present, though I tend to favor the latter. Gentzler (1996:169), too, sees Plato's late works as "filling in the gaps of the ontology that he sketches in the [constructive] dialogues, rather than as providing an alternative to it." Others, such as Sayre (1983) and Rickless (2007) see Plato's "late ontology" as moving away from the ontology of the constructive dialogues.

Sellars's famous opening salvo in "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man." There he declares that "the aim of philosophy, abstractly formulated, is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term" (1991:1). Plato's philosophy as a whole can be seen, I contend, along similar lines. He engages a rich array of topics across and within dialogues, such as the nature and scope of virtue, knowledge, and reality, the nature of death, how to live the best life, and what constitutes the best state. Sellars's understanding of 'things' includes normal sensibles, such as planets and people, but also "numbers and duties, possibilities and finger snaps, aesthetic experience and death," a disparate and ontologically broad grouping to say the least.[3]

Such a project is in an Eleatic spirit, I argue, once the vague concepts Parmenides employs have been demystified and clarified. As I argued in chapters 4 and 5, Plato in the *Parmenides* and *Sophist* seeks to clarify—as a sort of self-critique of his own Eleatic tendencies—what must have been meant or entailed by Parmenides' notions of (at least) oneness and not-being. On the one hand, the nature and scope of oneness, which is deducible from Parmenides' arguments, though not strictly argued *for* (as I discuss in chapter 2), is to the end a thorn for Plato; there is never a clear or final endorsement of any version of oneness, such as whole-of-parts or pure austerity, explored in the dialogues. In the end, perhaps the best we can do is understand it along the lines of Scolnicov (2003), as a more or less pragmatic background assumption, something without which *nothing can exist*, as the *Parmenides*'s final deduction

[3] Sellars focuses on modern science, which he contrasts with the naïve image of reality, one that Plato ostensibly would endorse. I will not engage the differences between the scientific image and naïve image, nor will I confront Sellars's article any more than to use his salvo as a call for understanding the fundamental *relationality* of everything, and whether there is such. Monism of any stripe must be able at *most* to show this, but at *least* to point to how one might go about showing it. I engage in the latter, more modest project, within the confines of Plato.

contends.[4] On the other hand, not-being—whose denial is the cornerstone of Eleatic ontology, which results in Parmenides' strict numerical monism—*is* clarified in the *Sophist*; it is shown there that Parmenidean not-being is altogether too strong, even for his own philosophical project.

In this chapter, I argue that *if* Plato ought to be understood as advocating a one-world thesis, then it is necessary to understand how the form-participant relation constitutes a single whole. If forms and participants mutually (symmetrically) depend on one another for their *existence*, it does not follow that their *natures* mutually depend on one another. If participants can be reduced to bundles of forms, then their natures are asymmetrically dependent on the natures of forms. This form-participant relation constitutes a single reality that is nonetheless divided along natural lines (a whole form-participant system), as Socrates suggests at *Phaedrus* 265e1-3. Such division, I argue, requires both the non-Eleatic notion of not-being argued for in the *Sophist*, and a principle of oneness of the sort found in the third deduction of the *Parmenides*. In this way, Plato is Eleatic about there being a single thing—the whole form-participant system (whereby forms and participants are different ways of understanding the system)—but non-Eleatic in advocating real division *within* the whole. The real division constitutes the whole's internal structure.

The discussion runs as follows. In §2, I first discuss the notion of immanence, and whether the notion of immanent form-copies (or immanent characters) offers a suitable alternative to separation. I then discuss an alternative to immanence—which must, it seems,

[4] In this vein, the absolute (or austere) one can perhaps never be known *as such*, though one might glimpse it in a sort of "noetic vision" (or as non-propositional knowledge), as Gonzalez argues for all forms, based in part on his interpretation of the *Seventh Letter*. There are problems with this view, though I regard the notion of noetic vision as less problematic for coming to know the absolute one than for coming to know, say, justice itself.

countenance something like *bare particulars*—namely, whether Plato can be understood as a *bundle theorist*, where at least sensible particulars are bundles of forms. In this vein, I will, from here on, use 'particulars' in place of the more general 'participants.'[5] The discussions of immanence and bundles (and bare particulars) is crucial for understanding how I take forms and participants to be related under structural monism.

In §3, I discuss the notion of structural monism itself. This includes some prolegomenatic fleshing out of some issues from chapters 4 and 5 about how the one and not-being might act as structuring principles.

In §4, I conclude the chapter and dissertation as a whole.

2. Immanence and the Nature of Sensible Particulars

Immanence serves as the basic alternative to the separation thesis regarding forms and particulars, discussed in chapter 4. It is the idea that forms (or, as we will see, copies or images of forms) are somehow *immanent* in particulars. This means, at the very least, that forms or form-copies are "in" particulars either as parts or as properties, sometimes as both (if properties can be construed as parts). Just as separation admits of different alternatives, so does immanence. I am concerned here with two things: first, whether the standard immanence theories make sense, and second, what the nature of the thing in which immanent forms/form-copies inhere is supposed to *be*. This second problem—the problem of the particular—is the more important of the two.

[5] 'Participants' refers to anything (including numbers, etc.) that participates in forms. I switch here to 'particulars'—which I take to mean *sensible* participants—because the focus of this chapter is sensible participants.

2.1. Immanence

The standard passages thought to ally Plato with an immanence theory come from the *Phaedo*. At 102b2-5, Phaedo recalls that Socrates asked ". . . when you then say that Simmias is taller than Socrates but shorter than Phaedo, do you not mean that there is in [ἐν] Simmias both tallness and shortness?"[6] The contentious question is what, exactly, is *in* Simmias? As Devereux points out, at 103b3-4, Socrates seems to make a distinction between things in us and those in nature (1999:195). This is supposed to show that there are two sorts of things: form-copies (or immanent characters), and the things they are copies (or images) *of*, namely, forms themselves.

Some, however, take it that so-called form-copies and forms themselves—even in this passage of the *Phaedo*—are identical: there are *just forms* in particulars; there are no redundant ontological things—immanent characters—in particulars. Fine, for example, argues that "immanence *just is* the suitable relation binding sensibles to forms" (2003:304, my emphasis). Plato, she notes, cashes out this "suitable relation" in several different ways: *presence*, *communion*, and *participation*. Moreover, the participation of particulars in forms is Socrates' "safe argument" for how particulars come to be the things they are:

> I no longer understand or recognize those other sophisticated causes, and if someone tells me that a thing is beautiful because it has a bright color or shape or any such thing, I ignore these other reasons—for all these confuse me—but I simply, naïvely and perhaps foolishly cling to this, that nothing else makes it beautiful other than the presence of [παρουσία], or the sharing in [κοινωνία], or however you may describe its relationship to that Beautiful we mentioned, for I will not insist on the precise nature of the relationship, but that all beautiful things are beautiful by the

[6] Translations are those of Grube, in Cooper (1997).

Beautiful. That, I think, is the safest answer . . . (100d1-e1).

It certainly sounds as though Socrates is advocating an immanentist reading of the relation between forms and particulars. One problem, however, is that if the relation-terms Fine mentions are supposed to cash out immanence, they are hardly any clearer than the notion of immanence itself. Fine ultimately takes the immanence of forms in particulars to be the presence of *properties* in particulars (303).

Now, as Devereux notes, the reason an immanent-characters interpretation is preferable to an immanent-*forms* interpretation is that Socrates seems to take it that these things in us (whatever they are) *perish*, whereas forms cannot come to be or perish (195). Simmias, being both short and tall, is somehow "between" them, such that when Simmias comes to be short, shortness "overcomes his tallness," and vice versa (102d1-3). Indeed, on such a change from one opposite to another in a given particular, "either it [the thing in us] flees and retreats whenever its opposite, the short, approaches, or it is destroyed by its approach" (102e1-2). Later (102e5-103a4), Socrates notes that tallness cannot become short, and vice versa. All of this Socrates uses to explain what seems to be an essential *difference* between what can and cannot perish, and since whatever is in us *can* perish, and there exist things "in nature" that cannot perish, the thing in us must be a copy or image of that imperishable thing in nature. One response to this, notes Devereux, is that Socrates sets the issue up, as we saw, as a disjunction: either the thing retreats or it is destroyed. Thus, critics of immanent characters argue that the second disjunct is not, as Devereux says, "a real possibility."

My focus here is not on the nature of whatever may or may not be "in" us. So, without getting into the details of the nature of these things, it is important to note that the immanent-characters reading, while an interpretation of these *Phaedo* passages, is also an argument *for*

separation. Devereux is explicit: "from the *Phaedo* on, [Plato] denies that Forms are immanent in their participants, and he is committed throughout to the claim that *all* Forms are ontologically independent of sensible particulars" (193, emphasis in the original).

There are, as we saw in chapter 4, problems with separation. Indeed, that the immanent-characters interpretation *entails* separation undermines the immanent-characters interpretation itself. Recall that separation can be understood in different ways. One way is Fine's *independent existence* (IE): *A* is separate from *B* just in case *A* can exist without, independently of, *B*. As I noted in chapter 4, IE is a non-symmetrical relation; it is neutral about the kind of relation *A* and *B* might have to one another, or even whether they have one at all. Another way forms can be separate is the more strongly symmetrical separation discussed in chapter 4; I argued there that the greatest difficulty argument in the *Parmenides*, and the friends of the forms argument in the *Sophist*, show Plato heuristically exploring this sort of separation. But there is also a weaker sense of *difference* or *distinctness*. It is clear from the constructive dialogues that Plato is at least committed to a logical distinction between forms and particulars: they are, in those dialogues, taken to be different *types* of things.

Despite the distinction between forms and particulars, Plato is obviously committed to a *relation* between forms and particulars. Otherwise, the positing of forms makes no sense. As we have seen, immanence (of some sort) is supposed to lock onto this aspect of the form-particular problem. But the immanent-characters interpretation suffers from precisely the same defect as several other interpretations of the form-particular relation. As Gonzalez notes, the problem now is that the immanent-characters reading "makes completely mysterious, *not to say*

incomprehensible, the relation between sense objects, with their immanent characters, on the one hand, and the forms, on the other" (2003:43, my emphasis).[7] As noted, the immanent-characters reading can be seen as both an interpretation of the *Phaedo* passages and as an argument for separation. All this Devereux accepts, noting that no explanation of the participation relation exists in the *Phaedo* (199-200). We might add: it exists nowhere in the *corpus*. Nonetheless, Gonzalez notes that for Devereux, the *interpretive* issue of the *Phaedo* passages is distinct from the *participation* issue, though Gonzalez rightly says that the issues cannot be easily divorced (43). If we choose to interpret the *Phaedo* passages as endorsing immanent characters *without* also explaining how participation is thereby possible, we seem to lose something of Plato's constructive metaphysics.[8] As Gonzalez notes, the greatest difficulty argument of the *Parmenides* bears this out: it "shows what happens if for the sake of consistency we strictly maintain separation (if that is what is meant there) at the cost of immanence: *we lose participation*; forms and sensibles separate into two different worlds and with no relation between them" (40, emphasis in the original). If the relation between particulars and forms is incoherent on separation readings, immanent-character readings push the problem down the road, since the relation between immanent characters and forms is *still* one of separation.

2.2. Sensible Particulars

The problem of what, exactly, participates in forms, is another the immanence and

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[7] McPherran (1988), who supports the immanent-characters reading, argues at length that the relation between particulars and forms is not between *them*, but between the immanent characters and forms only. That is, particulars are not themselves images of forms; their immanent characters *are*. I discuss McPherran's view below.

[8] It should be noted that Plato uses a familiar device to sidestep this problem: in the block quote in the main text above, we see Socrates claiming that he "will not insist on the precise nature of the relationship."

separation theses (of any stripe) must address. Just what is the nature of the thing that is supposed to have forms or immanent characters "in" it?[9] Recall that I briefly discussed this issue in chapter 4. Here I expand that discussion and problematize it more specifically.

There are three basic candidates for what particulars are supposed to be; the first two are related. On the one hand there are individual form-bearers of two types, which we saw in chapter 4. The first are *bare particulars,* which have no intrinsic properties of their own, but only become something through participation. One place we find these dubious and mysterious entities (if such they be) is *Republic* V (e.g., at 479d-480a). The second are form-bearers that nonetheless have their own intrinsic properties. We find these, recall, at *Phaedo* 102c1-3: there is something that is the *nature of Simmias* that is outside of his participation in any of the properties (such as tallness) he happens to have. The third understanding of particulars is that they are bundles of forms (or bundles of immanent characters). Bundles have no independent existence; they depend for their natures entirely on whichever forms happen to be bundled.[10] Often this position is denigrated because particulars are said to be *mere* bundles of forms. As I argue below, there are no *mere* bundles of forms, and this distinction makes a difference in understanding the *nature* of such bundles; their natures are only intelligible, I argue below, by understanding the *whole system* under which, and by which, they come to be the bundles they are.

I set aside (for the most part) the issue of purely bare particulars, since I think they are

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[9] It is at least conceptually not difficult to have some grasp of what forms are supposed to be or be like; several empirically based metaphors abound (tree to shadow, *explanans* to *explanandum*; even theoretically posited entities in science, which are used to explain the behavior of phenomena, offer a good metaphor). There are greater difficulties, as I argue in the text, for the nature of particulars.

[10] It is somewhat odd to say that purely bare particulars have their own natures, but since they are *not* bundles, they allegedly (and mysteriously) are supposed to have natures independent of participation.

utterly incoherent (and it is unclear whether Plato meant the *Republic* passage to countenance such wildly implausible entities). Nonetheless, some accept a "close enough" bare-particulars position, and this should be examined. In a highly illuminating article, McPherran (1988) attempts to steer a path through a dilemma set up by Matthews and Cohen (1968:632-34). They argue that for Plato, if something *x* is to have a relation *R* to anything, then *x* must be something in its own right. Their example is two cats—call them Annie and Button.[11] They argue that for Plato, Annie and Button are called 'cats', and *are* cats, by participation in cathood. But if cathood is something "over" Annie and Button, such that *they* participate in *it*, then Annie and Button are each things apart from cathood; they are things in their own right, *outside* of cathood. Now, it is just mysterious what the *x* and *y*—which exist "under" cathood—are supposed to be *as such*. The "Platonic rejoinder" from critics of this interpretation is that this is not a problem, since there are "things like reflections and shadows that are *essentially* or *constitutively relational*" (633, emphasis in the original). The dilemma set up by Matthews and Cohen is this: neither the bare particulars nor the constitutively relational things are coherent entities.

McPherran hopes to steer through the horns of this dilemma. He posits what he calls *nearly nude* particulars (529): "these individuals will 'possess' some essential properties (probably very few) and will have existence independent of the Forms in the sense that any such particulars can exist without instantiating any specific Form(s) (like bare particulars and unlike relational entities)." The crucial principle McPherran assigns to the explication of these nearly nude (or form-bare) particulars is this: "they are what they are (essentially) independently of any of the properties *for which there are Forms*" (529-30, emphasis in the original). This means that

[11] I shall replace their Felix and Fenimore to immortalize my own cats in the example.

McPherran accepts some properties that are not form-dependent, and this does seem (negatively or indirectly) to be borne out by the texts: a key property for which there is no form (and, of course, Plato could not cover all cases) is *being an extended thing*.[12] Thus, form-bare particulars *do* (contrary to purely bare particulars) have (minimal) essential properties, and this saves them from the ontological obscurity of purely bare particulars.

This is an ingenious solution, since it takes what is *absent* from the texts (though seemingly implied by what is required for sensible particulars to *have* a nature at all), and uses an interpretation of what is absent (namely, properties for which there are no form correlatives), to provide a missing link, by which one can pass through the Matthews and Cohen dilemma. But there seems to be an unnoticed problem with this solution.

Take any or all form-bare particulars and articulate their essential properties—properties for which there are no forms. Is it the case that each particular thing's properties are identical with all other particular things' properties, or are they not identical? Let us take the latter first. If each thing's properties are not identical, then there must be at least one property (or one set of properties) *each* particular has by which it is differentiated from all other form-bare particulars. This property would then explain, albeit seemingly *ex post facto*, why some form-bare particular instantiates property-set *A*, and why another form-bare particular instantiates property-set *B*. Why is it *ex post facto*? Take the two particulars Annie and Button. They seem distinct. The *reason* they seem distinct is because Annie looks like a white-gray-small cat, and Button looks like a brown-black-white-gigantic cat. But in a sense we already *knew* they were distinct in these

[12] There is a possible threat of anachronism here, since extension *qua* substance is not something Plato ever discusses.

ways: one looks different from the other. What we were after, however, is an explanation of *why* we came to that conclusion in the first place, i.e., why the one is gray, white, small, cat, and the *other* is brown, black, white, giant, and cat. We wanted to know, in other words, why cathood (being the relevantly similar property between them) instantiated the *other* properties at precisely the locations (in time and space) where Annie and Button are located. But by simply positing some sort of *haecceity*—or individuating property, such as Buttonhood—for what are supposed to be *minimally bare* particulars, we seem to be (at best) overpopulating our ontology.

A response here is that we are not *maliciously* overpopulating our ontology, since *each* form-bare particular is still *unto itself* minimal. That is, it does not matter how *many* "haecceity" properties there are in the world (there would be just as many as there are particulars). What is relevant for minimality is how many essential properties *each* particular must possess. And extension-in-space plus haecceity is minimal enough. The problem, however, is that this solution seems to beg the question: it *introduces* the individuation of form-bare particulars when their individuation is precisely what is at issue.

And this, I think, is the more serious problem. For if the haecceity is *ad hoc* or question-begging—and therefore must be abandoned[13]—then we are left with McPherran's actual position, namely, that there are form-bare particulars that have minimal essential properties. But now—having gotten rid of haecceity properties for each particular—*all particulars have identical properties*. So by the identity of indiscernibles, there is a single form-bare particular. In that case, there can be no good reason to posit form-bare particulars that nonetheless are

[13] Note that this issue is never introduced by McPherran. I have introduced it for him, as an introduction to the current, more serious, objection.

supposed to be the bearers of the immanent characters that ostensibly obtain for each particular we (seemingly) accept, such as Annie or Button. *If*, that is, there is a *single form-bare particular*, then something *else* must be the individuating factor for Annie and Button.

It is important to note that McPherran is somewhat wary of his own position on these matters, arguing that his nearly-nude particulars are something advocated primarily in the constructive dialogues. But he does invoke a lengthy discussion of the *Timaeus*, which indeed seems to have a single form-bare particular of the stripe that I have just deduced from the problem of positing a plurality of entities with identical properties. Though the *Timaeus* is controversial as a philosophical enterprise, there are some important problems from other dialogues that it addresses, namely, the problem of flux and the issue of participation.

The narrow part of the *Timaeus* I wish to discuss—the section dealing with what Plato calls (among other things) the *receptacle*—is notoriously obscure. The nature of the receptacle is itself unclear, as Timaeus himself indicates (49a5). Timaeus introduces it as a "third kind" in his mythological cosmos (in addition to forms and particulars), and it is meant to explain one version of how participation might work.[14] Now, what is controversial is whether it is a version that *was* endorsed by Plato, *could have been* endorsed by Plato, were it shorn of its non-philosophical elements, or *was not* endorsed by Plato at all, and represented strictly false storytelling or myth.[15] The interpretations—like those of Parmenides (with whose poem the

[14] Translations of the *Timaeus* are from Zeyl, in Cooper (1997).
[15] For Sayre (1983:240), the mythology in the *Timaeus* "is not an approximation to the truth; it is a story about a subject matter that *by its nature* cannot be truly described" (my emphasis). It is not clear that such a strong position should be taken, however, since the *Timaeus* does have affinities with other dialogues that are not, or not obviously, mythological. Silverman (2002:20) takes the *Timaeus* to be "the final theory of particulars," and so, as such, has some philosophical content.

dialogue shares many affinities)—run the gamut.[16] My intent here is not to rehearse the major interpretations, but to examine what is said in this section of the dialogue, mostly for the purpose of arguing that, if the *Timaeus* is pure myth, then there ought to be a Platonically construed way to argue for a systematic understanding of the form-participant relation (at least in outline) that does not resort to the mythology of the *Timaeus*.[17]

The section under consideration—48e3 to 53c4—is part of a myth about how the sensible world came into being. Timaeus attempts to clarify the nature of the receptacle by using various metaphors, such as gold (in which various shapes come to be molded, but which does not change its own nature), a mold itself (which receives impressions or shapes of other things), and a perfume base (which "carries" other scents with it but does not itself change). Following Harte (2002:257), it is perhaps best to understand the receptacle as a *medium*: it is the medium in which form-copies or immanent characters come to be.[18]

The main reason Timaeus introduces the receptacle seems to point to an issue that comes up in the *Theaetetus*: the flux-based problem of individuating sensible things. Timaeus says of the basic kinds (fire, water, air, and earth) that "it is difficult to say of each of them—in a way that employs a reliable and stable account—which one is the sort of thing one should really call *water* rather than *fire*, or which one one should call some one of these things rather than just any

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[16] Sayre (242) makes the explicit connection between the *Timaeus* and Parmenides' *Doxa*. As I argued in chapter 3, Parmenides' *Doxa* is more clearly strictly false, given his ontology; some aspects of the *Timaeus*, however, fit with Plato's overall ontology.

[17] Even if, however, some elements of the mythology are in accord with basic Platonic tenets from other dialogues, it is perhaps worthwhile to move away from a key aspect of the cosmology as presented, namely the teleological structuring of the cosmos by the demiurge.

[18] Note that it is not a medium in which forms themselves exist; the demiurge uses forms as models and then impresses their copies onto the receptacle. These mythological notions are not relevant to my discussion, but the notion that the receptacle is akin to a particular that *has* immanent characters is. Note, too, however, that the receptacle is explicitly called *space* (χώραν) at 52b4.

and every one of them" (49b3-6). Later, he claims that one cannot, "without embarrassment," say that some sensible *x* is not something else *y*, and so the "safest course" is to never call any sensible a "this," but always a "what is such" (49d). The key problem is that no sensible has the *stability* (μόνιμα at 49e2) that is evidently required to mark each thing off as something in its own right. By what principle, Timaeus asks, can we say that some *x* is the same as itself and (thereby) different from something else? For Parmenides, the global ban on not-being decided the issue: there is no legitimate principle for dividing reality up in such a way that would countenance plurality. It follows for Parmenides that there is just a single being.

The issues here are difficult. McCabe, for example, takes Timaeus to have made the mistake of supposing that since the four elements change into each other, they cannot *at all* remain the same as themselves (1994:177). Now, that position would be a flux position, but, as she argues, it does not follow from their changing into each other that they are *never* the same as themselves; it is consistent that water be water for a time, and *then* turn into fire. Against this, however, is the gold analogy, noted above: likening the receptacle to gold, Timaeus invites us to imagine molding different shapes in the gold, "going on non-stop remolding one shape into the next" (50a6-7). His point is to drive home the problem of not being able to *identify* any of the shapes, such that one can legitimately ask "What *is* it?" (50b1). In such a world as Timaeus has created here, there *is* no identifiable shape, simply because the molder is constantly "reshaping" the gold.[19] It seems, then, that something like flux in the realm of becoming is indeed what Timaeus has in mind.

[19] As we have seen in other flux contexts, even the language used to describe them is inadequate. Timaeus says that the person reshaping the gold is constantly going from *one* shape to the *next*. But these very concepts run against pure flux, since there is no *one* distinguishable from a *next*.

McCabe, however, sees Timaeus dealing with a different issue, namely, what is *basic* (178). As she argues, if fire changes into air, then it seems neither can be basic; when we ask what some *x really is*, we cannot say that it is fire, since it is not here anymore, nor that it is air, since that just appeared. This is, of course, just the sort of problem that bothered Parmenides, who similarly said that if something comes to be or perishes, then it strictly speaking *is not*. Parmenides, as we have seen, trimmed away everything unstable from his ontology, until there was a single thing left: *being*. But it is not inconsistent for Timaeus to be worried about both what is basic *and* the problem of flux; specifically, if the elements turn into one another *at any rate* (constantly or as McCabe says, more moderately), their individuation *at the ontological level* is still a problem. It is only, we might say, at the epistemological level (or more precisely, the doxastic level) that we experience the "more moderate" stability of everyday things. This does not, however, preclude their ontological flux at a deeper level. Indeed, Timaeus' gold analogy seems to bear out the problem of flux *and* the problem of fundamentality McCabe raises: he explicitly says that the analogy's safest answer to a *What is it?* question is "gold" and not, say, "triangle." For gold is what is basic, whereas shapes (such as they are in this example) are derivative.

At 49e8-10, Plato is perhaps invoking Parmenides when Timaeus says that there is a *single thing* that deserves to be called a *this*: the thing "*in* which [sensibles] each appear to keep coming into being and *from* which they subsequently pass out of being." Thus, the medium in which all becoming obtains is a stable *this*, in which the instability of becoming takes place. "It provides," as Timaeus says, "a *fixed state* [ἕδραν] for all things that come to be" (52b1). But the receptacle is not the *only* stable thing; the things we say are "by themselves" (51c1) are also singular (52a1), do not come to be or perish (52a2-3), are not impugned by and do not impugn

anything else (52a3-4), are invisible (52a4), and are known only by understanding (52a6). These, Timaeus tells us, are the forms, which are copied and impressed onto the receptacle to give us the world we know only by perception.

For my purposes, this description of the receptacle is directly akin to the notion of form-bare particulars, which have no properties of which there are forms. In other words, the receptacle is said to have at least some exceedingly minimal characteristics (though oddly, Timaeus describes it as entirely characterless in some places). It is at least *capable of receiving copies of forms*. Just like McPherran's form-bare particulars, then, the receptacle is a (and indeed the only) grand-scale form-bare particular.[20] Since the receptacle is not identical to any form, and is the thing in which immanent characters are copied, and since forms are known only by reason, and immanent characters (as form-copies) are merely perceived, it might be thought that the receptacle can be neither known nor perceived. Timaeus says that "it is itself apprehended by a kind of bastard reasoning that does not invoke sense perception, and it is hardly even an object of conviction" (52b2-4). It is apprehended, it seems, as a merely theoretical entity for positing how it is that sensibles exist; if something does not exist *somewhere*, says Timaeus, it is difficult to countenance its existence *anywhere* (52b4-7).[21]

One problem some commentators have noticed is that Timaeus seems to take the receptacle to be some *place* (on pain of it not existing, as we just saw), and also to *be* the place

[20] McPherran (1988:539) explicitly says this is a *change* in Plato's metaphysics, namely, from countenancing a plurality of form-bare particulars, to a single one, the receptacle. This developmentalist thesis does not concern me. But again, we should proceed with caution when discussing the *Timaeus*, in the sense that if it is mythology, it is unclear just how much of it can legitimately be said to contain positions Plato accepted, and whether such mythological positions represent a real change in how Plato thought about his metaphysics.

[21] This passage might be taken to support the two-worlds thesis, since Timaeus explicitly mentions "heaven" (οὐρανὸν) as a place, ostensibly where forms exist. Since this is part of Timaeus' myth, it should be taken as evidence for two worlds only with caution.

(*qua* space) where sensibles exist. Indeed, Timaeus makes these conflicting claims practically in the same sentence. As Sayre says, there is not even a metaphorical sense in which the receptacle can be both space itself and in space (1983:250). We seem to be going down a rabbit hole, and by making the receptacle *too* unintelligible, it might be best to jettison the idea that Plato sincerely advocated it. To reiterate Sayre's cautionary tale: it might be best to take this Timaean cosmology as a *Doxa*-style likely story, one that is—as it was for Parmenides—not even an image of what is *really true*. But what, then, of bare or form-bare particulars? Should they, too, not suffer the same fate?

If we discard the notion of bare or form-bare particulars, we have two options left: on the one hand, particulars that nevertheless have essential properties more robustly than form-bare particulars, and on the other hand, bundles of forms. The former are just the things with haecceity properties discussed (and tentatively discarded) above.[22] The latter are the problematic allegedly mere bundles few accept for Plato. Are bundles of forms as incoherent as they seem?

Now, I will not here pursue anything like a full-scale analysis of bundle theory in general, using instead McPherran's "simple" version of it:

> (B) A particular subject of this world is a complex bundle of properties that stand in a relation of co-instantiation to one another (543).

Note that McPherran is careful not to load (B) with anything that might beg the question against a bundle theorist, though it should be noted that his preferred interpretation (which seems dubious) takes it that what are bundled together (the "properties") are immanent characters: they

[22] I say "tentatively" because I am uncomfortable with *ex post facto* individuation, which seems question begging. It just does not explain why this particular space-time region *is* Annie, and *is not* Button. We can apparently *perceive* that the two are distinct; but this does not explain more fundamentally *why*.

are copies of forms. This is dubious because, as we saw in the above discussion, copies (or as McPherran prefers, *images*) require some sort of medium by which they can be images *of* something.[23] In any case, McPherran subjects this version of bundle theory to a number of objections, which I address in turn.

First, a bundle theory cannot make sense of the subject-predicate distinction. And—at least in part, according to McPherran—Plato introduces forms as a rememdy "to the pre-Platonic position of failing to distinguish subjects from their attributes" (543). McPherran's example: if Simmias is just a bundle of properties, Simmias will then simply be called those properties. This goes against the text (at least of the *Phaedo*), since Socrates explicitly says that Simmias has his own nature, distinguishable from his various attributes. Moreover, according to McPherran, if Simmias just is the tallness and shortness attributable to him, this entails that tallness is shortness, which is precisely a consequence Socrates wants to avoid.

It is not clear whether this objection works since it does not seem incoherent to say, for example, that tallness and shortness inhere in a particular part of space-time any more than that they inhere in a particular individual subject at the same time. Granted, it is far from clear that Plato's relational forms are coherent in any case, since Simmias is both short and tall at the same time, though from different perspectives.[24] But can forms occupy the same space-time point, as it were, without being a contradictory complex, i.e., without tallness *being* shortness? It seems so, since the respect(s) in which space-time region *S* is both tall and short will always be in

[23] McPherran references Lee (1966), who makes a distinction between two types of copy or image. On the one hand are copies which can survive the destruction of their originals. These are *substantial* copies/images (such as a statue or painting). The other kind do not survive the destruction of their originals (such as shadows or images in a mirror). All images in the receptacle, according to Lee, are of the latter type.
[24] See Denyer (1991:139-45) for a critique of Plato's treatment of relations.

relation to some *other* space-time region *P*'s bundled properties. In other words, the relation between Simmias and Phaedo is precisely the same, though *what* is related is a complex of properties at region *S* to a complex of properties at region *P*. It may be the case, however, that Plato's relational forms are intrinsically incoherent.

Second, and related, McPherran argues that a bundle theory simply goes against the passage noted above, where Socrates is talking about Simmias' properties that are *distinct* from Simmias (544). Indeed, talking about Simmias' nature *by way of* things such as his tallness is something Socrates rejects. I grant McPherran this objection, since the text of the *Phaedo* does seem to tell against a bundle theory of particulars. But, it should be noted, McPherran's argument deals almost exclusively with constructive dialogues. To invoke McPherran's own principle of setting aside the question whether Plato was consciously committed to some position, even though he may have been *logically* committed to it (540), I propose that a bundle theory is still a live option when examining non-constructive (mostly late) dialogues, where Plato's metaphysical commitments are less obvious.[25]

The third objection is that Plato makes a general distinction between things that possess properties and the properties *in* things. McPherran makes an important hedge, however: he notes that we have no evidence Plato ever attempted to collapse this distinction, but only "*while retaining a plurality of individuals objects. . .*" (544, my emphasis). In other words, if there were

[25] For example, the section concerning the communion of kinds in the *Sophist* (254b-255e) points to something like bundles of kinds, where "some kinds will associate with each other and some won't, some will to a small extent and others will associate a great deal, [and] nothing prevents still others from being all-pervading—from being associated with every one of them." Translation is from White (1993). Whether the Eleatic Visitor here has in mind just the five kinds in the *Sophist*—rest, motion, sameness, difference, and being—or still other forms (largeness, justice, etc.) is an open question. That *all* forms must be at least *logically* related (in whatever sense) is indicated in the divided line section of the *Republic*.

a point when Plato accepted a non-plurality of fundamental individual objects—as is possible in the *Timaeus*—then it is open as to whether he would retain the same *sort* of distinction between things and their properties as in the *Phaedo*. In the *Timaeus*, the same fundamental objects of predication we find in the *Phaedo* (e.g., Simmias), are bundles of properties in the *receptacle*. A plurality of individual property-bearing entities is endorsed in the *Phaedo* at least in part because, in *that* dialogue, Plato is concerned about discussing the soul and what happens after death. It would seem necessary to that discussion—if part of one's aim is to argue that the soul does not perish when the body dies—that there is some individual thing wherein all *our* properties are "contained." It does not follow from these context-specific arguments that Plato, under all circumstances, advocated a plurality of such subjects, and the *Timaeus* seems to be one such place.

Some contexts, where Plato seems to be after something more fundamental (e.g., the divided line passage of the *Republic*, or the discussions about wholes and parts in the *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus*, and *Sophist*), less clearly require something like robust particulars. As we saw above, the only particular in the *Timaeus* is an exceedingly *bare* particular, which nonetheless is the medium in which immanent characters (for McPherran) give rise to the sensible world. So should not the first objection above apply to the interpretation of the receptacle McPherran accepts? That is, immanent characters (for example, tallness and shortness) would be images in the receptacle at the same place and time if Simmias, *qua* receptacle-grounded thing, is both tall and short.[26] But then, since there is no form-bare particular *other than* the receptacle, the same objection as the first one above allegedly applies:

[26] Note that Simmias cannot be a *Phaedo*-like individual, given that the receptacle is the only one.

tallness and shortness are the same thing. For, *since* the receptacle is the only particular that has properties, it cannot be with respect to some *other* particular that it is both short and tall (or has shortness and tallness in it).

McPherran readily sees this objection as well, and invokes developmentalism to say that the *Timaeus* bundles in the receptacle are a development away from the plurality of form-bare particulars in the *Phaedo*. Thus, he acknowledges that the receptacle is the only *this*, and that all *thises*, such as Simmias, countenanced in the *Phaedo* are, in the *Timaeus*, *suches*. McPherran concludes by saying that this observation, along with the flux doctrine discussed earlier, "make it likely that Plato would agree with me that the bundles of the *Timaeus* . . . do not possess any property F (for which there is a Form) such that F is essential to their identity (i.e., they have none to speak of) or existence . . ." (545). Below I argue that there is a way to move away from form-bare particulars *qua* the medium of property instantiation, such that bundles are not *merely* bundles of properties, and indeed have a sort of essence and existence that is necessitated by the place they occupy within a structure.

3. Structural Monism

In chapter 4, I left vague what relation I envisioned between forms and particulars, and, as has been noted by others, Plato is himself rather silent on the matter. Forms are obviously supposed to be related to particulars *somehow*.[27] Perhaps the obscurity of the relation results

[27] Perhaps the least metaphorical understanding of the relation is from the *Phaedo*, where forms are causally related to particulars. But even there, this is no ordinary causal relation, since it is abstract objects that are apparently the causes of concrete physical sensibles, and it is not spelled out how this might work. See Sayre (1983:246) for a rundown of these problems. See Bailey (2014) for a new interpretation of causes in terms of *adequacy conditions*.

from its being unclear just what either thing *is*. If, that is, one could be clearer about the nature of forms and the nature(s) of particulars, then one might get clearer about how they are related.

One common relation in Plato—one that is nonetheless never fully spelled out—is the *ontological dependence* of the particular on the form. But what does this entail? At minimum, it seems to entail that there are two things—the form and particular—that are in a dependence relation (as a shadow depends on a tree). In this section, I offer an admittedly speculative interpretation of participation: forms and particulars exist mutually, but the latter's natures are explained in terms of the former. The notion of mutual dependence, however, is one of reduction: particulars are reducible to bundles of forms. That is, there are no independently existing particular sensible things; there are just forms in relation to one another, and the *apparent* particulars just are forms-in-relation.[28] Forms in relation constitute, I argue, a structured whole—the cosmos—that is, nonetheless, a whole *of* parts of the sort we find in the third deduction of the *Parmenides* and in the *Sophist*. It is, as Harte would say, not ontologically innocent, since the whole is a one-of-many, and not a problematic one-and-many. If it *were* a one-and-many, I argue, Plato would have no way of guaranteeing a stopgap with regard to flux: any combination of anything with anything would be ontologically permitted, as on composition-as-identity readings of the whole-part relation.

The whole-of-form-parts interpretation of the cosmos is a way Plato can be understood as forging a middle ground between Heraclitean flux and Eleatic being, as I initially mentioned in

[28] This might seem too Spinozistic, though I believe it is not anachronistically so. There is a major difference, which I discuss below: Plato's system seems to be teleologically structured. Another early modern affinity might be with what Leibniz says in the *Monadology* §§2-3, regarding how sensibles are "made up" of invisible monads. Admittedly, the weighty issue of how sensible things can be made up of non-sensible things is too weighty an issue to be discussed here.

chapter 1: the many particular things, since they are reducible to ontologically stable *formulae* (which cannot *arbitrarily* combine), cannot devolve into McCabe-style hopelessly generous entities. But since there are many forms that combine within a whole single system, the combination of these fundamental entities allows for the sort of explanation of sensible reality Parmenides could not give, since Parmenides—even if he had allowed a plurality of fundamental entities—nonetheless could not allow their combination: his denial of not-being is stronger than Plato's, and combination requires *some* sense of not-being. Plato's not-being as difference offers the right sort required for wholes to be structured. This is what I have been calling structural monism: the whole cosmos is a single thing, internally structured by two fundamental principles, oneness and not-being as difference.[29] Oneness guarantees that forms are things in themselves, while not-being as difference guarantees that forms are distinct things *such that* they can combine into derivative pseudo-entities (sensibles).

Let us return, then, to some issues from the *Parmenides*. Recall that in the third deduction (D3: *if the one is, what are the consequences for the others in relation to themselves*) Plato's Parmenides argues that a whole is not radically pluralized by virtue of its having parts. There is something *extra* that allows for the whole to resist such pluralization. But what is it? One problem we encountered in chapter 4 is that Plato seemingly accepts *two* principles of oneness in D3: an absolute (austere) version and a complex whole-of-parts version. Now, are

[29] The notion of oneness and not-being as difference is—especially in the *Philebus* at 15a1-c3, and in discussions of the limit and unlimited in the same dialogue, and also in Aristotle at *Metaphysics* 987b19-988a17—fleshed out as the one and the indefinite dyad (or limit and unlimited, or the one and the great and the small). It would take me too far afield to examine this important but difficult notion in Plato and Aristotle, but see Sayre (1983) for a detailed examination of the one and indefinite dyad, especially the mathematical underpinnings of the how the one and the indefinite dyad combine. Such a discussion is also relavant to the derivation of number in the second deduction in part two of the *Parmenides*. Again, the heavily mathematical nature of these passages is a concern I must take up on another occasion.

there *two* oneness principles, or a single principle that, as Gill says, functions in two ways (1996:90)? [30] The latter interpretation is preferable, though there is a deep problem with it. If, as Gill says, the one in D3 "accounts both for the unity of wholes and for the singularity of parts that compose the wholes," then the one in D3 is a single thing *divided* in itself into these two principles. But since the one (and not-being) are, as I argue, the very things that account for singularity and division, then it would follow not only that not-being is something internal to the one (since it explains the distinction between its two functions), but also that the one would partially serve as its own internal division principle (since the one itself is now a complex whole).

It may be preferable to understand the two functions of the one of D3 as being capable of being understood only by *different faculties*. For example, the aspect of the one that explains how wholes are unities of parts might be an aspect of the one that can only be grasped by perception. That is, since we experience things that we take to be sensible wholes, there is a pragmatic assumption to the effect that we assume there is a principle that individuates them *by* collecting, as it were, their parts into a whole.[31] The aspect of the one that explains the singularity of parts, on the other hand, might be graspable only by reason, since (by hypothesis) a part of a whole is not itself a whole (with parts). Its oneness is a theoretical posit.

There may be a less speculative solution, however. As Gill notes, and as briefly

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[30] Recall that there is, as I argued in chapter 1 (§3), a preference for the univocality of a principle of oneness/individuation, especially in regards to monism. Note, too, that the problem regarding how many principles of oneness are at work in D3 is somewhat similar to problems regarding Schaffer's priority monism I noted in chapter 1. Specifically, I argued that Schaffer must accept two different individuation criteria, one for the *independent* whole cosmos, and one for the *dependent* parts, though he seems to accept the same for both. As I argue in the main text, structural monism—based on my reading of D3—points to a resolution of this problem.
[31] Compare *Phaedrus* 265d2-9.

discussed in chapter 4, the one can be understood as a *limit*: it is that which "limits the parts *in relation to each other* and *in relation to the whole*, and *the whole in relation to them*" (90, my emphases).[32] Understood as a limiting principle, we can perhaps salvage the univocality we want for a principle of individuation, since the *same relation*—imposing a limit—is at work in all three aspects noted by Gill.[33]

In any event, the constructive work of D3, namely, the move beyond the pure austerity and generosity we see in the first two deductions, respectively, can presumably be applied to the whole cosmos. In this case, there is a single system of forms, where each form is a single indivisible part that enters into relations with other forms. If the one of D3 is a dual-aspect one, then it structures the cosmos as a single whole composed of parts, *and* shows how each form is a single thing. If it is a principle of limitation, it does the same work: we invoke it as a theoretical entity that explains how things *seem* to be wholes-of-parts. But it is a theoretical entity that we seemingly cannot do without. As Scolnicov notes, "the absolute one is a *precondition of all* [*being*]" (2003:165, my emphasis). We might add, however, that not-being as a principle of difference is *also* a precondition of all being, and that each must obtain for any sort of coherent ontology. Invoking Derrida, Scolnicov shows why: "Derrida maintains that since difference excludes the possibility of an absolute one, there is no difference between grammar and ontology." Without the one, and positing only difference, Derrida's philosophy ends up as

[32] See also Sayre (1983:165), who says that Aristotle took Plato to make the notion of limit and oneness (unity) to be equivalent. Sayre examines this notion through the lens of the *Philebus*, and accepts Aristotle's claims that such a reading is possible in Plato's late dialogues.

[33] In fact, the notion of a limit might be a *meta-principle* for individuation as such, in the sense that any individuation principle would have to adhere to *it*. In this way, there might be many individuation principles that are nonetheless *grounded* in the meta-principle of *limitation*. Presumably, not-being might work the same way. I thank Matt McKeon for this suggestion.

incoherent as a position of pure flux.

Moreover, in discussing the seventh deduction—which assumes that the one is not, and explores consequences for the others in relation to themselves—Scolnicov notes that "a world constructed on the principle of difference, *rather than on the supposition of real units, is* possible, at least *prima facie* (38, first emphasis mine). The supposition of real units, however, requires *both* the one *and* not-being as difference. If there were merely difference, says Scolnicov, "this would be a purely structuralist world, in which to be is to be different from something else. What we have, then, is a pure system of relations. Nothing *is* in itself; it is only in relation to something else." But as I argued in chapters 4 and 5, such a world is not *actually* possible, since for some *x* to be in a relation to some *y*, both *x* and *y* would each have to be something in their own right *already*. Relationality demands, as it were, ontological units, divisions within being. But since relationality requires both units and division, the systematic relations between forms requires a prior ontological foundation, and this just is the principle of oneness in conjunction with not-being as difference.

So what of McPherran's position, where the alleged bundles have no essence and no existence of their own?[34] In a sense, it is trivially true that bundles of forms would not exist were there no forms. But since, as I argue here, the form-particular relation *constitutes* a whole system of relations, forms too would be incoherent if they were *not* in some sort of necessary

[34] A far stronger objection to bundle theory, especially for structural monism, is that relations may end up issuing in Bradley-style regresses of the sort we saw in chapter 5. So, for example, bundles of forms have to be related in some specific ways. But are those relations also forms? If so, then those forms *too* have to be related. But are the relations between *them* forms? And so on. Another major problem is whether space is relative or absolute. If it is relative, then it is unclear why there could be no plurality of minimally bare particulars, in a Max Black-style two-spheres world. If it is absolute, then do particulars in fact have spatial individuating properties? These are issues I will have to deal with on another occasion. I thank Jeremy Kirby for both objections.

relations with each other, such necessary relations being precisely what occasion the existence of bundles (i.e., particulars) in the first place. And such bundles—since they are necessarily bundled in the way they are bundled—indeed give particulars something more than "mere" or shadowy essence. To understand this, we can revisit some of what Harte says about structured wholes.

Imagine an eight-member dinner party with a specific seating arrangement around a table: male then female, by name. Harte argues that Plato's understanding of wholes in D3 and the *Sophist* is that wholes just *are* structures: "structure is . . . something that a whole *is*" (2002:162, my emphasis). In this sense, the eight guests at the dinner party are "structure-laden" *qua* being members of the party. Their identities *qua* members *depend* on their place in the whole. Moreover, the dinner party itself depends for its existence and essence on there *being* guests, suitably arranged. If we can graft the whole-part relation onto the cosmos itself, we can understand the cosmos as a structured whole. But if it is a *structured* whole, then this entails that the parts (forms) are related non-contingently: they are not related to one another as rocks in a pile are. But if so, then the things that "emerge" from the interrelation of forms (particulars) have structure-laden essences that can only be grasped by understanding how they fit into the whole system. Certainly particulars' essences on this picture are not as robust as the kind of thing we find in the *Phaedo*. But the host of problems with those kinds of particulars tells against positing them as serious pieces of furniture in Plato's late ontology. I submit, then, that a one-world thesis is best understood as countenancing that one world as an interrelated, structured, whole system of *formulae*, from which emerge the less stable particulars.[35]

[35] There remains the problematic issue of how the one's nature, as a structuring principle, is *known*. To gesture

I want, finally, to briefly revisit what I called in chapter 1 the (a)- and (b)-readings of monism. Recall that (a)-readings concern *what* is to be counted as one, and (b)-readings concern what oneness *amounts to* (and as such, can countenance pluralism). I argued that the (b)-reading, while compatible with the (a)-reading, does not entail it, though the (a)-reading does entail the (b)-reading (SV(b)). Given that monism's account of oneness must be univocal, and can only be such if its target is one thing, I argued that SV(b) must be subsumed under SV(a), once a weaker version of SV(b) is eradicated. In chapters 2, 3, and 4, I argued for an interpretation of Parmenides as incompatible with the weaker interpretation of SV(b)—SV_{WK}(b)—which commits him explicitly to pluralism. But this results in a problem for his *explanatory* desires.

Now, Parmenides' monism accommodates such a univocal account of oneness (individuation), since for him there is just one individual. For Parmenides, SV(a) and SV(b) in a sense *converge*: the cosmos is the one object, and since all and only ones must be real, the cosmos is the one real object. The denial of not-being simply guarantees that it is the *only* real object, and so SV_{WK}(b) is eliminated as a live interpretation for Parmenides. And since being is the only thing, whatever Parmenides says about oneness (or, more realistically, can be gleaned about oneness from what he says about being), counts as his individuation criteria. Thus, an individual is something that adheres to the Eleatic principles of B8 and does not run afoul of the ban on not-being. This guarantees, I argued in chapter 2, that Parmenides has both the *criteria* of individuation (the Eleatic principles), and *what happens to fit that criteria*: being.

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toward a position: it seems that the one, along with the five greatest kinds in the *Sophist*, are the sorts of things that can only be known non-propositionally. Gonzalez is the prominent advocate for non-propositional knowledge in Plato, though he extends it to all forms. It is not clear that non-propositional knowledge should be extended to all forms, however, since—if Plato really thought there should be philosopher rulers—it is unclear how they should rule having non-propositional (i.e., non-communicable) knowledge of justice.

But does *structural* monism—as an answer to some internal problems in Parmenides—adhere to this convergence of SV(a) and SV(b)? Not exactly. Structural monism adheres specifically to the convergence of $SV_{EX}(a)$ and $SV_{WK}(b)$, neither of which entail or are entailed by the other. This just means that there is a single real thing ($SV_{EX}(a)$), and that the universe as a whole has many real things ($SV_{WK}(b)$) that constitute it as a unified whole. The single reality is "made up" of the many real ones, but not in the pluralizing sense we find in the *Parmenides*' second deduction. The convergence of the strong (a)- and weaker (b)-readings of monism just is the compromise Plato sought between Parmenides and Heraclitus; the oneness of the parts allows for—explains—the oneness of the whole, and the oneness of the whole allows for—explains—the structure-laden-ness of the parts. Each is a *limit* for the other.

This is similar to, but not the same as, Schaffer's priority monism, where the parts depend for their existence on the whole. The difference, however, is in the dependence relation: strictly speaking, the parts (forms) do *not* depend for their essence or existence on the whole; their structured relations just *are* the whole, in Harte's sense: a structure is what a whole *is*. Dependency comes at a lower level: particulars depend for their essences upon the structured form-relations. Their *existence*, however, is identical to whatever those form-relations are. Here is an analogy. Take the existence of water: it exists only insofar as hydrogen and oxygen (which themselves do not depend for their own existence on one another) are in a suitably structured relation. But given that relation, water's essence is not "mere" or shadowy. One can understand its essence, *strictly speaking*, only by understanding the cosmos as a whole, or as a whole system.[36]

[36] Thus, at least in a *fundamental* a sense, that is why chemistry depends on physics, both ontologically and

But particulars are not—strictly speaking—ones, since they do or can change. I submit, however, that they change only insofar as form-relations change, and that those can only change in *principled* (structured) ways. Since the whole and the parts are ones insofar as each is a *limit* for the other (i.e., in Gill's sense noted above), structural monism does not run afoul of the convergence of (a)- and (b)-readings: which things are ones (both the whole and each of its parts) adhere to precisely the same thing *by which* ones are ones: they are limits upon each other.[37]

4. Conclusion

To conclude, one gets the sense that all interpreters of Plato must play a delicate and somewhat self-defeating game of whack-a-mole: attempting to illuminate one area of his philosophy often darkens one or more of the others. So it is with the form-particular relation. Nevertheless, I do not subscribe to Gonzalez's counsel of despair, such that Aristotle's very detailed discussions of Plato's (and the platonists') "theory" of forms is a futile enterprise. Gonzalez chastises Aristotle for "doing precisely what most modern scholars are still doing: attempting to clarify and systematize what Plato says so unclearly by translating it into their own vocabulary and concepts" (2003:46). It does not follow, however, that what Aristotle and modern scholars are doing when trying to get clearer about Plato's ontology is futile; it may indeed be precisely what Plato *intended*, since it is plausible that the dialogues are meant to be living philosophical pieces, from which one might answer in myriad ways the difficult questions

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epistemically.

[37] At least in Plato, it is problematic just what the source of structure is. Harte takes there to be a normative element to structure, which, as noted above (n17) is based on a teleological understanding of the whole-part relation, which seems to require an intelligence (a demiurge, etc.) as the source of structure. It is not, perhaps, until the seventeenth century that people such as Spinoza seriously challenge these notions. Indeed, Spinoza seems to be one who takes up both Eleatic and Platonic issues in combination.

Plato poses.[38] That Plato poses difficult questions, uses vague or inconsistent terminology, and especially ends several dialogues with no good answers at all, indicates that he was not writing doctrine, and perhaps that he left purported answers for others.[39]

I have here engaged in such a delicate game, arguing for an interpretation of some of Plato's most basic—yet insufficiently discussed in the dialogues themselves—metaphysical principles, a game that has him forging an ontological path between Heraclitus and Parmenides. He needed to accomplish this task because without *principled* ways of addressing the problem of flux and the notion of not-being, Plato's ontology would either end in pluralistic chaos or would not be able to accomplish what he wished, namely, to explain the relative stability, but cognitive deficiency, of the sensible world. It is true, perhaps, that Plato viewed discussions of forms as far more critical than discussions about sensible particulars. But if Plato advocates a one-world thesis, then he has to be able to say—as Parmenides could not—*how* the single reality nonetheless grounds or explains why the sensible world is the way it is. I have argued here that Plato can be seen as advocating a one-world thesis, but as such, he cannot maintain that there are two different *types* of things, forms and particulars, such that one depends for its existence on the other. Rather, I have argued that, *strictly speaking*, there are just forms (and principles of structure); particulars, such as they are, depend for their natures on the intermingling of

[38] Witness the oft-repeated anecdote that the *Republic* has been used to justify everything from democracies to dictatorships. Now, Plato's concern is, of course, *truth*. But the fact that some of his writings have been interpreted in incompatible ways does not entail that his writings contain inconsistencies he somehow endorsed. Nor does it entail incompetence.

[39] If Plato did deliberately allow purported answers to come from others, then this position assumes, against Gonzalez, that such others would have to somehow bring their own concepts to the table since, otherwise, Plato *would* be doctrinaire. In other words, his whole point might have been to allow others to *do* philosophy from his dialogues. The "theory of forms" indeed is something that Plato never articulated explicitly; this does not entail that such a theory could not have been extracted from what he wrote, nor that he would not accept what was extracted.

formulae. But the *existence* of both particulars and forms rise and fall together: particulars exist via the bundling of forms; forms are incoherent unless they are bundled in structured ways.

A major problem which I cannot address here is the source of the structuring of the relations among forms. That is, what explains how forms interact in precisely the way they do? In the *Timaeus* Plato invokes an intelligent demiurge who fashions the sensible world in the receptacle so as to create *the best* world. That is, the sensible world is teleologically structured by an intelligent being.

If the mythological nature of the *Timaeus* warrants removing the demiurge, is Plato left with a coherent metaphysics? This is unclear. But based on the arguments I have provided, perhaps Plato's work can be seen as an initial and somewhat crude attempt at fulfilling Sellars's description of philosophy: to see how the whole of reality fits together. In this way, and contra someone like Gonzalez, *true* Platonic wisdom should be understood as something akin to semantic holism, but in a strongly ontological sense: knowing what some *x* is means knowing the entire system of reality in which it exists. Now, this knowledge may indeed be impossible for a human; but it is neither quasi-mystical, nor necessarily impossible for *humanity* as such.[40]

[40] This position is, it seems, of a piece with current understandings of the enterprise of science; no single person can have such lofty wisdom, but science, as a *collective enterprise*, may be able to embody such wisdom.

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