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PARMENIDES AND THE DISCLOSURE OF BEING

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## PARMENIDES AND THE DISCLOSURE OF BEING

The aim of this discussion is to offer an interpretation of the sense and intent of Parmenides'  $\xi\sigma\tau\iota$ . As the plethora and variety of excellent analysis attests, the problem is a perplexing one. The interpreter is faced with an intentionally fragmentary utterance — the  $\xi\sigma\tau\iota$  appears to stand alone, with its subject (and, possibly, predicate) ellipitd — embedded in a collection of fragments from a lost whole poem which, in turn, is itself one of the few pieces of philosophical writing to survive from the sixth century B.C. I will argue in this essay, nonetheless, that the original context of the  $\xi\sigma\tau\iota$  can be recovered and that, once this context is established, its sense can be fixed.

The key to my interpretation is a close reading of the proem. As it is, this passage is generally ignored in analyses of the argumentative substance of the poem. The reason for this is clear enough: the proem is imagistic in character, by contrast with the very precise argumentation offered in the middle fragments (2—8.49, the so-called Way of Truth) and the final fragments (8.50ff.—19, the so-called Way of Opinion, or *Doxa*). Nonetheless, the function of the proem gives it a special value for the interpreter of the  $\xi\sigma\tau\iota$ : whereas the middle fragments declare and defend it, and the closing fragments present the opinions of men who have failed to discover it, the proem describes the transcending to it from ordinary opinionatedness. If, therefore, there were a way of penetrating to the argumentative content of the imagery of the proem, we would be able to watch the emergence of the  $\xi\sigma\tau\iota$ , the divine truth, from human opinion; and this would contribute greatly to an understanding of the sense of the  $\xi\sigma\tau\iota$ .

Without lapsing into Hellenistic allegorizing, there is, I suggest, a way of getting to the proem's argumentative content. The basic procedure will be three-fold. First, in the proem Parmenides has appropriated key images from his predecessors to characterize the nonultimate stages of the journey to truth. (Of course, 'the journey' is itself the most basic image.) By tracing the historical reference of these images, therefore, we can begin to bring to view the positions of thought he claims to overcome or even to refute ( $\xi\lambda\epsilon\gamma\chi\omicron\nu$  1. 7.5)<sup>1</sup> with his new insight. Secondly, in the closing fragments he reiterates certain images or aspects of the imagery of the proem — now, however, as points within a tightly formulated web of doctrine. Close consideration of the relevant passages in the *Doxa* can thus provide a double insight. On the one hand, we can watch Parmenides himself, in effect, clarifying the conceptual content of his proemic imagery and analyzing the structure of the positions to which it alludes. On the other hand — and most importantly —, studying that clarification enables us to see not only these positions but, as well, the conceptual structure of their overcoming in the attainment of the  $\xi\sigma\tau\iota$ . It is here above all that we will recover the original context of the  $\xi\sigma\tau\iota$  and discover its sense *in* that context. Of course, our interpretation must be supported by discussion of the middle fragments in their own terms. What we shall find — and this will be the third stage — is that the analysis of the emergence of the  $\xi\sigma\tau\iota$  both illuminates and is illuminated by discussion of Parmenides' treatment, in the middle fragments, of the several "ways" ( $\delta\delta\omicron\iota$ , 2.2, also 6.3, 7.2, 8.1) of thinking.

### A. The Proem: Parmenides' Claim

At least as early as Hesiod, it was part of the epic tradition that the poet, in his proem, claim to transcend the limits of the tradition itself in his discovery of the truth.<sup>2</sup> Hence it is not surprising that Parmenides in his proem, by a pointed selection of images and a carefully worked out narrative structure, both calls to mind and tacitly claims to go beyond certain basic insights in earlier Greek thought. By a selective look at structure and imagery, we can get a first sighting on the position Parmenides claims to refute by his new insight.

#### (1) The process structure of revelation

The proem divides naturally into three parts. The most conspicuous division comes at line 22, where the goddess receives the traveler and tells him the meaning of his extraordinary journey. From that point on, both in the proem (1.22—32) and in all the other fragments, it is the goddess who is speaking; hence, what is spoken is presented from the divine perspective. This creates a major, albeit retrospective contrast between 1.22ff. and 1.1—21: 1.22ff., as divine speech, somehow transcends 1.1—21 as, in retrospect, merely human utterance. Within 1.1—21, in turn, there is an analogous division. At 1.8—10 the traveller tells how

σπερχοίατο πέμπειν  
Ἑλιαδες κοῦραι προλιποῦσαι δώματα Νυκτός  
εἰς φάος,

*they hasten to guide me,  
the Heliad maidens who have come forth from  
the house of Night / into the light, . . .*

On the one hand, these lines give us a 'topographic' orientation for the decisive event of 1.11—21, the passage through the gateway of the paths of Night and Day. The sight of the Heliades crossing from the house of Night into the light<sup>3</sup> situates us at or near the limits of the cosmos, at the boundary which divides it from the nether world, and it is "there" (ἐνθα, 1.11), presumably, where the gateway itself is located. At the same time, this ultimate location serves to create, again, a retrospective contrast: the arrival at and passage through the gateway in 1.11—21 give the journeying of 1.1—10, which goes "through all cities" (1.3), a character of nonultimacy and 'mere' approach.

Thus the proem presents a revelation process with three stages; and with the attainment of each new stage, a limitedness in the preceding is disclosed. The stages are (i) the journeying "through all cities," 1.1—10, (ii) a decisive passage, at the limits of the cosmos, through the gateway of the paths of Night and Day, 1.11—21, and (iii) reception and explication of the meaning of the whole journey by the "goddess," 1.22—32. Whereas the events of (iii) relativize those of (i) and (ii) as divine to human, the events of (ii) relativize those of (i) as, within the human, ultimate to nonultimate.

#### (2) Parmenides' heritage and key images

A more specific interpretation of these 'relativizations' requires an examination

of the proem's imagery. Strikingly, each part of the proem centers around its own unified, internally coherent nexus of images which evokes a distinct phase of Greek tradition. Thus Parmenides seems to invoke the authority of certain distinguished predecessors. At the same time, however, by the processive disclosure of limitedness we have just indicated, he appears to relativize earlier wisdom to his own. To trace this, we must first isolate and note the tradition evoked by each nexus of images.

**(a) Homeric herosim (1.1—1.10)**

The opening ten lines are dominated by echoes of Homer. The imagery centers around the chariot ride. As Havelock points out, the “route of much informing”<sup>4</sup> (ὄδον πολύφημον, 1.2) which passes “through all cities” (κατὰ πάντ’ ἄστη, 1.3) and the “knowing man” (εἰδότα φῶτα, 1.3) who travels upon it would surely evoke for the Greek hearer the travels of Odysseus.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the “much-knowing and -showing horses” (πολύφραστοι ἵπποι, 1.4) will recall the famous wise steeds who guide Achilles’ chariot into battle in *Iliad* 19. The sense of battle, moreover, is underscored by Parmenides’ word-choice in describing the movement of the chariot: the mares “strain” (τιταίνουσαι, 1.5) in drawing it forward, and the axle “blazes” (αἰθόμενος, 1.7) and, spinning, sends forth a “shrill cry” (αὐτήν, a Homeric term often meaning war-cry, 1.6). By this combination of Odyssean and Achillean motifs, Parmenides masterfully appropriates Homer to introduce his project: a far-ranging quest for knowledge which will do battle with the opinions of others.

**(b) Hesiodic and Ionian dualism (1.11—21)**

The second stage of the proem makes clear, however, that the traveler’s quest aims not at the extensive knowledge of an Odysseus, a polymathic interest in the new and foreign,<sup>6</sup> but rather at an intensive, basic knowledge of cosmic order. Brought to the limits of the cosmos, the traveler is confronted by the gateway of the paths of Night and Day. The image dominant in 1.1—10, the chariot, is displaced by — or perhaps even transformed into<sup>7</sup> — this new image of the gateway in 1.11—21. In all but one major respect, this latter image directly recalls Hesiod’s famous depiction of the underworld at *Theogony* 740ff;<sup>8</sup> in that one respect, the image has conspicuous reference to Anaximander. We shall discuss these allusions in turn.

The passage at *Theogony* 740ff. describes where and how Night and Day, traveling in opposite directions, pass one another each half day. The place is the border of Tartaros, a “vast chasm” (χάσμα μέγ’, 740) closed in by “gates” (πυλέων, 741). Inside these gates, Night has a home, and it is here that she remains when Day is traveling over the earth; likewise Day stays here when she has her “right time of travel” (ῶρην ὁδοῦ, 754). They are conceived as opposites in character — Day, significantly, is the bearer of “light” (φάος, 755), while Night brings Sleep — and as alternates in time; hence they are never at home or over the earth together, but constantly exchange positions. At only one place, the gateway on the border of Tartaros, do they come together: Hesiod writes that

*there, passing very near to one another, Night  
and Day speak a word of greeting in exchanging  
positions, over the great threshold of bronze.*  
ὄθι Νύξ τε καὶ Ἥμέρη ἄσσον ἰούσαι

Parmenides' image of the gateway revives this depiction of Hesiod's in basic ways. In place of the actual personages, Parmenides speaks of the "paths" (κελεύθων, 1.11) of Night and Day and the great "gates" or "wing-doors" (θυρέτρεις, 1.13) through which they pass. But, precisely as for Hesiod, the gateway is the place where Night and Day come together, passing side by side in opposite directions. Parmenides' language here has a curiously precise ambiguity: the lintel and threshold ἀμφίς ἔχει the gates of the two paths, a phrase which can mean either "enclose, hold from both sides" or "separate, hold apart"; the ambiguity reflects the sense in which, in the gateway, Night and Day stand together and apart at once, coupled in their mutual opposition. Parmenides also stresses the element of alternation and interchange: when (at the maidens' urging) the gates are unbarred for the traveler, they swing open ἀμοιβαδόν, "exchangingly" (1.19), in the sense, presumably, of "in alternate directions"; for when Night and Day pass, they are going in opposite directions. Finally, Parmenides also appropriates Hesiod's mention of a great "chasm" (χάσμι, 1.18) — though with an interesting modification.<sup>9</sup> In Hesiod's image, the chasm was the region beyond differentiation, Tartaros,<sup>10</sup> and it lay on the far side of the gateway; Parmenides, taking over Hesiod's word, tells us that a "gaping chasm was made by the gates swinging open" (1.17—18). (On the significance of this variation, see pp.10 and 21 below.)

The one respect in which Parmenides' image adds to Hesiod's is that Parmenides has the goddess Dike (justice) rule the gateway: "to the gates," he says at 1.14, "much punishing Dike holds the keys of alternate reward and requital."<sup>11</sup> This motif evokes the Ionian view, explicit in the one surviving fragment of Anaximander, that the cosmos has a temporal rhythm regulated by the principle of retributive justice. As with Hesiod, the alternation of opposites is the central idea of Anaximander's sentence: time, thought as a judge giving sentence, requires of each opposite that it pay retribution to the other for encroachment. Most likely, Anaximander has in mind the seasonal alternation of the dry and wet (fall and spring) and of the hot and cold (summer and winter) within the cycle of the year. But the thought may be applied with perfect appropriateness to the temporal alternation of day and night — which is just what Parmenides appears to have done. Thus, as appropriated in Parmenides' image, Dike is forever punishing Day and Night, each for dominating the other, and compensating that other for being dominated, by keeping the one at home while releasing the other to travel over the earth.

### (3) The contention: through and beyond the gateway

Parmenides' evocative appropriations of Homeric, Hesiodic, and Ionian imagery serve one manifold purpose: to prepare us for a movement beyond the deepest insight into cosmic order which earlier Greek thinking had achieved. Whereas the Homeric figure of the traveler of the "way of the daimon," guided by wise mares, announces a contentious intellectual quest, the image of the gateway shows the insight which the journey challenges. By integrating the Hesiodic picture of Night and Day passing of the threshold with Anaximandran Dike, Parmenides

indicates the fundamental unity of the two. And by stressing the gateway itself, *one* passageway with *two* passages held apart and together at once,<sup>12</sup> he focuses attention on the core of their common vision. The cosmos is ordered as the alternation of opposing powers, an alternation which, paradoxically, is the way they go together; for Hesiod and the Ionians alike, the fundamental structure of cosmic order is therefore the pairing of opposites. This begins to explain Parmenides' modification of Hesiod's image of the "chasm"; beyond the pairing symbolized by the gateway, there is no further structure or entity; to the traveler looking through its opening, therefore, there is only the void made by the gates themselves.

It is precisely at this point, however, that Parmenides, having thus evoked the basic insight of his predecessors, begins his objection to it. Of course, the proem is not argumentative in any explicit sense, and so we cannot rely on it alone for a definite statement of this objection. Nonetheless, the action of the proem offers a first experience, or expression, of Parmenides' claim. Evidently, the traveler's vision of the chasm is deceptive, for when his inspiring muses guide the chariot "there, directly through the gates, straight ahead" (τῆι ῥα δι' αὐτέων ἰθὺς, 1.20—21), he turns out to be "upon a broad way" (κατ' ἀμαξιτὸν, 1.21) and is received by a goddess. This turn of events stands in marked contrast with its model in Hesiod — for whom such a route would terminate in the home of Night (*Theog.* 744—45) not beyond but within the "great chasm" (740) of Tartaros which "even the gods abhor" (739). What is more, this remarkable arrival is permitted by Dike (1.16). Later, the goddess who receives the traveler tells him he has come in order to "learn-by-inquiry the unshaken heart of. . . truth, on the one hand (ἡμὲν) and, on the other (ἡδὲ), the opinions of mortals, . . ." (1.28—30). Her use of the adversative ἡμὲν ἡδὲ couples "truth" and "opinions of mortals" as opposite and complementary — and so has ironic implications for Ionian Dike as well as for Hesiod. Parmenides seems to suggest: beyond the truth opined by men, that is, the ultimacy of the conjunction of opposites, there is a higher truth which opposes and (in some sense) complements it. His basic contention — seen from the perspective of the proem — seems to be that Hesiod and the Ionians mistook for ultimate what was, albeit profound amongst men, nonetheless an intrinsically one-sided and superficial view of cosmic order.

### **B. Observations on the Doxa: The Gateway and Dualism**

The movement through the gateway to the goddess in some sense introduces the traveler to the truth. But to specify how, and indeed to interpret the goddess' revelation with this movement in mind, we must interpret it still more closely. In particular, we need to work out the argumentative or 'logical' value of the image of passing through the gates. The framework and terms for such interpretation are provided by several passages in the last main part of the poem, the closing fragments (8.50ff.—19) or Doxa. The helpfulness of the Doxa derives, in general, from its complex correlation and contrast to the proem, within the movement of thought of the whole poem. The correlation consists in the fact that the Doxa represents a return to and restatement of the opinions of mortals which, in the proem, are first presented and then surpassed. By contrast with the imagistic presentation of the proem, however, the Doxa is spoken in the conceptual language inaugurated by the

goddess in the intervening middle fragments (2—8.49), the Way of Truth). Hence the Doxa sheds a light on the argumentative content or reference of the imagery of the proem.

The two passages of particular interest to us are 8.53—56, in which the goddess describes the error which pervades human opinion, and 9, in which she presents a doctrinal statement of the deepest specifically human vision of cosmic order.

**(1) The error of mortals (8.53—56)**

8.53—54, in particular, has been extensively discussed and disputed in the vast literature on Parmenides, and I do not see how the several key questions under dispute can be definitively resolved. Nonetheless, a summary of (what I take to be) the major disagreement is itself germane to our inquiry, and we will be able to give at least heuristic grounds for accepting one of several possible resolutions. We will begin by considering, in turn, the two main proposed readings of the passage.

μορφὰς γὰρ κατέθεντο δύο γνώμας ὀνομάζειν,  
τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεῶν ἔστιν — ἐν ὠιπεπλανημένοι εἰσὶν —  
τάντια δ' ἐκρίναντο δέμας καὶ σήματ' ἔθεντο  
χωρὶς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, . . .

The traditional reading of this passage<sup>13</sup> goes basically as follows:

*For they made up their minds to name two forms,  
one of which it is not right to name — which is where  
they have gone astray —/ and have distinguished  
them as opposites in bodily shape and have assigned to  
them marks/ apart from one another, . . .*

To a point, this reading is interpreted in common by its proponents. The goddess, according to this consensus, criticizes men for deciding to name two rather than one form; mortals are dualists, asserting as primal — as we saw in discussing the gateway image — a pair of opposites, yet they should assert only one form. But this raises the question, what one form?, and here the paths of interpretation diverge. One view, proposed as early as Aristotle,<sup>14</sup> takes the goddess' rejection of "one of [the two forms]" to imply an alignment of being with one, non-being with the other. But this seems improbable; the forms are never explicitly named in the middle fragments (where being and its negation are treated), and they are called "equals" (9.4) in the Doxa. Thus neither the goddess nor mortals express a preference. A more persuasive view is that the goddess means to rule out the asserting of *any* "one" so long as it is τῶν, that is, so long as it is one of a pair of contraries.<sup>15</sup> On this view, therefore, the "one [form]" which should be named will be neither of the two actually named by mortals.

The foregoing reading and interpretation(s) suffer from some problems —

though no one appears really decisive. Three are noteworthy here: (1) As a point of grammar, the foregoing analysis — with the possible exception of the last view mentioned<sup>16</sup> — gives *μίαν* at 8.54 the sense of *ἑτέρην*, ‘one of a pair’; this is not customary for *μία* (or, in the masculine, *εἷς*), which means ‘one’ as such. (2) As a point partly of grammar and partly of meaning, the foregoing analysis seems to let *ἐν ᾧ* (“which is where”) at 8.4 refer at once or indifferently to both the dependent infinitive construction in 8.53 (*μορφᾶς . . . δύο . . . ὀνομάζειν*, “to name two forms”) and the relative clause following it at 8.54 and grammatically dependent upon it (*τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεῶν ἔστιν*). This is not a problem at all, of course, if the *τῶν μίαν*. . . clause, in its meaning, simply reiterates or amounts to the same things as *μορφᾶς δύο ὀνομάζειν*, for then in its *sense* the reference of *ἐν ᾧ*, even if it were grammatically restricted to the *τῶν μίαν*. . . clause, would be to *μορφᾶς δύο ὀνομάζειν* as well. And in fact, for all those who accept the traditional reading of 8.53—54, this is the case; that is, the goddess’ assertion that “it is not right to name one of [the two]” is an objection (albeit variously interpreted, as we noted) to “naming two forms.” On the other hand, for those who, as a result of the first problem regarding the confusion of *μίαν* with *ἑτέρην*, have taken up a different reading of 8.54 in particular, the question of the reference of *ἐν ᾧ* may be important and should not be begged. Specifically, if reinterpreting *μίαν* causes the *τῶν μίαν*. . . clause to *diverge* in sense from *μορφᾶς δύο ὀνομάζειν*, then the question will have material consequences. (3) Finally, we should note that the traditional reading (and interpretations) presents an objection to dualism as such; the goddess appears to say, ‘mortals ought never to have named two forms to begin with.’ Such a reading is not supported (very striking, given its power in the tradition of Parmenides’ interpretation!) anywhere else in the poem, and, in fact, the central passage in the proem appears to oppose it. In that passage, divine inspiration guides the traveler through and to the divine side of the gateway. But on the view implicit in the traditional reading, the goddess would be saying — to put it in terms of the image — that the gateway ought never have existed or, at least, that men should have turned away from it, refusing it the recognition implied by naming.

The first problem just noted has, of course, led a number of scholars to propose a different reading for *μίαν*<sup>17</sup> — with implications, however, for the interpretation of the whole passage. On this reading, *μίαν*, has its “numerical meaning” of ‘one’ and means “a unity,”<sup>18</sup> that is, a *μορφή*, “form,” in which the *μορφᾶς δύο*, “two forms,” of 8.53 are unified. Thus altered, the translation of 8.53—56 would run:

*For they made up their minds to name two forms, / a unity of which it is not right to name — which is where they have gone astray — / and have distinguished them as opposites in bodily shape and have assigned to them marks / apart from one another. . .*

We quote the passage in its entirety because it is altered as a whole by this alternative reading for *μίαν*. First of all, to name (or not name) “a unity of [the two]” is not at all the same as naming the two forms to begin with. Hence the question of the

reference of ἐν ᾧ must be raised. And, as we noted, the presumptively correct decision, given the difference and the place of the ἐν ᾧ. . . clause in the whole sentence, is to take the ἐξ ᾧ to refer to the τῶν μίαν. . . clause. But this means that the goddess does not object to the dualism as such; rather, she objects to the failure of mortals to go beyond it and name a higher, unifying form.<sup>19</sup> On this view, the Hesiodic-Ionian discovery of the fundamentality of the dyad of “opposites” (τάντια, in Parmenides’ language at 8.55) is an achievement — but it is insufficient, for the internal relation, the unity, of the opposites is not itself brought to view, not seen in its own right as μορφή, “form”; rather, mortals see the unity *only* in terms of the opposites themselves, as a dyad, and so *remain* dualistic.

There are at least two significant problems which can be raised with this reading and interpretation. (1) For the reading to stand, the thesis that “it is not right to name a unity of [the two forms]” has to be ascribed to the viewpoint of mortals;<sup>20</sup> the language of the clause, however — specifically, the use of the finite ἐστίν instead of the infinitive εἶναι — appears to set it apart from the κατέθεντο, “they decided,” of 8.53 and, thus, to ascribe it to the viewpoint of the goddess.<sup>21</sup> In fact, however, there is no real contradiction here; rather, Parmenides expresses a remarkably precise recognition of the complexity of the relation of human and divine viewpoints. On the one hand, it *is* men who fail to name the “unity.” But it is an error of omission, not commission; the “unity” has simply never appeared to human thought, such that it could be named or not named, in the first place. Hence, the prohibition against<sup>22</sup> naming a “unity,” though it is implicit in and essential to the dualistic position mortals take, cannot be asserted directly by men but only indirectly by the goddess, speaking in their behalf. Parmenides’ ἐστίν at 8.54 reflects this precisely. (2) This solution underscores the second problem, however. Put frontally, one wonders what constitutes the “divine perspective”; or, to ask the same thing in terms of its content, whence and how does this “unity,” itself a “form,” first appear to thought? Without answers to these questions, the reading seems dogmatic and empty. 8.53—6, however, because it describes the un-seenness of the “form,” cannot itself provide the answers; for that we must look elsewhere, and, therefore, the success of this reading in our context is interdependent with other readings still to come.<sup>23</sup>

## (2) The foundations of dualism (9.1—4)

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ πάντα φάος καὶ νύξ ὀνόμασται  
καὶ τὰ κατὰ σφετέρας δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τοῖσι τε καὶ τοῖς,  
πᾶν πλέον ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ φάεος καὶ νυκτὸς ἀφάντου  
ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων, ἐπεὶ οὐδετέρωι μετὰ μηδέν.

*Now since all things have been named Light  
and Night/ and things corresponding to their  
powers have been assigned to each,/ all is  
full of Light and obscure Night together,  
of both as equals, since nothing is with  
neither.*

An analysis of fragment 9 is helpful in several respects. The fragment itself explicates the structure and foundations of the dualism of “naming two forms.” What is more, in its language it appears to recall and explicate the basic motifs of the central passage of the proem. Hence, examining 9 enables us to complete our interpretation of the conceptual sense of the gateway image in the proem. This completion, in turn, will shed a new light on the overcoming of dualism. Since that, however, takes us beyond the scope of 9, we will hold it for the following section B.3.

Fragment 9 divides into two parts, 9.1—2 and 9.3—4. 9.1—2 describes the cognitive act fundamental to dualism, while 9.3—4 puts forth, in a very precise way, the several theses essential to the formulation of dualism as doctrine. 9.1—2, first, tells how the plurality of things present to merely extensive thinking — that is, πάντα, “all things” — are referred back to and grasped in subordination to the two forms Light and Night. This relativization gathers “all things” into a totality or coherent whole, as is expressed by the goddess’ shift from plural πάντα to singular πᾶν, “all,” in 9.3. The first thesis of dualism is, then, that the whole of things is “full” (πλέον, 9.3) of the two forms; that is, these account, between themselves, for everything. This does not yet describe the relation of Light and Night to each other, however, and so at the beginning of 9.4, by means of an appositive phrase, a second thesis is asserted: in their ‘filling’ of the whole, the two are “equal” or the “same” (ἴσων, 9.4), that is of equal rank or status.<sup>24</sup> These two theses, further, together imply a third as their ground.<sup>25</sup> For the two forms to be able to account for the whole of things requires that, from the beginning, neither be marked by unreality or, in the goddess’ term “nothing” (μηδέν).<sup>26</sup> Of course, for Night and Light to be equal requires that neither have a lack of reality or being in comparison to the other. But more basically, neither can have any unreality at all (not even, to state the limit-case, if it were equally distributed to the two), for this would imply that, in whatever form, reality in the full sense belonged to some further power; and in that case, that power would account for the two forms, and not vice versa. Hence the goddess concludes fragment 9 by asserting, as the ground (hence the ἐπεὶ, “since,” in 9.4) for the first two theses, that “nothing is with neither” (9.4).

Having made this analysis, we can see how the proem’s imagery precisely expresses the dualism of mortals. First, the relativization of “all things” to the two forms is embodied in the attainment of the gateway of the ways of Night and Day. (The shift from Day, in the proem, to Light in 9 is actually minor, since the two are strongly associated in pre-Parmenidean thought; Day is known as the bearer of φάος, Light.)<sup>27</sup> Secondly, the first thesis — that the whole is “full” (πλέον, 9.3) of the two forms — is expressed in the description of the gateway as “filled” (πληνται, 1.13) by the two doors or gates of Night and Day. The equality of the two forms, in turn, is expressed by a host of particular features of the proemic image, e.g. the τε καὶ (“both. . . and. . .”) pairing at 1.11, the apparently parallel courses of the “paths” and the symmetrical construction of the gateway, the emphasis on “interchange” (1.14, 1.19), and the presidency of even-handed Dike. Finally, the “nothing” of 9.4 is depicted by the “gaping” chasm (χάσμι’ ἀχανές), the sheer void or emptiness, at 1.18. Now, at last, we can see why Parmenides goes against the Hesiodic precedent and represents the “chasm” not as a separate entity, a Tartarean

realm beyond the gates, but rather as ‘made’ (see ποιῆσαν, 1.18) by the gates themselves. It is an *internal necessity* of dualism, as the assertion of the exhaustive and utter reality of the two forms, that “nothing,” the lack of reality, be precisely the lack of the two forms. Hence it is the gates themselves (or, the two forms) which, by their swinging back and open (or, by their absence), “make” the “chasm” (or, “nothing”).

### (3) The proem again: “nothing” and the unifying “form”

If the preceding remarks are correct, they suggest a key to two hitherto obscure moments at the heart of the proem: Dike’s willingness to open the gates and the revelation, in place of the “chasm” of a “broad way.”

Dike, we noted, is the goddess of contrariety; she preserves each opposite in its relation to the other, guarding the “right time” of each. Hence it is altogether fitting that she presides over the gateway of Night and Day (or Light). Now, however, we can go further. Fragment 9 shows that the contrary of the two forms together is “nothing” or the “chasm”; as the lack of reality, it is just what they cannot and must not be. Precisely this contrariety explains why Dike is persuaded to throw open the gates; it is her very nature, as the preserver of opposites, to let the contrary or opposite of the gates themselves, that is, of the two forms, appear.

But it is of decisive importance that this appearance be rightly understood. Earlier we noted how, for pre-Parmenidean thought, the appearance of the “chasm,” understood as a ‘region’ beyond differentiation, abhorrent even to the gods, marked an untrespassable limit; its very unintelligibility seemed to attest, conversely, to the grasp of duality (the basic form of differentiation) as the deepest possible understanding of the cosmos.<sup>28</sup> The proem, however, argues against this, for the traveler is driven “there, directly through the gates” where the “chasm” appeared, and there turns out to be a “broad way” (1.20—21); that is, translating into conceptual terms, he entertains (or even, ‘goes into’) the void of the two forms, and something further is disclosed. The motif of contrariety enables us now to comprehend this. On reflection, there is a striking disanalogy between the contrariety of Night and Day (or Light), on the one hand, and that of the two and “nothing,” on the other. In both, the thought of the one member of the pair brings the other to mind as well. But whereas the first pairing remains fixed and stable,<sup>29</sup> in the second both members undergo a specific redefinition in the process of reflection. This process has three steps. First, the two forms call forth “nothing.” “Nothing,” however, is contrary not to Night as such (that is Day’s function) nor to Day as such (that is Night’s function) but, rather, to the two *in their unity* as exhaustively and utterly real. Thus, secondly, “nothing” calls forth that “form” in which the two are at one, that is, precisely the reality or *being, as such*, which they exhaust and have.<sup>30</sup> The appearance of this new “form,” finally, amounts to the *disappearance* of “nothing” and, therefore, the overcoming of dualism: precisely as the contrary to being-as-such, “nothing” has no being of any kind nor, therefore, any presence-to-mind; and this leaves the questing mind “far from the beaten path of men” (1.27), in contemplation of one “form,” being-as-such, alone. The “broad way” (1.21), thus, is the ὁδὸς ὡς ἔστιν, the “way how. . .exists” (fr. 8.1—2), which is explicated in the middle fragments as truthful.

### C. The Disclosure of Being and the Several Ways

#### (1) The context of the *ἔστι* (2.3)

The preceding analyses of the proem provide, first, the context essential for interpreting the perplexing subjectless *ἔστι* announced by the goddess at 2.3 (and recalled at 8.1—2)<sup>31</sup> in the formulation

ἡ [ὁδὸς] ὅπως ἔστιν. . . ,  
*the [way] how ἔστιν. . .*

The *ἔστι* derives its sense, we suggest, from the assertion, imagistically expressed in the preceding imagery of the gateway, that the two forms are exhaustively and utterly real. Were mortals to articulate this assertion directly,<sup>32</sup> they would declare

ἔστι φάος καὶ νύξ,  
*there exists, really, (Day)light and Night.*<sup>33</sup>

For mortals, of course, this is a straightforward and final declaration; for Parmenides, however, it is laden with hidden significance and power. The ultimacy of the two forms which it announces entails, as their contrary, the “nothing” of 9.4 or, in its imagistic expression in the proem, the “chasm.” But this “nothing,” in its turn, entails, as *its* contrary, *not* the qualitatively differentiated dyad (Day)light and Night but rather the reality or being, as such, which unites them within itself. On an intuitive level, then, for the thought guided by contrariety the very appearance of the two forms leads to their disappearance and, with this, the appearance or emergence of their being, *as such*. And, we propose, the goddess intends to give linguistic expression to this by her *ἔστι*: speaking to the human traveler, she ellipses the subject in the assertion of dualism,<sup>34</sup> the φάος καὶ νύξ (“(Day)light and Night”), and lets the verb expressing their reality, *ἔστι* (“exists, really”), stand alone. Thus the *ἔστι* in effect traces the phases of the passage through the gateway and expresses the altogether new “form” which has come to view: the being, considered in its own right, of the two forms.

Before going on to discuss 2 as a whole, we might take note of one unusual implication of our interpretation. As the goddess makes clear by her substantivizations of the *ἔστι* to *ἔόν* at 2.7 and 8.3, the interest of the middle fragments is with being, not with the two forms. At the same time, the elliptical reference to them contained in the *ἔστι* implies that being is to be thought as the being *of the two*; in other words, the disclosure of being means not the rejection of the two forms as mere illusion so much as the first really penetrating and truthful examination of them. We shall return to this later.

#### (2) The pivotal function of the negation of being and the second way (2.3—8, 6.1—2)

Twice in declaring the new “form,” the goddess traces its emergence back to the negation of it — in fragments 2.3—8 and 6.1—2. In both passages, she reverses the order of appearance, speaking first of being and second of the negation. This reversal is altogether fitting. On the one hand, the *μηδέν* (“nothing”), as the negative not of the apparently ultimate two forms but rather of their being, occasions and itself precedes the appearance of being: being emerges from the *μηδέν*, as that of which the *μηδέν* is the negation. On the other hand, the internality of this relation (“negative of. . .”) means that the *μηδέν* is first fulfilled in and properly

understood only by reference to being. Thus being is presented first, the negation from which it emerges second.

The structure of emergence itself is most precisely explicated at 2.3 and 2.5. In these lines the goddess sets forth two “ways” (or “journeyings,” ὁδοὶ) to be thought through,

ἢ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι (2.3)  
ἢ δ’ ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς χρεῶν ἔστι μὴ εἶναι (2.5),

*on the one hand the [way] both how there exists. . .  
and how there cannot not exist . . . ,  
on the other hand the [way] both how there exists not...  
and how it is right that there not exist. . . 35*

The basic relation between the two ways is established by the adversative μὲν/δ’ (“on the one hand”/“on the other hand”); through the μὲν/δ’ the two lines are coupled as contrastive alternatives to each other.<sup>36</sup> This makes obvious sense, for 2.3, through its ἔστιν, declares being-as-such whereas 2.5, through its οὐκ ἔστιν, directly negates it. But that is only part of the story. Within 2.3, the emphatically conjunctive particles τε καὶ join — as mutually collaborative, not adversative, complements — the declaration of being-as-such (“there exists. . .”) and the negation of the possibility of the negation of being-as-such (“there cannot not exist. . .”). The effect of this joining is to make these clauses partners, as it were, in the constitution of one thought, the primacy of being-as-such. This is striking, for the second term requires pondering the negation of being (“there cannot *not exist*. . .”) and recognizing its impossibility (“there *cannot* not exist. . .”). Hence the first way as a whole derives its meaning from a thinking through of the second; or, put more strongly, the first in some sense emerges from, as an overcoming of, the second way.

The sense of this overcoming is clarified by the explicative commentary on 2.5, the second way, in 2.6—8. The second way is that of the one who, having become explicitly aware of the “chasm” or “nothing,” seeks to isolate it; he wants to “know” (γνοίης, 2.7) and “speak” (φράσαις, 2.8) “the non-existent, *taken by itself* (τό γε μὴ ἔδον, 2.7).<sup>37</sup> This is the meaning implied by the restrictive particle γε and underscored by the connotations of γνοίης — discern, distinguish — and φράσαις — attend to focally, single out. Such an effort, the goddess warns, is παναπευθέα “altogether uninquiring” or “pre-emptive of all learning” — both that of mortals, into the two forms, and that of the goddess, into being.<sup>38</sup> It is also ἀταρπὸν, “unturning” — neither turning back<sup>39</sup> from the chasm, as does the “beaten path” of mortals, nor turning from it towards its contrary. However, the effort cannot be sustained: in explanation why τό γε μὴ ἔδον cannot be known (discerned) or spoken (singled out), the goddess says, οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν, “for it is not practicable” or (in the sense, frequent in epic usage, of a journey) “incompletable.”<sup>40</sup> The implication of this is that isolating, fixing by itself, the negation of being is impossible — even, indeed, in the sense of depriving it, as a journey, of its finish or completion. The reason for this is that to think the negation of being is to think being as well; the thought remains fragmentary and incomplete

unless one thinks, as what is negated, being-as-such. At the same time, however, this completion of the thought of the negation of being is also its dissolution. Logically, the way which thinks the negation of being concludes with and is grounded in the thought of that which contradicts the negation itself, namely, being-as-such. Once this being-as-such appears, the negation is revealed, precisely as the negation, to have no being and, so disappears. Hence, as the second half of 2.3 suggests, the second way, thought through to end, dissolves into the first, the declaration of being-as-such.

This exegesis of 2 makes clear, as well, the parallel sense of 6.1—2:

χρῆ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἔδον ἔμμεναι . ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι,  
μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν . τὰ σ' ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα.

*It is right to speak and think being; for being  
exists, / but nothing exists not; these things  
I bid you ponder.<sup>41</sup>*

There is a fittingness — Parmenides' χρῆ ἔμμεναι recalls χρεῶν ἔστιν of 8.54 — that being be the object of thought. To see this, one must “ponder” or, recalling φράσαις, 2.8, “get oneself to attend focally” to “nothing,” μηδὲν; what will emerge is how, whereas it “exists not,” “being exists.” That is, what will emerge is the first way, the way of being-as-such.

### (3) The “back-turning” of mortals and the several ways (2, 6, 7)

Thus characterized, the second way has an intermediate position between the truth and customary opinion. On the one hand, the one who holds to it unwittingly holds off the emergence of being-as-such, “unwittingly” because prior to its emergence he cannot know what it is which he suppresses. His activity is less thought than mental violence, an effort — as the goddess says in 7.1, speaking from the perspective of the first way — to “force the non-existent to exist” (δαμῆι εἶναι μὴ ἔδοντα).<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, he goes beyond customary opinion in the sense that he recognizes and makes explicit the implications of dualism. In 2.5, the goddess' syntax precisely mirrors that of 2.3, coupling the negation of being (“there exist not. . .”) with an assertion of the fittingness or propriety<sup>43</sup> of the negation (“it is right that there not exist. . .”). If, as we have been proposing, the context for 2 is the (conceptually clarified) proem, then the fittingness refers back to traditional dualism. In 9, the goddess' careful formulation expressed how, given the assertion of the two forms as exhaustively and utterly real, the “nothing” or lack of reality is also asserted as their contrary: “for nothing is with neither” (9.4). The second way, as the assertion of the “nothing,” is thus not an importation of anything new so much as the recognition and bringing forth of what is already present, albeit ignored, at the heart of dualism. Thus there is a tight interweaving of the several ways. On the one hand, analogously as the first way emerges from a “pondering” of the second, so the second emerges from a pondering of the assertion of the two forms. And conversely, just as the second way unwittingly suppresses the first, so the insistence on dualism unwittingly suppresses the second.



applies to the contraries, each of which is present only in the absence of (or when thought in contradistinction to) the other. When these are thought *as ἐόντα*, that is, *as beings*, however, they are present at once. At 8.5—6, the goddess seems to characterize this simultaneous presence when she says of being (*ἐόν*, 8.3) that it

νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν,  
 ἔν, συνεχές.<sup>45</sup>  
*exists now, all of it together,/  
 one, cohesive.*

She has shifted here from the plural to 4.1; but the unity she affirms is one of “cohesive”-ness or “holding” (—*εχές*) “together” (*συν*—). Hence, as in 4 she appears to accept a plurality of beings even while disclosing the unity of kind which binds them together *as beings*. In two other passages, finally, this is suggested in another way: at 4.2, in explication of 4.1, the goddess declares that

. . . τὸ ἐόν τοῦ ἐόντος ἔχεσθαι,  
 . . . *being holds to being;*

and at 8.25, in explication of the “cohesive”-ness (*ξυνεχίς*, 8.25) of being, she tells how

. . . ἐόν. . . ἐόντι πελάζει,  
 . . . *being consorts with being.*

The repetition of the word “being” here is striking. The goddess appears to be taking a middle course between extremes. Had she wished to express undifferentiated unity, she would best have used a reflexive (as she does in another context at 8.29); had she wished to express the primacy of plurality, she might simply have used a plural form or, even more emphatically, different names (as she does in imitating the opinions of mortals). The effect of the repetition, by contrast, is to evoke together a plurality in number and a unity of kind. The whole clause, in turn (to overlook whatever difference there may be between *ἔχεσθαι* and *πελάζειν*), generates the thought of two drawn together by fundamental kinship or inner affinity. But this is to say, again, that the unity of being-as-such appears to include, not exclude, plurality.

(ii) The fundamental unity of kind by virtue of which “being holds to being” does, however, preclude the qualitative contrast, the heterogeneity, which characterizes the cosmos seen dualistically. Hence at 8.4 and 8.22, the goddess rejects heterogeneity as a character of being-as-such, declaring it “whole and monogeneric” (*οὔλον τε καὶ μωνογενές*) and “not differentiable” (*οὐ διαίρετόν*). Likewise, in the other famous deductions of 8 she rejects genesis and perishing, temporal determinacy,<sup>46</sup> and spatial determinacy.<sup>47</sup> There is, however, a striking restrictedness or reservation implicit in both the general structure and the particular locutions of the goddess’ denials. With regard to general structure, the goddess denies the just-noted features to *ἐόν*, being-as-such (see especially 8.3—4, 5, 22, 26,

32, 42). That is *not* the same, clearly, as denying being to those features — the frequent conflation of these two structures of denial in the tradition of Parmenides notwithstanding. Remarkably enough, the goddess simply never makes the second sort of denial. If this seems to leave the status of the various features up in the air, the particular locutions of the various denials only heighten the problem. In key passages the goddess' wording appears to in some sense affirm the existence of the very features which she denies to being-as-such. For example, in one of the lines just quoted, 8.5, she uses  $\nu\upsilon\nu$  ("now") with  $\xi\sigma\tau\iota\nu$  ("exists") in describing the existence of being-as-such. Her primary point, of course, is the denial of temporal determinacy to being-as-such, and so she contraposes  $\nu\upsilon\nu$   $\xi\sigma\tau\iota\nu$  and  $\text{o}\ddot{\upsilon}\delta\acute{\epsilon}$   $\text{p}\acute{o}\tau'$   $\eta\tilde{\nu}$   $\text{o}\ddot{\upsilon}\delta'$   $\xi\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$ , "exists now" and "neither existed at some determinate time nor shall exist [at some determinate time]." All the same, the use of  $\nu\upsilon\nu$  suggests a complex secondary meaning as well: being-as-such, though it cannot be assigned any particular place or "date" in time, nonetheless has temporal aspectivity; thus time is in some sense affirmed.<sup>48</sup> Just the same perplexing duplicity appears in the goddess' denial of spatial determinacy to being. Analogously with the  $\nu\upsilon\nu$  at 8.5, her phrase  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$   $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\iota$  ("in the same place") at 8.29 is part of the denial of mobility and, hence, of the possibility of understanding being-as-such in terms of particular locations in space; by speaking of being-as-such as  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ , "in," a place at all, however, the goddess appears to affirm spatiality as such. The most striking cases of such self-qualifying rhetoric, however, are the three denials of genesis and perishing: at 8.13–15 she tells how Dike, the goddess who preserves opposites and determines their "right time,"<sup>49</sup> "holds [genesis and perishing] fast" with "fetters"; at 8.21 she says that "genesis is extinguished and perishing unheard of," a puzzling formulation since "extinguishing" both suggests a prior existence for genesis and, as a form of "perishing," declares and instantiates what is supposed to be "unheard of"; finally, at 8.27–28, the goddess says that "genesis and perishing have been banished ( $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\lambda\acute{\alpha}\chi\theta\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$ ) far away, driven out by true conviction," an image which is quite inappropriate to express nonexistence but which represents very precisely the idea of relegation to another, in some sense secondary domain.

Our interpretation of the emergence of being and the hidden continuity of the several ways provides a basis for understanding (i) and (ii). To begin with, we have argued that being first emerges as the being *of* Night and (Day)light both; as such, it is the one form which unites the two, the form in which their unity itself comes into view. This explains the seeming ambivalence of language noted in (i). It is the very nature of being to be or exist as "cohesive" unity, a unity of several, and to ground and preserve — not nullify — these latter as, precisely, several *beings*. Secondly, however, in that the apprehension of this unity requires seeing through the diversity and contrastive aspect of beings which obscures it, that aspect must be stripped away.<sup>50</sup> This is initially accomplished by the encounter and entertaining of (or 'going into') the "nothing" (or "chasm"), through the power of the latter to totalize the two forms; it is then articulated by the assertions, converse to each other, of the togetherness of being and of its indifferenciability and homogeneity<sup>51</sup> at 8.5–6 and 8.22–25, respectively. In addition, there must also be a purging of those features which characterize beings *in* their contrast and so are co-implicit with it: thus the goddess denies temporal and spatial determinacy and all genesis<sup>52</sup> — features which,

for the whole tradition of Greek thinking from Hesiod through Anaximander, were interdependent with the alternation and, hence, contrariety of beings. But, finally, and here we come to the heart of the ambivalence noted in (ii), it is important not to overlook that it is being-as-such (or beings considered specifically as beings) which transcends contrast. Thus the goddess must, as she does, restrict her denials specifically to being-as-such. What is more, since being-as-such is attained in a movement of thought *from* beings in their contrast (that is, from the two forms), and since being-as-such is the being *of* them, there is good reason to preserve them together with their essential features, in a subordinate status or domain. This, we suggest, is the thrust of the goddess' duplicitous rhetoric in the denials of 8: the contraries, distinct in time and place and in perpetual genetic interplay, are "banished far away," that is, retained but as secondary and remote from the ultimate or from reality seen in its ultimate aspect.

If this interpretation is correct, then Parmenides did not regard the contraries as mere illusion.<sup>53</sup> It is true that he does not provide any explicit ontological characterization of their secondary status or domain. That will be the work of Plato and Aristotle. Nonetheless, in their accounts they are not overcoming a one-sided monism but, rather, completing a task for which Parmenides has established the starting-point and direction.

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#### Notes

1. D. Furley argues for this translation of ἐλεγχον in his "Notes on Parmenides" (in *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos*, ed. E.N. Lee, A.P.D. Mourelatos, R.M. Rorty, *Phronesis* Suppl. vol. 1 (Assen, 1973), pp.1—15), p.9.
2. See lines 27—28 of Hesiod's *Theogony*. The Muses' implication, that they have until now transmitted only verisimilitude to men, casts aspersions on the claims of all earlier poets. For a discussion of Hesiod's challenge to traditional thought, see my essay, "The Implicit Logic of Hesiod's Cosmogony."
3. I am persuaded by the arguments set forth by W. Burkert, in his "Das Proomium des Parmenides und die Katabasis des Pythagoras" (*Phronesis* 15 (1969), pp. 1—30), pp. 7—9, and by Furley, *op. cit.*, pp. 1—2, that the widely accepted view of the journey as an ascent "into the light" is a false construction. On their alternative interpretation (which Furley credits first to J.S. Morrison, "Parmenides and Er," *JHS* 75 (1955), pp. 59—68), the Heliad maidens, who share the dwelling of Night which is located at the edge of or within the underworld, come from there into the region of light inhabited by men in order to fetch the traveler back to their dwelling. This interpretation has many merits. Linguistically, it avoids the awkward linking of πέμπειν (1.8) with εἰς φάος (1.10) and permits the aorist participles in 1.9 and 1.10 their proper temporal-aspective sense. With regard to the logic of the passage, it eliminates the inconsistency of an ascent which ends in the underworld. (of course, this may be dealt with in other ways. J. Mansfeld, in his *Die Offenbarung des Parmenides und die menschliche Welt* (Assen, 1964), pp. 234—247, argues that Parmenides relocates the dwelling of Night and the gateway in the heavens. Mourelatos, *op. cit.*, pp. 14—16, holds that the elements of ascent and descent are

both present and that the proem is “intrinsicly vague.”) And hermeneutically, the Burkert-Furley view undermines the projection onto Parmenides of the Platonic association of light and truth and restores, in its place, the archaic priority of darkness to light and conception of the κατὰβασις of the extraordinary man into the nether world as the proper background for Parmenides. — The one immediate objection to this interpretation (made in advance, so to speak, by Mansfeld, p. 245) is that the gates are αἰθήρια (1.12) and, so, to be associated with the bright upper regions of the sky. But as both Burkert (pp. 11–12); and Furley (p.4) point out, the gateway is also made of stone (1.12); it thus appears that Parmenides means to echo his central conjunction of Night and Day by that of ether and stone and, thereby, to stress how the κατὰβασις leads ‘beyond’ the simple disjunction of opposites characteristic of the ‘over-world’ (or familiar “human world”).

4. This is an awkward effort at literal translation. Both Taran, *Parmenides* (Princeton, 1965), p. 10, and Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides* (New Haven, 1970), p. 41, argue that πολύφημον means “speaking much” and evidently alludes to the informing or newsgiving speech of bards. Thus they object to Havelock’s rendering, “famous,” in his “Parmenides and Odysseus” (*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 63 (1958), pp. 133–43), p. 136.) In Parmenides’ context, however, the route itself is characterized as informative.
5. For this and the next sentence, see Havelock, *op. cit.* Note that, given Havelock’s general view on the development of reading and writing, Parmenides’ audience is likely to know its Homer by heart. Hence the allusions will register immediately and forcefully. — Burkert, *op. cit.*, p. 5, suggests that the εἰδῶτα φῶτα is the initiate into the Mysteries; and he notes Epimenides, Orpheus, and Pythagoras as examples of Greek spiritual travelers who undertook καταβάσεις, journeys to the underworld. But the prototype for all these, as traveler, knower, and explorer in the underworld (see *Od.* XI), is Odysseus.
6. On Odysseus’ polymathy, see *Odyssey* I.1–3 (with which compare Parmenides 1.2) and W.B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme* (Ann Arbor, 1968), pp. 75–76. J. Mansfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 229–30, and very recently M. Cosgrove, “The κούρος Motif in Parmenides’ B1.24” (*Phronesis* XIX, 1 (1974), pp. 81–94), pp. 92–94, have noted this contrast between Odysseus and Parmenides.
7. Note how particular elements of the chariot image recur in the image of the gateway, e.g. ἄξων (1.6) and ἄξονα (1.19), σύριγγος (1.6) and σύριγγιν (1.19), αἰθόμενος (1.7) and αἰθήρια (1.13), and ἀμφοτέρωθεν (1.8) and ἀμφίς (1.12).
8. This allusion is discussed extensively by E.F. Dolin, Jr., “Parmenides and Hesiod” (*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 66 (1962), pp. 93–98, pp. 96–97. But Dolin does not grasp how fully the allusion is intended by Parmenides, for he takes the traditional view that the journey is an ascent “into the light” and holds that Parmenides means to overthrow Hesiod by locating the gateway there. — Havelock (*op. cit.*, p. 139), however, argues that Parmenides still alludes to Odysseus’ travels, principally his journey to the citadel of Lamos in Laestrygonia, where “the paths of night and day lie close together” (*Od.* X. 86). (Note that Homer calls the citadel by the epithet τηλεπύλον, “wide-gated”.) There is no reason, in general, why Parmenides’ image cannot incorporate the Hesiodic and Homeric images at once; but the plethora of allusive details make the Hesiod passage prominent.
9. That the “chasm” is not a separate region beyond the gates but, rather, a feature of them and, hence, internally related to them appears to have been almost universally overlooked. In part this simply reflects the rather widespread disinterest in exploring an argumentative content in the proem. But see, even, Furley, *op. cit.*, p. 3; Burkert, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–13; Dolin, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
10. Directly preceding his characterization of Tartaros as a χάσμα (740), Hesiod writes how “therein” are the “well-springs and boundary marks” — that is, points of beginning and end

— of the fundamental powers/regions which articulate the cosmos: earth, sea, sky and Tartaros itself (736—38, repeated at 807—10). Tartaros is therefore that region which, since differentiation arises out of it and terminates in it, is in itself beyond differentiation. The image anticipates Anaximander’s ἀπειρον and, as this essay attests, Parmenides’ ἕόν. In contrast to Parmenides, however, Hesiod knows only the negative aspect of the region beyond differentiation; in terms of what we shall see much later in our discussion, whereas he does see Tartaros as the negation of the differentiated cosmos (hence “even the gods abhor it,” 739), he does not see, at the center of this negation, the reference to the being, as such, of the differentiae. For discussion of Tartaros in Hesiod, see my essay, referred to in n.2. I will develop the connection between Hesiod and Anaximander on another occasion.

11. For this translation, see Taran’s comment, *op. cit.*, p. 15. — I should point out one key difference between my view here and Furley’s: whereas he takes the gateway as the “meeting place, where opposites are undivided” (his emphasis, *op. cit.*, p. 4), I take it that, precisely as a “meeting place,” the gateway is that place where opposites come together *as opposites*, hence where their *division is preserved* even while their community is attested. If the following discussion is right, it is precisely Parmenides’ problem to grasp the unity of opposites *precisely as unity*; in citing Hesiod’s gateway symbol, Parmenides indicates the failure of his predecessors to do this.
12. Taran, *op. cit.*, p. 14, suggests that πύλαι is a dual.
13. For discussions of the history of readings and interpretations of this passage, see H. Schwabl, “Sein und Doxa bei Parmenides” (in *Um die Begriffswelt der Vorsokratiker*, ed. H.G. Gadamer, Darmstadt, 1968, pp. 391—422), pp. 392—396; Mansfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 123—27; Taran, *op. cit.*, pp. 216—220; and Mourelatos, *op. cit.*, pp. 80—85.
14. Aristotle, in *Metaphysics* 986b30ff., says, “. . . being forced to follow the observed facts, and supposing the existence of that which is one in definition, but more than one according to our sensations, he now posits two causes and two principles, calling them hot and cold, i.e. fire and earth; and of these he ranges the hot with the existent, and the other with the non-existent.” (W.D. Ross translation.) Earlier, of course, Leucippus and Democritus had proposed, but in criticism, not interpretation, of Parmenides, an identification of being with the full (i.e. atoms) and nonbeing with the empty (i.e. void, space).
15. This view is suggested, most notably, by F. Cornford, H. Frankel, and Mourelatos. Cornford interprets the first half of 8.54 to assert that “it is not right to name (so much as) one” of the two forms. (*Plato and Parmenides* (London, 1939), p. 46.) This interpretation preserves, as the reference of μίαν, one of the two forms; hence we group it amongst those which regard ἑτέραν as the basic sense of μίαν. At the same time, Cornford’s interpretation has the goddess object to either one being named, that is, to dualism as such, rather than to the naming of one in particular. Frankel (*Wege und Formen fruhgriechischen Denkens*, (Munich, 1955), p.180) argues, similarly, that the goddess avoids ἑτέραν for this very reason, that it would have suggested approval of one of the two forms when, in truth, she objects to dualism as such. He notes that the objection at 8.54 precedes the naming of the two forms and so focuses solely on their duality, not on their peculiar natures. — Mourelatos (*op. cit.*, p. 87, and n. 36) seems to give tentative endorsement to Frankel’s “solution to the puzzle of μίαν, in place of ἑτέραν,” although he also plays down the importance of the puzzle (“the objection is actually not very compelling,” p. 81). Mourelatos’ basic view of 8.54 is that it asserts the “. . . doctrine, that one of the forms posited by mortals is to be dropped (the other, consequently, redefined) . . .” (p. 87). It is the parenthetical observation here which distinguishes his view from the first view noted in our discussion, which regards 8.54 as implying the goddess’ preference of one of the forms named by mortals; the “redefinition,” as Mourelatos’ exposition of fragment 8 shows, will be very radical. — Recently Furley has made the same basic interpretation as Cornford and Frankel by arguing, *op. cit.*, p. 5, that “. . . μίαν. . . οὐ can mean οὐδεμία, and there seems

to be no reason why it should not also mean οὐδετέρων ‘neither of two’.” This way of arguing, however, provokes a key counterquestion against all three interpretations. If Parmenides *could* have used a —ετέρων word just as easily as his actual choice of μίαν to express prohibition of both of the two forms, why didn’t he? Or, conversely, why did he use μίαν instead? I mean, of course, to point to the possible implication that he was not intent on such prohibition but had something else in mind.

16. See n. 15. This is a complex point. On the one hand, both Cornford and Frankel show why ἐτέρην might have been misleading. On the other hand, in both interpretations the grammatical reference of μίαν is one of the two forms, as such, and this ordinarily would call for ἐτέρην. This ambiguity comes to the surface in Mourelatos’ discussion: even while seeming to accept Frankel’s reading, he seems also to regard μίαν as meaning ἐτέρην and so, plays down the importance of the problem.
17. Most notably, H. Schwabl, *op. cit.*, p. 395; also Taran, *loc. cit.*, and J. Mansfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 124—127.
18. Taran, *op. cit.*, p. 220.
19. Schwabl, *op. cit.*, p. 396, argues for this distinction: “. . . unserer Meinung nach wendet sich also Parmenides gegen die Annahme der beiden Gestalten nur in Hinsicht auf ihre Absolutsetzung; er wendet sich nicht gegen die “Gestalten” also solche, . . . sondern nur gegen ihre falsche Einschätzung.” Taran disagrees very strongly (*op. cit.*, pp. 223—24), arguing that the mistake of mortals consists in positing two forms. But his argument is problematic on two counts: (1) His view that naming two implies, because the two are different, “the existence of non-Being” seems to suggest what he himself declares misled, namely, an equation of not-being-x (where “being” has an copulative sense) and not-being, as such (where “being” has a existential sense). (If Taran is concerned simply with the fact that the two, as contraries to each other, differ necessarily from the one respect, as such, in which they are the same, existence, his focus on the difference between the two forms is confusing.) (2) Taran does not explain why the τῶν μίαν —clause is separated from the preceding dependent infinitive construction by its finite verb ἔστιν; Parmenides’ grammar suggests some distinction between naming two forms and not seeking their unity. (See our text, next paragraph.)
20. If it were ascribed to the goddess, she would be advocating dualism and criticizing, by implication, a monism advocated by mortals.
21. Mourelatos, *op. cit.*, pp. 82—83, raises this problem.
22. I accept Mourelatos’ analysis of the negation of χρεῶν as a “negative injunction.” See his *op. cit.*, Appendix III, pp. 277—78.
23. It is just possible that the ambiguity of μίαν which allows for the two readings is intentional. Mourelatos, in his remarkable interpretation of the irony of the Doxa-fragments, shows how again and again the goddess’ words, in their “deceptive order” (κόσμον . . . ἀπατηλόν, 8.52), recall the truth even while speaking the false. And he suggests that sensitivity to this shows that often “. . . what is reflected in scholarly literature as controversy is actually a tension built into the argument and language of ‘Doxa’ . . .” (p. 222, *op. cit.*).
24. See Mourelatos, *op. cit.*, p. 85—86, and G.E.R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 216—19, also pp. 212—13. The similarity between the equality of opposites in Anaximander and that of the two powers in Parmenides’ Doxa should be noted.
25. The ἐπεὶ —clause explains ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων (see Mourelatos, *op. cit.*, p. 85, n. 29) but not in isolation; ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων is appositive to φάεος καὶ νυκτὸς; hence the ἐπεὶ —clause explains

how these, in their status as the powers which exhaust the cosmos, are “equals” (see Taran, *op. cit.*, p. 163).

26. Quite remarkably (since they are in basic disagreement which one another's views of its meaning in Parmenides' argument), Schwabl (*op. cit.*, p. 410), Mourelatos (*loc. cit.*), and Furley (*op. cit.*, p. 12), appear to be agreed on this way of taking μηδέν. For other instances, see 6.2 and 8.10. It is unlikely to mean, simply, negativity, for the two forms *do* stand as contraries, hence in mutual negativity, to each other. And there is no parallel for Taran's interpretation of it as “no [particular] thing” (*op. cit.*, pp. 163—64).
27. See Hesiod, *Theogony* 755, and p. 6 above. Also see Furley *op. cit.*, p. 6, n. 21.
28. See pp. 8—9 above.
29. It is a central point in the interesting interpretation by Mourelatos, *op. cit.*, esp. ch. 3, that the pairing is intrinsically unstable. He takes Parmenides to be critical of an ambiguity intrinsic to the assertion of contraries: whereas the two are asserted as determinate and equal, each, as the negation of the other, includes everything else than the other and so loses its own determinacy and, too, its equality with the other; this is the basis, according to Mourelatos, for Parmenides' “rejection of μη ἔόν and . . . what I consider his cognate doctrine, that one of the forms posited by mortals is to be dropped (the other, consequently, redefined) . . .” (p. 87, partially quoted in n. 15 above). In our view, by contrast, the pair of contraries asserted by mortals is stable because the negation which relates them is specific; that is, each is negative towards the other specifically — and towards the other as, with equal specificity, negative of it. This is why, even though each (as (Day)light and Night) is present only in the other's absence, they come to mind as a pair, each referring to the other as *its* other, as the symbolism of the gateway indicates. This instability, we suggest, arises not within the pair as such but, rather, within the pairing of it, as a whole, with its contrary, “nothing.”
30. Earlier, in n. 23, we noted the irony of the speech of the Doxa, an irony forewarned when the goddess calls attention to the “deceptive order of my words” (κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλῶν) at 8.52. It is intriguing to ask whether the goddess indicates what we are arguing regarding the unity of the two forms in a sub-surface meaning constituted by a “deceptive ordering” of the terms in 9.4. Her words there,  

ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων, ἐπεὶ οὐδετέρῳ μετὰ μηδέν,

were translated above as “of both as equals, since nothing is with neither.” But in light of our reflections, note the following features of the line: (1) ἴσων means not only “equal” but, also, “same.” (2) ἀμφοτέρων, “both,” is the term which refers to the members of a pair together, as a unit. (3) οὐδετέρῳ, “neither,” is a negative which refers to members of a pair as paired, that is, in their reciprocal disjunction. (4) The conjunction μετὰ, “with,” probably elliptical for μέτεσσι, is put in the somewhat unusual place, for a preposition, of following, rather than preceding, its object, and in that place it stands directly between οὐδετέρῳ and μηδέω. (5) ἐπεὶ has the function of relating the sense of ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων to that of οὐδετέρῳ μετὰ μηδέν as, respectively, what is explicated to what explicates it. Taking all this into account and reading the line as one who, having heard the truth, is attuned to a hidden sense in the goddess' words, one might offer the following outlandish translation to render an otherwise hidden, ironic secondary meaning: “[of] the two together in sameness with each other, on the basis that nothing stands with, as contrary to, the two in their pairedness.”
31. See too 2.5, 8.9, and 8.16, as well as the εἶναι at 2.3, 2.5, and 6.1 (explicated in the following text).
32. Note, though, that mortals, so long as they have not discovered the higher form will rather make their assertion in the form of fr. 9, as a relativization of all things to the two forms. This is presumably why it is the goddess who makes (albeit elliptically) the assertion. Compare this

to our discussion of the interrelation of human and divine perspectives on pp. 17–18 above.

33. On the syntax and grammar of this assertion, see E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik*, pp. 608 (on the combination of singular verbs with plural subjects in prose) and 694 (on the placement of an existential *ἔστι* at the beginning of a sentence). — This would exemplify C. Kahn's existential Type VI (see *The Verb 'Be' in Ancient Greek*, Dordrecht, 1973); our translation means to bring out the basically veridical character of the existential type. — But it is equally important that the existential force of the veridical not be lost. In this regard, note Furley, *op. cit.*, pp. 13–14. — For relevant examples of such assertion, consider Melissus fr. 8: εἰ γὰρ ἔστι γῆ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ ἀήρ καὶ πῦρ καὶ σίδηρος καὶ χρυσός, etc.; also Democritus fr. 9 (in which the ellipsis of *ἔστι* is an exact reversal of Parmenides' ellipsis, as we interpret it): ἔτετι δὲ ἄτομα καὶ κενόν.
34. C. Kahn argues persuasively that we should seek a subject for *ἔστι* ("The Thesis of Parmenides," *Review of Metaphysics* 22 (1969), p. 709, n. 12) and that we should look to the proem (p. 710). But when he derives, from the proem's character as a search for knowledge, "the knowable" as the "logical subject" of *ἔστι* (pp. 708–10), he abstracts too far from the specific 'knowing' which is symbolized by the proem and, so, forces his interpretation upon it.
35. We drop the veridical "really" (see n. 33 above) simply for convenience. For the force of "exists" is to express what "really" exists, by contrast with what first appears to. Mortals, in asserting the two, and the goddess, in leading beyond the two to their ground, are making "speculative" declarations in the sense discussed by Mourelatos (*op. cit.*, pp. 56 ff.).
36. Compare *ἡμὲν/ἡδὲ* at 1.29–30. In both pairings, the truth is announced by (*ἡ*) *μὲν*, the (relatively) false by (*ἡ*) *δέ*.
37. My stress, of course. — "The nonexistent" is as close a translation as I can make of *τὸ μὴ ἔον*. Insofar as the participle expresses the *ἔστι* of 2.3, it is literal. The danger (heightened, I think, by the alternative, "what is not") is that one take "— existent" to refer to some finite thing; with the ellipsis of the subject at 2.3 and 2.5, attention is drawn to existence as such, such that here it is not some determinate existent, but existence itself which is negated. The term should be understood as synonymous with *μηδέν* at 6.2, 8.10, and 9.4.
38. *παναπευθέα* at 2.6 seems to spell out the negation of *πάντα πυθέσθαι, ἡμὲν... ἡδὲ...*, at 1.28–30.
39. See p. 31 below on *παλίντροπος* at 6.9.
40. On this sense of *ἀνυστόν*, see Mourelatos, *op. cit.*, p. 23, n. 36.
41. Except for taking *χρῆ* in the sense required by Mourelatos' analysis of *χρεών* (see n. 22 above), this is Taran's reading. *ἔμμεναι* is copulative with *χρῆ*.
42. On *δαμῆ*, see Mourelatos, *op. cit.*, p. 28, n. 57, and Taran, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–75. With so little context surviving, it is impossible to speak surely about the reason for the plural *μὴ ἔόντα*. But it might be compared to the *ἀπεόντα/παρεόντα* of 4, where the goddess appears to refer to the contraries (things absent in one another's presence) *as beings*, that is, as united in the form, being-as-such; if the comparison is germane, then *μὴ ἔόντα* would refer to the negation of beings (considered *as beings*, under the aspect of being-as-such).
43. See n. 22 above.
44. *σκιδνάμενον/συνιστάμενον* of 4.3–4 might recall Anaximenes' doctrine of rarefaction/compaction or even Heraclitus fr. 91. For discussion, see Taran, *op. cit.*, pp. 48–50.

45. We accept Taran's (*ibid.*, p. 82) accentuation and punctuation here.
46. H. Frankel (*op. cit.*, p. 191, n. 1) notes the  $\pi\omicron\tau'$  at 8.5 and concludes that Parmenides denies not past and future, as such, but any particular past and future to being. The same observation holds for 8.20. — The discussion is later expanded by Kahn ("The Greek Verb 'to Be' and the Concept of Being," *Foundations of Language*, 2 (1966), pp. 254—7) and, especially, Mourelatos (*op. cit.*, pp. 103—11), who call attention to the aspectivity of Greek verb tenses. — What is remarkable about all these discussions is their break with the traditional view that Parmenides denies the reality of time.
47. At 8.29—30 the goddess tells how being, "remaining the same and in the same [place], lies by itself and abides so firmly where it is." This language suggests that being — or, again, beings regarded *as* beings — has location in space which is, however, entirely self-referential. The subsequent description of being as "like a sphere" (8.43) stresses the equality of its dimensions ("pushing out equally in all directions from the center," 8.44, and "from all sides equal to itself, . . . within the bounds equally," 8.49). The point seems to be that any location of being in one place rather than another is utterly arbitrary; it is indifferent to spatial determinacy.
48. For a probing discussion of this, see Mourelatos, *loc. cit.*
49. See pp. 7—9 above.
50. In this regard, note the specific contrast of 8.24,  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\ \delta' \ \epsilon\mu\pi\lambda\epsilon\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu\ \epsilon\delta\omicron\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$ , with 9.3, quoted on p. 18 above. The goddess introduces her exposition of the world of human dualism as a  $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\sigma\mu\omicron\nu$  (8.60), which might be literally rendered a "split ( $\delta\iota\alpha$ —) cosmos."
51. It is interesting to note that this denial, at 8.22—25, is neither argued for nor made dependent on arguments for other denials (as is the case with all other denials in 8). It is simply asserted. Our analysis of the emergence of being as the one form which unites the two in itself may explain this. Homogeneity is itself utterly essential to being as it emerges. Hence it would be redundant and even absurd to argue for its attribution to being. Were it not a character of being, there could be no being to begin with, in Parmenides' sense.
52. Genesis as birth is the means by which opposites arise (as Day and Ether from Night and Erebus, or as Heaven from Earth, in the *Theogony*, 124—27), for Hesiod; perishing, however, was excluded, since the opposites were thought as gods. For Anaximander, opposites are born out of and die into one another (see C. Kahn, *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* (New York, 1960), pp. 178—83); genesis and perishing are thus the means of alternation.
53. It should be noted that many translators have unwarrantedly made Parmenides seem to say this by translating 8.38, which they read as  $\tau\omicron\iota\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau' \ \delta\nu\omicron\mu(\alpha)\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\alpha\iota$  as "Therefore all [which mortals posit, believing as true] will be *mere* name . . ." (my underlining). In fact, as is pointed out by L. Woodbury ("Parmenides on Names," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 63 (1958), pp. 145—60), there is no ground, either in the Greek or in Parmenides' argument, for saying "mere" (pp. 146—47). Rather, Woodbury suggests, the passage should be read as  $\tau\omicron\iota\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau' \ \delta\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$ , with the  $\tau\omicron\iota$  taken not to mean "therefore" but, rather, to indicate the reference of the names which mortals posit (pp. 147—49.) This reading (also endorsed by Mourelatos, *op. cit.*, pp. 181—82, and Furley, *op. cit.*, p. 7, but interpreted differently) suggests a non-traditional interpretation of Parmenides' view of what men take as real; rather than condemning human opinion as deluded, he is relativizing opinion to truth. Especially if we take  $\tau\omicron\iota$  to refer to being, the passage may be read as much as a grounding as a discrediting of human opinion. Taken in its surrounding context, Parmenides is saying that, even while the characters of the two forms do not belong to being-as-such, nonetheless the ultimate reference of the speech by which mortals designate these characters is being-as-such. Human error, then, — and we have argued for this interpretation from other perspectives — consists in not

thinking through *to the end* the implications of the naming of two forms. — It is striking to find εἶναι τε καὶ οὐχί amongst the “names” listed at 8.40. Note, though, that it follows directly after and perfectly correlates with, γίγνεσθαι τε καὶ ὄλλυσθαι; this suggests that εἶναι refers to finite being, even living being, while οὐχί [sc. εἶναι] refers to being-perished or -dead. In this regard, see Burkert, *op. cit.*, p. 29. And note, too, Anaximander in his fragment uses the participle of εἶναι in a sense like this; the opposites, referred to as τοῖς οὖσι, are born and die. For Parmenides, this sense of “being” is nonultimate, but reflection into it will lead to the ultimate sense. In any case, the passage refers to what mortals take εἶναι to mean, not to the ultimate form disclosed beyond contrariety.