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FRANCIS M. CORNFORD

Plato and Parmenides

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PLATO and PARMENIDES

Parmenides' *Way of Truth* and Plato's
Parmenides translated with an introduction
and a running commentary

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xi
INTRODUCTION	
CHAP.	
I. THE EARLIEST PYTHAGOREAN COSMOGONY	1
II. PARMENIDES' <i>WAY OF TRUTH</i>	28
Frag. 1. Proem	30
Frgs. 2 ; 3 ; 6, ll. 1-3. The Way of Truth and the Way of Not-being	30
Frgs. 6, ll. 4-9 ; 7. Warning against the Way of Seeming	32
Premisses of the Way of Truth	33
The Way of Truth	35
Frag. 8, 1- 6. Enunciation	35
6-21. No coming-to-be or perishing	36
22-25. What is, being one and homogeneous, is indivisible	39
26-42. What is cannot move or change	42
42-49. The Sphere of Being	44
The Way of Seeming	44
Frag. 8, 50-61. Transition to the Way of Seeming	45
III. ZENO AND PYTHAGOREAN ATOMISM	53
MARGINAL PAGE	
THE PARMENIDES	
126A-127A. THE INTRODUCTORY NARRATIVE	63
THE CONVERSATION	65
127A-D. Antiphon repeats Pythodorus' account of the meeting	65
127D-128E. The contents and character of Zeno's treatise	66
128E-130A. Socrates offers the theory of separate Forms as ex- plaining how one thing can have two contrary characters	69
130A-E. Parmenides criticises the theory of Forms	81
(1) What classes of things have Forms?	81

CONTENTS

MARGINAL PAGE		PAGE
130E-131E.	(2) Objections to Participation. (a) A thing cannot contain either the Form as a whole or a part of it.	84
131E-132B.	(b) The Third Man	87
132B-C.	These objections cannot be met by making the Form a thought in a mind	90
132C-133A.	Can the objections be met by making the Forms patterns of which there are likenesses in things?	92
133A-134E.	(3) Will not the separate Forms be unknowable by us?	95
134E-135C.	The Forms are admitted to be necessary for all thought and discourse	99
135C-136E.	Transition to the second part. Parmenides' programme for an exercise in dialectic.	102
136E-137C.	Parmenides offers to demonstrate the consequences of supposing that there is, or is not, a One	108
	THE DIALECTICAL EXERCISE	109
	Principles of Interpretation	109
	HYPOTHESIS I	115
137C-D.	If the One is defined as absolutely one, it is in no sense many or a whole of parts	115
137D.	The One (having no parts) is without limits	118
137D-138A.	The One (being without parts) has no extension or shape	118
138A-B.	The One (being without parts or extension) is nowhere, neither in itself nor in another	119
138B-139B.	The One (not being a physical body in space) is neither in motion nor at rest	120
139B-E.	The One (lacking the above qualifications) is not the same as, or different from, itself or another	123
139E-140B.	The One is not like, or unlike, itself or another	124
140B-D.	The One is not equal, or unequal, to itself or to another	125
140E-141D.	The One cannot be, or become, older or younger than, or of the same age as, itself or another, or be in time at all	127
141D-142A.	Since it is not in time, the One in no sense 'is', and it cannot even be named or in any way known	129
	The Neoplatonic interpretation	131
	HYPOTHESIS II	135
142B-C.	If the One has being, it is One Entity, with both unity and being	136

CONTENTS

MARGINAL PAGE		PAGE
I42C-D.	A 'One Entity' is a whole of parts (both one and many)	137
I42D-I45A.	A One Entity (having parts) is indefinitely numerous and also limited	137
I45A-B.	A One Entity (being limited) can have extension and shape	145
I45B-E.	A One Entity (being an extended magnitude) can be both in itself and in another	147
I45E-I46A.	A One Entity (being a physical body in space) can have motion and rest.	150
I46A-I47B.	A One Entity (as above qualified) is the same as, and different from, itself and the Others.	154
I47C-I48D.	A One Entity (as above qualified) is like and unlike itself and the Others	164
I48D-I49D.	A One Entity (as above qualified) has, and has not, contact with itself and with the Others	167
I49D-I51B.	A One Entity (as continuous quantity or magnitude) is equal and unequal both to itself and to the Others	171
I51B-E.	A One Entity (as discrete quantity or number) is equal and unequal both to itself and to the Others	182
I51E-I55C.	A One Entity (as above qualified) exists in Time, and is and is becoming, and is not and is not becoming, older and younger than itself and the Others.	184
I55C-E.	A One Entity (being in Time) has existence and becomes. It can be the object of cognition and the subject of discourse	192
	HYPOTHESIS IIA. COROLLARY ON BECOMING IN TIME	194
I55E-I56B.	A One Entity (being in Time) comes into existence and ceases to exist, is combined and separated, becomes like and unlike, and increases and diminishes	194
I56C-I57B.	The transition in becoming and change is instantaneous	199
	HYPOTHESIS III	204
I57B-I58B.	If the One is defined as One Entity which is both one and many or a whole of parts (as in Hyp. II), the Others, as a plurality of other ones, form one whole, of which each part is one	205
I58B-C.	When the element of unity is abstracted from any one whole or one part, what remains is an element of unlimited multitude	208

CONTENTS

MARGINAL PAGE		PAGE
158C-D.	The combination of the unlimited element with limit or unity yields the plurality of other ones	210
158E-159B.	The Others, so defined, have all the contrary characters proved to belong to the One Entity of Hyp. II.	211
	HYPOTHESIS IV.	213
159B-D.	If the One (unity) is defined as entirely separate from the Others and absolutely one (as in Hyp. I), the Others can have no unity as wholes or parts and cannot be a definite plurality of other ones	213
159D-160B.	The Others, having no unity, cannot possess any of the contrary characters	215
160B.	OSTENSIBLE CONCLUSION OF HYPOTHESES I-IV	217
	HYPOTHESIS V	217
160B-D.	If 'a One is not' means that there is a One Entity that does not exist, this Non-existent Entity can be known and distinguished from other things	219
160D-161A.	A Non-existent Entity, being knowable and distinguishable from other things, can have many characters	221
161A-C.	A Non-existent Entity has unlikeness to the Others and likeness to itself.	222
161C-E.	A Non-existent Entity (being a quantity) has inequality to the Others, and has greatness and smallness and equality	224
161E-162B.	A Non-existent Entity has being in a certain sense	225
162B-163B.	A Non-existent Entity can pass from the state of non-existence to the state of existence, but cannot change or move in any other way	227
	HYPOTHESIS VI.	231
163B-C.	If 'the One is not' means that the One has no sort of being, the One will be a Nonentity	231
163D-E.	A Nonentity cannot begin or cease to exist or change in any way	232
163E-164A.	A Nonentity cannot have any character	233
164A-B.	A Nonentity cannot be specified as distinct from other things, or stand in any relation to them, or exist at any time, or be the object of any cognition or the subject of discourse	233
	HYPOTHESIS VII	234
164B-C.	If 'there is no One' means 'nothing that is "one thing" exists', then the Others can only be other than each other	236

CONTENTS

MARGINAL PAGE		PAGE
164C-D.	The Others will differ from each other as masses unlimited in multitude.	236
164D-E.	Such masses will present an appearance of unity and number	237
164E-165A.	There will be an appearance of greatness, smallness, and equality	238
165A-C.	There will be an appearance of limitedness and of unlimitedness	238
165C-E.	There will be an appearance of likeness and of unlikeness and of all the other contraries	239
	HYPOTHESIS VIII	241
165E.	If ' there is no One ' means ' there is no such thing as an entity ', the Others will be neither one nor many, but nothing.	242
165E-166C.	The Others cannot even appear one or many, or as having any character. There is nothing that has any being whatsoever	242
166C.	OSTENSIBLE CONCLUSION OF ALL THE HYPOTHESES	244
	INDEX	247

INTRODUCTION

attributes and parts and the whole arrangement of the Heaven, they collected and fitted into their scheme' (*Met.* 985b, 27).

Here it may be noted that these 'resemblances' (*ὁμοιώματα*) between things like Justice and the properties of numbers explain why Aristotle sometimes says that things represent (*μυεῖσθαι*) numbers, rather than simply *are* numbers. A sensible body, as we have seen, can be said to *be* the unit-atoms composing it; but if a man says that 'Justice is the square number' he cannot mean that Justice is a plane figure composed of four unit-points; obviously he means that the square figure is a symbol which represents or embodies the nature of fairness, just as when an honest man was called 'four-square without reproach', no one imagined that his figure really had four corners. The two modes of describing the relation of things to numbers are perfectly compatible, being respectively appropriate to different orders of 'things'.

Shortly after this passage comes the statement about the elements of number and the generation of numbers from the unit, ending 'and numbers, as we said, are the whole Heaven'. The world-order, *cosmos*, in which cosmogony terminates was not conceived, as by the Ionians, as the arrangement of the four great concentric masses of earth, water, air, and fire. The Pythagorean sciences are arithmetic, geometry, astronomy ('sphaeric'), and music, the sciences which discover the element of number, measure, proportion, in the cosmos and are studied in order to bring the soul into harmony with the objects of its contemplation. Accordingly for them the visible world is not Anaximander's battlefield in which the warring opposites perpetually encroach on one another's provinces and pay the penalty of their injustice. Rather it is the harmonious disposition of earth and the heavenly bodies according to the intervals of the musical scale. The same sciences in Plato's scheme of higher education lead to the same end, the assimilation of the soul to principles of symmetry and concord. As Socrates says earlier in the *Republic* (500b): 'One whose thought is set on reality will not have leisure to look downwards upon the field of human interests, to enter into the strife of men and catch the infection of their jealousies and feuds. His eyes are fixed upon an unchanging order; the things he contemplates neither inflict injustice nor suffer wrong, but observe due proportion and order; and of these he studies to reproduce the likeness in himself as best he can. A man cannot fail to imitate that with which he holds converse with wonder and delight. So the philosopher, holding converse with the divine and orderly, becomes, so far as man may, both orderly and divine.'¹

¹ The original sense of *cosmos* was social and political: the 'right order' of a state, army, or other group (cf. W. Jaeger, *Paideia* i, 108, E.T.). This

PYTHAGOREAN COSMOGONY

The Ionian 'inquiry into the nature of things' had no bearing on conduct and no point of contact with politics. But Pythagoras, as Plato remarks in the only passage where he mentions him by name, was pre-eminently valued for his private converse with his disciples, to whom he bequeathed a 'way of life' which marked them out from the rest of mankind (*Rep.* 600b). This way of life was characterised by Aristoxenus: 'Every distinction they lay down as to what should be done or not done aims at converse with the divine. This is their first principle, and their whole life is ordered with a view to following God' (ap. Iambl., *V. P.* 137). The 'following' or 'imitation' of the divine has been variously construed in different religious systems. It is probable that the Pythagorean construction is faithfully reproduced in the *Timaeus* (90b):

'If a man is engrossed in appetites and ambitions and spends all his pains upon these, all his thoughts must needs be mortal and, so far as that is possible, he cannot fall short of becoming mortal altogether, since he has nourished the growth of his mortality. But if his heart has been set on the love of learning and true wisdom and he has exercised that part of himself above all, he is surely bound to have thoughts immortal and divine, if he shall lay hold upon truth, nor can he fail to possess immortality in the fullest measure that human nature admits; and because he is always devoutly cherishing the divine part and maintaining the guardian genius (*daemon*) that dwells with him in good estate, he must needs be happy (*eudaemon*) above all. Now there is but one way of caring for anything, namely to give it the nourishment and motions proper to it. The motions akin to the divine part in us are the thoughts and revolutions of the universe; these, therefore, every man should follow, and . . . by learning to know the harmonies and revolutions of the world, he should bring the intelligent part, according to its pristine nature, into the likeness of that which intelligence discerns, and thereby win the fulfilment of the best life set by the gods before mankind both for this present time and for the time to come.'

In this passage Plato shows how the life of religious and moral aspiration was identified with the pursuit of truth about the order of the world. Philosophy is the achievement of immortality. The goal is attained by purifying the soul of lower desires and worldly ambitions, so as to set free the divine part to apprehend the harmony of the *cosmos*, and reproduce it in the harmony of the microcosm.

conception was first projected into external Nature, and then rediscovered there and set up as a pattern to be reproduced in socialised humanity.

CHAPTER II

PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH¹

WE have now some picture of the cosmology which Parmenides, as a dissident Pythagorean, would be primarily concerned to criticise. His logical mind rebelled against the assumption which it shared with the other systems of the sixth century. They had all described the emergence of a manifold world out of an original unity, and also recognised within the world an opposition of contraries derived from some primitive pair: the Hot and the Cold, or Fire and Air, or Light and Darkness. To Parmenides it seemed irrational and inconceivable that from an original One Being should come first two and then many. Heraclitus, too, had protested; but he attacked from the opposite quarter, denying the reality of any unchanging being. He abolished the notion of substance; nothing remains the same. Accordingly, he too rejected any cosmogony starting from a One permanent being, and accepted the world of becoming with its struggling opposites as ultimate. Parmenides took the other alternative. He held to the notion of one substantial being with all the consequences deduced by his logic. If its unity and its being are taken seriously, it cannot become two and then many; no manifold world can proceed out of the One. Therefore plurality, becoming, change, motion, are in some sense unreal.

Parmenides' choice is not that of a man of science. Aristotle calls him the antinaturalist (*ἀφύσικος*), for 'natural things' are things capable of motion. Parmenides' Pythagorean training comes out in his preference for unity, rest, limit, as against plurality, motion, the unlimited, to which the Ionian physicist felt no objection. Rather than surrender these attributes of being, he will set all common sense at defiance, and follow reason against the evidence of our eyes and ears. But, although his central doctrine, 'the real is one, limited, at rest', is ultimately traceable to religious and moral preconceptions and the symbolism of his proem indicates that the search for truth is comparable to a religious activity,² the truth he

¹ This chapter is partly based on an article, *Parmenides' Two Ways*, C.Q. xxvii (1933), 97, where some of the points are discussed at greater length.

² As Mr. C. M. Bowra points out in an interesting paper on the Proem, *Classical Philol.* xxxii (1937), 2, p. 97.

reason by laws to occur - at the same time -
for the teacher too

PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH

discovers is not animated by religious belief. He never calls his One Being 'god'. He is a curious blend of prophet and logician. Heraclitus was the prophet of a *Logos* which could be expressed only in seeming contradictions. Parmenides is the prophet of a logic which will tolerate no semblance of contradiction.

In the setting of his poem he follows the apocalyptic tradition: the truth is revealed to him by a goddess, whom he visits in a region beyond the gates of night and day. This attitude is not new. Hesiod had claimed to be taught by the Muses of Helicon. There may have been, as early as the sixth century, poems of the type of Orpheus' descent to the underworld. This traditional attitude of the poet to his work is not a mere artifice of bloodless allegory. It may be compared with Heraclitus' claim to reproduce in his treatise the Truth which stands for ever. But Parmenides is also, and above all, the man who reasons. He is the first philosopher to argue, formally deducing conclusions from premisses, instead of making dogmatic announcements. His school were the originators of dialectic. The new method of argument must have been suggested by the demonstrations of geometry, which was taking shape in Pythagorean hands and gave the first specimens of rigid proof: 'grant me certain assumptions and I will prove the rest'. The *reductio ad absurdum* was either invented or adopted by Zeno.

Parmenides' premiss states in a more abstract form the first assumption common to all his predecessors, Milesian or Pythagorean: ultimately there exists a One Being. His thought is really at work upon this abstract concept; he considers what further attributes can, or cannot, logically belong to a being that is one. At the same time, this One Being is not a mere abstraction; it proves to be a single continuous and homogeneous substance filling the whole of space. So far, as it seemed to him, reason will carry us, but no farther. Such a being cannot become or cease to be or change; such a unity cannot also be a plurality. There is no possible transition from the One Being to the manifold and changing world which our senses seem to reveal. His work is accordingly divided, after the proem, into two parts. The *Way of Truth* deduces the nature of the one reality from premisses asserted as irrefragably true. It ends with a clear warning that the *Way of Seeming*, which follows, is not true or consistent with the truth. This second part, accordingly, is not in the form of logical deduction, but gives a cosmogony in the traditional narrative manner. The starting-point is the false belief of mortals, who trust their senses and accept the appearance of two opposite powers contending in the world. Unfortunately very few fragments of the second part survive; but it is probable that we possess nearly the whole of the

INTRODUCTION

Way of Truth, thanks to Simplicius, who copied it out in his commentary on the *Physics* because the book had become very rare. And it is with the *Way of Truth* that we are chiefly concerned.

Frag. 1. *Proem*.

We need not linger over the allegorical proem. Parmenides travels on the chariot of the Sun along a road, far from the beaten track of men, which leads through the gates of Day and Night. Beyond them he is welcomed by a goddess. Her dwelling on the further side of these gates must be symbolic.¹ Light and Darkness are the two chief opposites in the world of misleading appearances. Parmenides' thought has travelled beyond the region of Seeming to what Plato in the *Phaedrus* calls the Plain of Truth, visited by the soul-chariots before incarnation. The goddess approves his coming and tells him:

'It is meet that thou shouldst learn all things—both the unmoved heart of rounded Truth and what seems to mortals, in which there is no true belief' (1, 28-30).

The Way of Truth and the Way of Seeming (as we may call it) are the two divisions of the poem: the deduction of the nature of the One Being and the illegitimate cosmogony.

Frag. 2, 3, 6 ll. 1-3. *The Way of Truth and the Way of Not-being*.

The goddess thus announces two Ways that can be followed, and are followed in the sequel. But subsequent fragments mention another Way, which cannot be followed at all, being 'utterly undiscernible'. The following passage sets this impassable Way in contrast with the Way of Truth and finally dismisses it.

'Come now and I will tell thee—listen and lay my word to heart—the only ways of inquiry that are to be thought of: one, that <That which is>² is, and it is impossible for it not to be, is the Way of Persuasion, for Persuasion attends on Truth.

¹ I cannot remember having seen in any account of Parmenides any notice of Procl. in *Parm.* iv, 34 (Cousin), who, following Syrianus, says of Parmenides in Plato's dialogue, offering his own hypothesis for examination in the dialectical exercise, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ τὸ σεμνότατον τῶν ἐαυτοῦ δογμάτων πάρεργον ἂν ἐποίησατο τῆς κατὰ τὴν γυμνασίαν διδασκαλίας, καίτοι νέοις προσήκειν ταύτην ἡγουμένους· ἐκεῖνο δὲ πρεσβυτικῆς εἶναι διανοίας καθορᾶν, καὶ οὐδὲ ἀνθρωπίνης, ὡς ἐν τοῖς ποιήμασι φησιν, ἀλλὰ νύμφης Ὑψιπύλης τινός. This seems to mean that Parmenides called his goddess 'the nymph Hypsipyle'. The 'high gates' must be the gates of Day and Night, which the poem so elaborately describes.

² ἡ μὲν ὅπως ἔστι τε (Simplic., ἔστι γε, Procl.) καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι. The lack of any subject for ἔστι suggests that Parmenides wrote ἡ μὲν ὅπως ἐὸν

PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH

'Another, that *It is not, and must needs not be*—this, I tell thee, is a path that is utterly undiscernible; for thou couldst not know that which is not—for that is impossible—nor utter it.

'For it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be.'¹

'What can be spoken of and thought must be; for it is possible for it to be, but it is not possible for "nothing" to be. These things I bid thee ponder; for this is the first Way of inquiry from which I hold thee back'.²

This first Way of untruth directly contradicts the Way of Truth. The starting-point of the true Way is: *That which is, is, and cannot not-be*. The starting-point of this false Way is: *That which is, is not, and must not-be, or It is possible for 'nothing' to be*. Here is a flat contradiction; one or other of these starting-points must be completely dismissed before we can advance a step in any direction. The goddess accordingly condemns the false Way as 'utterly undiscernible': a Way starting from nonentity lies in total darkness and cannot be followed to any conclusions whatsoever. The decision here given to abandon all consideration of this Way is recalled at frag. 8, 12-18, where it is denied that anything can come into being out of non-existence: 'The decision concerning these things lies in this: *It is or it is not*. But the decision has been given, as is necessary—to leave that Way upon one side as unthinkable and unnamable, for it is no true Way.' This, then, is not the false Way in which the goddess (in frag. 1) promised to instruct Parmenides and which is actually followed in the second part of the poem. Common sense and philosophers were agreed that nothing can come out of Nothing. No advance can be made from the premiss that all that exists was once in a state of non-existence, or that nonentity can exist. The goddess does indeed say that it is 'possible to think of' (εἰσι νοῆσαι) three alternatives, of which this premiss is one; together they exhaust the logically conceivable possibilities. But later she calls this Way which starts from the sheer non-existence of anything 'unthinkable and unnamable' (ἀνόητον ἀνώνημον 8, 17). Thought cannot pursue such a Way at all; there is no being for thought to think of or for language to describe significantly. This impassable Way may be called, for

ἔστι καὶ ὡς, κτλ. Cf. frag. 6, 1, ἐὸν ἔμμεναι. I do not see how ὅπως ἔστι can mean 'dass IST ist' (Kranz). At 8, 12, γε was inserted similarly in Simplic., F, ἔκ γε μὴ ὄντος, to fill up the metre after ἐκ μὴ ὄντος (D.E.) had come to be written for ἐκ μὴ ἔόντος. Later, however, we find ὡς ἔστι with no expressed subject (8, 2).

¹ Frags. 2 and 3, Diels-Kranz, *Vors*⁵. (4 and 5 in earlier editions).

² Frag. 6, 1-3. Burnet's rendering of the first line is supported by Simplicius' paraphrase (E.G.P.³, 174).

distinction, the Way of Not-being. It is dismissed, once for all, in the above fragments.

Frag. 6, ll. 4-9; 7. *Warning against the Way of Seeming.*

The goddess next warns Parmenides against putting his trust in that Way of Seeming in which she has said that he must be instructed, as well as in the Way of Truth. It is the Way of mortal belief based upon sense experience. Frag. 6 continues:

'But secondly (I hold thee back) from the Way whereon mortals who know nothing wander, two-headed; for perplexity guides the wandering thought in their breasts, and they are borne along, both deaf and blind, bemused, as undiscerning hordes,¹ who have determined to believe that *it is and it is not, the same and not the same*, and for whom there is a way of all things that turns back upon itself (frag. 6, 4-end).

For never shall this be proved: that things that are not are; but do thou hold back thy thought from this Way of inquiry, nor let custom that comes of much experience force thee to cast along this Way an aimless eye and a droning ear and tongue, but judge by reasoning the much-debated proof I utter.²

There is only one Way left that can be spoken of, namely, that *It is.*' (Here follows the whole Way of Truth.)

I have called this second way of untruth the 'Way of Seeming' and translated βροτῶν δόξας (I, 30) 'what seems to mortals', because 'opinions' or 'beliefs' is too narrow a rendering. 'What seems to mortals' (τὰ δοκοῦντα, I, 31) includes (a) what *seems real* or appears to the senses; (b) what *seems true*, what all men, misled by the senses, believe and the dogmas taught by philosophers and

¹ This abusive denunciation of 'mortals who know nothing' (uninitiate, in contrast with οἱ εἰδότες, οἱ σοφοί) may be a traditional feature borrowed from the literature of mystic revelation (Diels, *Parmenides Lehrgedächtnis*, 68). Cf. Kern, Orphic. Frag. 233, θῆρες τ' οἰωνοὶ τε βροτῶν τ' ἀετώσια φύλα, | ἄχθεα γῆς, εἰδῶλα τετυγμένα, μηδαμὰ μηδὲν | εἰδότες, followed by lines in imitation of Hom., *Hymn to Demeter*, 256, νήδες ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἀφράδμονες οὐτ' ἀγαθοῖο | αἴσαν ἐπερχομένου προγνώμεναι οὔτε κακοῖο. Aristoph., *Birds* (Parabasis), 685, ἄγε δὴ φύσιν ἄνδρες ἀμαυρόβιοι, φύλλον γενεῆ προσόμοιοι, | ὀλιγοδρανέες, πλάσματα πηλοῦ, σκιοειδέα φύλ' ἀμενηνά, κτλ. Empedocles similarly abuses men for believing in becoming and perishing: frag. 11, 'Fools—for they have no far-reaching thoughts—who fondly think that what was not before comes into being and that a thing can perish and be utterly destroyed'.

² Frag. 7, restored to this place by Kranz with the approval of Diels, *Vors.*⁴ (1922), i, xxviii. Eye and ear have no real external object. The tongue may stand for taste or speech, which is sometimes ranked with the senses; Hippocr. π. διαίτης, I, 23, the seven αἰσθήσεις include στόμα διαλέκτου and respiration.

poets on the same basis; and (c) what has *seemed right* to men (*γενόμεσται*), the decision they have 'laid down' to recognise appearances and the beliefs founded on them in the conventional institution of language. This decision is mentioned where the Way of Truth denies that any second being can arise alongside of the being that already exists: 'Therefore all those things will be a mere word—all the things that mortals have laid down (*κατέθεντο*), believing that they are true, namely becoming and perishing, both being and not being, change of place, and interchange of bright colour' (8, 38-41). And again, where the Way of Seeming begins: 'For mortals have laid down their decision (*κατέθεντο γνώμας*) to name two forms, of which it is not right to name one; and that is where they have gone astray' (8, 53-54, followed by the description of the two forms, Fire and Night, and the whole cosmogony of the second part).

Parmenides means that all men—common men and philosophers alike—are agreed to believe in the reality of the world our senses seem to show us. The premisses they start from is neither the recognition of the One Being only (from which follows the Way of Truth and nothing more) nor the recognition of an original state of sheer nothingness (which would lead to the impassable Way of Not-being). What mortals do in fact accept as real and ultimate is a world of diversity, in which things 'both are and are not', passing from non-existence to existence and back again in becoming and perishing, and from being *this* ('the same') to 'being something else' ('not the same') in change. The elements, they think, are modified or transformed on a 'way to and fro', that turns back upon itself.¹ Becoming, change, and the diversity they presuppose must be assumed in any cosmogony. They will be assumed in the cosmogony of the second part. But Parmenides alone perceives that at this point error begins to go beyond the limits of truth.

Premises of the Way of Truth.

In these passages Parmenides has stated the premisses from which the Way of Truth will deduce the attributes of the real.

(1) *That which is, is, and cannot not-be; that which is not, is not, and cannot be.* The real exists and can never be non-existent. It follows that there is no such thing as coming-to-be out of non-existence or perishing into non-existence. 'Being' has for Parmenides a strict and absolute sense: a thing either is or is not. If it is, it is completely and absolutely; if it is not, it is simply nothing. There are no degrees of being; a thing cannot be partly

¹ There may be a special reference to Heraclitus' ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω, but Anaximenes' Air also is rarefied into Fire and condensed into Water and Earth.

Wie immer man denkt, voeiv steht für enangehen
denn (Figurativ) für doxere -- in 26. Vers ist doxere doxere
das "palaio" und ist doxere fr. 7, 5.

INTRODUCTION

real and partly unreal. There can never be a state of not-being in which what is could ever be; and there can be no transition from not-being to being or from being to not-being. Nor can there be any change of that which is; for that would mean that it *is not* at one time what it is at another.

(2) *That which is can be thought or known, and uttered or truly named; that which is not, cannot.* This premiss is concerned with the relation of the real to thought and language. 'It is the same thing that can be thought and that can be'.¹ 'Thinking and the thought that "it is" are one and the same. For you will not find thought apart from that which is, in respect of which thought is uttered.'² Thought is uttered in names that are true, i.e., names of what really is. In names that are not true no thought or meaning is expressed. You will not find thought (meaning) apart from something real, which is meant by the utterance of that thought in words. There is nothing else for words to mean. Frag. 8 continues: 'For there is and shall be no other thing besides what is, since Destiny has fettered it so as to be whole and immovable.' (Since it is 'whole', complete and all-containing, there is no second thing beside it, to be thought or spoken of. And it is 'immovable' or unchangeable; so there will never be a second thing arising out of it. The real cannot cease to be just what it is and become something else). 'Therefore all those (names) will be a mere word—all the (names) that mortals have agreed upon, believing that they are true: becoming and perishing, both being and not being, change of place and interchange of bright colour.' All these terms are dismissed as empty names which are meaningless, since they do not apply to what is, and there is nothing else for them to mean.

Only what is can be thought or truly named; and only what can be thought can be. The real must be the same as the conceivable and logically coherent, what is thinkable by reasoning (*λόγος*) as

¹ Frag. 3, τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἔστιν τε καὶ εἶναι. I follow Zeller and Burnet in reading ἔστιν, 'it is possible'. Other ways of construing the words (suggested by Heidel, H. Gomperz, and others) yield the same sense. I cannot believe that Parmenides meant: 'To think is the same thing as to be.' He nowhere suggests that his One Being thinks, and no Greek of his date or for long afterwards would have seen anything but nonsense in the statement that 'A exists' means the same thing as 'A thinks'.

² Frag. 8, 34, ταῦτόν δ' ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὐνεκεν ἔστι νόημα. The context supports the above rendering (Heidel, Fränkel, H. Gomperz, Kranz). Parmenides certainly held that there can be no thought without an object which is; but nothing in the poem supports the interpretation that thinking is the same thing as its object. Burnet's translation: 'the thing that can be (ἔστι) thought and that for the sake of which the thought exists is the same' is rather tautologous: it amounts to 'what can be thought is the object of thought'.

PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH

opposed to the senses (frag. 7, 5). The real is the same as the rational. And the real is the only thing that can be named or 'uttered'. In a sense Parmenides does not deny that it is possible to believe and say what is false; mortals are accused of doing both. But he appears to hold the view, which was maintained later, that all false statements are meaningless. Plato formulates it as follows: 'To think (or say) what is false is to think what is not; but that is to think nothing; and that, again, is not to think at all.'¹ In a word, it is impossible to say or think what is false, because there is nothing for a false statement to mean or refer to. So Parmenides holds that false names like 'becoming', 'perishing', are meaningless. Only thought (*νοεῖν*), as distinct from belief founded on the senses, has a real object.

(3) *That which is, is one and cannot be many.* This is a third premiss, for which Parmenides gives no proof. Theophrastus² supplied it as follows: 'What is beside that which is, is not; what is not is nothing; therefore that which is, is one.' Theophrastus was probably following Aristotle³: 'Claiming that, besides that which is, that which is not is nothing, he thinks that that which is is of necessity one and there is nothing else'; and Aristotle himself was perhaps expanding Frag. 8, 36, 'There is and shall be no other thing besides what is.' That the real is ultimately one had been assumed from the outset of philosophy; that may be why Parmenides takes this premiss for granted. What is new is his insistence that what is one cannot also be many, or become many. The unity of the real is affirmed as strictly and absolutely as its being. The real is *unique*; there is no second thing beside it. It is also *indivisible*; it does not contain a plurality of distinct parts, and it can never be divided into parts. There cannot be a plurality of things that are (*πολλὰ ὄντα*).

THE WAY OF TRUTH

From the premisses above stated we can now turn to the Way of Truth, in which their consequences are deduced. We possess here what appears to be a continuous fragment of 61 lines. It opens, like a geometrical theorem, with a sort of enunciation of the conclusion to be proved.

Frag. 8, 1-6. *Enunciation.*

There is only one Way left to be spoken of, namely that *It is*. And on this way are many marks, that what is is unborn and

¹ *Theaet.*, 189A, *Soph.* 237DE, *Euthyd.* 286C, 283E. See F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 115, 204.

² *Ap. Simplic.*, *Phys.*, 115, 11 (Parm. A 8).

³ *Met.* 986b, 28.

INTRODUCTION

imperishable ; whole and unique,¹ and immovable, and without end (in time) ; nor was it ever, nor will it be, since it is now all at once, one, continuous.

The several attributes here enumerated are now established by a series of arguments.

Frag. 8, 6-21. *No coming-to-be or perishing.*

First comes the proof that what is is unborn and imperishable.

For what birth of it wilt thou look for ? In what way and whence did it grow ?²

Birth and growth both suggest a living creature that grows by feeding on something from without. So Empedocles says of the sum of his four elements : ' What could augment this all and whence could it come ? ' (17, 32). Plato too declares that the world, though living, does not draw nourishment from outside (*Tim.* 33c). Both deny the Milesian doctrine of a boundless circumambient (*περιέχον*), from which fresh material could be drawn and into which the world's substance could return when it perished. In the Pythagorean cosmogony, too, the world grew from a first unit or seed and drew in breath from the unlimited, which exists ' outside the Heaven '. Parmenides is rejecting the notion that what is can have been born in this way and have grown to its present dimensions. It must always exist as a whole (*οἶλον*, l. 4).

Nor yet, he continues, could it have come out of sheer nothingness.

Nor shall I let thee say or think that it came from what is not ; for it cannot be said or thought that ' it is not '.

What is can never have been in a state of not-being ; for such a state is inconceivable and the assertion is meaningless : there is nothing for the words ' it is not ' to refer to. So Melissus : ' What was, was always and will always be. For if it had come into being, before it came into being it must have been nothing ; and if it was nothing, nothing could ever come out of nothing ' (frag. 1).

And what need could have stirred it up, starting from nothing, to be born later rather than sooner ?

Thus it must either be altogether or not at all.

¹ *μονογενές*, ' unique ', the only one of its kind. This is said of the world by Plato, *Tim.* 31B, 92C (in opposition to a plurality of worlds). Presently (ll. 7-13) it will be proved that Being is (1) *whole*, for it does not come into existence part by part, but is ' all at once ', and (2) *unique*, since no second being can arise alongside it.

² *αἰζηθέν*. Perhaps *αἰζηθῆν* (like *μυγῆν*, 12, 5, and *φῶν*, 8, 10) ?, *αἰζηθῆν*, Wilam.

PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH

This is an acute and unanswerable objection to current cosmogonies. They all assumed a process of birth or becoming which started at some moment of time. They could give no reason why it should not have started at any earlier or later moment. The last line rejects any process of becoming during which being was growing to completion and at the end of which it would be all there. ' It is now, all at once. ' ' It must be *altogether* or not at all. ' He now adds : Granted that it is always there as a whole, nothing further can arise alongside of it and in addition to it. It is ' unique ' (*μονογενές* 8, 4).

Nor will the force of belief suffer to arise out of what is not something over and above it (viz. what is¹).

This further something would have to come out of not-being ; but that is impossible. At 8, 36, he repeats : ' there is and shall be no other (*ἄλλο*) besides what is (*πάρεξ τοῦ ἑόντος*), ' with the inference that all becoming and change must be mere meaningless words. The One Being exists always as a whole ; nothing more and nothing different can be added. The multiplicity of forms (sensible opposites) and changes of quality which mortals believe in, cannot be real. The conclusion is that there is no way in which anything can come to be out of not-being.

Wherefore Justice with her fetters does not let it loose or suffer 15 it either to come into being or to perish, but holds it fast.

The decision concerning these things lies in this : *It is, or it is not*. But the decision has been given, as is necessary : to leave alone the one Way as unthinkable and unnamable—for it is no true Way—and that the other Way is real and true.

This refers to the decision given in frag. 2, where the Way of Not-being was finally dismissed as an ' utterly undiscernible path ', because Not-being is unknowable and unutterable (p. 31).

And how could what is be going to be in the future ?² And 20 how could it come to be ? For if it came into being, it *is* not ; nor *is* it, if it is at some time going to be.

¹ I understand *παρ' αὐτό* to mean ' alongside of what is ', ' *etwas anderes als eben dieses* ' (Kranz), not ' *etwas anderes als eben Nichtseiendes* ' (Diels). Cf. Emped. 17, 30, *καὶ πρὸς τοῖς* (the 4 elements) *οὐτ' ἄρ τι ἐπιγίνεται*. [Ar.] MXG. 974a, 5, *εἴτ' ὄντων τινῶν αἰεὶ ἕτερα προσγίγνεται, πλέον ἂν καὶ μείζον τὸ ὄν γεγονέναι φ' δὲ πλέον καὶ μείζον, τοῦτο γενέσθαι ἂν ἐξ οὐδενός*.

² *πῶς δ' ἂν ἔπειτα πέλοι τὸ ἑόν* ; MSS. Diels. This suits the next line (*εἴ ποτε μέλλει ἔσεσθαι*) ; but if some reference to perishing is thought necessary, *ἔπειτ' ἀπόλοιτο ἑόν* (Karsten, Kranz) may be right. H. Gomperz (*Psych. Beob.* 11) takes *εἰ ἔγεντο* to mean ' if it once was (but is no longer) '.

INTRODUCTION

20 Thus becoming is extinguished and perishing is not to be heard of.

The statement in the enunciation, 'Nor was it ever, nor will it be, since it is now all at once,' is here echoed. Only the present 'is' may be used, for there is no process of becoming starting at one time and ending at another, during which we could say that it is not yet all there, but is going to be all there in the future.¹

Aristotle summarises the Parmenidean argument, where he remarks that his own account of becoming out of potential existence is the only solution of the problem. 'The first philosophic inquirers into the truth and the nature of things turned aside, as it were, into another way,² into which they were thrust by lack of experience. They say that nothing that is either comes into being or perishes, because what comes to be must do so either from what is or from what is not, and both are impossible. For what is cannot come to be, because it already is; and nothing could have come to be out of what is not, for there must be something present as a substrate. So too they exaggerated the consequence which follows and denied the very existence of a plurality of things, saying that only Being itself is.' (*Phys.* 191a, 23.) Parmenides intended his denial of becoming to include all change; for in change something which was not comes to be, and something which is so-and-so comes to be not so-and-so but different and such as it was not before. All this seemed to him irrational.

The universal assumption of previous cosmogonies is thus rejected. No one, indeed, had believed that something could come out of nothing; and the philosophers of the sixth century had regarded their primary Being as a permanent and imperishable substance. But, not content with that, they had professed to derive from this

¹ This interpretation is supported by Melissus, frag. 2, εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἐγένετο, ἀρχὴν ἂν εἶχεν (ἤρξατο γὰρ ἂν ποτε γινόμενον) καὶ τελευτήν (ἐτελεύτησε γὰρ ἂν ποτε γινόμενον). ὅτε δὲ μήτε ἤρξατο μήτε ἐτελεύτησεν αἰεὶ τε ἦν καὶ αἰεὶ ἔσται, οὐκ ἔχει ἀρχὴν οὐδὲ τελευτήν. οὐ γὰρ αἰεὶ εἶναι ἀνοστόν, ὅ τι μὴ πᾶν ἔστι, if we understand ἤρξατο (and ἐτελεύτησε) γὰρ ἂν ποτε γινόμενον to mean 'it would at some time have begun (and at some time ceased) coming into being'. Sir W. D. Ross (*Ar., Physics*, p. 471-2) points out that γινόμενον (not γενόμενον as in Diels) is the true reading. He interprets ἀρχὴν and τελευτήν as a spatial beginning (i.e. a part which came first into being) and a spatial end (i.e. a part which came last into being), and the conclusion as being that the real has no spatial beginning or end. Melissus thus argued that 'if a change takes place, it must begin at a particular point and then spread'. This notion fits the Pythagorean evolution of the cosmos from a seed or spark which spreads to take in more and more of the unlimited. The Eleatic can admit no such process: what always is, must be 'all at once', never partly in existence and partly not.

² Parmenides' 'Way' of Truth was, after all, misleading.

just an *οὐκ ἔστι* sense -

PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH

one Being a manifold and changing world, which they had regarded as real. Out of a One, which always is, had come a many, which were not before and will again not be. And this had begun to happen at some moment of time. Parmenides declares all this to be not only inexplicable, but impossible. Their real primary Being admittedly never began and will never cease to exist. But besides this a real ordered world of things was to be born and grow. Out of what? Not out of the original real Being, for that already was, absolutely and completely; no second being could come out of it. Not out of nothing, for all agreed that nothing could come out of nothing. Therefore a changing world of many real things can never arise.

This first conclusion: 'No becoming or perishing of anything real', was accepted by subsequent thinkers. They agreed that the ultimately real factors—elements, atoms, etc.—could not begin or cease to exist. But they evaded the conclusion that a manifold world could never exist by making their ultimately real things a plurality instead of a unity, and by reducing the 'becoming' of things composed of them to a rearrangement of the ultimately real factors.

Frag. 8, 22-25. *What is, being one and homogeneous, is indivisible.*

The last paragraph showed that no second being could arise out of nothing by way of addition to the Being that always exists. Next, it is denied that this unique Being could become many by way of division, which would not involve any fresh being, but only loss of unity. Being is one, homogeneous, and continuous, without any distinction of parts, and such a unity cannot be broken up.

Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike (homogeneous); nor is there something more here than there, that might hinder it from holding together, nor some part weaker, but it is all full of what is. 25 Therefore it is all continuous; for what is is close to what is.

The One Being, if it is really and absolutely one, is indivisible, because it is all alike (without any distinction of one part from another) and uniformly distributed; there is not more of it in one place than in another. Also there are no gaps in it. There is, therefore, no reason why it should break up into different parts and so become many. This denial has several applications.

Anaximander's Boundless was without internal limits or distinctions (one sense of *ἄπειρον*) until the opposites, hot and cold, began to be separated out. If so, Parmenides argues, then no distinctions could ever break out. They could be due only to some unevenness

INTRODUCTION

or want of homogeneity and equilibrium; but that is inconsistent with perfect unity. So Melissus: 'Since it is one, it is throughout alike; for if it were unlike, it would be more than one, and so not one but many.'¹ It would, in fact, have distinct parts, one hot, another cold, or (as in Anaximenes' Air) one denser, another rarer; and there would then be at least two original beings. If there is only one, it must be all alike, and there will be no reason why it should break up into two or many.²

The insistence on continuity is aimed at the Pythagorean doctrine of the unlimited 'void' which was invoked to separate the units of which numbers are composed, and in cosmogony as the air or breath separating solid bodies in space. The Atomists later identified body with what is and the void with what is not, or nothing. But Parmenides declares that 'nothing' cannot exist; and since this 'nothing' is required to separate a plurality of discrete things, there can be no such plurality. Being must be absolutely continuous. Melissus expands this doctrine: 'Nor is there any emptiness; for emptiness is nothing, and what is nothing cannot be. Nor does it move; for it has nowhere to betake itself to, but is full. If there were any emptiness, it would betake itself into the emptiness; but since there is no emptiness, it has nowhere to betake itself to. And it cannot be dense or rare; for the rare cannot be as full as the dense, but the rare must be emptier than the dense. What is full must be distinguished from what is not full in this way: if a thing has room for anything else and takes it in, it is not full; if it has no room to take it in, it is full. Now it must be full, if there is no emptiness; and if it is full, it does not move' (frag. 7, 7-10).

Aristotle resumes the doctrine as follows: Some of the old philosophers held that what is must be one and immovable. The void, they argue, is not; but unless there is a void with a separate being of its own, 'what is cannot be moved, nor again can it be many, since there is nothing to keep things apart. And in this latter respect, they think, the view that the universe is not continuous, but consists of discrete things in contact (with no separating void, as in Empedocles) is no better than the view that it is not one thing, but many together with a void (as in Atomism) . . . Further, they maintain it is equally necessary to deny the existence of motion. Reasoning in this way, they were led to transcend sense-perception and to disregard it on the ground that one ought to follow the

¹ Restored as frag. 6a, by Burnet, *E.G.P.*³, 322, from *Simplic.*, *Phys.* 130, 30 ff., and *MXG.* 974a, 13.

² Cf. Plato, *Tim.* 57E. In a state of uniformity (*δμολότης*) there can only be rest, for there can be no distinction of mover and moved. Motion requires lack of uniformity, due to inequality.

PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH

λογος rational argument; and so they assert that the universe is one and immovable' (*de gen. et corr.* 325a, 2).

Aristotle's last sentence may refer to the goddess' injunction to 'judge by reasoning' (*λόγω*), not by the senses (7, 5), or perhaps to another fragment which is relevant to our context¹:

Look at things which though far off (from the senses?) are yet surely present to thought.² For you cannot cut off being from holding fast to being, whether as scattering itself everywhere in an order, or as coming together³ (frag. 4 [2]).

If we trust reasoning against the senses, we shall see that Being cannot be divided and 'scattered' to form a world order (*κόσμος*); nor can such an order be formed by putting together parts already scattered.

Parmenides means to assert that what is continuous (*συνεχές*) is not merely undivided but indivisible. Indivisibility always remained as the attribute of the unit of number; and it was naturally asserted of those unit-points having magnitude which appear in the Pythagorean Atomism criticised by Zeno. It still remains in the impenetrable bodies which the later Atomists, Leucippus and Democritus, called 'being' in contrast with the void. Only they maintain that there is eternally an unlimited number of physically indivisible beings, not one only. Aristotle,⁴ on the other hand, where he criticises the Eleatic dogma that 'the All is One', points out that Parmenides was misled by the ambiguity of the term 'one'. 'Continuous' and 'indivisible' are two distinct senses. If the One is continuous, it must be divisible without limit and so 'many', at least potentially; whereas if it is indivisible (like a mere point or arithmetical unit), there will be no quantity or quality, and the universe can be neither unlimited (Melissus), nor limited (Parmenides), for the limited is divisible, though the limit is not.

Parmenides has now denied reality to the Unlimited in all its senses. There is no boundless stuff outside, from which any part of the world's substance could be drawn. There is no void, either outside or inside the extent of Being. There is no unlimited plurality of units; for Being is unique and cannot be increased by addition. Nor is Being infinitely divisible into a plurality, since it is homogeneous and continuous.

¹ Possibly this fragment has dropped out after 8, 25 (Zeller-Nestle, 17, 692). Frag. 5 appears here in Proclus, and this may indicate a gap.

² Cf. Emped. 17, 81, 'Contemplate her (*Philía*) with thy thought (*νόω*) and sit not bemused by thine eyes.'

³ Heracl. 91D, *σκιδνησι καὶ πάλιν συνάγει.*

⁴ *Phys.* Aii, 185b, 6.

Frag. 8, 26-42. *What is cannot move or change.*

Motion and change had hitherto been accepted as self-evident facts, and both had been attributed by philosophers to the real primary being. This had been regarded as alive, 'immortal' as well as imperishable, and consequently as always moving; and the opposites had been separated out of it in the cosmogonical process. As Melissus' argument (p. 40) shows, it was held that nothing can move unless there is empty space for it to move into.¹ Motion accordingly becomes impossible, if there is no void. For Parmenides there can be no void, either outside his One Being or as interstices inside it; for the empty is nothing, and nothing cannot exist. Hence the One Being cannot move from place to place, nor can any motion occur within its complete continuity.

But it is immovable in the limits of its mighty bonds, without beginning or cessation, since becoming and ceasing to be have been driven afar, and true belief has thrust them out.

'Immovable' (*ἀκίνητον*) denies both locomotion and change of any sort.² The earlier rejection of all becoming and ceasing to be is invoked as proof that no motion could ever begin or cease, and no change ever occur, since any change implies that something which was not comes to be, or something which is ceases to be.

The same and abiding in the same (place), it is set by itself, and thus it abides there firm and unmoved; for overmastering Necessity holds it in the bonds of the limit that fences it about, because it is not permitted that what is should be imperfect; for it is not in need of anything; if it were (imperfect?), it would be in need of everything.³

The One Being is not imperfect (unfinished, incomplete, *ἀτελεύτητον*) and has no need or lack of anything. Parmenides connects these attributes with immovableness. They had been regarded as divine attributes. Xenophanes said of his one God: 'He always abides in the same (place) not moving at all; nor does it beseem him to shift from place to place' (frag. 26). He also objected to the gods being spoken of as masters or servants of one another, because none of them has any needs.⁴ 'In discussions

¹ Plato, *Theaet.* 180E, *Μέλισσοί τε καὶ Παρμενίδαι . . . δισχυρίζονται ὡς ἔν τε πάντα ἐστὶ καὶ ἔστηκεν αὐτὸ ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔχον χώραν ἐν ἣ κινεῖται.*

² Emped. 17, 13, can call his elements *unchanging* (*ἀκίνητοι*), though they are always moving in space.

³ [μη] ἐὸν δ' ἄν παντὸς εἶετρο. The reading is doubtful.

⁴ [Plut.] *Strom.* 4 = *Vors.* 21 [11]A, 32, *ἐπιδεισθαί τε μηδενὸς αὐτῶν μηδένα μηδ' ὄλωσ.* Xen., *Mem.* 1, 6, 10, *νομίζω τὸ μηδενὸς δεῖσθαι θεῶν εἶναι.* Eur., *Her.* 1341,

of the divine,' says Aristotle, 'popular philosophy often propounds the view that whatever is divine, whatever is primary and supreme, is necessarily unchangeable. This confirms what we have said; for there is nothing else stronger than it to move it—since that would mean more divine—and it has no defect and lacks none of its proper excellences' (*οὐτ' ἐνδεές τῶν αὐτοῦ καλῶν οὐδενός ἐστιν, de caelo* 279a, 31). The suggestion is that a perfect being could have no reason to change or move, as an animal must move about to supply its needs.¹ Parmenides' One Being inherits these divine characteristics, but he never calls it 'god' or speaks of it as alive or conscious. As Diels remarks, he must have intentionally avoided associating it with the popular conception of gods. To deny all motion is to deny life; and here Parmenides makes a clear break from earlier systems.

Perfection also implies limitedness. The complete (*τέλειον*) cannot be without end (*τέλος*) or limit (*πέρας*). The assertion that Being is held by Necessity in the bonds of the limit may be directed against Anaximander's Boundless, which he called 'the divine'. It will lead presently to the assertion of spherical shape. But here the perfection and completeness of Being recalls the premiss that 'what can be thought is the same as what can be'. This Being is all that can be conceived by rational thought.

Thinking and the thought that *it is* are one and the same.
35 For you will not find thought apart from that which is, in respect of which thought is uttered; for there is and shall be no other besides what is, since Destiny has fettered it so as to be whole and immovable.

Therefore all those (names) will be a mere word—all (the names) that mortals have agreed upon, believing that they are true: becoming and perishing, both being and not being, change of place, and interchange of bright colour.

Since Being is 'whole' and complete, there can be no other being left outside it, no second object of thought. And it is unchangeable, since there is nothing that it 'is not' and could come to be by changing. The only quality mentioned is colour, which was regarded as the inseparable concomitant of the surface or 'limit' of a solid body.² Since Being has a limit, it might be expected to have colour.

δεῖται γὰρ ὁ θεός, εἴπερ ἔστ' ὀρθῶς θεός, οὐδενός. Antiphon Soph., frag. 10 = Suid. *ἀδέητος*: ὁ μηδενὸς δεόμενος καὶ πάντα ἔχων. 'Ἀντιφῶν ἐν ᾧ Ἀληθείας' 'διὰ τοῦτο οὐδενός δεῖται (θεός? νοῦς?) οὐδὲ προσδέχεται οὐδενός τι, ἀλλ' ἀπειρος καὶ ἀδέητος.' (Here *ἀπειρος* appears to be used as by Anaxagoras of his *Noūs*. See note, ad loc., Diels-Kranz, *Vors.* 5, 87 [80], B, 10.)

¹ At *Tim.* 33CD, Plato describes the divine universe as having no need of food from without, and then as having no limbs for locomotion.

² Above, p. 19.

INTRODUCTION

But this Parmenides must deny, as well as all the other sensible opposites.

Frag. 8, 42-49. *The Sphere of Being.*

The above negations are now followed by the positive description of Being as a sphere.

But since there is a furthest limit, it is complete on every side, like the mass of a well-rounded Sphere, everywhere equally poised from the midst. For it cannot be something greater or 45 something weaker in one place or in another. For neither is there a Nothing that could stop it from attaining to uniformity, nor could what is possibly be more here and less there, since it is all inviolable. For it is every way equal to itself¹ and meets with its limits uniformly.

Here Parmenides once more denies the void as a 'nothing' that would interrupt the continuity of Being and make it a plurality, and also any variation of density such as might destroy its equilibrium and cause it to break up into opposites preying on one another.² The Sphere is the obvious figure, being the only solid contained by a single unbroken surface. So Plato's Demiurge gave the world the shape that was fitting and akin to its nature: 'accordingly he turned its shape rounded and spherical, equidistant every way from centre to extremity—a figure the most perfect and uniform of all; for he judged uniformity to be immeasurably better than its opposite'³ (*Tim.* 33B).

THE WAY OF SEEMING

At this point the Way of Truth ends. 'Here', the goddess continues, 'I put an end to the trustworthy reasoning and thought concerning the truth.' The rational deduction of all the attributes that can belong to real Being is complete. It is a geometrical solid,

¹ οἶ, reflexive, as in Hom., *Od.* xi, 434 (Fränkel). Cf. Emp., 29, 3, σφαῖρος ἔην καὶ πάντροθεν ἴσος ἑαντῷ.

² I understand ἄσολον, 'inviolable', as negating Anaximander's doctrine that things pay the penalty of their unjust invasions of one another's provinces and suffer reprisals (which could be expressed by σῦλαι, σῦλον). Plato's world needs no hands to defend itself, *Tim.* 33D.

³ The whole context in Parmenides seems to me against the view that the Sphere is metaphorical, 'a simile illustrating the possibility of rational thinking' (A. H. Coxon, *The Philos. of Parm.*, C.Q. xxx, 140). It is the movement of spherical revolution that symbolises reason in Plato (not the shape of the figure and the equidistance of extremity from centre), and Parmenides' sphere does not move. Also Plato takes it literally at *Soph.* 244E, and he is not the man to criticise Parmenides captiously.

λογος εἰς ἑῶς

PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH

occupying the whole of space, having the perfect shape of the sphere, and filled with continuous, uniform, and homogeneous 'being'. The essential point is that all these attributes belong to the categories of extension and quantity, the mathematical categories. The Sphere does not contain the opposites of sensible quality. For that reason it seems wrong to describe Parmenides' theory as corporeal monism. He does not call his being 'body' (σῶμα). When Plato has spoken of the visible world as a unique and everlasting living creature, he constructs its body before turning to its soul, and remarks that 'it must needs be bodily (σωματοειδές) and so visible and tangible; and nothing is visible without fire or tangible without earth. Accordingly the god began by making the body of the world out of fire and earth', adding afterwards the two other elements (*Tim.* 31B). Parmenides' One Being does not contain fire and earth, and is not visible or tangible. It contains neither light and darkness, corresponding to sight, nor hard and soft, hot and cold, etc., corresponding to touch. It is an object of thought, not of the senses. The goddess now states that to add these opposites, ranged 50 under the primary pair, Light (Fire) and Darkness (Night), is to take an illegitimate step for which reason gives no warrant. All the opposites appear to our senses, and mortals have accepted them as real; but it is here that they have gone wrong. These qualities cannot be deduced, like the attributes so far considered, from the premisses of the Way of Truth.

Frag. 8, 50-61. *Transition to the Way of Seeming*

50 Here I put an end to the trustworthy reasoning and thought concerning the truth. Henceforward learn what seems to mortals, hearkening to the deceitful order of my words.

Parmenides was told at the outset to judge by reasoning (κρίναι λόγῳ 7, 5) and not to trust his senses. Here, where false belief is about to take the mortal leap and follow the senses, the rational account (λόγος ἡδὲ νόημα) of the truth gives place to a 'deceitful order of words' (κόσμον ἐπέων) or names. 'Cosmos' is used with reference to its sense of world-order.¹ The cosmogony which follows in the Way of Seeming is a cosmos of false names, which are not names of the real.

¹ As in frag. 4 [2], σκιδνάμενον . . . κατὰ κόσμον, and Heracl., 30D (20 Byw.). Heracl., 1, speaks of the everlasting truth (λόγος) which might be learnt from the words (ἐπέων) and things which he sets forth; thus he claims that his words are not deceitful. Empedocles (17, 26), similarly, controverting Parmenides' denial of the visible elements, says 'οὐ δ' ἄκουε λόγου στόλον οὐκ ἀπατηλόν, significantly substituting λόγου for Parmenides' ἐπέων.

INTRODUCTION

For mortals have made up their minds to name two forms, of which it is not right to name one—that is where they have
55 gone astray—and have distinguished them as opposite in fashion and assigned to them marks apart from one another: here the flaming Fire of heaven, gentle, very light, in every direction the same with itself, but not the same as the other¹; and also that other, its very opposite, blind Night, a form dense and
60 heavy. This disposition of things, all plausible,² I tell thee; for so no mortal judgment shall ever outstrip thee.

The phrase 'of which it is not right to name one' has, I think, been misinterpreted by those who understand that mortals were wrong to name the second form, Night, but right to name the first, Fire. Aristotle, indeed, says that Parmenides 'ranked hot or fire under Being, cold or earth under Not-being'. This may not be based solely on our passage, which says nothing of hot and cold or of earth; but it must mean that fire or heat is, if not wholly real, somehow the more real of the two, or that it represents the real in the world of sensible appearance. But it is hard to believe that Parmenides, with his uncompromising alternative, 'It is or it is not,' and his absolute construction of being and not-being, can have held that fire has any claim to reality. He must have seen that our belief in the existence of fire as light or warmth rests on precisely the same ground as our belief in the existence of darkness and cold—the evidences of the senses, which see the light and feel the warmth. If the belief in fire and light as real had for him any rational basis, they would have figured in the Way of Truth; but there is not a word about them. Nor does any early philosopher conceive that one sensible opposite can exist without the other—light without darkness or heat without cold. The whole drift and meaning of the poem demand that the sense should be: mortals, though they have rightly named Being, have been wrong in going further and naming in addition two forms when not one should have been named. We must, accordingly, understand the goddess to mean: 'mortals have decided to name two forms, of which it is not right to name (so much as) one'.³ Both names are false; neither form is real. The

¹ This phrase may throw light on the condemnation of mortals for holding that being is 'the same and not the same' (frag. 6, 8).

² εὐκότα, sc. τοῖς ἐτόμοισι. Xenoph., 35, ταῦτα δεδοξάσθω μὲν εὐκότα τοῖς ἐτόμοισι. Hom., *Od.* 19, 203, and Hes., *Theog.* 27, ψεῦδεα πολλὰ ἐτόμοισιν ὁμοῖα. Plato, *Tim.* 29c: accounts of an εἰκῶν can only be εἰκότες λόγοι, ἀλλ' εἴαν ἄρα μηδενὸς ἦττον παρεχόμεθα εἰκότας, ἀγαπᾶν χρεῖ. The last words may be Plato's paraphrase of *l.* 61.

³ This seems to be substantially in agreement with H. Gomperz (*Psych. Beob.* 16), 'statt einer Einheit eine Zweiheit (von der eben die eine Einheit

PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH

next fragment, which followed after a short interval, states the consequences of this error.

But now that all things have been named Light and Night and the names corresponding to their several powers have been assigned to these things and to those, the All is full at once of Light and unapparent Night, both equal, since neither has any part in the other¹ (frag. 9).

'The names corresponding to their several powers' means the names of things (qualities, as they were to be called later) such as 'the hot', 'the cold', 'the light', 'the heavy', etc. In the fifth century² 'the hot', for example, was conceived as an active 'power' (*δύναμις*) residing in bodies and enabling them to act on our senses, and to cause 'affections' (*πάθη*) in one another. A portion of 'the hot' present in a body is the 'power' which makes us feel hot and heats other, colder, bodies. 'The names corresponding to (or falling under) their several powers' will form a list of opposite qualities, arranged, as in the Pythagorean Table of Opposites, in two sets ('these things and those') under the primary pair:

zu viel ist, nicht angenommen werden sollte), statt des einen wahrhaft Seienden zwei nicht wahrhaft seiende Erscheinungen'. Diels had already objected to *μία* as a substitute for *τὴν ἑτέραν*, but his own interpretation was forced and did not really escape the objection. See Zeller-Nestle, *l.* 703ⁿ. M. Diès (*Parménide*, p. 14) translates: 'deux formes . . . dont aucune n'est permise seule'.

¹ Cf. Alex. Polyh. ap. Diog. L., viii, 26 (Pythagorean doctrine): 'Things having equal part (*ἰσομοῖρα*) in the world are Light and Darkness . . . Light and Darkness, Day and Night, Fire and 'Air'—each member of the pair has, in the ordered world, its own distinct province or lot (*μοῖρα*), fixed by Destiny. 'Fate (*εἰμαρμένη*) is the cause of things being thus disposed, both as a whole and part by part' (*ibid.*, 27).

² Especially in the medical writers. See the evidence collected by J. Souilhé, *Étude sur le terme Δύναμις* (Paris, 1919). The prominence of this use of *δύναμις* in the medical writers is due to the obvious fact that a doctor is interested in substances in so far as they have the power to affect (*ποιεῖν*) the physical state of the patient (*ὁ πάσχων*). Hence he studies 'powers' such as 'the sweet', 'the bitter', 'the saline', etc., to find remedies containing the powers (*δυνάμεις τοῦ ποιεῖν*) required. Souilhé (p. 26), in agreement with the scholion on 8, 56–59 (Simplic., *Phys.* 31, 3), remarks on our passage: 'ces *δυνάμεις* ne sont autres que les *qualités* opposées: le chaud et le froid, le dur et le mou, le léger et le dense', and points out that the term *δύναμις* is attributed to the doctor Alcmaeon: 'Ἀλκμαίων τῆς μὲν ὑγείας εἶναι συνεκτικὴν τὴν ἰσομοίαν τῶν δυνάμεων, ὑγροῦ ξηροῦ ψυχροῦ θερμοῦ πικροῦ καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν (Aet., v, 30, 1). See also Mr. H. C. Baldry's interesting paper on Plato's 'Technical Terms', *C.Q.* xxxi (1937), 141 ff. Plato uses *μορφαί* and *δυνάμεις* for the qualities filling space 'before' the Demiurge adds the geometrical shapes of the four primary bodies (*Tim.* 52D).

INTRODUCTION

Light	Darkness
rare (<i>ἀραιόν</i>)	dense (<i>πυκνόν</i>)
light (<i>ἐλαφρόν</i>)	heavy (<i>ἐμβροθές</i>), etc.

The scholium quoted by Simplicius (*Phys.* 31, 3) adds two more pairs: hot and cold, soft and hard.

So this fragment says: Once you have named (and so wrongly recognised as real) Light and Night, drawn up a list of corresponding physical qualities, and added them to the geometrical Sphere deduced in the Way of Truth, from that moment the All (namely the Sphere) will at once be full (no longer merely of homogeneous 'being', but) of these pairs of sensible opposites. They are equally balanced, and 'neither has any part in the other': the opposites in each pair, such as the hot and the cold, are separate things, 'apart from one another', but capable of being combined in mixtures.¹ We shall then have recognised and added to our conception of the Sphere the plurality of powers with which bodies must be endowed in order to affect our senses and to act on one another.

The ancients debated whether the Sphere described in the Way of Truth was or was not the visible 'Heaven' (*Οὐρανός*).² The answer is that the Sphere, or 'the All', is not the visible Heaven until it has been filled with light and darkness and all the other opposite powers; the geometrical solid filling all space then becomes the perceptible physical body of the world. The addition has converted the permanent ground of being, which alone is real, into an initial state of things (*ἀρχή*), a possible starting-point of becoming. Given a physical body filled with opposite powers, analogous to Anaximander's unlimited body or Empedocles' Sphere, from which opposites are separated out, cosmogony can start and proceed on the traditional lines:

Thou shalt know the nature of the sky, and all the signs in the sky, and the destructive operation of the sun's pure shining torch, and whence they arose; and thou shalt learn the wandering works of the round-eyed moon and her nature. Thou shalt know too the embracing Heaven, whence it was born, and how Necessity drove and fettered it to hold the limits of the stars . . . how

¹ Plut., *adv. Col.* 1114B (on Parmenides), ὅς γε καὶ διάκοσμον πεποιήται καὶ στοιχεῖα μὲν τὸ λαμπρὸν καὶ σκοτεινὸν ἐκ τούτων τὰ φαινόμενα πάντα καὶ διὰ τούτων ἀποτελεῖ.

² Simplic., *Phys.* 143, 4, οὐδὲ τῷ οὐρανῷ ἐφαρμόττει τὰ παρ' αὐτοῦ λεγόμενα, ὡς τινὰς ὑπολαβεῖν ὁ Εὐδήμος φησὶν ἀκούσαντας τοῦ 'πάντοθεν εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκου'.

PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH

earth and sun and moon, and the common sky, and the Milky Way, and utmost Olympus, and the burning might of the stars set forth to come into being (frag. 10, 11).

The Heaven is driven (in its circular motion) by Necessity and 'fettered to hold the limits' of the visible fiery stars. These words are meant to recall, by way of contrast, what was said of the Sphere, 'held by Necessity in the bonds of its limit' (circumference), and 'fettered by Destiny so as to be whole and immovable' (8, 30, 37). The limits of the stars are those bands (*στέφαναι*) which Parmenides substitutes for the circles of the heavenly bodies forming the cosmic harmony of the Pythagorean Heaven. Thus the immovable and homogeneous Sphere is converted into the revolving Heaven with all the multiplicity of changing appearances.

If I have rightly interpreted the transition to the Way of Seeming, a much debated question is settled. Since this Way is denounced as false, it has been supposed that the cosmogony it contains cannot be of Parmenides' own construction. It has been regarded as either a systematisation or a mere catalogue of beliefs about the world held by ordinary men or set forth in the poetical cosmogonies and in the philosophic systems of the sixth century; and it is understood that the whole is dismissed as simply false. On this hypothesis it is hard to account for the form and contents of this part of the poem. Though few fragments survive, we are told enough to know that there was a long and detailed cosmogony in the traditional narrative style. The principle of the harmony of opposites was restored and personified as a goddess, in the midst of the bands of the heavenly bodies, who governs all things: 'everywhere it is she who is the beginner of painful birth and marriage, sending the female to the embrace of the male, and again the male to the female'. 'First of all the gods she devised Eros.' There followed a theogony and an account of the 'violent deeds' in the dynastic succession of the supreme gods. We hear also of an anthropogony, views about the fiery nature of the soul, an account of sense-perception, and so on. There are, moreover, some features, such as the theory of the *στέφαναι*, of which there is no trace elsewhere. Would any philosopher, wishing to discredit popular beliefs or the doctrines of rival schools, cast them into the form of a cosmogony, without a hint of irony, caricature, or criticism, so that the ancients themselves could not discover that the doctrines were not his own? The doxographers attribute them to Parmenides, just like the opinions of any other philosopher.

The more natural view that the cosmogony is Parmenides' own can claim the support of Aristotle:

INTRODUCTION

'Parmenides seems to speak with more insight (than Xenophanes and Melissus, who are "a little too crude"). For holding that, alongside what is, what is not is nothing, he thinks that what is is necessarily one and there is nothing else . . . but being constrained to fall in with obvious appearances, and supposing that, whereas the One exists according to rational argument, there is a plurality according to our senses, he restores two causes or principles, hot and cold, i.e. fire and earth; and of these he ranks the hot under what is, the cold under what is not' (*Met.* 986b, 27).

Aristotle (whether rightly or wrongly) clearly means that Parmenides¹ could not ignore the manifest appearances of the sensible world entirely, but felt bound to give some account of it, though reason might assure him that the real must be one. So he restored, 'put back again' (*πάλιν τίθησι*), the two opposite principles which the Way of Truth had banished from the Sphere.

This is exactly what we have found the goddess doing where she passes from the Way of Truth to the Way of Seeming. If we take her language literally, she seems to suggest that mortals are responsible for the apparent (though unreal) existence of sensible qualities. When Fire and Night have been 'named', she says, the All is at once full of both. To give a thing a substantive name is to recognise it as a substance. But Parmenides cannot have thought that men actually endowed the Heaven with all its appearances by an arbitrary agreement to give them names. If the appearances were not first given, how could mortals set about naming them? But if the language is not taken literally, he has left the appearances unexplained. Reasoning has convinced him that they are incompatible with the necessary nature of reality. Mortals are deluded by the senses and ought not to believe in the forms which their eyes seem to reveal. Why the senses delude us, how false appearances can be given, he cannot tell. The problem was left for Plato to attempt, and he everywhere implies that no solution was to be found in Parmenides. As himself a mortal, Parmenides is constrained to fall in with obvious appearances. He gives his fable of the birth of a visible world and all its parts, perhaps a better story than others have given: 'for so no mortal judgment shall

¹ The Parmenides who 'speaks with insight' and is 'constrained to fall in with appearances' is the man, not (as Burnet suggests, *E.G.P.*³, 182) a part of the poem containing views which Aristotle knew that Parmenides condemned. Theophrastus (*Dox.* 482) simply repeats Aristotle's statement in somewhat different terms and so confirms his view. He says that Parmenides 'followed both ways' (not the Way of Truth only) and 'tried to give an account of the origin of things' (not merely to record the false opinions of others).

PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH

ever outstrip thee'. The story is 'plausible', but not true; and he knows exactly where the error comes in. It is not an alternative to the Way of Truth, for the Way of Truth is not a cosmogony, but stops short where cosmogony must begin.¹ The Way of Seeming is a continuation, but an illegitimate continuation, vitiated by the mortal leap. To borrow the language of the allegorical proem, Parmenides has turned back through the Gates of Day and Night (light and darkness) to re-enter the world of things that 'seem', which he must also traverse on his journey through all things (*διὰ παντός πάντα περῶντα*, I, 32).

Had Parmenides been less clear-sighted, less uncompromisingly logical, his system would have been presented in a different form, as a physical doctrine of the pattern that has ever since been familiar. The Sphere of Being would have stood in the place of that rational nature of things which has been so variously conceived by science as numbers, invisible atoms, extension, energy, waves, electrical charges, and so forth. These entities seem to common sense no less far removed than the Parmenidean Sphere from the appearances they profess to support and explain; and men of science are not always able to decide whether they have a physical existence or are convenient figments of the reason, persisting in the demand, first formulated by Parmenides, that the real shall be rational. Parmenides stands alone in his candid admission that his rational reality will not explain irrational appearances, but is irreconcilable with them. Hence his system is presented in two chapters, separated by a gap which he does not pretend to have bridged and even declares to be impassable.

This gap corresponds to the most striking and questionable transition in the Pythagorean evolution of the visible Heaven from the original One: 'from solid figure, sensible body'. Even if it be granted that the geometrical solid can be built up from, or analysed into, surfaces, lines, and points identified with the units of number, how can such a solid be endowed with perceptible qualities or 'powers', like hot and cold? This is precisely the objection urged by Aristotle against the Pythagoreans (p. 14 above). No process of reasoning can ever deduce the existence of such properties. But Parmenides challenges and rejects not only this step, but every step in the Pythagorean process of cosmogony. His Sphere of Being is not the outcome of any process; 'it never was nor will be, but is now all at once'. The reasoning of the Way of Truth does not construct this Being; it merely enumerates and establishes all

¹ *Plut., Amat.* 756B, accordingly quotes frag. 13, *πρώτιστον μὲν Ἐρωτα θεῶν μητίσαστο πάντων* as occurring *ἐν τῇ κοσμογονίᾳ*, as if this were the recognised title of the second Part. Cf. Zeller-Nestle, I⁷, 683.

κλεινὴ ἰσ
δοκτεῖν ὅ
περιτοῦ
ἰσ

same
stars

to mean that, whereas in earlier statements of the theory attention had been fixed on the relation of Forms to individual things, there is no less need to study the relations of Forms to one another in their own sphere and to face the implications of statements about Forms themselves. These consist entirely of Forms: for instance, 'Motion exists (partakes of Existence)', 'Motion is not (is different from) Rest', and so on.

Let us now return to the theory of Forms considered as undermining Zeno's conclusions. Socrates' criticism is not really fatal to some at least of Zeno's arguments. Zeno was discussing, not concrete visible things like 'you and me', but those point-units which the Pythagoreans treated as indivisible magnitudes. Moreover, some of his pairs of contraries, e.g. 'finite in number' and 'infinite in number', were contradictory characters. Unless there is some ambiguity in the terms employed, his proposition that 'the same set of things cannot be both finite and infinite in number' cannot be upset by suggesting that the things might have both characters by partaking of two contrary Forms. The criticism would have more force as directed against Parmenides, who had rejected the Pythagorean conception of the world as a harmony of opposites. The Pythagoreans had their Table of Opposites, including Limit and Unlimited, One and Many, At rest and In motion, and they had seen everywhere a combination of these opposites in things. Parmenides denied that opposites could be combined: what is one, limited, at rest, cannot also be many, unlimited, in motion. He chose the opposites in the 'column of goods', and rejected the other column. He had also denounced the popular or Heraclitean union of opposites: 'it is and it is not, the same and not the same'. It was, in fact, Parmenides, quite as much as Zeno, that had assumed all opposites to be not only contrary but contradictory. Zeno was loyally supporting his master. The Eleatic position can be treated as a single whole; and it included a denial of the reality of ordinary concrete things, which was based on the logical assumption that contraries cannot be combined. So in his last words above Socrates speaks of the perplexities which Zeno and Parmenides have shown to be involved in the things we see.

It is probable that Plato had in view, not so much Zeno's actual arguments as those of later eristics inspired by Zeno's dialectic. After the dramatic date of our dialogue difficulties had been raised about ordinary things having contrary characters or even more than one 'name'. The Stranger in the *Sophist* (251A) mentions young men and some of their elders who have taken to learning late in life, who object to our 'taking any given thing as one and

yet speaking of it as many and by many names', as when we say that a man is not merely a 'man' but also 'good' and any number of other things. They tell us that 'many things cannot be one nor one thing many'. The Stranger dismisses this theory of predication¹ with contempt, and turns from it, as Socrates turns in our passage, to consider the question whether Forms can combine among themselves. Similarly in the *Philebus* (14C) Socrates speaks of the paradox of one thing being many or many things one. When Protarchus asks if he means the question how one person can also be 'many who are contrary to one another', both tall and short, heavy and light, and so on, Socrates brushes the suggestion aside as childish and no more a problem than one man having many limbs. What he does mean is the problems that arise from asserting unchanging and eternal unities (*μονάδες*) like Man, Ox, Good, Beautiful, and then conceiving each of these as distributed among innumerable things that come to be: does it then become many, or does it 'as a whole come to be, apart from itself, one and the same thing both in one and in many things at the same time'? The real difficulty, in fact, lies in the theory of Forms itself, as Parmenides will presently point out in our dialogue.

Aristotle, again (*Phys.* 185b, 26), speaks of fifth-century thinkers, later than Parmenides and Heracleitus, who were troubled about the danger of admitting that 'the same thing is both one and many', if they should say, 'This man *is* white' or '*is* walking'. Some, like Lycophron, Gorgias' pupil, banished the word 'is' altogether. Others substituted *λελευκωται* for *λευκός ἐστι*. Ross (*ad loc.*) endorses as probable Apelt's argument that Antisthenes, the Megarians, and the Eretrians all attempted to dispense with the copulative 'is'. There may be a trace of such dubitations in Philoponus (*Phys.* 42, 9 ff.), who represents Zeno himself as arguing against a plurality of individuals, such as horses and men. 'His proof is as follows: Socrates, who you say is a unit (*ἐνάδα*) contributing to make up the plurality, is not only Socrates, but also pale, philosophic, pot-bellied, and snubnosed: and so the same man is both one and many. But the same man cannot be one and many; therefore Socrates cannot be one.' The same reasoning applies to other alleged units; and without a number of units there can be no plurality. 'And if what is must be either one or a plurality, and it has been proved that it is not a plurality because there are not a number of units, it must therefore be one.' Since the real Zeno could not have used Socrates as an illustration,

¹ That it is a theory, not a 'denial', of predication is pointed out in *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 254.

it is conjectured that Philoponus was quoting from some dialogue in which Zeno figured.¹

From the passages in the *Sophist* and the *Philebus* above cited, it appears that Plato regarded such 'childish' puzzles as disposed of by the theory of Forms as stated in the text before us. If they were being discussed by sophists in the late fifth century, Socrates himself may well have expressed an opinion on the subject. When he set out to define what Aristotle calls a 'universal', such as the Beautiful, he must often have had occasion to draw the distinction, frequently pointed out in the early dialogues, between the single character to be defined and the many things which have that character, as well as others: 'I am not asking for a list of beautiful things; I want to know what "beautiful" means. What is this single character which is present in all the things and which makes you call them beautiful?' That single character would, of course, exclude its contrary 'ugly': no one could say that 'the beautiful is ugly'. But the things which contained that character might also possess the character of ugliness; they might (as Protagoras would say) be beautiful to me, ugly to you. Socrates could draw that distinction, and perhaps must have drawn it, without going on to assert that the Beautiful itself has a separate existence, independent of the many things in which the character appears. He was not a metaphysician, but interested only in finding out what such terms meant. Aristotle states quite definitely that the further step was taken by Plato, who gave these characters an independent existence and called them Forms. The consequence of separating the Forms from individual things which nevertheless share the same character was that Plato was involved in those problems of participation which Parmenides will presently point out.

The separation (*χωρισμός*) of the Forms is explicitly effected in the *Phaedo*. If I may express dogmatically an opinion about a much disputed matter, I would say that in no earlier dialogue is there a single expression definitely implying that the common character (*εἶδος*) exists apart from the many things possessing it. But in the *Phaedo* this doctrine is skilfully led up to by a series of steps. It is entailed by the belief in Anamnesis. This is shown to involve the separate existence of a conscious and knowing soul, apart from the body and its senses, before birth—a conclusion which all parties to the discussion take as satisfactorily demonstrated, provided that the Forms exist. If a disembodied soul can know all reality and truth, the objects of its knowledge must exist apart from sensible things, for such knowledge cannot come to it

¹ See Lee, *Zeno of Elea*, pp. 19, 27.

through the senses at all. Thus Anamnesis, the separate existence of the soul before birth, and the separation of Forms from sensible things, all stand or fall together. The whole of the first part of the *Phaedo* is designed to lead the reader to this conclusion.

The Forms are first mentioned (65D) in the opening protreptic discourse, which begins by defining death as the deliverance of the soul from the body: 'to be dead means that the body has come to be separate from the soul apart by itself (*χωρὶς αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό*) and the soul separate from the body apart by itself (*χωρὶς αὐτήν καθ' αὐτήν*).' The senses are a hindrance to thought; the philosopher's soul, even in this life, will renounce them so far as possible and retire into itself to think. At this point the Forms are introduced. All that is said of them here is that objects such as Socrates sought to define with his friends, Justice itself, or Goodness itself, cannot be perceived by any of the senses, but are known by themselves in their purity (*αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό εἰλικρινές*) to thought by itself in its purity (*αὐτῇ καθ' αὐτήν εἰλικρινεῖ τῇ διαβολῇ*). Any of Socrates' companions must have admitted that you cannot see Justice itself with your eyes, but can only think of it.

The Forms appear next in the demonstration of Anamnesis. Here the distinctions² are more clearly drawn between: (1) Equality itself, the definition of which we can know and which is 'something different over and above' all the sensible things which are spoken of as (roughly) equal; (2) Equals (*ἀτὰ τὰ ἴσα*), i.e. quantities defined as simply equal and nothing else: these 'equals' can never appear to be unequal, nor can Equality ever appear to be Inequality (74C); (3) Instances of Equality which are in sensible things (*τὰ ἐν τοῖς ξύλοις τε καὶ οἷς νυκτὴ ἐλέγομεν τοῖς ἴσοις*, 74D). These are always imperfect; they are described as 'in our perceptions' (*ἐν ταῖς αἰσθήσεων, τὰ ἐκ τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἴσα*, 75B); and they can appear equal to one person, not equal to another (74B). It is argued that, from the moment when we begin to use our senses, we judge of the imperfection of these perceptible instances by reference to our knowledge of perfect Equality, which we must therefore have acquired before birth. Thus it becomes plain that the separate existence of the soul before birth involves the separate existence of the objects of its knowledge.

This conclusion is reinforced by the final argument of the first part: that the soul, in contrast with the body, is invisible and has the divine function of ruling; probably therefore it is akin to the invisible and divine order of things and, like them, simple, indis-

¹ Cf. 67D, *λύσις καὶ χωρισμός ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος*.

² Precisely the distinctions which Socrates in the *Parmenides* accuses Zeno of ignoring, p. 70.

soluble, and unchanging. 'The reality of whose existence we give an account in our questions and answers'—terms such as those which Socrates discussed with his friends—belong to the higher unseen order: each of them is simple (*μονοειδής*), by itself, always the same and never suffering any sort of change whatsoever. The many beautiful or equal things we perceive, on the other hand, are constantly changing in every respect and belong to the lower order, with the body whose senses perceive them (78D ff.).

Thus Plato leads on the reader to see that the separate existence of a conscious immortal soul carries with it the separate existence of the Forms. Both doctrines are united in the theory of Anamnesis, which had first appeared in the *Meno*. A comparison of the *Phaedo* with the earlier dialogues bears out Aristotle's statement that it was Plato, not Socrates, who separated the Forms from things; and the *Apology* is witness that Socrates, who knew that he knew nothing about 'the things in Hades', did not affirm the pre-existence of the soul. The inference is that Plato arrived at both doctrines simultaneously, most likely as a result of a better acquaintance with Pythagoreanism, acquired on his first visit to South Italy.

Since the objections Parmenides will presently make are admittedly directed against the theory as stated in the *Phaedo*, it will be well here to summarise the passage where it is offered as an alternative to those physical explanations of 'becoming and perishing' which Socrates had rejected. Socrates lays down two premisses. (1) The first is the existence of the Forms: 'that there is such a thing as Beauty just by itself, Goodness, Tallness, and so on with all the rest' (100B). (2) The second concerns the relation of such Forms to individual things bearing their names. This premiss is stated in two ways.

(a) 'If anything else is beautiful, besides Beauty itself, it is beautiful for no other reason than because it partakes of that Beauty' (100C).

The phrase 'for no other reason than because' (*οὐδὲ δι' ἕν ἄλλο ἢ διότι*) is ambiguous. 'Reason' might mean 'explanation' (a common use of *αἰτία*). The premiss will then assert that the statement 'This rose is beautiful' is equivalent to 'This rose partakes of Beauty': I can substitute that form of words and so explain the sense by paraphrase. But Plato seems to be speaking, not of the analysis of a statement, but of the corresponding fact. The theory will then assert that this fact consists of (1) a particular visible thing, this rose; (2) the Form, Beautiful or Beauty; and (3) what we should call a relation between the two expressed by

'is', for which we can substitute 'partakes of'. But once more we have, so far, only an explanation: the fact that this rose is beautiful is the same thing as the fact that this rose partakes of Beauty. We learn nothing about any *cause* which would bring that fact into existence. On either view we have only an analysis of a statement or of a fact, not a reason for the statement being true or a cause of the fact's existence.

(b) The second formulation seems, at first sight, to tell us more:

'What makes (*ποιεῖ*) the thing beautiful is (not having a gay colour or anything of that sort, but) nothing else than the presence of that other Beauty, or the sharing in it, or however it may be that it comes to be there.¹ For I stop short of making any assertion about that: I only assert that it is *by* Beauty that all beautiful things are beautiful' (*τῷ καλῷ πάντα τὰ καλὰ καλά*, 100D).

But again the word 'makes' is ambiguous. Does it mean that the thing's beauty simply *consists in* the presence either of the Form itself or of the character like that of the Form, as we say that the presence of a gay colour 'makes' the thing gay? Or does it mean that the Form, existing independently, *causes* the thing to be (or to become) beautiful by somehow imparting its own character to the thing? This is precisely the dilemma on which Socrates refuses to pronounce. The language might be expressly designed to leave it unsolved. 'Partaking' and 'sharing' mean no more than that many things can share, or have in common, the same relation to a single Form; that is so, whatever the relation may be. 'Presence' is the current, non-technical, term for the possession of any moral or physical quality. Thus Socrates says to Charmides, 'You ought to know what temperance is 'if you have temperance in you and are a temperate person' (*εἰ σοι πάρεστι σωφροσύνη καὶ εἰ σώφρων*, 158B). Again at *Lysis* 217D, when hair turns white in old age 'it becomes like the quality that is present—white by the presence of whiteness' (*οἷόνπερ τὸ παρόν, λευκοῦ παρουσία λευκαί*). No doubt, the real Socrates would use this expression; he could use it with no metaphysical implications. But here

¹ Reading *οὐκ ἄλλο τι ποιεῖ αὐτὸ καλὸν ἢ ἢ ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ εἶτε παρουσία εἶτε κοινωνία εἶτε ὅπη δὴ καὶ ὅπως προσγενομένου*. The *προσγενομένη* of all MSS. cannot be right. The *Hipp. Maj.*, which seems to be based on our passage, indicates that it is the Form that *προσγίγνεται*: 289D *ἐπειδὴν προσγένηται ἐκεῖνο τὸ εἶδος*, 292D *τὸ καλὸν αὐτό, ὃ παντὶ ᾧ ἂν προσγένηται, ὑπάρχει ἐκείνῳ καλῷ εἶναι*. The genitive *προσγενομένου* may have been altered to agree with *παρουσία* and *κοινωνία*. The alternative is to read *προσαγορευομένη* (Wytténbach). For our purpose the reading does not matter.

he will not commit himself to it or to any other phrase that might imply either that the Form was present in the thing or that it was not. He takes refuge in the instrumental dative: 'by Beauty all beautiful things are beautiful'. If (as I suppose) Plato was aware that his own doctrine of separately existing Forms had never been maintained by Socrates, we might expect some embarrassment just here, where he has to speak, through Socrates' mouth, of the relation between Form and thing. Socrates had talked, like anyone else, of characters present in things. Plato has just propounded his own doctrine that Forms exist separately. This has already led to the distinction between the unique unchanging Form which is the object of thought (Equality itself) and the many changing instances which we perceive as immanent in things (*τὰ ἐν τοῖς ξύλοις ἴσα*). The distinction is clearly maintained in the argument which follows. Hence at this point he refuses to use any term implying the presence of the unique Form itself in many things. He may have been already feeling some uneasiness about the relations between the separate Form and the immanent character and setting such problems aside as not relevant to his present purpose.

Some further illustrations are then given. It is 'by tallness' that tall persons are tall and taller ones taller; 10 exceeds 8 not 'by 2' but 'by maniness' (*πλήθει*) or 'because of maniness' (*διὰ τὸ πλήθος*). In the whole argument no distinction is drawn between qualities and relations. Tallness is treated as if it were a quality like whiteness, inherent in the tall person, but with the peculiarity that he has it 'towards' or 'in comparison with' (*πρός*) the shortness of another person.¹

Plato next draws clearly the distinction between the unique and unchanging Form, Tallness (*αὐτὸ τὸ μέγεθος*), and a particular tallness which is *in* the person.² This may be called an immanent character (*ιδέα, μορφή*) or an instance of Tallness. It is, of course, only one of innumerable instances, and it is not exempt from all change. We are further told that the same person, Simmias, can possess two contrary characters at the same time—a tallness, as compared with the shortness in Socrates, and a shortness as compared with the tallness in Phaedo. This is the point which Socrates

¹ Both Plato and Aristotle speak of 'relative terms' or 'predicates', never of relations as subsisting *between* two terms. Hence they do not recognise change of relation as a distinct kind of change. Aristotle gives as the reason for there being no proper kind of change for the relative that a thing, without changing, can be now greater, now less, than another, if that other changes in quantity (*Met.* 1088a, 34). Similarly if A is now to the right, now to the left, of B, this is because either A or B has changed in place (locomotion).

² *Phaedo*, 102D, τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν μέγεθος. Cf. 103B, οὔτε τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν (ἐναντίον) οὔτε τὸ ἐν τῇ φύσει. *Parm.* 130B, αὐτὴ ὁμοιότης χωρὶς ἧς ἡμεῖς ὁμοιότητος ἔχομεν.

makes in the *Parmenides* against Zeno's assertion that the same things cannot have two contrary characters.

So far the theory has explained what is meant by statements such as 'this rose is beautiful', or 'Simmias is tall'. Plato now turns to the explanation of becoming and change, in fulfilment of Socrates' opening remark: 'we need an explanation of becoming and ceasing to be in general' (95E). The terms are carefully chosen to indicate this, including one term which is used nowhere else. Just as a thing's *being* beautiful is due to its *having a share* (*μετέχειν*) in Beauty, so its *becoming* beautiful means that it *comes to partake* of Beauty (*μετάσχειν*, ingressive aorist, from which the noun *μετάσχεσις*, here only, is formed for 'acquiring a share', 101C). As in the previous case we are given only an analysis of what is meant by 'Simmias becomes tall': he begins to partake of Tallness. This is a description of the same event in other words. Nothing is said as to any 'cause', in our sense, which would make such an event take place as its effect.¹

The next question is: what exactly happens when a thing, such as Simmias, loses one character and gains the opposite? What is it that changes or comes into existence? (1) The Forms themselves cannot, of course, come to be or perish or change: Shortness itself can never become Tallness. (2) Nor can the particular instance of shortness which is in Simmias change its nature and become a tallness. It must either retire and give place to the opposite character or perish. Later it appears that all ordinary qualities do in fact perish; the alternative of 'retirement' is included only to provide for the case of the soul, which by definition carries with it the character 'living' and excludes death and destruction. (3) There is also the person who undergoes the change and remains the same

¹ This is rightly pointed out by Aristotle where he criticises this analysis, *de gen. et corr.* ii, 9. Matter and form are not enough to bring things into being without a source of motion. Some have thought the Forms adequate to account for coming-to-be. Thus Socrates in the *Phaedo* first blames everyone else for having no explanation of becoming, and then, after laying down the distinction between Forms and things that partake of them, tells us that 'while a thing is said to *be* (so and so) in virtue of the Form, it is said to *come-to-be* by virtue of *taking a share* (*μετάληψιν* = Plato's *μετάσχεσιν*) and to pass away by losing it (*ἀποβολήν*). So he regards Forms as causes (*αἴτια*) of coming-to-be.' Aristotle then objects that, if Forms are to be moving causes, why is their generating activity intermittent? (No change can occur in them, which could make them operative at one time, and not at another.) Cf. the same criticism at *Met.* 991b, 3. It is true that Plato here indicates no efficient cause. Aristotle's suggestion that the Form might 'generate' is probably based on *Tim.* 50c, where the Form is compared to the father, the recipient to the mother. But in the *Timaeus* the moving cause is, not the Form, but the Demiurge.

all the time (102E). What happens in change, then, is that one immanent character perishes and its contrary comes to be in the subject of change. The new character is described as 'approaching' or 'invading' and ousting the contrary already in possession. These metaphors disguise the lack of any efficient cause. We have only an analysis of the factors involved in any change of quality, not a 'reason' why any actual change should ever occur, or a 'cause' which could bring it about. The only case where anything like a cause appears is that of fire and snow. Fire is always hot, snow always cold. When the heat in fire approaches snow, the snow will not admit hotness, but will perish together with its own coldness (103D). Since no change can occur to Forms and they cannot perish, this can refer only to a particular fire approaching a particular piece of snow. Socrates seems to be unaware that the only efficient cause of change he actually describes is a physical cause of precisely the kind which, in the account of his youthful experiences, he had rejected as unsatisfying.

Such is the theory which Socrates offers as disposing of Zeno's assumption that the same things cannot have two contrary characters. If the 'things' in question are concrete sensible things, Socrates asserts, simply as an obvious fact, that the same person can be both tall and short as compared with different people. Also he can be one person and yet have many parts. This means that one concrete thing can possess at the same time two contrary characters, by virtue of partaking of two contrary Forms. No contradiction is necessarily involved.

Parmenides now proceeds to criticise the theory. He does not challenge the point which Socrates has made against Zeno; Plato evidently regards that as established. Nor does he as yet take up Socrates' suggestion that the mutual relations of Forms among themselves need further study; the second part of the dialogue will have a bearing on this question. Parmenides' criticisms here fall under three heads: (1) the extent of the world of separate Forms; (2) the problem of participation; (3) the danger that Forms, if separate, may be found to be unknowable by us.

Why does Plato choose Parmenides, among all the Presocratics, to criticise his own theory? He always speaks of Parmenides with more respect than he pays to any other philosopher. He looked upon himself as the successor of the man who had first drawn, however imperfectly, the distinction between an intelligible world of truth and reality and a sensible world of seeming and becoming. In *Rep.* V he had adopted, without acknowledgment, Parmenides' scheme distinguishing (1) the perfectly real and knowable, (2) the

totally unreal and unknowable, and (3) between these two, a world of appearance, partaking both of being and of not being. But he could not follow Parmenides in rejecting, as wholly illusory, the third of these three Ways. The world of appearance must have some sort of being, and must therefore be somehow related to the world of true reality, which Plato has peopled with Forms. Parmenides is the obvious critic of this departure from the pure Eleatic doctrine. The objections here are such as he might have raised. (1) If there are to be many Forms instead of the one real Being, how many are there? On what principle does Plato decide that there is, or is not, a Form for any set of things with a common name? (2) If the world of Seeming has some ground in reality, what is the relation which holds the two worlds together? (3) If no intelligible account can be given of this relation, will not the real world be entirely cut off from the sensible, by a gulf which our knowledge cannot pass?

130A-E. *Parmenides criticises the theory of Forms.* (1) *What classes of things have Forms?*

130A. While Socrates was speaking, Pythodorus said he was expecting every moment that Parmenides and Zeno would be annoyed; but they listened very attentively and kept on exchanging glances and smiles in admiration of Socrates. When he ended, Parmenides expressed this feeling: Socrates, he said, your eagerness for discussion is admirable.

B. And now tell me: have you yourself drawn this distinction you speak of and separated apart on the one side Forms themselves and on the other the things that share in them? Do you believe that there is such a thing as Likeness itself apart from the likeness that we possess, and so on with Unity and Plurality and all the terms in Zeno's argument that you have just been listening to?

Certainly I do, said Socrates.

Here, as in the *Phaedo*, the distinction is quite clearly marked between (1) the separate Form; (2) the immanent character, 'the likeness that we have'; and (3) the concrete things which partake of, or share, the Form and contain the character.

The first class of terms, about which Socrates has no doubts, are such as those which had figured in Zeno's arguments: Likeness and Unlikeness, Unity and Plurality, Motion and Rest, etc. We are not to infer that this class contains only these contraries, however many they were. All the mathematical Forms, at least, would belong here. The similar list of 'common' terms at *Theaetetus*,

185, includes, with Being and Not-being, Likeness and Unlikeness, Sameness and Difference, Unity and Plurality, *Odd and Even and number in general*. To this class is next added (as in the *Theaetetus* and the *Phaedo*) the moral Forms.

130B. And also in cases like these, asked Parmenides: is there, for example, a Form of Rightness or of Beauty or of Goodness, and of all such things?

Yes.

2 It has often been pointed out that Plato must have started by recognising the Forms of moral qualities, because these had been the main object of Socrates' inquiries. The claim of the mathematical Forms becomes prominent in the *Meno* and *Phaedo* with the doctrine of Anamnesis, since mathematical truth is pre-eminently recoverable by recollection. The mathematical sciences were the only sciences in the full sense, yielding exact truth about unchanging objects. Socrates' doubts begin only with the remaining classes.

130C. And again, a Form of Man, apart from ourselves and all other men like us—a Form of Man as something by itself? Or a Form of Fire or of Water?

I have often been puzzled about those things, Parmenides, whether one should say that the same thing is true in their case or not.

The Forms of the species of living creatures and of the four elements do not appear in the early dialogues. The species (Man, Ox) figure in the *Philebus* (15A), and they are all contained in the intelligible Living Creature of the *Timaeus* (30C). The *Timaeus* also asserts Forms of the four elements (51B). The need for Forms of these products of divine workmanship, as they are called at *Sophist*, 266B, 'ourselves and all other living creatures and the elements of natural things, fire, water, and their kindred', would become clear when the theory was applied to the philosophy of Nature. The real Socrates never so applied it. The *Phaedo* is probably true to fact in representing Socrates as giving up all hope of finding a really satisfactory explanation of the physical world before he turned from 'things' to dialectical discussions. It is borne out by Aristotle's statement that Socrates did not concern himself with Nature as a whole.

130C. Are you also puzzled, Socrates, about cases that might be thought absurd, such as hair or mud or dirt or any other trivial and undignified objects? Are you doubtful whether

130C. or not to assert that each of these has a separate Form distinct from things like those we handle¹?

D. Not at all, said Socrates; in these cases, the things are just the things we see; it would surely be too absurd to suppose that they have a Form. All the same, I have sometimes been troubled by a doubt whether what is true in one case may not be true in all. Then, when I have reached that point, I am driven to retreat, for fear of tumbling into a bottomless pit of nonsense. Anyhow, I get back to the things which we were just now speaking of as having Forms, and occupy my time with thinking about them.

E. That, replied Parmenides, is because you are still young, Socrates, and philosophy has not yet taken hold of you so firmly as I believe it will some day. You will not despise any of these objects then; but at present your youth makes you still pay attention to what the world will think.

Socrates' only expressed objection to Forms of this class is that it seems absurd to suppose Forms of such insignificant things. Parmenides rightly dismisses this objection as unphilosophical, but does not say that they must have Forms. The impression is left that the field of Forms had been too narrowly restricted; attention had been fixed on the moral and mathematical Forms, and the question what other Forms must be recognised had not been faced. If Socrates here stands for the Platonic Socrates of the early and middle dialogues, it is true that, all through these, the prevailing interest had been moral, religious, and political, not metaphysical. The moral Forms were by far the most prominent. The mathematical Forms had appeared in the theory of Anamnesis, but the chief point of that theory was to establish the pre-existence of the soul. It is only when the doctrine of Forms is applied to the explanation of 'the whole of Nature' that this question of their extent becomes a problem.² The *Parmenides* stands at the beginning of the later series in which Plato sets his own doctrine beside the main Presocratic systems and indicates where he agrees or disagrees with them. The series leads up to the cosmology of the *Timaeus*. Since nothing further is said about this matter in our dialogue, it is unnecessary to examine once more the difficulties of reconciling Aristotle's evidence with the Platonic

¹ Diès' correction, *ὃν ἄλλο αὖ τῶν οἷων ἡμεῖς μεταχειρ.* (Cf. C, I, τῶν οἷων ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν), seems the best yet proposed.

² In *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 9, I have suggested that the difficulty arises from the double origin of the theory, in Socrates' search for the definition of terms and in the Pythagorean doctrine of the nature of things.

131D. which is smaller than Largeness itself. Will not that seem unreasonable?

It will indeed.

And again, if it is Equality that a thing receives some small part of, will that part, which is less than Equality itself, make its possessor equal to something else?

No, that is impossible.

Well,¹ take Smallness: is one of us to have a portion of Smallness, and is Smallness to be larger than that portion, which is a part of it? On this supposition again Smallness itself will be larger, and anything to which the portion taken

E. is added will be smaller, and not larger, than it was before.

That cannot be so.

Well then, Socrates, how are the other things going to partake of your Forms, if they can partake of them neither in part nor as wholes?

Really, said Socrates, it seems no easy matter to determine in any way.²

There is evidence that the immanence of Forms was discussed at the Academy.³ Aristotle remarks that Forms can contribute nothing to the being of things unless they are in them; they might in that case be regarded as causes 'in the same way as white is the cause of whiteness to the white thing by being mixed in it; but this theory, first stated by Anaxagoras and later by Eudoxus and some others, is easily refuted' (*Met.* A, 991a, 13). Alexander enumerates the objections from Aristotle's *περὶ ἰδεῶν* B (Frag. 189R): (1) Forms would have to be bodies and also contrary to one another; (2) either the whole Form or a part of it would have to be in each thing: if the whole, then what is numerically one would be in many things; if a part, a man will contain only a part of the Form Man; (3) Forms would be divisible; (4) there would

¹ Punctuate 'Ἀλλὰ τοῦ σμικροῦ . . . ἐαυτοῦ ὄντος; as a question. As the text stands, ἄλλα could only introduce an alternative consequence of the previous supposition about τὸ ἴσον; but it does not. This is a third supposition, τοῦ σμικροῦ standing first and carrying the emphasis, like αὐτὸ τὸ μέγεθος and τοῦ ἴσου in the previous speeches. Two consequences follow: (1) Smallness itself will be larger than the portion of it taken by the small thing, and (2) this portion taken from Smallness (τὸ ἀφαιρεθέν), though added to the thing, will not make it greater, but smaller than before. Proclus (v, p. 113) interprets correctly. So does M. Diès, but he prints the current punctuation, which will not yield the sense required.

² Aristotle's statement (*Met.* 987b, 13) that the Pythagoreans and Plato left the nature of 'participation' or 'imitation' an open question for discussion, has been taken to refer to this conclusion.

³ Jaeger, *Aristoteles*, p. 16.

be many Forms, not one only, mixed in each thing; (5) Forms would not be models; (6) they would perish with the things in which they are mixed; and (7) they would not be exempt from motion. This criticism indicates that Eudoxus was conceiving participation in the same material way as Parmenides here. The terminology of the theory, which was borrowed from current speech, lent itself to such interpretation.¹ In the medical writers and the early philosophers 'the hot' (τὸ θερμόν), for example, is spoken of as if it were a material substance, a 'part' of which could be 'present in' a thing which would thus 'possess a share' of it. Eudoxus, apparently, proposed to understand participation in a Platonic Form, such as αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν or αὐτὸ τὸ μέγα in just this way. The objection raised by Parmenides is identical with one of Aristotle's; and our passage might be understood as Plato's own rejection of such a crude interpretation. Parmenides' examples, Large, Equal, and Small, bring out the absurdity of supposing that 'Largeness itself' (αὐτὸ τὸ μέγεθος) or 'the Large itself' (αὐτὸ τὸ μέγα) is a large thing, which could be divided into parts. Owing to the current use of language, it would be difficult for the ordinary Greek to realise that Largeness or 'the Large' was not itself large; it would have seemed to him a contradiction to say 'the Large itself is not large'. There is, in fact, an ambiguity in the expression αὐτὸ τὸ μέγα. It can mean, not the Form, but 'that which is simply large and nothing else', like Socrates' αὐτὰ τὰ ὅμοια (129B) which meant 'things which are simply alike and nothing else'. As Socrates said, it would be contradiction to say that such things were unlike or not alike. Plato himself was aware of this ambiguity; and it will be part of the purpose of the second part to call attention to it.² The young Socrates, however, is not represented as capable of detecting it; though he will presently suggest a way of escape. Meanwhile Parmenides advances another objection, resting on the same false assumption that Largeness itself is a large thing.

131E-132B. (b) *The Third Man*

131E. Again, there is another question.

What is that?

132. How do you feel about this? I imagine your ground for believing in a single Form in each case is this: when it seems to you that a number of things are large, there seems,

¹ For illustrations, see H. C. Baldry, *Plato's 'technical terms'*, C.Q. xxxi (1937), pp. 141 ff.

² At 149D ff. the *Phaedo* theory, so far as Largeness, Smallness, and Equality are concerned, will be shown to lead to the impossible result that no quantity can be greater or smaller than another.

Parmenides now adds a second objection.

132C. And besides, said Parmenides, according to the way in which you assert that the other things have a share in the Forms, must you not hold either that each of those things consists of thoughts, so that all things think, or else that they are thoughts which nevertheless do not think?

That too is unreasonable, replied Socrates.

This objection is *ad hominem*, directed against Socrates' account of the way in which things have a share in Forms—the way that Parmenides has been criticising, according to which either the whole Form or a part of it would have to be in the thing. If Forms are acts of thinking, each thing will be composed of acts of thinking; and either everything will think (not minds only), or there will be acts of thinking which do not think—a contradiction in terms. It may be noted that Plato's Parmenides repudiates the doctrine which some critics ascribe to the real Parmenides, that 'to think is the same thing as to be': τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ εἶναι (see above, p. 34).

Socrates abandons his suggestion. Some modern writers have not abandoned it, but have talked of the Forms as the 'thoughts of God', as if they existed only in his mind. This 'God' is to be the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*. But there is no warrant anywhere in Plato for saying that the Forms, which the Demiurge takes as his model, depend on his mind for their existence or are his acts of thinking; still less for saying that the copies of the Forms in the sensible world are thoughts composing things. If any serious meaning can be found in such statements, it is not a meaning that we have the smallest right to attribute to Plato.

132C-133A. *Can the objections be met by making the Forms patterns of which there are likenesses in things?*

Socrates now returns to his view that there are separate Forms, fixed in the nature of things or in reality (*ἐν τῇ φύσει*), a term which, as Proclus remarks, Plato often uses of the intelligible world. He now suggests that the relation of the Form to the immanent character may be that of pattern to copy. If 'participation' means only the resemblance which a copy has to its original, we shall escape the difficulties entailed by the crude notion that the Form is a thing, all or parts of which might be in individuals. There may be any number of mirror images of the same object. Neither the object nor any part of it will be *in* the image or *in* the mirror; but each image can reflect its whole character. May not the whole

character of the Form be reproduced, on this analogy, in any number of individuals?

132C. (*Socrates continues.*) But, Parmenides, the best I can
D. make of the matter is this: that these Forms are as it were patterns fixed in the nature of things; the other things are made in their image and are likenesses¹; and this participation they come to have in the Forms is nothing but their being made in their image.

Well, if a thing is made in the image of the Form, can that Form fail to be like the image of it, in so far as the image was made in its likeness? If a thing is like, must it not be like something that is like it?

It must.

And must not the thing which is like share with the thing
E. that is like it in one and the same thing (character)?²

Yes.

And will not that in which the like things share, so as to be alike, be just the Form itself that you spoke of?

Certainly.

If so, nothing can be like the Form, nor can the Form be like anything. Otherwise a second Form will always make its appearance over and above the first Form; and if that second Form is like anything, yet a third; and there will be no end to this emergence of fresh Forms, if the Form is to be like the thing that partakes of it.

133.

Quite true.

It follows that the other things do not partake of Forms by being like them; we must look for some other means by which they partake.

So it seems.

Parmenides' argument here is fallacious, as Plato must have been aware, for he did not give up speaking of Forms as patterns in the nature of the things. In the *Timaeus* the Demiurge takes Forms for his model, and later (52B) the copies of them are regarded as images (*εἰκόνες*) cast by the Forms themselves upon the Receptacle in which they appear. Proclus pointed out that the relation of

¹ I have used the word 'image' (= *εἰκὼν*) in rendering *εἰκέναι*, *εἰκασθέν*, and 'like' (*ὅμοιον*) where *ὁμοίωμα*, *ἀφομοιωθή* occur, because two things may be alike without the one being an image or copy of the other. But Plato does not clearly mark this difference by his choice of terms, for *ὁμοίωμα*, *ἀφομοιωσθαι* usually mean 'copy' (image).

² *εἶδος* is omitted by Burnet and Diès, following Jackson.

copy to original is not *merely* one of likeness; the copy is derived from the original.¹ The reflection of my face in a glass is a copy of my face and like my face; my face is like the reflection, but not a copy of it. In the *Republic* the term 'image' (*εἰκών*) is used for a lower grade of existence. If we examine Socrates' statement carefully, we find that he suggests that things are likenesses (*ὁμοιώματα*) of Forms, being made in their image (*εἰκέναι*), and that the relation called 'participation' is that of image to original (*εἰκασθῆναι*); he does not clearly assert that this relation is *merely* one of likeness. Parmenides then produces an argument to prove that the relation of likeness cannot be the same as the relation of participation, which Socrates has now identified with the relation of copy to original.

The argument is this. If an image or copy is like the original, the original must be like the copy. (This is true.) But if one thing is like another, that means that they partake of the same Form, and this Form, it is clearly implied, will be the same as the Form of which the copies are copies: e.g. if all men are like one another, this *means* that they all partake of the Form, Man. This is not in agreement with Socrates' original statement (129A) that two things are alike when they partake of the Form *Likeness*. 'This man is like that man' is not equivalent to 'These men both partake of the Form, Man'. There is consequently no objection to saying that this man is like the Form, Man, and the Form is like him. This does not entail that the Form, Man, should partake, or be a copy, of itself or of a second Form, Man. We merely say that the Form, Man, partakes of the Form, Likeness. No infinite regress is involved so long as we do not identify the relation of Likeness with that of copy to original. There may be many similar photographs of the same person. They will be like one another, and the person will be like them. But they are all pictures of the person; they are not pictures of one another, nor is the person a picture of them. They would not all be like the person, if they were not all pictures of him; but you cannot argue that the person cannot be like the photographs unless he is himself a picture of a second person, and so on for ever.

The upshot is that the argument is fallacious, unless Socrates meant to assert that participation is the same thing as likeness, and it is not clear that he did mean that. The conclusion that the two relations are not identical is sound; but it is no reason against regarding the Form as a pattern of which the many

¹ Cf. Taylor, *Plato* (1926), p. 358. The same consideration underlies Asclepius' defence of Plato against this use of the Third Man, *Schol. in Met.* (Berl. Edit., vol. iv) 567a, 41.

individuals are copies. Plato must have seen this, because he continues to speak of Form and individuals in these terms.

Here the objections to 'participation' end. The conclusion seems to be that (1) participation is not to be understood in the gross material sense that a Form is a substance, *parts* of which are distributed among any number of things; (2) that the Form nevertheless has an independent existence and is not 'a thought in a mind'; and (3) that it can stand to the individual instances in a relation analogous to that of original to copy, which includes, but is not identical with, the relation of Likeness. The reader is left to discover the answers to Parmenides' objections; the young Socrates is represented as unable to meet them. He lacks that training in the detection of ambiguities which Parmenides will presently illustrate. It is naive to conclude that Plato himself regarded the objections as seriously damaging his theory, although the nature of participation is undoubtedly obscure and hard for our imaginations to conceive.

133A-134E. (3) *Will not the separate Forms be unknowable by us?*

The final objection is that the separation of the Forms from their instances in things threatens to isolate them in a world of their own, inaccessible to our knowledge. Conversely the gods, if they belong to that other world, may be cut off from knowledge of the things in our world, and will not be, as the *Phaedo* (63c) declared, our masters.

133A. You see then, Socrates, said Parmenides, what great difficulties there are in asserting their existence as Forms just by themselves?

I do indeed.

I assure you, then, you have as yet hardly a notion of
B. how great they will be, if you are going to set up a single Form for every distinction you make among things.

How so?

The worst difficulty will be this, though there are plenty more. Suppose someone should say that the Forms, if they are such as we are saying they must be, cannot even be known. One could not convince him that he was mistaken in that objection, unless he chanced to be a man of wide experience and natural ability, and were willing to follow one through a long and remote train of argument. Otherwise there would be no way of convincing¹ a man

C. who maintained that the Forms were unknowable.

¹ The reading ἀπιθανός is confirmed by the later reference to this remark at 135A, ταῦτα λέγοντα . . . ὁ ἄρτι ἐλέγομεν, θαυμαστῶς ὡς δυσανάπειστον εἶναι.

Idea - thought! Expression of
thinking, but not *διεξιόδοσις* -
THE PARMENIDES 134E-135C

the Forms is to destroy the possibility, not only of philosophy, but of all significant discourse.

- 134E. And yet, Socrates, Parmenides went on, these difficulties
135. and many more besides are inevitably involved in the Forms, if these characters of things really exist and one is going to distinguish each Form as a thing just by itself. The result is that the hearer is perplexed and inclined either to question their existence, or to contend that, if they do exist, they must certainly be unknowable by our human nature. Moreover, there seems to be some weight in these objections, and, as we were saying, it is extraordinarily difficult to convert the objector. Only a man of exceptional gifts will be able to see that a Form, or essence just by itself, does
B. exist in each case; and it will require someone still more remarkable to discover it and to instruct another who has thoroughly examined all these difficulties.

I admit that, Parmenides; I quite agree with what you are saying.

But on the other hand, Parmenides continued, if, in view of all these difficulties and others like them, a man refuses to admit that Forms of things exist or to distinguish a definite Form in every case, he will have nothing on which
C. to fix his thought, so long as he will not allow that each thing has a character which is always the same; and in so doing he will completely destroy the significance of all discourse. But of that consequence I think you are only too well¹ aware.

True.

Parmenides here accepts the fundamental thesis of Plato's theory: Forms are necessary as objects on which to fix our thoughts and as constant meanings of the words used in all discourse. Otherwise, in any communication we shall not be thinking and speaking of the same things; and if the things change while we speak of them, our statements will not remain true. The Forms, therefore, must not be wholly immersed in the flow of sensible things. Somehow they must have an unchanging and independent existence, however hard it may be to conceive their relation to changing individuals.

Stallbaum first suggested that the objections brought by Parmenides against the theory of Forms had been formulated by

¹ For this use of *μᾶλλον*, cf. *Phaedo*, 63D, *φησὶ θερμαίνεσθαι μᾶλλον διαλεγόμενος*, 'people get too hot with talking'.

ALLEGED MEGARIAN CRITICS

Megarian contemporaries of Plato.¹ The only external evidence alleged was the invention of the Third Man argument by Polyxenus, friend of the Megarian Bryson; but Professor Taylor has pointed out that this was not the argument involving indefinite regress used by Parmenides. Moreover, the general attitude of Parmenides towards the theory of Forms is not such as the Megarians could have taken up. As Taylor remarks, Parmenides 'does not quarrel with the young Socrates for believing in the separate and intelligible forms; on the contrary, he expressly declares that without such objects there can be no philosophy and no science, for there is nothing else that can be really known'. This admission could no more have been made by the Megarians than by the historic Parmenides; we are told that they adhered strictly to Eleatic monism. They would have been even more anxious to deny a plurality in the intelligible world than to object to giving the sensible world any but an illusory existence. Parmenides' tone is, on the whole, sympathetic. He seems desirous to help Socrates to a clearer statement of his doctrine; he does not pull it to pieces with captious and eristic criticisms. The difficulties are of the sort that must have been raised in discussions at the Academy itself; and we have independent evidence that Eudoxus had taken the crude materialistic view of participation. About the Megarians we know very little. The followers of Euclides soon gained a reputation for eristic, and they seem to have contributed nothing more important than some paradoxes which still provide logicians with amusement.² As Mr. Hardie³ remarks, 'Burnet's suggestion of a personal and philosophical cleavage between Plato and the Megarics, and his view that the later dialogues represent a progressive "emancipation" from "Megaric doctrine", are no more than conjecture.' The conjecture is certainly not borne out by the only personal mention of Euclides in the later dialogues. The introductory conversation of the *Theaetetus* presents him in a very favourable light and reads like a dedication of the work to an old and valued friend.

The belief that the Megarians had formulated the criticisms is bound up with a view of the dialogue as a whole which we shall see reason to reject. Briefly, this view is that the second part of the dialogue is a largely fallacious tissue of 'antinomies' or contradictions, deduced by means of peculiarly Zenonian and Megarian

¹ Apelt, *Beiträge*, 45.

² A sober review of what is known or can be safely inferred about the Megarians is given in Prof. G. C. Field's *Plato and his Contemporaries*, pp. 169 ff.

³ *A Study in Plato*, p. 107.

logical methods. Professor Taylor¹ states the case as follows: 'If we assume that the objections brought by Parmenides against the doctrine expounded by Socrates did not originate with Plato himself, but are in substance a reproduction of criticisms on the teaching of dialogues like the *Phaedo* coming from an Eleatic quarter, we can understand why Plato, after stating them, should counter by saying in effect to his critics: "Turn the kind of logic you are accustomed to exercise upon me and my Socrates against your own fundamental tenet, and see how you like the result. The contradictions in which you think you have entangled me are nothing to those in which I can involve you by playing your own game with your own doctrine. I can easily do with you as Zeno did with the critics of his master Parmenides—give you back as good as you bring and better, in a way which will be highly diverting to a lover of dialectic."' Of the ostensible conclusion reached at the end of the dialogue Professor Taylor writes: 'It seems clear to me that by this enigmatic conclusion Plato is telling us as plainly as he can that the whole series of "antinomies" is a *parody* of a logic which is not his own.'²

Against this hypothesis it may be urged that the logic used against Socrates in the first part is not Zenonian in form, except in so far as the first argument against participation contains a dilemma: 'Either the whole or a part of the Form must be in the thing.' Nor is there anything characteristically Zenonian or Megarian in such fallacies as we have detected. Further, the method employed in the second part differs radically (as we shall see) from Zeno's. Finally, if it appears that the second part is anything but a tissue of fallacious conclusions, the *tu quoque* view (as we may call it) falls to the ground. Leaving these questions in suspense, we must first consider what light is thrown on the relations of the two parts by the transitional passage which here follows.

135C-136E. *Transition to the second part. Parmenides' programme for an exercise in dialectic*

On the admitted assumption that Forms are a necessity for all thought and discourse, Parmenides now offers advice to Socrates as to how he should proceed. His mistake has been to attempt the definition of Forms, such as Beauty or Justice, without a preliminary exercise of a sort which Parmenides will presently illustrate.

135C. What are you going to do about philosophy, then?
Where will you turn while the answers to these questions remain unknown?

I can see no way out at the present moment.

¹ *The Parm. of Plato translated. Introd., p. 10.*

² *Ibid., p. 111.*

135C. That is because you are undertaking to define 'Beautiful', 'Just', 'Good', and other particular Forms, too soon,
D. before you have had a preliminary training. I noticed that the other day when I heard you talking here with Aristoteles. Believe me, there is something noble and inspired in your passion for argument; but you must make an effort and submit yourself, while you are still young, to a severer training in what the world calls idle talk and condemns as useless.¹ Otherwise, the truth will escape you.

Why is a preliminary exercise necessary? The suggestion is that, before setting out to define some particular Form, there is need to study the general assumptions involved in the assertion that such a Form exists and can be defined. Take, for instance, 'the Beautiful just by itself'. What does that phrase mean? We have already noted (p. 87) one ambiguity: it may mean either the Form, Beauty, or something defined as having the character of that Form and no other, 'that which is simply beautiful and nothing else'. The Form, Equality, is distinguishable from 'equals' (*ἀπὸ τὰ ἴσα*), quantities defined as simply equal. What we seek to define is the Form. This is certainly one thing, a unity. But it can be defined only in terms of other Forms, which appear to be *parts* of the meaning defined. If so, that meaning is, in some way, a whole of parts; not a bare unity, but a one which is also many. The whole task of definition is to discover and enumerate those parts. The 'Division' of a generic Form into its proper parts is a method of reaching definitions that has already been announced in the *Phaedrus* and will be lavishly illustrated in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*. Hence, before defining any particular Form, we need to consider what definition involves: how a single Form is related to its many parts, and to other Forms which are not parts of it, but wholly excluded by it.

The historic Socrates had spent his time defining just such Forms as are mentioned here: Beauty, Justice, Goodness. He had not, as I believe, raised the preliminary questions: Have these Forms a separate existence, and in what ways can one Form be related to others? The same is true of Plato's own early dialogues, in which he had followed the Socratic procedure and tried to define Courage, Temperance, and so on. Then, in the

¹ Isocrates in particular condemned Socratic discussion as *ἀδολεσχία καὶ μικρολογία* (xiii, κ. σοφ., 18), and applied the same terms to the studies of the Academy, as useless for practical life (xv, ἀντιδ., 262). Plato defiantly adopts the word to describe his own procedure. Parmenides is not recommending a training in eristic sophistry.

that it 'is' of such and such a character, because that would normally be understood as implying that the subject exists (I61C). But here the One is not even an entity.

Neither of the two inferences: (1) that the One does not exist, (2) that the One is not even an entity and therefore cannot be the subject of a true statement that it is one, appears to follow from the previous conclusion that the One is not in time. A Platonic Form is an entity that is not, and does not come to be, in time, and yet has many characters and can be known.¹ Also it will actually be demonstrated in Hyp. V that an entity which does not exist at some time nevertheless is an entity, can have many characters, and can come into existence. At the present stage, however, these distinctions are not yet drawn and they are not strictly observed here. Plato is content to draw a true conclusion from premisses that hardly sustain it. But the premisses themselves are true; and to represent a true conclusion as following from true premisses, which do not by themselves entail it, is not sophistry in the usual sense. It is rather taking a short-cut, to avoid entering on explanations which will be more in place elsewhere. Plato could not explain everything at once; the ambiguities of 'being' are reserved for the later Hypotheses. We shall meet with a few other cases of this sort. It must be remembered that the whole of this second part is avowedly a preliminary exercise in the study of ambiguities. This gymnastic is designed for the students of the Academy. They are expected to compare the arguments of each Hypothesis with those of the others and to find out for themselves the distinctions that must be drawn—in fact, to go through the very process attempted in the present commentary. In the next Hypothesis they will be confronted with a whole series of conclusions which appear contradictory until the ambiguities are detected. In an exercise of this sort Plato did not scruple to introduce, here and there, a *Non sequitur*. It is possible that the phrase, 'if we can trust such an argument as this' (I41E, I2), is a hint that formally, although the premisses and the conclusion are true, the reasoning is not entirely trustworthy.

Parmenides ends by asking, 'Can this possibly be the case with the One?' and Aristoteles answers, 'I do not think so.' The purpose is to provide a transition to the next Hypothesis, which will suppose a One that has being and will lead to positive conclusions.

¹ On the other hand, at *Tim.* 37E, where eternity is contrasted with time, it is said that past and future ('was' and 'will be') are forms of time, appropriate to the becoming which proceeds in time, but 'is' should be used of eternal being which is for ever in the same state immovably, and ought not to be used of what is becoming.

Parmenides does not mean that the consequences so far deduced do not follow for the One as defined in the present Hypothesis. They do follow, and they have led to purely negative results. So, if we are to give 'the One' any sense in which true positive statements can be made about it, we must add to its oneness some sort of being. This we proceed to do in the next Hypothesis.

The Neoplatonic Interpretation.—Mention has been made in the Preface of some recent writers who have revived the Neoplatonic interpretation of the Hypotheses. They all agree that the One of Hyp. I is a God, beyond all being (*ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας*), unknowable, and to be characterised only by negations. This deity is to be identified with the Form of the Good. He is situated '*en un lieu surintelligible*', which Plato has described only in the *Republic* (Wahl, p. 120). For Wundt he is the Form of the Good, the *ἀρχὴ ἀναπόθετος* (*Rep.* 510B), the Cause of *Philebus* 27B, and 'the Idea of the Idea', i.e. that which is presupposed by every determinate Idea and makes it an Idea. Plato, not Plotinus, is the founder of negative theology. Speiser's view is similar; and he connects the unknowableness of this God beyond being with Socrates' saying that the highest human wisdom is to know that we know nothing. Paci regards this One as an '*unità superessente*' superior in ontological worth to the being which is the object of thought and which comes into view in Hyp. II (p. 113). This unity is a 'transcendent God' (p. 144).

All these writers would, I think, admit that this revelation of mystical doctrine could never have been discovered by anyone who had nothing more to go upon than the text of the dialogue itself. What Parmenides offered to Socrates was a gymnastic exercise, not the disclosure of a supreme divinity. He also said that he would begin 'with himself and his own supposition that there is a One', and Parmenides' One Being was not a god, nor was it 'beyond being'. The language throughout is as dry and prosaic as a textbook of algebra; there is as little here to suggest that the One has any religious significance as there is in the other case to suggest that *x*, *y*, and *z* are a trinity of unknown gods.

The Neoplatonic interpretation rests in the first place on the assumption that, when Plato says that this One has no positive attributes and cannot even 'be' in any sense, he means that it is somehow 'beyond' or 'above' being and all other attributes. There is not the slightest hint anywhere in the text to warrant this assumption. It depends entirely on the identification of the One as here characterised with the Form of the Good, and on a mystical construction of the phrase *οὐκ οὐσίας ὄντος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλ' ἔτι*

ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας πρῶσβεία καὶ δυνάμει ὑπερέχοντος (*Rep.* 509B). Thanks largely to the Neoplatonists themselves, such an atmosphere of religious fervour has gathered about Socrates' comparison of the Good to the Sun that it seems almost brutal to suggest a simpler interpretation. But can it be proved that these words mean anything more than that, whereas you can always ask the reason for a thing's existence and the answer will be that it exists for the sake of its goodness, you cannot ask for a reason for goodness; the good is an end in itself; there is no final cause beyond it? This applies to the universe. As Socrates urged in the *Phaedo*, the order of the world should be explained by reference to some good of the whole which will be the ultimate reason (*αἰτία*) why things are as they are. The 'reason' or 'cause' that explains all existence might be described as 'beyond' the existence it explains; and being the good or end of that existence, it will be superior to it in worth. It is quite another matter to say that this cause itself can be identified with a 'One' which has no existence or being of any kind. The Neoplatonising interpreter appeals to Aristotle's statement that 'of those (Pythagoreans and Platonists) who maintain the existence of unchangeable substances (*οὐσίας*) some say the One itself is the Good itself; but they thought its essence (*οὐσία*) lay mainly in its unity'. These 'some' may be identified with Plato and his conservative followers, notably Xenocrates. But the doctrine is not Plotinian.¹ The Good is not here 'beyond being', but an unchangeable substance (*οὐσία*), just as Plato's 'One' is said to be *οὐσία* at *Met.* 987b, 22. And so far from being beyond knowledge, the Good of the *Republic* is described in the same context as 'the highest object of knowledge' (*μέγιστον μάθημα*, 505A). This knowledge is the goal of the whole course of the philosopher's higher education. In describing it Plato uses language borrowed from the *ἐποπτεία* of the Eleusinian mysteries, which consisted in the exhibition of cult-symbols and images of the divinities. This revelation had, of course, no resemblance to the 'mystical union' of trance and ecstasy. Nor has any mystic ever suggested that the proper avenue to his supreme experience lies in a fifteen-years course of pure mathematics and dialectic, followed by fifteen years of subordinate office in the State. There is no evidence that either Socrates or Plato ever had that experience which was really the core round which Plotinus constructed his theology. Had any such tradition been known in ancient times, the Neoplatonists would have made the most of it.²

¹ This is pointed out by Mr. A. H. Armstrong in his unpublished dissertation on Plotinus.

² The unfortunate suggestion, revived by Burnet, that Socrates when he

On the surface the conclusion of Hyp. I is that if Unity itself, Socrates' *αὐτὸ τὸ ἓν*, is to be understood as bare unity and nothing else at all, then we cannot even say that there is such a thing. Why should this conclusion not be accepted as what Plato means, with the inference he actually draws, that this cannot be a satisfactory account of Unity itself, but we must at least add 'being' to unity, as we proceed to do in the next Hypothesis? We shall then have an *αὐτὸ τὸ ἓν* which does exist, and which might with much better reason be identified with the Good. The equation of the Good with the bare Unity of Hyp. I is in flat contradiction with the text. That Unity has no second character; therefore we cannot say it is good or the Good. It has no sort of being; therefore, if this is the Good, the Good does not exist, is not real, is not even an entity. No one will maintain that Plato could have meant that. The Neoplatonisers may fairly be asked to explain why he said that you cannot truly assert that the One *is* anything whatsoever, when he meant that you can truly assert that it *is* beyond being, and *is* good, and a god, and 'the Idea of the Idea'.

The Neoplatonists make the further assumption that the Good of the *Republic* is the supreme god of Plato's theology, superior to the divine *Noῦς*, which they locate in Hyp. II. Nothing approaching satisfactory evidence for this equation can be found in Plato's works and it is hard—perhaps impossible—to reconcile with the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*. It may be added that Aristotle, if anyone, must have understood the *Parmenides* correctly; and to his far from mystical temperament it would have seemed the worst sort of nonsense to say of the supreme God what Plato does say of the One, that he cannot have any sort of being and nothing true can be said about him. Such a theology would surely have been denounced in the *Metaphysics* and elsewhere. This is a case in which the argument from silence has considerable force.

The most that can be said for the Neoplatonist interpretation is that Unity is later on (158D) represented as the principle of Limit, which when combined with the Unlimited factor produces a plurality of limited things; and Limit is associated, in Pythagorean and Platonic thought, with Goodness. But in Hyp. I and IV this principle of unity is supposed to be separated in complete abstrac-

stood absorbed in thought for a day and a night at Potidaea, was enjoying a 'beatific vision' in some sort of trance, is plainly contradicted by Alcibiades' own words at *Symp.* 220c. Socrates had 'begun to reflect upon something (*συννοήσας τι*) and stood there considering it (*σκοπῶν*), and when he could make no headway he would not let it go, but still stood trying to find the answer (*ζητῶν*)'. Word went round that Socrates was standing 'thinking about something' (*φροντίζων τι*). The essence of the 'mystical union' is that it transcends all discursive thought.

- 144B. throughout all the members of a plurality of beings, and is lacking to none of these beings from the smallest to the greatest; indeed it is nonsense to suggest that anything that *is* should lack being. Thus being is parcelled out among beings of every possible order from smallest to greatest;
- c. it is subdivided to the furthest possible point and has an illimitable number of parts. So its parts form the greatest of multitudes.

- Again, among all these parts there cannot be any which *is* part of being and yet not *a* (one) part: if it *is*, then, so long as it is, it must always be some *one* part; it cannot be *no* (not one) part. Consequently, unity must belong to every part of being, and be lacking to none, smaller or greater. And unity, being one, cannot be in many places at once as a whole. And if not as a whole, it must be as divided into parts; only so can it be present to all the parts of being at the same time. Further, that which is divided into parts must be as many as its parts. So we were wrong to say just now that being was distributed into the 'greatest' multitude of parts. Its parts are not more numerous than those into which unity is distributed, but
- D. equal in number; for nothing that *is* lacks unity, and nothing that is *one* lacks being; the two maintain their equality all through. It appears, then, that unity itself is parcelled out by being, and is not only many but indefinitely numerous.

Thus not only is a 'One which is' a plurality, but unity itself is distributed by being and is necessarily many.

With this conclusion it is interesting to compare Aristotle's proof that there are as many species of being as there are of unity. That which *is* ($\tau\acute{o} \delta\upsilon\upsilon$) and that which is *one* ($\tau\acute{o} \epsilon\nu$) are the same thing and a single nature by virtue of the fact that each implies the other in the same way as 'principle' and 'cause' imply one another, though in definition they are different. Thus 'one man' ($\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$), 'he who *is* a man' ($\delta\upsilon\nu \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$), and 'a man' ($\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$) are the same thing: nothing is added if we substitute either of the two former expressions for 'a man'; even if a man comes into existence or ceases to exist, he does not gain or lose either his 'being' (in this sense) or his unity. Accordingly, 'that which *is*' ($\tau\acute{o} \delta\upsilon\upsilon$) and 'that which is *one*' ($\tau\acute{o} \epsilon\nu$) denote the same thing (*Met.* 1003b, 22).

It only remains to point out briefly that any One Entity must also be limited, in so far as it is one whole, containing its parts.

- 144E. Further, since its parts are parts of a whole, the One, in respect of its wholeness, will be limited. For the parts are contained by the whole; and a container must be a limit.
145. Therefore, a 'One which is' is both one and many, whole and parts, limited as well as indefinitely numerous.

The above argument is a brilliant refutation of the Eleatic thesis, that a One is, and yet a plurality of beings (πολλὰ ὄντα) is irrational. We have proved that an indefinite plurality of entities, so far from being inconsistent with the assertion of a One Being or of the unity of all being, can actually be deduced directly from that assertion, by allowing our thought to follow out its implications. And Zeno's dogma that what is one cannot also be many is directly contradicted: anything that *is one* must be at least two, as having two parts or elements, its oneness and its being; and indeed three, if we count the difference between these as a third character necessarily present. The same argument holds against Socrates' suggestion (129B) that the Form, Unity itself (αὐτὸ τὸ ἕν), cannot be many. If that Form (or any other Form) exists, it has its peculiar nature (unity or whatever it may be) and also its existence. Thus it 'partakes of' or 'combines with' a *different* Form, Existence. At least three Forms are thus involved in the recognition of any Form as existing; and these three characters are inseparably combined in any one Form. Given one existing Form, it must always be true that (1) the Form is *what* it is, has a nature of its own, (2) the Form *exists*, and (3) its nature is *different* from its existence. Thus 'Unity itself' is a whole or complex with at least three parts or elements, and so is many.

The statement that 'Unity, being one, cannot be in many places (πολλαχοῦ) at once as a whole' is meant to recall Parmenides' first argument against participation (131A). If we take Unity here to mean the Form, Unity itself, this Form, as an undivided whole, cannot be 'in' any one thing in a way that would imply that it was used up by that thing. Unity must be somehow divided and distributed among many things; for we have proved that the mere assertion of a One Being at once implies that there are many beings, each of which *is one* or partakes of Unity. To deny this would entail all the negative consequences of the first Hypothesis and annihilate all discourse. We must not, therefore, shrink from the second horn of Parmenides' dilemma, or be afraid (as Socrates was, 131C) to say that a Form can be portioned out among things and still be one. In some sense this is demonstrably true, though not in the sense Parmenides suggested, that the Form is cut up into pieces, each of which would be smaller than the whole.

The above demonstrations are of great importance for the sequel. They have established two conceptions, (1) unlimited multitude and (2) indefinite plurality, as against Parmenides' dogma that a One Being must be (1) indivisible and (2) unique.

(1) By way of division we have justified the notion of a One Entity considered as a whole divisible without limit into parts, each of which will itself be *one* part when the division has been made. On the other hand, no one part that we reach will ever be an indivisible unit; 'any part proves to consist of two parts, and so on for ever by the same reasoning' (142E). When the One Entity has been clothed with further attributes, so as to become an extended magnitude and finally a physical body in space, it will retain this property of infinite divisibility in the ordinary sense, applicable to continuous quantity.

Now, in our study of the Pythagorean evolution, we saw that Alexander Polyhistor's summary opens with the derivation of the Indefinite Dyad from the One. The One was the first principle of all things. 'From the One came the Indefinite Dyad, as matter for the One, which is cause; and from the One and the Indefinite Dyad came numbers.' Whether or not this was a feature of the original Pythagoreanism, it is certainly a feature of the later Platonism, and it is indicated in the passage before us.¹ We have here the picture of a One Being regarded as an all-inclusive whole and, as such, one and limited, and also as possessing continuous 'being'. So far it resembles Parmenides' One Being. The difference, however, is that our whole is divisible, and the whole itself and every part, though one, are also always two and so further divisible. The whole and every part thus consist of two ever-present factors or elements: Limit or unity and Unlimited multitude. This multitude only becomes a plurality of discrete units when actually divided. In itself it is what Plato calls the Indefinite Dyad, because, as he says here, it 'always proves to be two and never is one'. It will be convenient to use the word 'multitude' for this factor, and reserve 'plurality' for any number of discrete parts or units resulting from actual division. In some of the later arguments in this Hypothesis and in some of the other Hypotheses we shall encounter this conception of the Unlimited as the infinitely divisible factor or material element. As multitude, it will be called

¹ Cf. Ar., *Met.* 1081a, 14: (according to Plato) 'number consists of the One and the Indefinite Dyad; and these are called the principles or elements of number.' It appears that the 'being' which is distributed or parcelled out by the limiting factor of unity actually is the Indefinite Dyad or great-and-small. We may identify this unlimited factor or 'other' with the 'being' which, in combination with unity, constitutes a 'One Being' (ἐν ὄν).

'the Others', in contrast with 'the One' considered as the element of unity or limit. The two factors combined constitute one limited thing (πεπερασμένον).

(2) From the second point of view the derivation of numbers, pluralities of discrete units, has disproved Parmenides' dogma that the One Being is necessarily *unique*. By way of addition and multiplication we have justified the notion of a One Entity considered as one unit (the unit of number) with any number of other units alongside it and capable of being added to it to make up any plurality of units, however numerous. Since each of these other units is just as much a one *being* as the first unit, we have rejected the Eleatic dogma that there cannot be a plurality of things that *are*, existing alongside one another. From this point of view 'the Others' will mean these 'other ones', which can be invested with all the further attributes now to be added.

These two meanings of 'the Others', as (1) the unlimited factor requiring to be limited by the One (unity), and (2) other ones alongside anything we choose to call 'the One', will be distinguished and described in the complementary Hyp. III, which deals with the consequences for the Others of our present supposition. We shall presently have occasion to invoke both conceptions in explaining arguments which pass from one sense to the other. Meanwhile we may note that they correspond to those two conceptions of quantity, as continuous or discrete, of which Zeno availed himself in his dilemmas.

145A-B. *A One Entity (being limited) can have extension and shape*

Having deduced a plurality of entities from the mere conception of 'One Entity', we can now consider whether it is possible to clothe such entities with those further attributes which we had to deny to the bare unity of Hyp. I. These attributes are taken in the same logical order, beginning with extension and shape. We pass, as before, from number to geometrical figure. This was the next stage in the Pythagorean evolution: the unit of number was also the point, from which proceeded lines, surfaces, and solid figures.

From either of the two points of view our One Entity is a whole. We regarded it first as a continuous whole, infinitely divisible into parts. As discrete plurality, although the number series is endless, any *one* number, however great, is a limited plurality or total, and so likewise a whole. If we now add to this notion of a limited whole the attribute of extension, our 'One Entity' will become more concrete as 'one magnitude'. And it will be true of any one magnitude, however great, that it has extremities: any *one* line must have a beginning and an end; any *one* plane or solid figure

151E. older than itself and the Others, and also neither is, nor becomes, younger or older than itself or the Others.

Since the One *is* one, of course it has being; and to 'be' means precisely having existence in conjunction with time present, as 'was' or 'will be' means having existence in

152. conjunction with past or future time. So if the One is, it is in time.

The above is really a definition of existence in time, together with the assertion that the 'One' with the qualifications already given to it, i.e. any thing which is extended in space and can move, has existence in time. The word 'is' or 'being', which has hitherto been used in a wider sense applicable to any entity, is now confined to existence in, or at, or during, some time, which must be either past or present or future. This is a good example of a definition cast in the misleading form of an inference.

The following paragraphs explain in what ways something that exists in time can be said (a) to be becoming older and younger than itself; (b) to be older or younger than itself, (c) neither to be becoming, nor to be, older or younger than itself, but to have the same age.¹

152A. (a) Time, moreover, is advancing. Hence since the One moves forward temporally, it is always becoming older than itself. And we remember that what is becoming older becomes older than something that is becoming younger.² So, since the One is becoming older than itself, that self must be becoming younger.

B. Therefore, in this sense, it is becoming both younger and older than itself.

This is the current conception of Time as the 'everflowing stream', itself advancing and carrying temporal things with it.³ One thing borne forward on this stream will leave its former selves further and further behind. As a man grows older, the baby he once was may be said to become relatively younger. This way of speaking may be unfamiliar, but it is not fallacious.

In the next paragraph we have a different picture. All time is conceived as a stationary frame stretching indefinitely in both

¹ In this section Burnet's division of paragraphs is once more misleading.

² Cf. 141A, B.

³ Critias, frag. 18, ἀκάμας τε χρόνος περί τ' ἀενάω ρεύματι πλήρης φοιτᾷ τίκτων αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν. Aesch. *Eum.* 852, οὐπὲρτέων χρόνος. *Simplic., Phys.* 705, 8, δοκεῖ δὲ ἡ αὐτῆ πῶς ἔννοια εἶναι χρόνου καὶ κινήσεως· ῥύσαν γὰρ τινα καὶ ὁ χρόνος καὶ χορεύων ἐνδείκνυται. *Ar., Phys.* 219b, 9.

directions. It is like a calendar in which every event has a date. A thing which exists in time is imagined as travelling over a certain span, as it were from the date of its birth to the date of its death. When we say 'it is older than it was', we mean that it is so *at* (κατὰ) the date which it has reached. Now, as it travels, it is always at some date which is, for the moment, its present; and at every such moment we can say of it that it *is* (now) older than it was. The thing must always be *at* its own present date ('coincide with the present'); it can never be getting ahead of its own present date into the interval between that and some future date. So, from this point of view, we can never say 'it is now (at its own present date) becoming older'; we can only say 'it has been becoming older and now *is* older'; and we can say this of it at *every* moment from the beginning of its existence.

152B. (b) Also it *is* older when, in this process of becoming, it is *at* the present time which lies between 'was' and 'will be'; for of course, as it travels from past to future, it will never overstep the present. So, when it coincides

c. with the present, it stops becoming older; at that time it is not becoming, but already *is*, older. For if it were getting ahead, it could never be caught up by the present, since to get ahead would mean to be in touch with both the present and the future, leaving the present behind and reaching out to the future, and so passing between the two. Whereas, if it is true of anything which is becoming that it can never pass beyond the present, it constantly

D. stops becoming when it is at the present, and it then *is* whatever it may be that it was becoming. This applies to the One: when, in becoming older, it coincides with the present, it stops becoming and *is* then older. Moreover, it is older than the thing it was becoming older than, namely itself. And older means older than a younger. Hence the One is also younger than itself at the time when, in becoming older, it coincides with the present. But the present is E. with the One always throughout all its existence; for at whatever time it is existing, it is existing 'now'.

Therefore, at all times the One both is, and is becoming, older and younger than itself.

Finally (c) there is obviously a sense in which a thing must always be of the same age as itself.

152E. (c) Also in thus being or becoming it cannot take a longer time than itself; it must take the same time. But

question is: when does this transition occur? Plato takes the case of transition from being in motion to being at rest—a case no doubt suggested by Zeno's paradoxes about the impossibility of motion. In particular, the Pythagorean view that magnitude, motion, and time, all consist of a series of atomic units, and the objections offered by Zeno, had raised the question, what is meant by a 'moment'? Plato argues that the transition occupies no stretch of time at all, however short. There is no time during which a thing has ceased to be in motion and not yet begun to be at rest, but is changing from the one condition to the other. The same principle applies to all the forms of becoming.

- 156C. But when, being in motion, it comes to a stand, or, being at rest, it changes to being in motion, it cannot itself occupy any time at all.¹ For this reason: suppose it is first at rest and later in motion, or first in motion and later at rest; that cannot happen to it without its changing. But there is no time during which a thing can be at once neither in motion nor at rest. On the other hand it does not change without making a transition.² When does it make the transition, then? Not while it is at rest or while it is in motion, or while it is occupying time. Consequently, the time at which it will be when it makes the transition must be that queer thing, the instant.³ The word 'instant' appears to mean something such that *from it* a thing passes to one or other of the two conditions. There is no transition *from* a state of rest so long as the thing is still at rest, nor *from* motion so long as it is still in motion; but *this queer thing, the instant, is situated between the motion and the*
- D. rest; it occupies no time at all; and the transition of the moving thing to the state of rest, or of the stationary thing

¹ μηδ' ἐν ἐνὶ χρόνῳ εἶναι cannot mean that it is altogether outside time and dateless. It must μετέχει χρόνου. But at the instant of transition it does not occupy or fill any stretch of time.

² ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὴν μεταβάλλει ἀνευ τοῦ μεταβάλλειν is an odd statement, intelligible only if we suppose that Plato shifts here from the common use of μεταβάλλειν for 'change' in general to the stricter sense of 'transition' or passing from any one state to another. Μεταβολή will be used again in this strict sense later (162B), where it is shown that a non-existent thing can pass from non-existence to existence, but cannot change in any more usual sense (move in space or suffer alteration). Or should we read ἀνευ τοῦ <ποτε> μεταβάλλειν? 'It cannot change without changing at some time. At what time, then, does it change?'

³ Punctuate: Ἄρ' οὖν . . . ὅτε μεταβάλλει — Τὸ ποῖον δὴ; (interrupting)—τὸ ἐξαίφνης.

- 156E. to being in motion, takes place *to* and *from* the instant.¹ Accordingly, the One, since it both is at rest and is in motion, must pass from the one condition to the other—only so can it do both things—and when it passes, it makes the transition instantaneously; it occupies no time² in making it and at that moment it cannot be either in motion or at rest.

- The same holds good of its other transitions: when it passes from being in existence to ceasing to exist or from being non-existent to coming into existence, it is then between certain motions and states; it is then neither existent nor non-existent, and it is neither coming into existence nor ceasing to exist. By the same reasoning when it passes from one to many or from many to one, it is not either one or many, and it is not being separated or being combined. Similarly when it passes from like to unlike or from unlike to like, it is neither like nor unlike, and it is neither becoming like nor becoming unlike. And when
- B. it passes from small to great or equal or in the opposite direction, it is not small or great or equal, nor is it being increased or being diminished or being equalised.

All these changes, then, may happen to the One, if it exists.

Plato's treatment of the instant as a point 'up to which' or 'from which' transition occurs reminds us of his remark that the point is 'a fiction of geometers'; 'he called a point the beginning of a line, while again he often spoke of indivisible lines.'³ Aristotle, though he objects to defining a point as 'the beginning of a line' and asserts that even indivisible lines must have extremities, really took the same view as Plato's here. 'A point, he says, is like the *now* in time: *now* is indivisible and is not a part of time, it is only the beginning or end, or a division, of time, and similarly a point may be an

¹ This means that if a thing passes, say, from motion to rest, it is in motion *up to* (εἰς) the moment of transition, and at rest *from* (ἐκ) that moment. This is substituted for the description above (D 2) of the instant as the time at which (ἐν ᾧ) the transition occurs. That phrase would normally suggest a stretch of time *within* which a change occurs; but the instant is not a stretch of time *occupied* by the transition.

² For ἐν χρόνῳ meaning *taking* (a length of) time as opposed to instantaneous, cf. ΑΓ., E.N. 1174b, 7, δόξειε δ' ἂν τοῦτο καὶ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ἐνδέχασθαι κινεῖσθαι μὴ ἐν χρόνῳ, ἦδεσθαι δέ· τὸ γὰρ ἐν τῷ νῦν ὄλον τι. Mich. Eph., ad loc., χρόνου τὸ ἀτομον εἶπε νῦν. δέδεικται δ' ἐν τῇ φυσικῇ ἀκρόασει ἐν τῷ ἕκτῳ βιβλίῳ (Phys. 233b, 33 ff.) ὅτι ἐν τῷ ἀμερεῖ καὶ ἀτόμῳ νῦν οὔτε κινεῖσθαι τι οὔτε ἡρεμεῖν δύναται, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ γίνεσθαι ἢ φθεῖρεσθαι.

³ ΑΓ., Met. 992a, 20.

extremity, beginning, or division of a line, but is not part of it or of magnitude.'¹ Some of Zeno's arguments against motion as conceived by his opponents were based on their notion of the instant or moment as an indivisible part or atom of time and of a stretch of time as made up of a number of such atomic parts succeeding one another. Analogously the line was conceived as a row of points. This view suggests that a point or an atom of time could be isolated and exist apart from its neighbours. Plato rejects that idea as a fiction, and with it the notion that transitions such as he describes can occupy an indefinitely minute *part* of time. Aristotle's discussion of time in relation to motion in *Physics*, IV, x-xiv, owes much to Plato's analysis.

The view that this account of becoming constitutes a distinct Hypothesis is perpetuated by the Neoplatonising critics. It appears to be based partly on the Plotinian doctrine that this passage deals with a further emanation from the One, namely the World-Soul and all the other souls which are responsible for the sense-world, partly on the Hegelian notion that the One which is not or is beyond being (Hyp. I) and the One which is (Hyp. II) require to be, in some mysterious manner, synthesised in a One which both is and is not. Others, again, oppose the two Hypotheses as resulting respectively in a 'radical negation' (nothing is true of the One) and a 'radical confusion', in which 'every attribution is contradicted by a contrary attribution no less legitimate'.² But, if our interpretation is even approximately correct, the contrary attributions are not contradictory and there is no radical confusion in Hyp. II. It should also be clear that Hypotheses I and II do not form an 'antinomy' or result in two contrary theses calling for a Hegelian reconciliation. The two Hypotheses start from suppositions stated in the same form of words, but, so far from being the same supposition, it has appeared that they actually contradict one another and hence naturally lead to opposite conclusions. Professor Taylor has pointed out that there is no justification for discovering in the *Parmenides* either the manoeuvres of Hegelian dialectic or the deduction of Kantian antinomies. 'We have not in the *Parmenides* anything in the least degree like the Hegelian dialectic. There is no conception anywhere in the dialogue of a special connection between metaphysical speculation

¹ Heath, *Thirteen Books of Euclid*, i, 156, citing *de caelo*, 300a, 14, *Phys.* 220a, 1-21, 231b, 6 ff. Cf. Stenzel, *Zahl. u. Gestalt*, 80. Simplicius, *Phys.* 982, 2, τοῦτο τὸ ἐν ᾧ πρῶτον μεταβέβληκε τὸ μεταβεβληκός, οὐ χρόνος ἐστὶν ἀλλ' ἄτομον τῆς πέρας χρόνου, ὅπερ νῦν καλοῦμεν, ὅπερ Πλάτων ἐξείφνης ἐκάλεσεν.

² L. Robin, *Platon* (1935), p. 131.

and a particular method; no systematic presentation of a series of categories as evolved from one another by the stress of an internal necessity.' Nor again, if we apply the term 'antinomy' to Parmenides' reasonings, is this to be confused with Kant's procedure in the Transcendental Dialectic. 'The Kantian antithesis consists of a parallel proof and disproof of the same proposition: the Platonic of the derivation of contradictory results from what is to all appearance one and the same premiss. Hence the final goal of the one is to demonstrate the equal validity or invalidity, as the case may be, of both thesis and antithesis; that of the other, as it is at least natural to suppose, is to establish one interpretation of the common premiss as against the other'.¹

Least of all can the Hegelian scheme be compatible with any interpretation of the first two Hypotheses on Neoplatonic lines. If the first is an account of an unknown God beyond being and the second an account of Intelligence and the Ideas at a lower level of emanation, there can be no question of any synthesis or reconciliation involving the conception of becoming in time. Finally, I have not been able to understand how Plato's businesslike account of the instant (τὸ ἐξαιφνης) at which the various species of change occur can be connected with the 'sudden' vision of the Beautiful (Wahl, p. 171) and the doctrine of *Anamnesis* (Speiser, p. 47). The only link appears to be the use of the word ἐξαιφνης in its normal sense of 'suddenly' at *Symp.* 210E, and *Ep.* vii, 341D.

If we now review the whole course of the dialectical exercise up to this point, the results are as follows. Hyp. I showed that from the notion of a bare unity which negates any kind of plurality, nothing can be deduced or evolved. Parmenides, who insisted on the absolute unity and indivisibility of his One, was logical in so far as he inferred the non-existence of anything else: there could be no 'Others', no plurality of real things, no world of sensible appearances. But he was not justified in ascribing to his One itself any further attributes. It could not even exist or be the object of any kind of knowledge. He did, however, regard it as existent and knowable, and he called it not only 'One' but 'One Being'. Hyp. II started afresh from this notion of a One which has being, and showed that such a One, just because it is not absolutely one, unique and indivisible, can have some of the further attributes which Parmenides deduced, but equally well other attributes which he denied. It can have many parts or aspects or elements; and there can be 'Others', in a number of different senses. If we add (as Parmenides did) the attributes of

¹ *Mind*, N.S., No. 19, pp. 325-6.

spatial extension and shape, there is no reason why it should not have motion and all the kinds of change in time. In fact there is nothing to arrest our thought from proceeding all the way from the conception of a 'One Entity' to the existence in space and time of a multitude of physical bodies, capable of motion and of every kind of change, and perceptible by the senses.

As against Zeno, Plato has triumphantly disproved his fundamental assumption that the same thing cannot have two contrary attributes. The One of Hyp. I can have no attributes at all. The One Being of Hyp. II can have a whole string of contrary attributes, provided we observe those distinctions which Zeno ignored in the meanings of ambiguous terms.

By casting the whole into the form of a deduction, I understand Plato to indicate that there is no logical barrier such as Parmenides' goddess set up between the deductions of the first part of his poem and the mythical cosmogony of the second part. The existence of a manifold and changing world in time is not an irrational or self-contradictory illusion of mortals. Reasoning will carry us all the way from Parmenides' own hypotheses of a One which has being to the notion of the sensible body with contrary qualities. The Pythagorean evolution, starting from the Monad and ending with the sensible body, is restored and justified. But this train of reasoning simply postulates the addition of one attribute after another, in a logical order. It must not be confused with an account of how a sensible world could actually come into existence, by 'emanation' from a supreme One. There is no hint of any moving cause. The production of a sensible world can be explained only in the imagery of a creation myth such as we find in the *Timaeus*.

In studying the relations of 'the One' to 'the Others', we have already learnt a good deal about these 'Others' and been led to distinguish various senses of the term. But in accordance with the original plan, the next step will be to consider these Others on their own merits, and what are 'the consequences for them' of the same supposition as in Hyp. II of a One which has being and is capable of all the other attributes we have ascribed to it.

HYPOTHESIS III

The supposition here is the same as in Hyp. II. This means that all the consequences of that Hypothesis are taken as established. It was there shown that, since plurality follows directly from the notion of a One that has being, there is nothing illogical

in supposing an indefinite number of things which, by the addition of successive qualifications, can become a multitude of bodies situated in space and capable of motion and rest. From that point (146B) onwards we heard of the relations which one such thing could have to 'the Others'. These Others could be regarded as simply the other members of a set of such things, differing numerically from any one member which we choose to call 'the One' (146D). This is the conception of the Others from which we start here. There is no need to deduce once more the possibility of their existence. The Others will correspond to the One at every stage in the 'evolution'. There will be a One and Others, whether we are speaking simply of a mere One Entity, or of the unit of number, or of numbers as wholes, or of Forms, or of geometrical magnitudes, or of sensible bodies existing in space and time. The recognition that there must be Others at all these levels escapes the difficulties that beset interpreters who assume either that the Others here (and in Hyp. II) are 'the other Forms' only, or that they are not the Others of Hyp. II but 'the sensible world'.

This Hypothesis is, accordingly, short. The first section establishes the relevant definition of the Others, as against different possible senses of 'things other than the One', or 'other than one'. It points out that the Others, as here defined, form one whole set, each member of which also is one. The second section points out that these 'other ones' are complex, each containing, besides the unity which it has, an unlimited element which has that unity but can be conceived in abstraction from it. Finally, it is briefly remarked that, when the two factors are combined in limited things, these 'other ones' can possess all the contrary attributes which Hyp. II has ascribed to the One. The conclusion is that there is no ground for asserting, with Parmenides, that a One Being must be unique. There may be, and indeed are, any number of other one-beings (*πολλὰ ἄντα*).

157B-158B. *If the One is defined as One Entity which is both one and many or a whole of parts (as in Hyp. II), the Others, as a plurality of other ones, form one whole, of which each part is one.*

The expression 'things other than one' or 'other than the One' (*ἄλλα τοῦ ἑνός*) is highly ambiguous. As we have already seen, 'one' or 'the One' has several meanings, and there are also several ways of being 'other' (146B ff.). Plato is concerned here to define a sense of 'things other than the One' which will allow of such things existing, having each its unity, and being the subjects of true statements ascribing to them the whole series of contrary attributes in their relations among themselves. It is pointed out