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Ph.D Thesis

Parmenides and Ancient Mereology

Department of Classics and Ancient History

Matilde Berti

First Supervisor: Prof. Phillip S. Horky

Second Supervisor: Prof. Anna Marmodoro

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Parmenides and Ancient Mereology

Matilde Berti

Abstract

This Ph.D. thesis aims to demonstrate that Parmenides' account of What-Is provides a conception of Monism that, in unprecedented ways, answers the philosophical problem of the relation between Parts and Wholes, which overlaps with that of the relation between One and Many. Specifically, according to my reading of Parmenides' Monism, What-Is is a complex yet singular entity that is to be considered a 'whole', rather than an 'all'.

The innovative methodology developed in this thesis combines contemporary mereological theories with concept studies of Parmenides and his predecessors (especially Homer and Hesiod) in order to offer a historically grounded and philosophically stimulating reading of Parmenides' work. As a result, Parmenides' mereological views are shown to be an attempt to address and solve live philosophical problems that involve many apparently distinct areas (e.g., cosmology, ontology, epistemology)—appealing to, and at the same time going beyond, the conceptual tools offered by Epic tradition.

Although in their studies of Plato's mereology scholars have observed that his views about the relation between Parts and Wholes might go back to Early Greek Philosophy, an in-depth study of Plato's central mereological models has never been conducted. Through a dedicated study of Parmenides' mereology, this thesis not only fills a gap in the field, but its results could have wider impact in the field of ancient philosophy. For, on the one hand, its methodology offers theoretical gains to the study of mereology in other Early Greek philosophers (e.g., Empedocles, Heraclitus, the Pythagoreans). On the other, it paves the way to new approaches to the study of Plato's mereology.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements **8**

Introduction **10**

PART ONE: Mereology and Ancient Philosophy

Chapter One: The Historical Background and Theoretical Framework of Ancient Mereology: Looking Backwards **15**

1.1 Mereology and Its Relevance for Platonic Philosophy **15**
1.2 Plato's Parts and Wholes: Mapping the State of Investigation **25**
1.2.1 Verity Harte's *Plato on Parts and Wholes* **26**
1.2.2 Anna Marmodoro's *Forms and Structure in Plato's Metaphysics* **36**
1.3 Possible Antecedents to Plato's PWR doctrine **44**
1.4 Traces of Early Greek Mereological Doctrines in Plato: Monism, Pluralism and Parmenides **48**
1.5 Conclusion **65**

PART TWO: Parmenides' What-Is and its Mereological Structure

Chapter Two: Parmenides' Theoretical Context and Aristotle's View on Parmenidean Monism **70**

2.1 The Object of Parmenides' Quest and Parmenidean Monism **70**
2.2 Aristotle and Theophrastus as Sources of Early Greek Philosophy **79**
2.3 The importance of Considering Parmenides' Literary Context: Homer, the *Homeric Hymns*, Hesiod, and the *Hippocratic Corpus* **85**
2.4 Aristotle's Reading of Parmenides' Poem **92**
2.4.1 Composition in the *Alētheia*: 'One According to Matter' *and* 'One According to Definition' **95**
2.4.2 Composition in the *Doxa*: 'Many According to Sensation' **114**
2.5 Conclusion **138**

Chapter Three: Parmenides' Philosophical Methodology **141**

3.1 The Goddess' Role within the Proem (B1 DK = D4 L.-M.) and Its Epistemological Implications **141**
3.2 A Review of Predicational Approaches to Parmenides' What-Is and an Alternative Approach **160**
3.3 The Epistemological Grounds and Methodology of Parmenides' Mereology (B7 DK = D8.1–6 L.-M.) **173**

Chapter Four: B8.1–50 DK (= D8.6–54 L.-M.): Textual Considerations and Translation **203**

4.1 B8.1–50 DK (= D8.5–54 L.-M.): Some Textual Problems **204**
4.2 B8.1–50 DK (= D8.5–54 L.-M.): A Translation **213**

Chapter Five: B8 DK (= D8.5–54 L.-M.): The What-Is and Its Mereological Structure **216**

A. The Arguments of B8 DK and Signs of the What-Is **217**
5. Overview **225**
5.1 Ungenerated (*agenētos*) (6–18) **234**
5.2 Corollary: Indestructible (*anōlethros*) (18–22) **243**
a. Justice (*Dikē*) **245**
5.3 Of a Single Kind (*mounougenes*) (22–8) **250**
b. Necessity (*Anagkē*) **261**
5.4 Whole (*oulon*) (32–8) **266**
c. Fate (*Moira*) **269**
5.5 Untrembling (*atremes*) (26–31, 38–41) **271**
5.6 Accomplished (*teleston*) (42–50) **274**
d. Right (*Themis*) **279**
B. The What-Is as a Structured Unity and Parmenides' **PWR** **282**

5.7.1 Of a Single Kind, Similar, Continuous: Aspects of Parmenides' **PWR** **285**

5.7.2 Epic Bonds, Limits and the Structure of the What-Is **302**

5.7.3 A Cumulative Reading of the What-Is: is it an 'all' a 'whole' or neither? **316**

Chapter Six: Conclusions **328**

Appendix: Early Greek Mereological Terminology **333**

1. 'All' (*pas*) and 'Whole' (*holos*) **336**
2. 'One' (*hen*) **342**
3. 'Mixing' (*mignumi*) and 'Blending' (*kerannumi*) **346**
4. 'Order' (*kosmos*) **352**
5. 'Part' (*meros*) **355**

Bibliography **357**

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Alle persone care

Introduction

Parmenides is retrospectively considered the father of ontology, as the term first appears only in the 17th century. His conception of What-Is makes him a transformative figure not only in Early Greek philosophy, but for the whole of Western Philosophy. Indeed, his impact on modern and contemporary thought is still palpable.

Parmenidean philosophy has been the object of several studies, all of which deploy different methodologies to shed as much light as possible on his enigmatic views. Notable mentions are Mansfeld's *Die Offenbarung des Parmenides und die menschliche Welt*, published in 1964, where the author establishes a breakthrough association between Parmenides and Early Greek poets. As a result, Mansfeld's reading of Parmenides' proem was taken to be philosophically relevant while remaining firmly linked to its literary context. After Mansfeld, Mourelatos' landmark monograph *The Route of Parmenides*, originally published in 1970, provides a comprehensive account of Parmenidean philosophy. Mourelatos' sensitive analysis of Parmenides' use of the Homeric poems with philosophical acuteness resulted in a study that is still one of the best examples of Parmenidean scholarship. From Mourelatos' study Parmenides emerges as a philosopher profoundly rooted in Homeric tradition. However, at the same time, he is concerned with a specific view of predication, which Mourelatos calls 'Speculative Predication', according to which What-Is and the verb 'to be' serve to define, identify and explain the essence of reality exhaustively.[1] Furthermore, although Mourelatos does not extensively discusses Parmenides' monism, What-Is is an 'absolute and all-encompassing cosmic One', which is nonetheless compatible with numerical plurality.[2]

[1] Mourelatos 2008, 57.
[2] Mourelatos 2008, xvi, 133.

It is especially thanks to *The Legacy of Parmenides: Eleatic Monism and Later Presocratic Thought*, written by Curd in 1998, that scholars embarked on a new consideration of Parmenides' monism by taking more seriously his role as a natural philosopher as well. Notable more recent books, such as Palmer's *Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy* (2009), extend Curd's project, while distancing from her work and focussing on different aspects of Parmenides' poem. Nevertheless, many problems regarding Parmenides' views of What-Is remain unsolved. Wedin, in *Parmenides' Grand Deduction: A Logical Reconstruction of the Way of Truth* (2014), sets out to make sense of Parmenides' views on What-Is through logical deductions. As a result, Parmenides figures as an *ante litteram* analytic philosopher who develops the account of Parmenidean philosophy that Owen formulated in his famous article *Eleatic Questions* (1960). While this approach may be useful, it overlooks important aspects of Parmenides' poem, such as the fact that the poem is presented as a divine revelation.

In *Becoming Being*: *On Parmenides' Transformative Philosophy* (2006), Robbiano focusses on the dramatic dimension of the poem, discussing how the rhetorical function of the Goddess serves Parmenides' philosophical project, in that the modalities of the Goddess' narration of What-Is are transformative for the listener. Furthermore, in *Mortal and Divine in early Greek Epistemology. A Study of Hesiod, Xenophanes and Parmenides* (2017), Tor's attentive consideration of the literary conventions that inform Parmenides' poem brings to the fore the core role that the opposition between mortal and divine plays in Parmenides' philosophy.

Robbiano's and Tor's monographs marked a renewed interest in the dramatic and poetic dimensions of the poem, as the recent *Poetry and Poetics in the Presocratic Philosophers: Reading Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles as Literature* (2021) by Mackenzie, and *Homer, Parmenides, and the Road to Demonstration* (2022) by Folit-Weinberg, show.

My thesis develops the results of Tor's and Folit-Weinberg's studies, in order to explore Parmenides' Mereology. It is divided into two parts: Part One (**Chapter 1**) discusses contemporary mereology and its applications to Ancient Philosophy, while the Part Two (**chapters 2–5**) focusses on Parmenides' mereology.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to mereology as a branch of philosophy which investigates how an object that appears to be one may be the result of the sum of parts, or something beyond its parts. Contemporary philosophers try to explain how unity arises from multiplicity and *vice versa* through several possible accounts of the relation between parts and wholes (hereafter referred to as **PWR**). However, I argue that we can find examples of **PWR** not only in Plato, but in his predecessors as well. First, I discuss how two landmark studies of Plato's metaphysics, Verity Harte's *Plato on Parts and Wholes* (2002) and Anna Marmodoro's *Forms and Structure in Plato's Metaphysics* (2021), have deployed mereological notions to arrive at a better understanding of Plato's conception of parts, wholes, and alls. Furthermore, I argue that Plato's mereology is a development of Early Greek views of the relation between parts and wholes, notably, that of Parmenides, which he treats in several works.

Chapter 2 initially discusses the main scholarly views on Parmenides' Monism and their limitations. Since some interpretations of Parmenidean Monism gain support from specific readings of Aristotle's testimony, this chapter calls for a reassessment of his testimony. In the past scholars have argued that Parmenides is a Strict Numerical Monist, namely, someone who believes that exactly one thing is, on the basis of Aristotle's testimony. However, a closer look at Aristotle's testimony suggests a different story. On the one hand, Aristotle does not argue that Parmenides is a Strict Numerical Monist. Rather, it suggests that Parmenides may have a nuanced understanding of what it means for What-Is to be 'one'. Furthermore, while

scholars have mainly focussed on Aristotle's testimony, and to some extent the influence of Homer, they have tended to overlooked other potentially fundamental texts, namely, Hesiod, the *Homeric Hymns*, and the earliest texts of the *Hippocratic Corpus.* Accordingly, I make the case for including these materials not only for assessment of Parmenides' philosophy as a whole, but especially for a determination of Parmenides' mereology.

Although Aristotle criticises Parmenides' approach to What-Is, his testimonia may support the hypothesis that, while What-Is is partless, it is 'one' in a way that allows for internal complexity. On the other hand, Aristotle's testimony shows that Parmenides was aware that the mereological conception of What-Is cannot be applied to the phenomena. As a result, the phenomena must be accounted for through a different set of mereological principles. Furthermore, I will argue that in the cosmology of the *Doxa* Parmenides relies on a conception of 'one' that is looser, where unity can be reached only through mixture of two principles. The resulting account, together with my observations regarding the inclusion of Hesiod, the *Homeric Hymns*, and the earliest Hippocratic texts, sets the context for discussing Parmenides' Mereology starting in his own fragments.

Chapter 3 discusses the limitations of accounts of What-Is that rely on Parmenides' use of the verb 'to be'. Furthermore, it makes the case for an approach that concentrates on 'signs' of What-Is instead. In order to understand the role of 'signs' in Parmenides' mereological account of What-Is, I first offer an account of the role Parmenides attributes to the Goddess. For she is the one that reveals the 'signs' of What-Is to the protagonist of the poem. Thus, I discuss the proem by drawing connections between how Parmenides and Homer appeal to female divine agents in the pursuit of knowledge. Finally, I discuss how the Goddess formulates a method to determine the essence of What-Is as well as its structure, arguing that Parmenides presents the Goddess' method as a criticism of Homeric epistemology.

Chapter 4 introduces the text of **B8 DK**, the core evidence for Parmenides' conception of What-Is. It discusses some textual problems and their philosophical relevance for my account of Parmenides' mereology. In the light of these textual issues, it presents a new text and translation of **B8 DK**.

Chapter 5 is divided in two parts. The first part (**A**) offers a detailed analysis of **B8 DK**, which takes into account the Goddess' method discussed in **Chapter 3**. The second part (**B**) develops the results of **A** in order to explain how Parmenides could posit that What-Is is an entity that is complex and yet 'one'. In particular, it argues that Parmenides's conception of complexity for What-Is provides us with a **PWR** that relies on a specific understanding of 'continuity' and 'similarity', which I call **Cumulative PWR**. Furthermore, it shows that Parmenides' conception of What-Is could draw on Hesiod. In particular, Hesiod's characterisation of monstrous or prodigious creatures offers a good representation of how and why ordinary language (i.e., names) struggle to capture the essential unity of several features that may appear irreconcilable.

Chapter 6 presents the main results of this thesis. It illustrates the advantages of the adopted methodology for an understanding of Parmenides' philosophy as a whole, and for his mereology. Furthermore, it suggests that this approach may be fruitful not only for philosophers interested in mereology, but also for scholars of Early Greek philosophy and Plato. For it opens a new set of interpretative possibilities and applications.

The **Appendix** explores the development of Early Greek mereological terminology. Specifically, I examine 'all', 'whole', 'one', 'mixing', 'blending', 'order' and 'part', which, as the analysis of Parmenides' **PWR** has shown, are crucial in Ancient Mereology.

PART ONE: Mereology and Ancient Philosophy

Chapter One: The Historical Background and Theoretical Framework of Ancient Mereology: Looking Backwards

1.1 Mereology and Its Relevance for Platonic Philosophy

When Stanisław Leśniewski (1886–1939) conceived Mereology as an alternative to set theory, little would he have imagined its impact on disciplines other than logic. Nelson Goodman and Henry S. Leonard, who in 1940 developed the same theory in *Calculus of Individuals*[3] independently from Leśniewski, were probably more aware of the wider applicability of Mereology:

> The concept of an individual and that of a class may be regarded as different devices for distinguishing one segment of the total universe from all that remains. In both cases, the differentiated segment is potentially divisible, and may even be physically discontinuous. The difference in the concepts lies in this: *that to conceive a segment as a whole or individual offers no suggestion as to*

[3] Leonard-Goodman 1940, 46, cf. Cotnoir-Varzi 2021, 11.

> *what these subdivisions, if any, must be,* whereas to conceive a segment as a class imposes a *definite* scheme of subdivision—into subclasses and members.[4]

Rather than sets, subsets, or members, Goodman and Leonard distinguish between 'individuals' and 'wholes', that is, respectively, constituent parts and what results from putting together the constituent parts. 'Individuals' and 'wholes' are linked by a Part-Whole Relation, which has the advantage of being more 'flexible' than 'inclusion', because by defining what counts as 'part' (i.e., Parthood) it can account for a wider range of entities whose relation between their constituents would be impossible to characterise otherwise. For 'inclusion' verifies only when a 'smaller' set (subset) is completely contained but does not coincide with a 'larger' set. Thus, one can say that a subset B is *included* in a set A. Notwithstanding its origin as an alternative to set theory, Mereology has evolved into a theoretical approach which aims to characterise the relation *between entities that populate our world and their inner composition* rather than among sets, subsets and their members.[5] In order to capture the constitution of our world philosophers have designed different Part-Whole Relations, which determine various types of Parthood.[6] As a result, Mereology characterises the interaction between entities in a way that the set-theory

[4] Leonard-Goodman 1940, 45 (my emphasis).

[5] On this see Koslicki 2008, who, in order to put forward her own neo-Aristotelian view of structured wholes offers an overview of several attempts to employ Mereology as a tool to better describe the world around us. Her account is not limited to objects, but extends to states of affairs, to include mathematical entities, and theoretical entities and particles not necessarily directly observable, as in chemistry or physics.

[6] For different formal definitions of Parthood, see Cotnoir-Varzi 2021, 12–5, 45–7, 49–50, 67–76.

specific relation of 'inclusion' cannot, except under very specific circumstances.[7] The advantage of a Part-Whole Relation is that it can equally apply to a mug and its handle (i.e., a part physically connected to another), to the remote control and the stereo system (i.e., a part physically unattached to another), or to a portion of space (i.e., an immaterial part of something, which can be either material or immaterial).[8] Thus, given the varieties of Part-Whole Relations that Mereology can accommodate, ever since Leonard and Goodman Mereology has been regarded as a topic-neutral tool applicable to any discipline.[9]

As a branch of Metaphysics, Mereology found many applications.[10] In particular, scholars soon understood that the study of the relation between constituent parts and resulting wholes can be employed to study of Ancient Philosophy, too.[11] For Ancient philosophers too wondered about the relation between Parts and Wholes, as Barnes pointed out in a seminal paper:

> And the Neoplatonists were following Plato, who is the **spring and origin** of the idea: according to the *Timaeus*, we are wholes (33A), and the κόσμος is a whole (32D), and we and the animals are parts of the κόσμος (30C). The view thus had a long and illustrious history. It was no mere metaphor or *façon de parler* to call plants and animals and men parts of the universe: they are parts in the full and literal sense of the word. Nor, I think, was the view intended

[7] Leonard-Goodman 1940, 45.
[8] For more examples and a through introduction to different kinds of parthood see Varzi (2019).
[9] Leonard-Goodman 1940, 55.
[10] See Cotnoir-Varzi 2021 and Lando 2017 for an updated presentation of the main strands of Mereology, and its applications.
[11] Cotnoir-Varzi 2021, 12–3.

> to convey a relatively mundane truth—like the relatively mundane truth that my arm is a part of my body. **Rather, it represents a substantive metaphysical thesis:** I am a part of the universe, I stand to the universe in the relation in which my right hand stands to me. The κόσμος, the Whole *par excellence*, is an organic unity, and we are among its organic parts.[12]

As Barnes recognises, the idea that many things compose the universe, so as to make it a whole out of parts, can be even dated back to Plato. According to Barnes, understanding the precise relation between the parts and the resulting whole is taken seriously from a *philosophical* point of view. Wondering about the relation between Parts and Wholes is a foundational question that invests Ontology, Metaphysics and Physics, which calls into question our understanding of reality and its workings, not to mention *our* relation with such reality as *its* parts. But these questions and all their answers entail taking a stance regarding another problem, which in contemporary Metaphysics is labelled the Problem of (Special) Composition.[13] In a nutshell: once we admit that it is possible,[14] what makes some two or more objects compose and result in a single *further* object? This problem in Mereology is only the tip of the

[12] Barnes 1988, 226–7, my emphases.

[13] Van Inwagen 1990 is possibly the first metaphysician to openly posit this question. On the Problem of Composition see Koslicki 2008, 9–22, Cotnoir-Varzi 2021, 159–209, Tallant 2017, 19–44.

[14] Importantly, not all metaphysicians accept this possibility: Nihilists in particular consider composing a further object out of many other objects to be under no conditions possible; on the other end of the spectrum there are Universalists, who always consider the composition of objects possible, and are supporters of Unrestricted Composition. In between these two extreme positions one can find many further subdivisions which can be overlooked for the sake of the scope of my discussion. On Nihilism, Universalism and other positions see Markosian 2008, 346–59.

iceberg as, to be resolved, it requires one to address the following questions as well: is the resulting object a 'whole' in the sense that it is identical to the sum of its constituents or something over and above them? Are there particular criteria necessary to compose a unitary entity (i.e., Restricted Composition) or are there as many such entities as I can *arbitrarily* make up either in thought or in actuality (i.e., Unrestricted Composition)? [15] But above all, how is composing a single entity out of many entities even possible?

Since Plato is thought the first to address the Problem of Parts and Wholes (from now on **PPW**) and therefore to develop a Part-Whole Relation conception (from now on **PWR**), he has been the focus of the studies on Ancient Mereology. But, from an historical point of view the **PPW** does not only relate to the Problem of Composition. For it overlaps with what I call the One-Many Problem (from now on **OMP**), that is, the question regarding **a.** *how many* entities exist, **b.** *of what kind* they are, and **c.** whether and how it is possible to start from *one* thing, have *many*, and *vice versa*.[16] The overlapping between these two problems happens because, even *prima facie*, a unitary entity can be something *one* made up of *many* parts. Furthermore, both the

[15] This opposition respectively illustrates the two broader answers to the Problem of (Special) Composition. Those who believe that anything can be a single entity without having to respect any specific criteria to be brought together support a version of Unrestricted Composition (e.g., Leonard-Goodman 1940 Lewis 1991, Lando 2017), while those against this view support a version of Restricted Composition (e.g., Koslicki 2008).

[16] Determining whether something is one or many depends on whether we admit parts and on how we understand the relation between parts and the resulting entity they compose. Thus, there is an overlap between mereology and the **OMP**. On the **OMP** in contemporary metaphysics and its use of mereological concepts see Unger 1980 and Weatherson 2023.

parts and the resulting unitary entity must *be of a certain kind* and thus be *qualified* in certain ways rather than others (e.g., cold, wet, immaterial). As a result, any discussion of the **OMP** posits very similar questions and requires interpretative strategies similar to any **PPW.**

Much scholarly work has been devoted to how Plato's **PWR** is at work in both psychology and ethics through investigating the relation between different 'parts' of soul[17] and of virtue.[18] Yet Barnes' quotation introduces a further, no less fundamental, application of Plato's **PWR**, that is, cosmology and physics. The *Timaeus* is a good case study of this aspect of Plato's **PWR**: since the cosmos is a single divine being obtained out of the combination of the elements, it can offer an account of how Plato's **PWR** applies to the sensible realm.[19] But Barnes identifies yet another application of the **PWR**, namely, a metaphysical one, which leads him to consider the *Sophist*.[20] In order to answer the problem regarding Not-Being, the *Sophist* first discusses the **OMP**. The dialogue questions how something that has many parts can result into

[17] Is Plato's soul unitary? Does it have parts or is it best to talk about faculties? Interpreters tried to explore these questions keeping in mind Plato's Mereology in its psychological application, Miller 1999, Ferrari 2007, Corcilius 2015, 23–32, Brown 2012, Wilburn 2021, 3–26.
[18] E.g., Plato, *Prot.* 329d3–8, *Lg.* 965d3–e2, Penner 1973, Vlastos 1972, Kahn 1976, Devereux 1992, Centrone 2008.
[19] Barnes 1986, 227 calls the physical cosmos the whole *par excellence*, and similar views are found in Harte 2002. On the applicability of 'whole' to the universe see *infra*. Interestingly, Johansen 2022 talks of the *Timaeus* as a work from which emerges a 'psychosomatic holism'. Given the role of the soul at a micro- and macrocosmic level, the *Timaeus* promises interesting considerations on the use of the **PWR** in physics. For the *Timaeus* offers accounts both of the composition of the cosmos and of the individual. Thus, it can inform us regarding the **PWR** views active not only in two different 'wholes' (i.e., individual bodies, the cosmos), but also their relation.
[20] Barnes 1988, 226, 229.

something that is said to be 'one', and, *vice versa*, how something that is 'one' can result into something that is said to be 'many'. Both aspects, needless to say, involve Plato's theory of predication, and reflect on Plato's conception of Forms.[21] The *Timaeus* and the *Sophist* well show how Plato applies his view of the **PWR** not only in ethics and psychology, but in metaphysics and physics as well. Thus, they also help us to get a better grasp of the metaphysical and physical aspect of Plato's Mereology.[22] On the one hand, these two dialogues offer extensive though not exhaustive discussions of Plato's **PWR**, while on the other they seem to include alternative models of the **PWR** to Plato's. I will return later to whom these alternative models belong. For the moment we can say that since Plato seems to be engaging with other doctrines, the *Sophist* in particular has the additional advantage of informing us about what Plato's **PWR** in metaphysics and physics is *not*. Thus far, at least one thing is clear: given its manifold applications, Plato's **PWR** doctrine is of great importance for Plato's philosophy as a whole. Furthermore, unfortunately, in particular the metaphysical and physical applications of Plato's **PWR** seem to have received comparatively less scholarly attention, contributing to my decision to concentrate on these aspects.

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[21] Plato, *Soph.* 259e, 263a–d, De Rijk 1986, 190–214, Harte 2002, 169, Crivelli 2011, 221–60, Fronterotta 2013, in particular, 210, n. 7, 220–4, Giovannetti 2021.

[22] The importance of both the *Sophist* and the *Timaeus* for Plato's **PWR** has been noticed by Harte 2002 and Marmodoro 2021, who devote a lot of attention to both dialogues. But see already Barnes 1988, 226 (*Timaeus*), 229 (*Sophist*). Barnes 1988 already made a strong connection between the *Sophist* and Plato's application of **PWR** in metaphysics and between the *Timaeus* and Plato's **PWR** in physics.

Only two major recent works deal extensively with the metaphysical and to some extent physical aspects of Plato's **PWR**, namely, monographs by Verity Harte (2002), and Anna Marmodoro (2021). Their works are fundamental and constitute an excellent starting point for studying these aspects of Plato's **PWR**. While they offer two alternative but overall equally compelling accounts of what parts, wholes, and what their relations and functions are for Plato, there are unanswered questions arising from them. For example, are the **PWR** views found in Plato's metaphysics (e.g., in the *Sophist*) different from those developed in physics (e.g., in the *Timaeus*)? In other words, does Plato conceive of consistent and yet distinct **PWRs** depending on the objects examined (i.e., Forms, the cosmos, and sensible entities within it)? If so, what would the relation between the two resulting **PWRs** be? Are there entities that are more than the sums of their parts, which do not result in a 'whole' or which result in a 'whole' of a different kind? Answering these questions is crucial for Plato's Mereology and for his philosophy as a whole. For according to Plato's physics, the status of the sensible realm is defective from an ontological point of view compared to the intelligible one.[23] In particular, Ademollo has convincingly showed that the former is *never* ontologically stable, though at times it has qualitative stability.[24] Sensible objects undergo *continual* change, contrary to Forms, which admit change *only*

[23] E.g., Plato, *Tim.* 27c5ff., *Phaed.* 78d1–e4, Frede 1988.
[24] Ademollo 2018, 36.

in some respect, as we learn from the *Sophist*. [25] But if this is so, in what sense can we maintain that each sensible object is a whole, that the cosmos itself is a whole of wholes, and that Forms are wholes, as Harte does? [26] In light of Ademollo's views on change, these three aspects are crucial for a better account of Plato's **PWR**: **1.** whether the necessary and sufficient criteria for forming physical compounds are identical to those applicable in the intelligible realm; **2.** whether and in what sense physical entities and the cosmos *are* wholes (i.e., something over and above the sum of its parts); **3.** whether there are unities that are more than the sum of their parts (without actually being a 'whole' in the strong sense).

There are two more foundational, and yet relatively unexplored, queries that could shed light on some of these unclear aspects of Plato's Mereology: *who* influenced Plato's view on Parts and Wholes in metaphysics and physics? And *how* did they do so? Plato expresses his philosophical views, including his views on the **PWR**, using a rich and complex vocabulary. For example, Plato resorts to numerous terms to indicate different way of combining constituents.[27] Harte herself notices this complexity and richness, admitting that such a vocabulary is of primary importance for Plato's **PWR**.[28]

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[25] Irani 2022.

[26] Harte 2002, 226.

[27] See for example the uses of: *kerannumi* with different preverbs in Plato, *Phlb*. 64d11, or *Parm.* 129e2, *Tim.* 35a3; compounds of *krasis* again for example in Plato, *Phlb*. 64d10; *symplekō* and *symplokē* in Plato, *Theaet*. 202b4, *Soph.* 262c6–d4; *koinōneō* and *koinōnia* Plato, *Soph.* 260e2–3, *Phlb*. 25e7.

[28] Harte 2002, 4.

However, in her book she does not expand on the roots and consequences of this constitutive aspect. Rather, she occasionally refers to the Eleatics, or to Empedocles, without considering the possibility of their own **PWRs**.[29] Could such richness and complexity be a sign that Plato is theoretically engaging with *previous* conceptions of Parts and Wholes? If it were so, Plato would be developing his views on the basis of the results of his predecessors. Establishing Plato's predecessors' import would help us to grapple with the important questions regarding **PWR** and Composition in general, and have relevant philosophical implications for our understanding of Early Greek philosophy. Furthermore, it would clarify Plato's view of the **PWR**. For an examination of his predecessors' views would help us to explain some Platonic reservations regarding certain aspects of **PWRs**. In other words, such an analysis could help us to establish whether and in what way the cosmos is a whole in the same sense a Form is 'whole', if the cosmos is a whole at all. Moreover, once it is admitted that Plato is in constant dialogue with his predecessors, one can better set into context Plato's innovative Mereology, its motivations and its attempt to offer more satisfactory solutions to compositional challenges arising in metaphysics and physics. Therefore, an investigation focused on identifying potential influences on Plato and their mechanisms will significantly impact any account of Plato's **PWR**. The

[29] For example, Harte 2002, 234 connects the Empedoclean echoes with Plato's discussion of **PWR** within the *Timaeus*.

important question at this point is: how can we show that Plato is building on the ideas of his predecessors? Is there any evidence that his predecessors ever addressed the **PPW**? If there is, who are they and how did they contribute to shaping Plato's **PWR**? On which thinker should one focus first, and why? These are the questions that will be addressed in the following sections. But before this, it will be necessary to provide some more context to Plato's Mereology and review the main results of the scholarship on Plato's **PWR**.

1.2 Plato's Parts and Wholes: Mapping the State of Investigation

Only two major recent books deal with Plato's conception of Parts and Wholes, namely, Verity Harte's *Plato on Parts and Wholes* and Anna Marmodoro's *Forms and Structure in Plato's Metaphysics*. In order to provide the conceptual background to my study of Early Greek Mereology, I will sketch out the key aspects of Harte's and Marmodoro's readings, starting from the former. Furthermore, I will expand on some theoretical points arising from their views, which will be relevant in the next chapters.

1.2.1 Verity Harte's *Plato on Parts and Wholes*

In her analysis, Verity Harte focusses on several dialogues (i.e., the *Sophist*, the *Timaeus*, the *Philebus*, the *Theaetetus*, and the *Parmenides)*, whilst admitting that this list is not exhaustive.[30] Her primary interest is an analysis of Plato's views on composition, which consequently provide an account of his **PWR**. She never openly advances hypotheses on how the resulting **PWR** applies to either Plato's metaphysics or physics, nor of its specific philosophical consequences.[31] Furthermore, she does not discuss passages where the **PWR** is applied to psychology or ethics (e.g., the *Protagoras*, the *Republic*, the *Laws*). The bulk of the passages that she analyses come from dialogues that concentrate on metaphysics and physics, such as the *Sophist*[32] and the *Timaeus*. Because of this, I will confine the present overview to these. According to Harte, Plato distinguishes two kinds of **PWR** but endorses only the one found in the *Sophist* and in the *Timaeus*.

The first kind is found mainly in the *Theaetetus* and in the *Parmenides*, and it rests on the idea that a whole is nothing but the sum of its parts: knowing each constituent of the resulting entity is the same as knowing the

[30] Harte 2002, 1.
[31] Harte 2002, 6.
[32] Harte 2002 devotes some attention to the *Parmenides*, too. The dialogue offers puzzles about Parts and Wholes, and dialectically dismisses the possibility of Forms. It represents a *gymnasia* (Plato, *Parm.* 135d–136d) without positive conclusions and even regarding the objects of enquiry (Fronterotta 2001, 289–99, Gardner 2018, 40–2, Ferrari 2022). Thus, it has mostly a negative role within a discussion on Plato's **PWR**.

whole. This view coincides with what in contemporary Metaphysics is called Composition as Identity and usually entails an unrestricted view of Composition.[33] Plato rejects this first characterisation in several places.[34] For such a newly constituted whole neither receives any new property, nor becomes anything *essentially* different from any of its parts.[35] Furthermore, this view presents Plato with the problem of explaining how complexity arises from basic constituents, as well as with the difficulty of a competition between the causal powers of the basic constituents and that of the resulting whole. For example, if 'flesh' is made up of fire, earth, and water, does its essence identify with one or all of its basic constituents? Or, in other terms, does the causal power of fire, earth, and water identify with that of 'flesh'? According to Harte's reading of the Platonic evidence, which I believe to be correct, the answer is 'no'. Interestingly, on the basis of the discussions found in the *Parmenides* and in the *Sophist*, Harte traces back this unrestricted view of Composition to Parmenides and the Eleatic school, so that the 'parts' of What-

[33] Although Composition as Identity is not strictly identical to Unrestricted Composition, the two are closely connected, see Cotnoir-Varzi 2021, 193–201, Cotnoir 2014, 7: Unrestricted Composition states that whenever there are parts these can compose a whole, while Composition as Identity says that a whole identifies with nothing but the sum of its parts. Thus, in a theory that deploys Unrestricted Composition, Composition as Identity seems to follow. The closeness between these two seems further encouraged in Merricks 2005, where it is argued that Composition as Identity requires Unrestricted Composition and in Sider 2007. In contrast with the closeness between Unrestricted Composition and Composition as Identity see Cameron 2012, and McDaniel 2008.

[34] E.g. Plato, *Hipp. Ma.* 299e, *Soph.* 243c–e, *Theaet.* 185b2, *Resp.* 524a–b.

[35] Plato, *Theaet.* 205d1–e, Levett-Burnyeat 1990, 253–68. For an interpretation of the passage see Sedley 2004, 163–8 and Giannopoulou 2013, 155–66.

Is are identical to What-Is.[36] However, as we will see this is a position that does not seem to correspond straightforwardly to our evidence about the historical Parmenides. Thus, rather, it appears that the alleged Eleatic conception of Unrestricted Composition and Composition as Identity are more of a Platonic inference than an accurate account of Parmenides' views on the matter.

Nevertheless, as Harte highlighted when stressing the similarity with Lewis' conception of wholes,[37] this first view of Composition is problematic for at least two reasons that could be connected with Parmenides' conception of What-Is. First, similar to Universalist or Unrestricted views of composition, it forms wholes arbitrarily,[38] which especially in a teleologically oriented philosophy[39] such as Plato's, where Forms have a normative power over sensible objects, seems hardly tenable. For, then Plato would be equally subject to the Overpopulation Problem, according to which *everything* can be a 'whole', even the arbitrary and potentially counterintuitive products of one's imagination which contravene any ordinary experience, conceivability and thus knowledge of the world (i.e., pen-table, Dog-Socrates).[40] Second, this view would paradoxically make of each alleged whole either something exclusively 'one', or something exclusively 'many', or, finally, something

[36] Harte 2002, 100ff.
[37] Lewis 1991, 1–6. Lewis assumes the view that anything has a whole (i.e., Unrestricted Composition) and that the parts of the whole are identical with the whole (i.e., Composition as Identity). Therefore, a Lewisian whole is the sum (or fusion) of *all* parts of something.
[38] For a criticism of Lewis' conception of parts and wholes, see Van Inwagen 1994.
[39] See Lennox 2001, 281, Sedley 2007, 93–127, Broadie 2012, 150, Johansen 2020.
[40] Watherson 2023.

simultaneously 'one' and 'many' *under the same respect*. But all these possibilities involve problems in Plato's formulation of the first view. For, if flesh is *identical* with its components, then it is problematic to explain *how* and *when* they can be thought as something 'one' (i.e., 'flesh') without rejecting the fundamental assumption that the whole is nothing over its parts. Furthermore, the possibility that flesh is 'many' due to its several constituents threatens the existence of 'flesh' as something conceivable as a 'whole', which implies being 'one'. Lastly, claiming that flesh is 'one' and 'many' without any further theoretical considerations is trivially contradictory. The only case in which, according to Plato, the sum of the constituents of something would perhaps result into something one and identical to its parts, is in the case of something which is throughout qualitatively identical. However, even this possibility can hardly satisfy Plato's conception of a 'whole', as it lacks 'structure', a feature I will discuss in due course. Thus, Plato does not consider what arises from this first **PWR** 'whole' (*holon*), but rather an 'all' (*pan*).[41]

The second characterisation appears mainly in the *Sophist* and *Timaeus*. Although Harte believes that this is Plato's conception of the **PWR**, she doubts that Plato developed a fully fleshed-out doctrine out of it.[42] Harte mentions that the contexts of application of the **PWR** are different, being, respectively,

[41] Plato, *Theaet.* 202a–205a.
[42] Harte 2002, 273.

the cosmos and Forms.[43] Unfortunately, this mention does not lead her to question whether Plato needs to accommodate his **PWR** according to the objects of its application, i.e., the sensible and the intelligible realm. Nevertheless, Harte rightly recognises that in both dialogues Plato conceives 'wholes' as what is 'complete' (*teleion*) and 'more' than the sum of its parts.[44] In addition to Plato's rejection of Composition as Identity, this view suggests that Plato argues for a theory that accepts Restricted Composition, where we saw that this view allows wholes to obtain only under some specific conditions. According to Harte's reading, a whole is obtained if only if **(i)** there are certain parts that function as building blocks (what she calls 'content') and if **(ii)** these parts are all *grouped together* and arranged *in a certain way* (what she calls 'structure'). Given the importance that 'structure'[45] in the sense of the arrangement of the parts has, the resulting whole is neither constituted out of *any* parts, nor is it *identical* with the parts it *has*: a whole *essentially* differs from

[43] Harte 2002, 213.

[44] Plato, *Theaet.* 204a1–b10, but also *Hipp. Ma.* 299c–10, 302e3–303a3, *Soph.* 243d6–e6, cf. *Parm.* 157d7–e2. Scholars generally agree that for Plato a whole is 'more' than the sum of its parts (Hardy 2001, 253, Harte 2002, Centrone 2002), though Socrates actually dismisses this characterisation.

[45] By 'structure' in metaphysics one refers to the *arrangement* the parts of something can have, at least in the senses of 'order', 'level', and 'repetition'. The first one means that the place or the role a part has in an object determines whether a certain whole obtains, while the second indicates that the parts of an object are *hierarchically* disposed, so that the hierarchy that obtains defines what wholes obtain. The third one states that the same part can be added to an object several times, and this affects the resulting whole. The notion of 'structure' was introduced as a way to better capture the complexity embedded in the composition of the objects that populate the populate the world. On the various uses and understandings of 'structure' in metaphysics, see Cotnoir-Varzi 2021, 201–9 and Koslicki 2008, 235–40. For the theoretical benefits of employing a notion of 'structure' to properly define both theoretical aspects of our world, objects, state of facts, see Koslicki 2008, 240–52, who conducts some case studies on logic, chemistry, music and linguistics.

its individual parts. The identity or essence of both the parts and the resultant whole is *context*-dependent, and relies on the necessary conditions that dictate the emergence of that whole.[46] For, the 'content', that is, the specific parts necessary for a whole are also determined according to their arrangement and the context in which the whole originates. Thus, according to Harte, the parts and the whole are *interdependent*, in the sense that, the way one depends on and is determined by the other is dictated by the context and arrangement. The importance of the *arrangement*, its context, and the essence of the parts constituting the whole make of Plato's wholes something over and above their parts that Harte calls 'contentful structures'.[47]

Harte illustrates Plato's wholes as 'contenful structures' with the following clarificatory example. Let us assume that the 'guests' at a dinner party exemplify a Platonic whole: because of the *occasion* (i.e., context) of the dinner party each person becomes *relevant qua* part of the whole 'guests'. Indeed, a sum of people without context and proper arrangement does not make 'guests'. It is the arrangement of the people, say, around a table, and the context of having dinner together that makes a given occasion a 'party' and thus constitutes 'guests'. As a result, wholes do not depend exclusively on the nature of the constituent parts. Furthermore, it is because under certain contexts a 'person' *qua* constituent part can be defined or identified *primarily*

[46] Harte 2002, 3.
[47] Harte 2002, 375.

as a 'guest' that the whole is 'guests' rather than something else (e.g., a 'team').[48]

Harte argues that the *Sophist* is the first dialogue where we find the idea of 'structure' in Plato's philosophy,[49] notwithstanding its anticipations in the *Theaetetus*. [50] Although Harte acknowledges that in the *Sophist* Plato investigates the **PWR** eminently from a metaphysical and ontological perspective, she approaches the matter from a linguistic perspective, [51] applying the criterium of 'structure' to language. Harte in this case understands 'structure' as a 'syntactic space' (i.e., context) that allows for a certain appropriate interweaving of words and verbs,[52] but this procedure mirrors and points to the interweaving of Forms. Hence, this understanding of the **PWR** could extend to Forms. Alternatively, in the case of the *Timaeus*, 'structure' applies to the cosmos. According to Harte, in the *Timaeus* Plato believes that the cosmos is a 'whole of wholes' or 'structure of structures'.[53] Interestingly, even the compounds formed out of the elements and the elements themselves can be considered wholes. For they are 'structure-laden', meaning that what results out of their combination depends on how they interact with one another and thus makes of them something already

[48] In a sense Harte's reading of Plato's **PWR** is close to contemporary teleological approaches to Mereology, see Tallant 2017, 39–42, cf. Rose-Schaffer-Folk 2017.
[49] Harte 2002, 167.
[50] Plato, *Theaet.* 202b4–5.
[51] Harte 2002, 167–9.
[52] Harte 2002, 171–7.
[53] Harte 2002, 226.

'structured', that is, ontologically determined or technically speaking *loaded*.[54] Harte's reading is problematic both due to how change in physical compounds happens,[55] and on textual grounds.[56] For Plato never seems to attribute to the cosmos the same 'wholeness' that he attributes to the intelligible realm.[57] Nonetheless, Plato employs the term 'whole' referring to

[54] Harte 2002, 232–3: 'The constitution of the body of the cosmos, thus described, is a good example of a structure in the sense with which I have been concerned. The four elements involved in its constitution are (an instance of) this structure, in virtue of the *proportionate relations* in which they stand to each other. Being so related, *they are themselves structure-laden*. To describe them as such is *not* to refer to any internal structure of their own that they may happen to have. As far as Timaeus' description here is concerned, *each individual element need have no internal structure at all, although it will, in fact, turn out that they do*. What is important here is rather their relations to one another. They are structure-laden in the sense that they occupy *positions*, both in themselves, and in *relation to each other*, that are determined *only in the context of the structure that they themselves compose*.' (my emphasis). For a detailed discussion as well as a criticism of Harte's use of 'structure-laden' see Koslicki 2008, 112–7.

[55] Ademollo 2018.

[56] Harte makes a case for her reading by rendering ὅλον ὅλου (Plato, *Tim.* 30b2) as 'whole for whole'. However, the syntax does not support it, as translations of Plat., *Tim.* 30b1–3 make plain (λογισάμενος οὖν ηὗρισκεν ἐκ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ὁρατῶν οὐδὲν ἀνόητον τοῦ νοῦν ἔχοντος **ὅλον ὅλου** κάλλιον ἔσεσθαί ποτε ἔργον, νοῦν δ'αὖ χωρὶς ψυχῆς ἀδύνατον παραγενέσθαι τῳ). For nowhere is the cosmos *identified* with a 'whole': the point seems to be the comparison between a physical cosmos where there is reason and one where there is none. The one with reason will be more 'whole' than the one without it. But, crucially, in both cases being 'whole' is defective, since only the intelligible cosmos, from which the demiurge draws inspiration to create the physical one, is truly a 'whole' (see the next note). Cornford 1937 ('Taking thought, therefore, he found that, among things that are by nature visible, no work that is without intelligence will ever be better than one that has intelligence, when each is taken as a whole, and moreover that intelligence cannot be present in anything apart from soul'), Zeyl 2000 ('Accordingly, the god reasoned and concluded that in the realm of things naturally visible no unintelligent thing could as a whole be better than anything that does possess intelligence as a whole, and he further concluded that it is impossible for anything to come to possess intelligence apart from soul'), Petrucci 2022 ('nel suo istantaneo ragionare trovava dunque che nessuna opera realizzata a partire da ciò che per natura è visible che sia, nella sua interezza, sprovvista di intelletto, sarà mai più bella di una che nella sua interezza ne sia provvista, e che a sua volta, senza un'anima, è impossibile per un intelletto venire a essere presente in una qualsiasi cosa').

[57] Timaeus introduces the perfection of the cosmos by saying that the physical cosmos must resemble as much as possible the intelligible one (i.e., Forms) (already Cornford 1937, 39). Next, Timaeus makes a comparison aiming to stress the superiority, in the sense of being more 'whole', of a cosmos endowed with reason to one that lacks it (Plato, *Tim.* 30b1–2: λογισάμενος οὖν ηὗρισκεν ἐκ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ὁρατῶν οὐδὲν ἀνόητον τοῦ νοῦν ἔχοντος ὅλον ὅλου κάλλιον ἔσεσθαί ποτε ἔργον). Although one may think that Timaeus attributes

the cosmos, which necessarily leads us to think that in some unclear way the cosmos *is* a 'whole'. However, without a better understanding of previous conceptions of the **PWR** Plato's choice remains mysterious. Perhaps, calling the cosmos a 'whole' serves to offer a physical or cosmological **PWR** that dismisses the chance that the cosmos is not subject to a divine rational principle that orders its constituents. For this would avoid relativistic or subjectivistic views of the cosmos according to which it is populated by arbitrary entities and state of affairs. Thus, though Plato's physical or cosmological use of 'whole' would be weaker than the metaphysical one, it would still imply a clear-cut position against conceptions of the cosmos, which either simply make an 'all' out of it or consider it a 'whole' in the highest sense—something Plato exclusively ascribes to Forms.

In conclusion, given the importance of the notions of 'content' and 'structure', Harte concludes that Plato's **PWR** relies on Restricted Composition, because not just *any* parts under *any* conditions constitute a whole. Plato's wholes seem to succeed where Unrestricted Composition and Composition as Identity fail, as Plato's account obtains wholes that are not arbitrarily composed. Furthermore, since each entity to be a whole must respect certain

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the same wholeness of the intelligible to the cosmos with reason, this is probably not the case. For later (Plato, *Tim.* 32d–33a1), Timaeus clearly says that the physical cosmos endowed with reason is complete and whole 'only' in the fullest measure *possible* (πρῶτον μὲν ἵνα ὅλον ὅτι μάλιστα ζῷον τέλεον ἐκ τελέων τῶν μερῶν εἴη), which still seems to entail the absolute wholeness of the intelligible one. Some further observations can be found in Koslicki 2008, 112–3.

conditions in terms of 'content' and 'structure', Plato's conception of wholes is normative as well.[58] As a result of this characterisation, Harte believes that Plato's **PWR** is close to her reading of Van Inwagen's, except for the fact that Plato maintains that the parts and the whole are *interdependent*.[59] I believe that Harte's parallelism with Van Inwagen is helpful. Furthermore, it has the advantage of avoiding the view that complete homogeneity of the constituents is necessary, as what is important is that all parts have the same goal, i.e., contribute to *that* certain whole. Importantly, since wholes are *essentially* intelligible, they are the object of knowledge, be it physics, metaphysics or language. However, surprisingly, Harte's view does not mention Van Inwagen's crucial intuition, that is, that only living organisms can be wholes (i.e., Organicism),[60] though, in a different way, Plato may share a kind of Organicism. For the idea that wholes are in a sense 'living' is sometimes found in Platonic passages, and is usually connected to the intelligible realm or Forms.[61] This observation does not diminish Harte's overall compelling interpretation of a whole as inherently *complex*, with unity achieved through context and arrangement of the constituent parts. Yet, to what extent the account provided by Harte applies indifferently to Plato's metaphysics and

[58] Harte 2002, 271.
[59] Harte 2002, 166, Van Inwagen 1990, 81–98.
[60] Van Inwagen 1990, Tallant 2017, 38–9.
[61] E.g., Plato, *Soph.* 249b5–6, *Phaedr.* 276a5–9, *Tim.* 30c7–d2. Interestingly this view is so impactful that even Aristotle adapts it to fit within his conception of substance (e.g., Aristotle, *Metaph*. Δ 8. 1017b16–19).

physics is open to discussion. Furthermore, Harte's reading makes of Plato' **PWR** something that appears out of the blue, and that Plato discusses having at best only one possible model in mind, that is, an *alleged* genuine version of the Eleatic one.

1.2.2 Anna Marmodoro's *Forms and Structure in Plato's Metaphysics*

In *Forms and Structure in Plato's Metaphysics*, Anna Marmodoro offers an alternative interpretation of Plato's **PWR** to Harte's. She too focusses on the *Sophist* and on the *Timaeus*, but with a primary interest in Plato's metaphysics. She maintains that both dialogues represent important moments within Plato's theory of Forms. She explores the development of Plato's conception of participation, grappling with the classic question: how can a Form be 'one' and yet 'many' due to its being made of parts?[62] Since this question is closely connected to Mereology and to exploring Plato's **PWR**, it allows Marmodoro to investigate the question regarding the nature of Forms together with the question on participation between physical objects and transcendent Forms in terms of the Problem of Composition. Thus, she can formulate important

[62] It must be noted that Marmodoro does not appear to provide a clear understanding of what she takes to be a 'part' for Plato. In several points (e.g., Marmodoro 2021, 85) she seems to hold that it is not the presence of a property that defines a part, but rather its belonging necessarily to a Form or an object. However, this is still quite vague and thus does not allow us to specify what she specifically means.

hypotheses concerning Plato's **PWR** that similar to Harte rely on 'structure' as a property that can account for Forms' complexity. According to Mormodoro, however, Plato's use of 'structure' figures only at a later moment of his philosophical production, because previously his solution to the Problem of Composition was very similar to Anaxagoras'.[63] In her consideration of Anaxagoras as a relevant influence within Plato's metaphysics, Marmodoro offers a fresh approach to Plato's Mereology.[64] Marmodoro's analysis has the advantage of setting Plato's **PWR** within a mereological debate that pertains to Early Greek Philosophy, too. In order to better appreciate Marmodoro's views on Plato's **PWR** it is useful to sketch Anaxagoras' views regarding Composition.

According to her, Plato's take on Forms, and on the **PWR**, is a development of Anaxagoras' 'constitutional overlap'. In contemporary Metaphysics 'overlap' establishes that two or more entities acquire their features because they have at least a common feature.[65] For example, two streets overlap when both have a part in common, i.e., the part where they intersect.[66] 'Constitutional', instead, refers to the fact that Anaxagoras' Opposites are the features that *physically* or *materially* constitute everything. Since Anaxagoras believed that properties are *immanent* and indistinguishable

[63] Marmodoro 2021, 6.
[64] Marmodoro 2021, 2, 156, on Anaxagoras, see Marmodoro 2017.
[65] See Lando 2017, 59–62.
[66] Cotnoir-Varzi 2021, 24.

from the Opposites, Anaxagoras' conception of 'overlap' is literal. Thus, the Opposites materially *constitute* (i.e., make up) a physical structured unity,[67] which Marmodoro calls *simulpresence*[68] because the constituent parts are *inseparable* from or embedded in any compound they form. Yet, the Opposites alone cannot make structured unities, and so they do not sufficiently account for the complexity of the cosmos. According to Marmodoro, Anaxagoras solves this problem introducing the use of seeds and of *nous*, which respectively provide each individual thing with a structure and collective entities (e.g., a forest of trees) with meta-structures.[69] It is due to the Opposites, the seeds and *nous* that Anaxagoras can provide a rather complex answer to the Problem of Composition, according to which our world consists of mereological sums (i.e., the resulting unity is nothing over and above what composes them). Furthermore, sense perception seems to be only one possible criterium to determine what is unity, so that Marmodoro can conclude that Anaxagoras posits 'phenomenal wholes'.[70]

As to Plato, Marmodoro's approach to the dialogues is developmental. She believes that Plato's explanatory mechanism for participation changes considerably between the *Sophist* and the *Timaeus*. However, this shift does not seem to substantially affect the overall account of Plato's **PWR** that

[67] Marmodoro 2021, 37 n. 3.
[68] Marmodoro 2021, 7, 34.
[69] Marmodoro 2021, 16.
[70] Marmodoro 2021, 44.

Marmodoro offers. Without going into the details of Marmodoro's interpretation, one can say that in her view the *Timaeus* substitutes the Great Kinds of the *Sophist* with the *paradeigma*. By being a single Form that can stand for all the other Forms, the *paradeigma* offers to each Form the necessary structure to account for every partaking between Forms.[71] Thus, it rationalises the complex model of communication between Forms proposed in the *Sophist*.[72]

Plato's conception of Composition in Marmodoro's reading is more nuanced than Harte's, and considers the possibility that Plato offers different **PWRs** depending on whether what is discussed is a sensible object or a Form.[73] For she distinguishes three possible modalities in which something can be

[71] The account of participation that Plato develops starting from Anaxagoras is ultimately considered to be unsatisfactory by Marmodoro. For Forms, being *complex entities* (i.e., structures) that arise from reciprocal relations to one another, cannot be obtained from such an initial conception of participation. This is why, according to her, in the *Sophist* Plato, in addition to the Great Kinds, introduces a new kind of participation, i.e. 'permeation'. 'Permeation', according to her interpretation, describes the way in which all Forms (i.e., first-order Forms) take part to the Great Kinds (i.e., second-order Forms), where Plato considers the latter to be present in any Form (Marmodoro 2021, 158, 170–2). For without the Great Kinds no Form is possible. In terms of Form-Particular participation, 'permeation' is normative. It provides the necessary conditions according to which, say, Socrates participates in 'oneness' as well as Hippias, while taken as two people they take part in Duality (Marmodoro 2021, 172). In terms of interrelations between Forms, the Great Kinds provide the necessary properties for each Form *qua* structured entity (Marmodoro 2021, 174). However, due to the regresses generated by this participation model, it is unsatisfactory (Marmodoro 2021, 176–8). Thus, Marmodoro advances the view that one has better options in the *Timaeus*, though it has less explanatory power than the model presented in the *Sophist*. Here all Forms are considered one *single* structure, i.e., the *paradeigma*, which 'embodies all the metaphysical overlaps (interpermeations) between Forms and Great Kinds' (Marmodoro 2021, 178). Although in general terms the model in the *Timaeus* is consistent with what a whole is, it introduces important changes concerning how properties can be attributed to physical entities.

[72] Marmodoro 2021, 182.

[73] Marmodoro 2021, 122.

composed, that is 'fit', 'holism', and 'fusion', and thus three possible answers to the Problem of Composition. Differently from Harte, who had identified two different models of Composition (one unrestricted and the other restricted) to ascribe to Plato only one of them, Marmodoro maintains that all three have a specific role within Plato's philosophy.[74] 'Fit' is a conception of Composition at work in the *Theaetetus*[75] which states that the parts of something fit together as bricks of a wall or as letters make up a word. In the first case, the bricks constitute the structure, while in the second one the structure is provided by the arrangement of the letters. In other words, the structure is *external* to the letters, while in the case of the bricks it is *within* the bricks of the wall. According to Marmodoro, this way of understanding Composition cannot apply to Plato's Forms, but rather to sensible objects. For it does not result in actual 'wholes', but rather in 'alls' where each constituent remains numerically discernible as part of a sum.[76] As to 'holism', we find it at play several times as a conception of Composition where unities obtain on the ground of the function that qualitatively different components play to cooperate towards the same function or goal.[77] One example of this model is virtue, because though each virtue is qualitatively different, their end is to make an individual *wholly* (i.e., in any respect) virtuous. Thus, the virtues are

[74] Marmodoro 2021, 121.
[75] Plato, *Theaet.* 204a1–5.
[76] See Marmodoro 2021, 117–21.
[77] See Marmodoro 2021, 130–1.

one according to the function they play or according to their aim.[78] According to this account a whole is not identical to its parts, just as the parts are different from it, so that the parts are a sum of parts that is to be distinguished from the whole.[79] Marmodoro argues that the last model of Composition, that is, 'fusion', is the one that best represents the **PWR** that characterises Forms. For the resulting whole is a complex entity over and above its parts that is all there is as something that arises out of parts, and yet has none.[80] This is the model of Composition that she believes to be more indebted to Anaxagoras' view of Composition. For it allows that a Form operates just as the Opposites, which rely on 'overlap' and function as 'open sets': 'they need not increase, decrease, or suffer change when parts are shuffled'.[81] Thus, in force of this view Marmodoro argues that Forms are wholes and 'one' in the sense that they are *logical* 'fusions', where 'fusion' denotes a process of composition that leads to a whole resulting from parts, but that has *no* parts.[82] Forms as 'fusion' find a fitting analogy in a pool of water, because a pool of water is formed out of all the droplets that makes it, but each droplet is indistinguishable and inseparable.[83]

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[78] Marmodoro for her account of this view of Composition mentions Plato, *Prot.* 329d3–e1, *Theaet.* 207e–208a.
[79] Marmodoro 2021, 124.
[80] Marmodoro 2021, 118.
[81] Marmodoro 2021, 132.
[82] On the definition and properties of 'fusions', see Lando 2017, 144–6, Cotnoir-Varzi 2021, 159–93.
[83] Marmodoro 2021, 131.

Thus, although similar to Harte's reading whereby, each Form is 'more than the sum of its parts', Marmodoro contrarily makes plain that the parts of the resulting whole (i.e., Form) are *numerically* indistinguishable from one another. Furthermore, since Forms thus conceived are qualitatively uniform, it is 'qualitative overlap' that is responsible for making the constituent parts of a whole *numerically* indistinguishable within the whole. Hence, a Form ends up being not only partless but also indivisible, and one. If a Form has parts, this happens because they can have parts only in an *extrinsic* sense, which Marmodoro calls 'Cambridge Partitioning',[84] which by establishing an overlap between the Form and a given material objects happens to determine a part of that Form. Possessing parts according to 'Cambridge Partitioning' does not affect the Form itself *qua* intelligible and *un*instantiated entity. For a Form has parts only because its instantiations, which are *extrinsic* to the Form itself as a whole, are many.[85] Furthermore, this model of Composition allows that each Form has within itself *all* its *necessary* and *possible* 'components' (past, future, present or absent).[86]

[84] 'Cambridge Partitioning' can be seen as the mirror image of the famous 'Cambridge Change', which is so defined in *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*: a thing changes 'if it satisfies a description at one time that it does not satisfy at another. […] So, by the Cambridge criterion, I have changed, but I need have undergone no robust or substantial change […]."

[85] Marmodoro 2021, 111, cf. Plato, *Parm.* 131cff.

[86] Marmodoro 2021, 133. I find the distinction between 'parts' and 'components' not entirely spelled out in Marmodoro's work. If the difference were merely terminological, talking of components rather than parts would not solve the problem. However, she seems to understand 'components' as something that is distinctive of a whole, possibly on the basis of its definition, based on Aristotle, *Cat.* 1a24 – 5 (Marmodoro 2021, 120, n. 11, see also 135–6).

When compared to Harte's conception of wholes as 'contentful structures', Marmodoro's notion of wholes offers a dynamic account of the line of thought behind Plato's **PWR** that takes into account its metaphysical consequences. Furthermore, Marmodoro's interpretation has the merit of shifting the focus of Plato's **PWR** from the conception of 'part' to that of 'overlap', which by being responsible for determining the extrinsic parts of Forms results in the real core of Plato's **PWR**.[87] Thus, given the alleged debt to Anaxagoras' 'overlap', one could hypothesise Plato may be drawing some of his views as well as alternatives to the notion of 'part'[88] from his predecessors. Such a result furthermore points out that the **PPW** may need to be investigated from a different perspective which does not necessarily revolve around the notion of 'part'. However, although Marmodoro rightly sets Plato's **PWR** in dialogue with his predecessors, one of the aspects that I believe to be controversial in her study is arguing that Plato's **PWR** is mainly influenced by Anaxagoras. For there are good reasons to argue that Parmenides was an equal if not even a greater point of reference for Plato.

[87] Marmodoro 2021, 185.

[88] Early Greek philosophers rarely resort to the term 'part' in their **PWRs**, and if they do, the term can have a plethora of connotations—even a religious one. Chantraine 1933, 345 notices how the meaning of the word μέρος heavily depends on the context of discussion. In Homer (e.g., Homer, *Il*. 6.357), the term refers to the 'portion' of fate that the Moirai allotted to someone, while in Hesiod, *Th.* 211 it is a personified divinity again linked to fate. Similar observations can be made for Parmenides, where however (**B16 DK**) another terms, that is *melea* (i.e., 'limbs' or 'body') is used in combination with *krasis* to suggest the idea of 'being part of'.

1.3 Possible Antecedents to Plato's PWR doctrine

I previously called for investigating the roots of Plato's **PWR** doctrine in order to deepen our understanding of Plato's Mereology. For it emerged that Plato's rich vocabulary and conceptions may be thought to rely on his predecessors, though this still has to be demonstrated. On the one hand, Marmodoro's work underscores the idea that Anaxagoras inspired not only Plato's philosophy overall, but also that he played a role in shaping his **PWR**.[89] Furthermore, according to Harte, since Plato's **PWR** opposes to a conception of Composition that can be traced back to the Eleatics, it is likely that Parmenides also had a **PWR**. However, as we will see, assuming that Plato's representation of Parmenides' thought is accurate is problematic. On the other, there is a commonsensical observation that favours the idea that Early Greek thinkers had views about the **PWR**: how could a conception of the **PWR** already as sophisticated as Plato's emerge out of nothing? Plato's nuanced vocabulary and theoretical strategies would seem to point to a longstanding discussion on Parts and Wholes. Furthermore, if, as it seems, Plato openly found mereological considerations in at least one of his predecessors' thought, that is Parmenides, there might be evidence regarding other Early Greek philosophers. As mentioned previously, some scholars consider Plato to be the

[89] Marmodoro 2021, 12–64.

first to thinker to tackle the troublesome **PWR**,[90] while others have disregarded this view on the grounds that:

> The search for a unity in the universe behind the multiplicity of phenomena is *perennial and universal*. It is a religious and aesthetic, a philosophic and scientific need; and it appears *at all* periods of history. We have seen it in the previous poetry of a pre-philosophical age [*scil*. Hesiod], and shall encounter it in its most extreme form a hundred years later after Thales in Parmenides.[91]

Here Guthrie refers to the **OMP** rather than the **PPW** to maintain its presence in what is not canonically considered Early Greek Philosophy (e.g., Hesiod, the author of the Derveni Papyrus).[92] While the **OMP** and **PPW** are not identical, we have observed their overlap: like the **OMP**, the **PPW** questions whether what is is a singular entity, or multiple, and of what kind. In order to reach an answer to the **OMP** and **PPW**, philosophers had to offer explanations of the processes that unify the many different parts of reality and, *vice versa*, make it many. Thus, the necessity of providing an explanatory account of such processes of unification and differentiation is a further aspect that the **OMP** shares with the **PPW**.[93] All similarities considered, nothing prevents one from considering the two problems as different sides of the same coin. Actually, Aristotle, in his doxographical passages detailing the meanings of 'whole' and

[90] At various points Harte 2002 mentions that the Eleatics are the target of Plato's endeavour. However, she does not focus on Parmenides' **PWR.**
[91] Guthrie 1962, 70.
[92] In the Orphic cosmogony the author lays out, Zeus seems concerned with granting to the universe unity notwithstanding the complexity of all things that compose it, see Palmer 1999, 27–30, Betegh 2004, 175–9, Palmer 2009, 59–61.
[93] E.g., Mourelatos 1986, 135, Harte 2002, 3.

'one', made these two notions explicitly overlap. For, under certain respects, 'whole' means 'one' as 'one' means 'whole'.[94] However, there is no perfect symmetry between unity and wholeness. For being 'one' can also mean 'all' (*pan*). This observation is crucial, because it implies a different conception of unity when compared with 'whole' (*holon*). Furthermore, similar to Plato, Aristotle considers 'wholes' superior to 'alls'. The former express a unity that is 'more' than the sum of its parts, because the arrangement of the parts is relevant to the function the whole plays. Removing or misplacing one of the parts amounts to destroying a given whole: for example, a shoe without a sole or with a misplaced sole is not a shoe as it does not perform its function.[95] This is why individual substances are wholes, while stuffs such as water or fire are not.

Introducing the distinction between 'all' and 'whole' at this stage is pertinent to our attempt to establish whether Early Greek philosophers conceived of the **PPW**. Interestingly, Plato's predecessors almost never employ the term 'whole'.[96] This word is rarely found in compound words and on its own before Plato, even in philosophical works where neologisms are expected. Of course one can wonder how aware Early Greek thinkers were

[94] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 24. 1023b26–1024a11, Stokes 1971, 13–22.
[95] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 6. 1016b9–17.
[96] The term *holon* is found for example in Heraclitus, where its use is particularly problematic because it is in the plural (B10, B72 DK), and in Philolaus, where it stands for cosmos (B21 DK). Parmenides according to some reading of the text uses its epic and archaic version in a compound of dubious meaning (**B8.4 DK**: *oulomeles*). Similar observations follow for Empedocles (B62,7 DK: *oulophyeis*).

that their views on the **OMP** entailed views on the **PWR**. However, this observation does not change the fact that addressing the **OMP** implies a certain, either implicit or explicit, answer to the **PPW**.

What remains uncertain is whether the vocabulary and theoretical tools available to Early Greek philosophers constrained them to use 'all' in the sense Aristotle suggests, which can be considered unrestricted. In principle, the absence of the exact word 'whole' does not necessarily imply that Early Greek philosophers lacked understanding of the characteristics ascribed to a 'whole', such as the importance of 'structure' (e.g., arrangement). In fact, for instance, Parmenides not only attributes to What-is some of the features that Plato will attribute to wholes, but he appeals to both the terms 'whole' and 'all'.[97] Furthermore, when Plato talks of Parmenidean What-is, he himself says that it is a 'whole', though this is done to highlight the alleged untenability of Parmenides' views that Plato offers in the *Sophist*.[98] The term 'whole' is merely one example where Early Greek philosophers might have employed terminology differently from that conventional by the time of Aristotle. But this does not deny that they attempted to express similar thoughts. For analogous observations apply to terms deployed to describe, for instance, the process of combination between parts.[99]

[97] Parmenides, e.g., **B8.4**, **B8.24 DK**.
[98] Plato, *Soph.* 244e2–5.
[99] See the **Appendix** for a discussion of the development of mereological vocabulary in Early Greek thought and literature.

In conclusion, it is a worthy investigation to see whether, and if so how, Early Greek philosophers sought to solve the **OMP**, and, consequently the **PPW**. For despite their limitations in expression it is likely that Early Greek philosophers tried to articulate in their own terms complex and possibly more abstract mereological ideas. The next section, which will focus on a Platonic passage, will further substantiate the view that Early Greek philosophers helped to shape Plato's Mereology, and how. Furthermore, it will identify some influential models for Plato with a specific focus on Parmenides'. Thus, exploring the Early Greek antecedents of Plato's **PWR** doctrine clearly becomes fundamental not only for its profound relevance for Plato's own philosophical contribution to Mereology, but also for its inherent value. For it opens the way to crucial steps forward in our understanding of Early Greek philosophy and Mereology.

1.4 Traces of Early Greek Mereological Doctrines in Plato: Monism, Pluralism and Parmenides

I have previously established that it is crucial to analyse Early Greek **PWR**s to better grasp Plato's Mereology, and that Early Greek philosophers appear to have dealt with the **OMP** and the **PPW**. I agree to some extent with Guthrie,

who argued that the Milesians, like Hesiod, were not fully aware of these issues. However, as I showed, there seems to be an attempt to explain the **OMP** already in pre-philosophical authors. Furthermore, contrary to some scholars,[100] I believe that the solutions to the **OMP** and **PPW** found in Heraclitus and Empedocles are philosophically relevant. For the Pluralist account of reality developed by Empedocles openly reacts to Parmenides and his unity of What-is,[101] as he was probably the first philosopher to be fully aware of the **OMP**.[102] Furthermore, it does not matter much whether Heraclitus lived before or after Parmenides,[103] because the evidence suggests that he was already engaged with both the **OMP** or with a **PPW**.[104] However, his exact views and his degree of awareness of the **OMP** are hard to properly pin down, due to his cryptic style.

In general, up until Plato, it seems likely that the investigations into the **OMP** and **PPW** were not *explicitly* posited and consistently argued for. The fact that Parmenides addressed the **OMP** more explicitly than other Early Greek philosophers (aside perhaps Zeno) on its own could justify a focus on Parmenides' **PWR**. However, this does not mean that previous Early Greek

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[100] See Stokes 1971, 249.

[101] E.g., O' Brien 1969, 239–249, Wright 1997**a**, 164, Curd 2004, 155, Palmer 2009, 260–312, McKirahan 2011, 264–77.

[102] Stokes 1971, 249ff.

[103] On the textual other than temporal difficulties (on which, see Kirk 1954, 1–3, Guthrie 1962, 1, Kahn 1979, 1–3, KRS 1983, 181–3, McKirahan 2011, 150) linked to the relation between Parmenides and Heraclitus, see Stokes 1971, 109–12, Graham 2002, Palmer 2009, 341–5.

[104] Heraclitus, B10 DK, on which, see Robinson 1987, 81–83, Kirk 1954, 167–79, Heraclitus, B124, B125 DK.

thinkers did not sense it. For a conception of the **OMP**, rather than with an explicit doctrine, could have been expressed implicitly, where by 'implicitly' I mean that a given thinker:

1) lacks an entirely consistent and shared vocabulary to refer to Parts and Wholes;
2) does not have a fully fleshed out theory, but rather *exemplifies* and thus *describes* a certain underlying conception of the **PWR**, e.g., while illustrating the workings of the universe.

As we will see, with regards to the **OMP**, Parmenides' vocabulary appears more consistent and his views more thoroughly developed than it is generally thought. However, Parmenides writes at an early time, which makes him rely on terminology taken from everyday Greek and Epic that may be employed differently by his contemporaries; differently from Plato and Aristotle, Parmenides *cannot* avail himself of a standardised philosophical terminology. Furthermore, it is unclear to what extent Parmenides' views should be considered an explicit take on the **PWR**, rather than something that can be reconstructed at a meta-level.

Since Plato is thoroughly aware of Early Greek philosophy, the fact that he mentions his predecessors' doctrines while discussing his **PWR** and the **OPM** strengthens the possibility that that they discussed the **OPM** through one or more **PWRs**. However, this possibility depends on the extent of

reliability we are willing to grant to Plato's account of his predecessors' views. For Plato may draw his own inferences and tweak his predecessors' views according to his liking. Several scholars have discussed the passages where Plato mentions Early Greek philosophers, and the general consensus is that Plato is less interested than Aristotle or Theophrastus in providing an at least *prima facie* more account, though not necessarily neutral.[105] Plato includes Early Greek views for dialectical purposes, and his approach (whether positive or negative), as well as the details he provides, can change depending his specific interests.[106] Thus, one may conclude that Plato's testimony on Early Greek philosophers should be taken at least with as much a grain of salt as Aristotle's. Nonetheless, what scholars find hard to accept is the possibility that Plato could be simply making up his predecessors' views, especially given the fact that he quotes their words *verbatim*. Furthermore, although often Plato's quotations of Early Greek material introduce variations that may have important theoretical consequences, usually our access to alternative sources allows us to determine the extent of these modifications.[107] Notwithstanding

[105] E.g., Bárány 2006, Adomenas 2006, Mansfeld 1986, Horky 2013, Benzi 2024. In particular Mansfeld 1986, Andolfi 2023 and Benzi 2024 offer a reconstruction of the origin of doxography, which is likely to be found for the first time in sophistic writings.

[106] See Adomenas 2006 for a discussion of Plato's criticism of his predecessors that focusses on the insufficient clarity with which Early Greek philosophers expressed themselves, and on Plato's reappropriation and reinterpretation of some Early Greek doctrines. Adomenas persuasively argues that Plato's use of his predecessors does more often than not eschew his predecessors' views to make them fit his strategies, and leads Plato to favour one philosopher over another depending on the matter under discussion.

[107] On these aspects, see McCabe 2000, 10–3, specifically with reference to Parmenides' positions, see 60–89.

the adjustments Plato makes to the Early Greek **OPMs**, his writings nevertheless suggest that Early Greek philosophers formulated relatively sophisticated **PWRs**. To be sure, the divergence between Plato's interpretation of his predecessors' **PWRs**, and their actual views, is a separate issue from the one I am exploring. For my primary objective here is to offer a historically and philosophically accurate account of how Early Greek thinkers conceived of **PWRs** that influenced Plato's own doctrine.

Not every Early Greek philosopher has contributed in the same way to Plato's philosophy. The same can be said for his **PWR** doctrine. Therefore, despite the inherent challenges and the unavoidable level of partiality in the selection, it is crucial to identify the main Early Greek philosophers to whom Plato is both responding, and whose ideas he draws upon. A viable approach is to start by considering the philosophers that Plato names in connection with the **PPW**, and then look into the philosophical rationale behind this choice. Although relying solely on names does not entail that those who are named are *more* relevant for Plato's **PWR** doctrine than others, it is hardly deniable that this is the case with Parmenides. Nonetheless, the following passage from Plato's *Sophist* encourages us to consider non-Parmenidean accounts of Mereology as well, either *per se*, or in the framework of Plato's **PWR**:

> EV: It seems to me that Parmenides and anyone who ever rushed the judgment as to distinguishing *how many* and of *what kind* (*diorisasthai posa te kai poia*) are the things that are (*ta onta*) spoke to us in a sloppy way (*eukolōs*).

THEA: How so? EV: Everyone seems to me to have told us a story (*mython*), as if we were children. **[A]** One told that the things that are are three, and that at times they fight (*polemei*) against themselves in some way, but at other times make friends, set marriages, then beget and bring up their offspring (*phila gignomena gamous te kai tokous kai trophas tōn ekgonōn parechetai*). **[B]** But then another says that the things that are are two, moist and dry or hot and cold, marrying them off and making them set up house together (*synoikizei te auta kai ekdidōsi*). **[C]** Among us there is the Eleatic tribe (*ethnos*), which began with Xenophanes or even before him, who thus in their stories went through in detail saying that all things are 'one' (*henos ontos tōn pantōn*). **[D]** Later, certain Ionic and Sicilian Muses thought that the safest approach (*asphalestaton*) was to combine the two accounts and say that what-is is many and one (*to on polla te kai hen estin*), and is brought together by both Hate and Love (*echthra de kai philia synechetai*). **[D.1]** For 'in dividing off they always bring together' (*diapheromenon gar aei sympheretai*), say the more high-strung (*syntonōterai*) Muses, **[D.2]** while the softer ones (*malakōterai*) always make this saying looser, saying that the all is one (*hen einai phasi to pan*) in turns (*en merei*), and sometimes it is one in friendship under the power of Aphrodite (*philon hyp'Aphroditēs*), but then many and in conflict with itself through the action of a certain strife (*polla kai polemion auto hautōi dia neikos ti*). It is difficult and inappropriate to say whether such great, famous and ancient men said all things with some degree of truth or not, and thus find fault in them, but we can make this clear without reproach—[…] When one of these men pronounced these things saying that 'it is' or 'it came into being' or 'are coming in to being' being either 'many' or 'one' or 'two', and again 'hot being mixed together with cold' (*estin ē gegonen ē gignetai polla ē hen ē dyo, kai thermon au psychrōi sygkerannymenon*), positing at some other point 'separations' (*diakriseis*) and 'combinations' (*sygkriseis*), by the gods, dear Theaetetus, do

you understand what they are talking about? (Plato, *Soph.* 242c4–243b7, my translation)[108]

This passage comes from the *Sophist*, a dialogue where, among other things, Plato discusses Composition, whether What-is (*to on*) is a whole or not,[109] and its consequences for predication of what really is.[110] Plato's discussion of What-is is preluded by this well-informed doxographical section on previous approaches to the **OMP**.[111] Given the terms and processes outlined, Plato takes his predecessors to investigate the **PWR**[112] cosmologically and foreshadows its

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[108] {ΞΕ.} Εὐκόλως μοι δοκεῖ Παρμενίδης ἡμῖν διειλέχθαι καὶ πᾶς ὅστις πώποτε ἐπὶ κρίσιν ὥρμησε τοῦ τὰ ὄντα διορίσασθαι πόσα τε καὶ ποῖά ἐστιν. {ΘΕΑΙ.} Πῇ; {ΞΕ.} Μῦθόν τινα ἕκαστος φαίνεταί μοι διηγεῖσθαι παισὶν ὡς οὖσιν ἡμῖν, ὁ μὲν ὡς τρία τὰ ὄντα, πολεμεῖ δὲ ἀλλήλοις ἐνίοτε αὐτῶν ἄττα πῃ, τοτὲ δὲ καὶ φίλα γιγνόμενα γάμους τε καὶ τόκους καὶ τροφὰς τῶν ἐκγόνων παρέχεται· δύο δὲ ἕτερος εἰπών, ὑγρὸν καὶ ξηρὸν ἢ θερμὸν καὶ ψυχρόν, συνοικίζει τε αὐτὰ καὶ ἐκδίδωσι· τὸ δὲ παρ' ἡμῖν Ἐλεατικὸν ἔθνος, ἀπὸ Ξενοφάνους τε καὶ ἔτι πρόσθεν ἀρξάμενον, ὡς ἑνὸς ὄντος τῶν πάντων καλουμένων οὕτω διεξέρχεται τοῖς μύθοις. Ἰάδες δὲ καὶ Σικελαί τινες ὕστερον Μοῦσαι συνενόησαν ὅτι συμπλέκειν ἀσφαλέστατον ἀμφότερα καὶ λέγειν ὡς τὸ ὂν πολλά τε καὶ ἕν ἐστιν, ἔχθρᾳ δὲ καὶ φιλίᾳ συνέχεται. διαφερόμενον γὰρ ἀεὶ συμφέρεται, φασὶν αἱ συντονώτεραι τῶν Μουσῶν· αἱ δὲ μαλακώτεραι τὸ μὲν ἀεὶ ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχειν ἐχάλασαν, ἐν μέρει δὲ τοτὲ μὲν ἓν εἶναί φασι τὸ πᾶν καὶ φίλον ὑπ' Ἀφροδίτης, τοτὲ δὲ πολλὰ καὶ πολέμιον αὐτὸ αὑτῷ διὰ νεῖκός τι. ταῦτα δὲ πάντα εἰ μὲν ἀληθῶς τις ἢ μὴ τούτων εἴρηκε, χαλεπὸν καὶ πλημμελὲς οὕτω μεγάλα κλεινοῖς καὶ παλαιοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐπιτιμᾶν· ἐκεῖνο δὲ ἀνεπίφθονον ἀποφήνασθαι – […] Ὅταν τις αὐτῶν φθέγξηται λέγων ὡς ἔστιν ἢ γέγονεν ἢ γίγνεται πολλὰ ἢ ἓν ἢ δύο, καὶ θερμὸν αὖ ψυχρῷ συγκεραννύμενον, ἄλλοθί πῃ διακρίσεις καὶ συγκρίσεις ὑποτιθείς, τούτων, ὦ Θεαίτητε, ἑκάστοτε σύ τι πρὸς θεῶν συνίης ὅτι λέγουσιν;

[109] Plato, *Soph.* 244d–246a2, Granieri 2023, who shows that in the *Sophist*'s the main concern of the philosopher is the enquiry regarding the *idea tou ontos* understood as the whole intelligible realm or the totality of Forms, rather than Being as one of the Great Kinds.

[110] Plato, *Soph.* 243d–244b. The gist of the argument relies on Composition as Identity and on 'to be' as conveying identity, and goes as follows. If both the cold and the hot are something, then the cold and the hot would be the same thing. But this is impossible, because it contradicts the assumption of the Pluralists, who believe that many things are, rather than only one. Therefore, the Pluralists are disproved. Cf. Crivelli 2012, 74–5.

[111] On this passage, see Hülz 2013, in particular 109–14, Horky 2013, 177–82, Adomenas 2006, Bárány 2006, McCabe 2000, 60–6, 75–9.

[112] Plato considers such questions to be not only physical but also metaphysical. However, metaphysics is not yet a topic of enquiry *per se* in Early Greek philosophy. In other words, in Early Greek philosophy physics and cosmology have embedded in themselves metaphysics, but are not investigated *qua* metaphysics. Metaphysics requires a degree of abstraction that is not fully grasped. Not even Parmenides, who characterises What-Is as something that appears

ontological implications.[113] Plato identifies two primary inquiries that his Early Greek philosophers seek to address through their doctrines:

1. the question regarding *how many* things there are;
2. the question regarding *how* they can be either 'one' or 'many';
3. the question regarding of what *kind* these things are, which involves identifying the necessary features of the constituents of reality and the processes that serve to account for their views.

These questions constitute the main queries that inform the **OMP**, which, as we have previously argued, overlaps with the **PPW**. The passage mentions numerous aspects necessary to any view of the **OMP** and **PPW**. First, it presents the constituents that compose reality. Next, it mentions the processes through which Combination happens. These processes instantiate the relation

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beyond the physical world, could do without terms that still suggest corporeality, or at least spatiality (Cornford 1933, 106, Guthrie 1965, 49, Calogero 1967, 146, Zeller 1967, 237, KRS 1983, 270). As I will show in the course of this thesis, there are good reasons to believe that the spatial reading and the association between What-Is and a sphere are to be read literally, as Sedley 1999 does. Hence, when we are talking about Early Greek **PWRs** the metaphysical aspect is not the focus, but rather an implicit feature within the cosmological and physical aspect, on which one can elaborate.

[113] Cf. Hülz 2013, 110. In Early Greek philosophy the **PWR** interests above all cosmology, though Parmenides is the only one to introduce explicit considerations regarding language and predication (i.e., the impossibility that two different things can be *said* to be the same). For Parmenides' philosophy, being strongly epistemological (Di Iulio 2021, Tor 2015), leads to conclude that the senses and thus language are likely to deceive us (B6 DK). Predication can be mistaken, if it does not reflect the way things really are (i.e., the path illustrated by the Goddess in the *Alētheia*), but rather what *seems* to be the case (i.e., the path of deception illustrated in the *Doxa*). Why does Empedocles not consider language deceitful and thus why does he not consider the problem of predication? To answer to this question, we must acknowledge that Parmenides' distinction between the *Alētheia* and *Doxa* calls for a nuanced view of predication, whereas Empedocles does not need it. Empedocles maintains that information that derives from the senses is genuine (B23, B106, B108 DK). Therefore, there is no reason why one should not trust language, and thus he opts out of Parmenides' linguistic caution.

between Parts and Wholes, which thus are the tools Early Greek philosophers used to explain the transition from 'one' to 'many' and *vice versa*. Importantly, all these aspects are the fundamentals of any **PWR** conception, and Plato uses them to distinguish two basic types of **PWRs**: Monists, who believe that all things are 'one', and Pluralists, who believe that all is 'many'. Though Pluralists are so characterised, it will become clear that Plato does not ascribe to them radical views which deny any sort of unity to the universe. Furthermore, the flat opposition between Monism and Pluralism has above all a heuristic function. For it allows Plato to claim his views as more sensible through the introduction of two mutually exclusive, opposite, exhaustive groups of views on reality, which equally represent extreme theoretical positions: *all* the **PWRs** implicit in the text either fall in the group of the Monists or in that of the Pluralists. Furthermore, while focussing on the **OMP** and **PPW,** this opposition informs us about the models of **PWR** that Plato addresses. Thus, Plato rhetorically and dramatically constructs the passage to place his **PWR** within an existing theoretical framework (i.e., Monists versus Pluralists) while also presenting it as an alternative and better option to the others due to its innovations and minor shortcomings, as in other passages.[114]

[114] E.g., Plato, *Theaet.* 152c8–153d, where Plato is again opposing Pluralism to Monism. For Heraclitus and Empedocles are grouped together with Epicharmus and contrasted to Parmenides, see Hülz 2013, 106–7, Horky 2013, 177–82. Plato's strategy can be considered what Nightingale 1995, 148–9 calls 'active double-voiced discourse' or 'parodic discourse' exactly because while it allows us to take a glimpse at Plato's original source for a view (e.g., Parmenides), at the same time he exploits it according to his own purposes, so that ultimately it does not reflect the original view alone anymore. Furthermore, as Plato does this he glorifies

Given these theoretical parameters, it falls to us to detect the thinkers behind the opposition between Monists and Pluralists. Plato himself helps us with this task, but it is impossible to identify some of the thinkers he places in each group.[115] The first pluralist **[A]** conceived the principles appealing to familial bonds. According to him reality is obtained through simple processes, such as friendship, marriages and finally begetting children starting from a status of conflict. There is no information as to what the principles are, but Plato says they are three. This way of conceiving reality recalls Hesiod, yet Pherecydes of Syros,[116] and Ion of Chios[117] are possible, too.[118] The next doctrine **[B]** again lacks clarity, making it challenging to pinpoint a specific advocate.[119] Although it uses widespread principles in Early Greek Philosophy (e.g., the opposites), the language is still rather archaic and relies again on familial bonds as theoretical tools to explain reality. It is only with **[C]** and **[D]** that Plato's allusions become clear. Furthermore, he introduces explicitly for the first time what is that is either 'one' or 'many', namely, the all (*to pan*) (i.e., the universe). First, Plato mentions the Eleatics (including

his source and criticises them at the same time. Importantly, Plato seems to be playing with the reader, as the shifts appear subtle prima facie, and a charitable reader could even consider them minimal. However, in the long run all the shifts introduced produce a view that can result in something extremely different from that of the thinker who originally put it forward.

[115] Cornford 1935, 218, Hülz 2013, 110.

[116] B1 DK.

[117] B1 DK.

[118] For this view, see Adomenas 2006, 331.

[119] Adomenas 2006, 331 connects it with Archelaus as he introduces oppositions such as Hot-Cold and Dry-Moist within his cosmology, probably on the basis of B4 DK. However, the reference is so vague that it could be ascribed to other thinkers as well.

Xenophanes) as those who held that the all is 'one' **[C]**. Plato's choice to read the Eleatics as interested in cosmology, in line with other Early Greek philosophers, is peculiar, but not unreasonable.[120] Both Xenophanes' and Melissus' monistic doctrines are cosmological, and the fact that scholars tend to agree that Melissus' doctrines became the so-to-say 'orthodox' version of Eleatism further encourages Plato's view.[121] Nonetheless, though in this context one can think of Parmenides as a cosmological thinker too, over the course of the next chapters it will become apparent that he is more than that, as Plato's analysis of Parmenides' conceptions within the *metaphysical* discussion on What-Is and What-Is-Not already make plain. Lastly, Plato refers to another group of Pluralists **[D]**, who maintain that everything that is is 'one' *and* 'many'. The mention of the Ionic and Sicilian Muses and the later clear references to their doctrines indicate that Heraclitus, Empedocles and Epicharmus[122] are respectively meant. They are grouped together because both share the idea that the all is 'one' and 'many'. Furthermore, some sort of conflict (be it war or Strife) determines the structure of reality, though in different ways. Empedocles' and Heraclitus' views are implicitly distinguished. The latter believes that 'one' and 'many' coexist, and that

[120] On this see **Chapter 2** of this thesis.
[121] Palmer 1999, 190–3, Harriman 2019, Palmer 2009, 218–24, cf. Hülz 2013, 111. This reading seems also confirmed by a reading of Aristotle's testimony that I will propose in the next chapters.
[122] For the evidence on Epicharmus, see Horky 2013, 180–1.

unreconciled conflict is necessary **[D.1]**.[123] Heraclitus' doctrine is rather eccentric, because although Plato considers him a Pluralist, the possibility of reconciling the contraries in their union could be exploited to consider him nevertheless as a monist.[124] The former believes in different cosmic cycles, where at one time everything is 'one', and at another 'many' **[D.2]**. Although due to the four elements as principles Empedocles is a Pluralist, he definitely envisages a Monistic moment within the cycle. As a result, he can maintain that 'the all' is *both* 'one' and 'many'. Plato highlights the distinction between Heraclitus and Empedocles by associating the more severe Muses with the former and the softer ones with the latter. Since Plato is interested in his own views on the **OMP** and **PPW**,[125] the opposition between Monists and Pluralists sets out to provide a general context and some examples of inadequate solutions to them. Accordingly, Plato has no need to expand on the doctrinal differences between Heraclitus and Empedocles. *To him* identifying the Monists with the Eleatics—Parmenides in particular—and the Pluralists with Heraclitus and Empedocles is sufficient.[126] For, in order to answer the question of how one thing can be said 'many' and how multiple things can be regarded as 'one' Plato will 'only' need to advance a more nuanced conception of: **a)** What-Is (*to on*) and What-Is-Not (*to me on*) as 'different' (*to heteron*), and **b)** a

[123]E.g., B 80 DK, but cf. Hülz 2013, 112.
[124] See Neels 2018, Kahn 1981, 4, and Aristotle, *Metaph.* A 3. 984a7–8 who considers him to be a Monist. On Plato's interpretation of Heraclitus, see also McCabe 2000, 93–138.
[125] Plato, *Soph.* 251a–b.
[126] Wright 2021, 455.

PWR that allows him to *say* that something is in motion *and* at rest *at the same time*, which in a way implies its unity *and* multiplicity as well as change and changelessness.[127] It is when one wants to provide an account of which **PWRs** shaped Plato's to the greatest degree as in our case that one needs a *thorough* and accurate distinction between its various previous conceptions.

Thus far, the analysis of the above passage proves significant for the following reasons. First, the passage informs us regarding Plato's framework when it comes to the **OMP** and the **PPW**. Second, it provides the names of some of the philosophers that belong to this framework, and to whom Plato reacts. Third, Plato draws a brief overview of their cosmological responses to the **OMP**, which have important metaphysical consequences that Plato will not fail to spell out. Furthermore, by reprising the opposition between Monists and Pluralists while discussing the **PPW**, Plato suggests that there are different **PWRs** behind the Early Greek understanding of the **OMP**. Thus, in conclusion, the passage constitutes another sign that Plato's considered his predecessors to have developed different views of the **PWR**.

Plato's doxography might be considered imprecise and inaccurate. However, he presents an accurate compilation of the authentic terminology that his predecessors, in particular Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Empedocles,

[127] Plato, *Soph.* 254b11–d3, Granieri 2023.

employed to articulate the compositional processes inherent in reality.[128] This fact circles back to Harte's characterisation of Plato's mereological vocabulary as 'rich'.[129] Furthermore, the fact that the mereological vocabulary found in this passage partially overlaps with the one Plato employs later within his account of the **PWR**[130] substantiates the Early Greek origins of the vocabulary of Plato's **PWR**. Of course there are more terms and concepts that Early Greek philosophers employ, and Plato is only selecting the terms that *he* considers conceptually valuable. Not every neologism or resemantisation that Early Greek philosophers introduced was equally lucky. But this does not mean that the ideas behind a certain term were not influential for later thinkers such as Plato. Rather the contrary. Though Plato may convey differently the ideas exploited in his predecessors' **PWRs**, he is receptive of their philosophical import, as the constant Parmenidean echoes in Plato's works show.

The reading of the passage that I have proposed may not be conclusive in terms of the thinkers it identifies as relevant for Plato's **PWR**. However, I believe that we can consider limiting the scope of Plato's influences to

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[128] For Empedocles, compare the use of *philia*, *echthra* (a term originally Hesiodic) in combination with *synechetai* (which is parallel to Empedocles' use of *synerchomai*) found in e.g., B17, B26 DK to the *Sophist* passage quoted above. For Plato's mention of Aphrodite as a power able to bring together the many into one, and Strife (*Neikos*) as the power that makes the one many again, compare e.g., 31 B69, B35 DK. For Heraclitus, see the use of *polemein*, which is again a term employed especially in Hesiod's *Theogony* to characterise the happenings within the universe, in e.g., B53, B80 DK. What makes it explicitly Heracliteian is the *verbatim* quotation of B10, but cf. B51 DK.

[129] Harte 2002, 4.

[130] For instance, see the use of compound verbs of ἁρμόζω (Plato, *Soph.* 253a3), which has parallels in Empedocles (e.g., 31 B96 DK), or συνάγω (e.g., Plato, *Soph.* 251d9), which has parallels in Heraclitus (B10, B91 DK).

Parmenides, Empedocles and Heraclitus is a good compromise. Furthermore, to be sure, giving the spotlight to these philosophers does not aim to deny the relevance of other Early Greek philosophers. Still, in this context, Parmenides, Heraclitus and Empedocles are the most straightforward Early Greek thinkers to isolate, as they are ones that Plato allows us to recognise.[131] For example, although Plato was influenced by Pythagoreanism, his references to the Pythagoreans are obscure.[132] Furthermore, he never names Philolaus, even if his conceptions may be relevant for Plato's **PWR.**[133] Another particular case of Plato's tendency to avoid explicit reference to his predecessors are the Atomists. Thus, although the Atomists may prove to some extent influential for Plato's **PWR**, their specific contribution is difficult to isolate.[134] As other scholars have noticed, Plato never mentions them either by nicknames or even with geographical allusions.[135] So, there is no doubt about the influence of

[131] Dialogues such as the *Protagoras* and the *Gorgias* clearly mention and even have as main characters the homonymous sophists. However, these do not need to be considered, because Plato never discusses their doctrine in the context of the metaphysical and physical application of **PWR**.

[132] On Plato and the Pythagoreans, see Burkert 1972, 83–97, Zhmud 2012, 50–61, 415–33, Huffman 2013, Horky 2013.

[133] On Plato's relation to Philolaus, Burkert 1972, 218–25, Huffman 1993, 1–35, and n. 106, Horky 2013, 225–36.

[134] Take for example Anaxagoras. The passages where Plato points to his philosophy (i.e., Plato, *Phaed.*, 97b8ff. probably *Lg.* 894e4–895b8) show that Plato's interest is in the Anaxagorean *Nous*. For the Anaxagorean doctrine of mixture can be considered together with other pluralist accounts of reality (e.g., Plato, *Soph.* 243d–244b). Nonetheless, Marmodoro 2021 argued that Anaxagoras could have impacted Plato's Forms, more generally his metaphysics, with important consequences on Plato's **PWR**.

[135] E.g., Sattler 2021, 434, Wright 2021, Gregory 2021.

Philolaic[136] and Atomist ideas to Plato's metaphysics and physics in general.[137] However, the explicit connections between the Atomists and Pythagoreans with Plato in respect of his **OMP** or **PPW** are hard to establish. If Parmenides, Empedocles, and (to some extent) Heraclitus are brought up within the context of Plato's metaphysical and physical applications of the **PWR**, Plato may regard their contributions as more profound. Thus, it makes sense to prioritise their **PWRs** in a study of Plato's Mereology.

The reasons why one should start to reconsider Plato's **PWR** from Parmenides, and thus focus on Parmenides' **PWR**, are various. First, Parmenides is notoriously a crucial figure for several aspects of Plato's philosophy,[138] and the inclusion of his views within the context of Plato's **PWR** doctrine only reinforces this fact. Furthermore, given how much of a breakthrough Parmenidean philosophy was, it can be expected that

[136] For the Philolaic import on the *Philebus*, see Huffman 2001, 70, Meinwald 2002, Bossi 2013, Gill 2019, and Plato, *Phlb*. 16c, 23b–27c where the passage addresses a problem of composition and mixture that is readily applied to the cosmos (i.e., physical aspect of **PWR**), but could point towards metaphysics (i.e., the structure of Forms as wholes). For the *Philebus* passage on syllables (*Phlb*. 18b6–d2) closely recalls both the *Theaetetus* (*Theaet.* 203a) and the *Sophist*'s discussion on language, which is linked to the interweaving of Forms (*Soph.* 253a).

[137] The references Plato has in mind in the *Theaetetus* are so mysterious that Plato could be reacting to some kind of *logical* Atomism, Ryle 1990. But again, Plato never mentions the Atomists. Accordingly, Plato's reference to them in other dialogues, such as the *Sophist*, remains at best tentative (McCabe 2000, 75, n. 61, 77, n. 65). Some have even doubted that Plato was acquainted with the doctrines of the Atomists (e.g., Taylor 1928, Thesleff 1986, Gigon 1972); though this is very unlikely (Sattler 2021, 448, Zhmud 1997, Gorey 2018). A more likely scenario for Plato's engagement with Atomist philosophy could be physics, in particular the *Timaeus* (Cornford 1937, Gorey 2018, Sattler 2021), but see Ferwerda 1972 for a through, cautious, and yet generally negative consideration of Plato's knowledge and integration of Atomist views in his philosophy.

[138] See McCabe 2000, 60–89, Palmer 1999, especially 3–17 for previous studies on Plato and Parmenides.

Parmenides contributed to the creation of a more abstract language for discussing the metaphysical aspect of mereology. For example, Parmenides' belief that What-is is 'one' surely informed Plato's view that Forms are 'one', though their being structured could make them to some extent plural. Although the ties to Epic and cosmogonic poetry of the historical Parmenides may link his reflections to cosmology, his conception of What-is generates many tensions that extend to metaphysics and predication. Thus, Plato looked to Parmenides mainly as a source for his metaphysical application of the **PWR**.

Second, while Parmenides' **PWR** would make a perfect case study for a Monistic **PWR**, at the same time it could offer relevant insights for a Pluralistic **PWR**. For, on the one hand, Parmenides' *Doxa* can convey a view of the phenomena only through a Pluralist doctrine of the principles, which are Light and Night. On the other, Parmenides' Monism offered a unique chance to later Early Greek thinkers to formulate more nuanced Pluralist **PWR**s. Thus, starting from a study of Parmenides' Mereology has the further advantage of preparing the ground for a later examination of later **PWR**s. Third, in principle, other Early Greek philosophers such as Empedocles, Heraclitus, Philolaus and the Atomists are worthy of inclusion in an enquiry on Plato's **PWR**. However, one must admit that covering even just one Early Greek philosopher properly requires extensive time, effort, and space. Had one chosen to examine all the Early Greek philosophers who could have influenced Plato, the outcome, though comprehensive, would have only scratched the surface of many

philosophical problems related to the **PWR**. This becomes especially true, when it comes to matters so poorly investigated such as the relation between Parts and Wholes.[139]

In conclusion, I have shown that, when Plato discusses the Problem of Composition and his **PWR** doctrine, he refers to Parmenides, as to other Early Greek philosophers, with a clear agenda in mind. However, if one considers that Plato discusses Parmenides' ideas and responses to the **OMP** and **PPW** in both the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*, it is very likely that, though unsatisfactory, his views were extremely valuable for Plato and therefore could play a focal role for comprehending Plato's Mereology.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter started with an analysis of how contemporary Mereology can apply to the study of Ancient Philosophy. The aim was to provide the necessary background for understanding how recent scholars have employed it to better understand Plato's philosophy. It is with the same aim that I have provided a brief summary of the current *status quaestionis* on Plato's Mereology. Within this summary I have voiced some of my concerns and

[139] Stokes 1971 might be considered the work that comes closest to a study of parts and wholes in Early Greek Philosophy. However, the account he provides is overly pessimistic and leaves out much evidence.

added a few remarks. According to scholars, Plato is the first philosopher to develop a view on the **PPW**, because many aspects of Plato's philosophy, starting from psychology, involve the **PWR**. But Plato situates his discussion of the **PWR** in cosmology and metaphysics, too. Thus, scholars interested in these aspects of Plato's **PWR** have directed their attention above all to the *Sophist* and the *Timaeus*. Furthermore, as various interpreters have noticed, the vocabulary and concepts that Plato exploits are complex and may have root in Early Greek philosophers. However, scholars have paid little attention to the Early Greek elements of Plato's Mereology, though, as I have shown, Plato himself was aware that Early Greek philosophers already addressed the **OPM** offering a certain answer to the **PPW**. First, I have argued that Early Greek philosophers conceived of the **PPW** as part of the **OMP**. Furthermore, although Marmodoro has tried to trace back Plato's Mereology specifically to Anaxagoras, the sources allow for the inclusion of other thinkers. Even pre-philosophical writers such as Hesiod were already grappling with the **OMP**, which overlaps consistently with the **PPW**. This does not mean that every Early Greek philosopher developed as comprehensive a view as Plato's; for Early Greek philosophers rather seem to have illustrated their views of the **PWR** through examples or in discussing their cosmological views. Next, I have shown how in the *Sophist*, Plato himself presents his predecessors as committed to developing solutions to the **PPW**. The mutually exclusive division between Monists and Pluralists served Plato at least two purposes.

On the one hand, the passage offers a framework for Plato's own doctrine. On the other, it works as a methodological means to foreshadow that Plato's alternative conception of the **PWR** is more philosophically satisfactory than his predecessors'. After granting that Plato himself thought that the **PPW** is found in the Early Greek philosophers, I sought to identify the thinkers who are likely to have most influenced and inspired Plato's **PWR**. Although there are other passages where Plato discusses the **OMP**,[140] I have relied on the *Sophist* as it is the most detailed passage of this sort. The general division between Monists and Pluralists that Plato himself uses is effective, and it directs the attention to two main alternative models for the **PWR**. Within these two groups Plato places Parmenides in Parmenides in the Monists, while he places Empedocles and Heraclitus in the Pluralists. Given the context of discussion and other considerations, I have argued that these philosophers are likely to be philosophically significant for Plato's **PWR**. For situating Plato's Mereology within its Early Greek framework and focussing on Early Greek **PWRs** could enable us to address important unanswered questions in the current understandings of Plato's Mereology. Thus, it is reasonable that by focussing on Early Greek conceptions of Composition we can provide some relevant insights into Plato's **PWR**, both that which obtains in physics, and that which obtains in metaphysics. For example, examining the vocabulary

[140] E.g., Plato, *Theaet*. 183e5–7, 180d8–e4, *Parm.* 127e8–128b6, on which, see Adomenas 2006, McCabe 2000, 60–89.

and ideas related to the **PWR** that Plato derives from specific predecessors may uncover whether Plato is constructing a unique conception of 'whole' (if at all) for the sensible realm.

Accounting for each Early Greek philosopher who influenced Plato's **PWR** would require much time, and expertise. Thus, I have decided to inaugurate a study of Early Greek **PWRs** that influenced Plato's with an account of Parmenides' **PWR**, which will constitute the focus of the rest of the thesis. Aside from the unquestionable importance of Parmenides for Plato's philosophy in general, one can also mention that Parmenidean philosophy was transformative among Early Greek philosophers as well. For example, given that Empedocles' philosophy may be considered to be a critical reaction to Parmenidean Monism, we could say that his **PWR** would not obtain without Parmenides' ideas.[141] Furthermore, Parmenides' **PWR** serves as Plato's foundational basis for his Mereology, as evidenced by the extensive consideration he gives to Parmenides' philosophy in comparison to other early Greek philosophers.

Accordingly, by providing the theoretical grounds to study other Early Greek philosophers' **PWRs**, a study of Parmenides' **PWR** will be valuable not only in the field of Early Greek philosophy, but also in the context of Platonic scholarship. For while on the one hand it will hopefully provide scholars in

[141] See Guthrie 1965, 147–8, Wright 1981, 161–62, Palmer 2009, 70–1, specifically 260–317.

Early Greek philosophy with a tool to study other Early Greek **PWRs**, on the other the results of this thesis will prove valuable for scholars interested in Plato's Mereology as well.

In conclusion, with this work I wish to accomplish the following aims. First, I wish to show that, Parmenides' **PWR** does not boil down to an unrestricted view of Composition that necessarily embraces Composition as Identity as scholarship has uncritically assumed.[142] Second, once we supply the Early Greek background, Plato's Mereology acquires a deeper meaning, and possibly some insight on problems left unsolved. Third, I aim to provide the Early Greek philosophers with the philosophical and theoretical relevance they deserve by arguing that their **PWRs** doctrines are worthy of study for their own sake and that Plato's Mereology becomes more understandable chiefly through the correct assessment of the Early Greek import within Plato's **PWR**.

[142] E.g., Harte 2002, Koslicki 2008.

CHAPTER TWO: Parmenides' Theoretical Context and Aristotle's View on Parmenidean Monism

2.1The Object of Parmenides' Quest and Parmenidean Monism

With Parmenides we are at a crossroads in history of philosophy. By distinguishing between what truly is (*Alētheia*) and the phenomena (*Doxa*), Parmenides is the first philosopher to explicitly question whether there is some truth beyond what ordinary sense perception perceives, and its reliability.[143] The first part of the poem (i.e., the *Alētheia*) played a crucial role in the history of philosophy. Ancient commentators like Simplicius have been taken to believe that it alone dealt with the *true* essence of reality, and that accordingly Parmenides attributed philosophical and metaphysical relevance exclusively to it.[144] It is however quite easy to see how this view, which was shared by the majority of 20th century scholarship, is problematic: given that in Early Greek philosophy there is neither clear-cut distinction between different fields of knowledge, nor within what we today understand to be 'philosophy', every aspect of reality has metaphysical and philosophical

[143] Kahn 1969, 703: 'Now he certainly does *not* begin with any discussion of the structure of the heavens, or with the problems of the nature and number of the elements. Parmenides' poem contains a cosmology, but it does not *begin* with cosmological questions.' Cf. Tor 2015.
[144] Baltussen 2008, 1–19, against this interpretation of ancient commentators, specifically Simplicius, see Tor 2017, 220.

relevance. The fact that the Goddess presents a discourse on the essence of What-Is and another (lost but for a few fragments) on the principles that describe the phenomena has prompted scholars to maintain that Parmenides' poem actually consists of two neatly separated parts.[145] As a result, especially in modern scholarship, this has brought to the fore the problem of their mutual relation, which saw the emergence of two main opposing factions. These two positions are very broad and represent only the extremes of a plethora of sub-factions that combine elements from both.[146] Either Parmenides conceived of What-Is in purely logical and linguistic terms without any connection to the models of enquiry of his predecessors (i.e., cosmology),[147] which I call the **logical reading**; or Parmenides was a man of his time, very much rooted in his cultural framework, which I call the **historical reading**. This latter faction provides a more deflationary view of Parmenidean philosophy, compared with that of the **logical reading**. For Parmenides would still conceptualise What-Is in an attempt to understand how the cosmos is structured.[148]

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[145] Recent contributions (e.g., Mansfeld 2021, Tor 2017, but already Curd 2004), in their attempt to consider together parts of the poem canonically attributed to the *Alētheia* or the *Doxa*, recognise that Parmenides' fragments do not grant such a neat division. Indeed, this view seems to be rooted in the ancient commentators' prevalent interest in metaphysical matters, which are exclusively discussed in the discourse on What-Is, surely influenced by Plato's metaphysics and his own reading of Parmenides.

[146] See Curd 2004, Palmer 2009 for a detailed overview.

[147] Owen 1960, Long 1963, Barnes 1982, Clarke 2019.

[148] Calogero 1977, Calogero 1967, 43. Interestingly, a similar reading is found in our early sources on Parmenides, e.g., Theophrastus, ap. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Metaph.* 31,7–16 = A7 DK: 'Coming after him [i.e., Xenophanes] […], Parmenides went on both paths. For at the same time he asserts that the universe (*to pan*) is eternal and he tries to explain the genesis of the things that are (*tōn ontōn*); but he does not judge in the same way about both of these points: he supposes that according to truth (*kath'alētheian*) the universe is one, ungenerated,

Furthermore, it might make some of Parmenides' considerations too dependent on his cultural context to be accessible to modern readers. As a result of the **historical reading**, then, Parmenides' revolutionary theories may be considered ultimately more inaccessible to us than they could actually be. Inevitably, scholars who adhere to the **logical reading**, by offering a reading of Parmenides' philosophy that relies on contemporary metaphysical and logical conceptions, tended to draw a clear-cut line between him and his predecessors. As a result, they ended up with fascinating, but nevertheless anachronistic interpretations of Parmenides' views.[149]

Independently from any specific faction, all the interpretations arise from the difficulty of establishing what the object of the *Alētheia* that Parmenides is talking about really is. To this end, both the **logical** and the **historical readings** have their own merits as they capture different aspects that make Parmenides' philosophy so unique. For while the poem is set in the context of a divine revelation, which proves Parmenides' continuity with tradition and Early Greek Epic, Parmenides also deploys sets of arguments, which are compressed but ultimately rest on logical principles. Furthermore, Parmenides shows a deeper awareness of how language can or cannot

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and spherical in shape (*sphairoeides*), while according to the opinion of the many (*kata doxan de tōn pollōn*) he accepts, in order to explain genesis, that the principles are two, fire and earth, the one as matter and the other as cause and agent (*to men hōs hylēn to de hōs aition kai poioun*).' (tr. Laks-Most modified), cf. Simplicius, *in Phys.* 25.15–16, D.L. 9.21–2.

[149] E.g., Wedin 2014, Austin 1986.

adequately describe reality.[150] Parmenides' use of language led Owen and Barnes to identify the object of the poem with something abstract, primarily pertaining to logic, language and meaning.[151] However, it is also true that, given the very nature of Parmenides' poem, it is anachronistic to suppose that traditional themes like that of divine revelation or the opposition between divine knowledge and mortal ignorance play no philosophical role, so that they do not orient us towards a certain understanding of the object of the poem.[152] In fact, the presence of Epic themes passed down either orally or in other ways[153] through Homer and Hesiod serves to show how the *kouros* can access knowledge of What-Is, which now appears as something divine and more concrete. Thus, although logical necessity is something that Parmenides probably starts to make use of in unprecedented ways,[154] some reconstructions cross the line in that they detach Parmenides' enquiry from Homeric and Hesiodic Epic to posit a use of language that anachronistically approaches our understanding of logic. That Parmenides' conception of necessity is still very close to its Epic representations is clear from the fact that Parmenides posits different nuances of necessity that can hardly be considered exactly equivalent

[150] Kahn 1969.
[151] Barnes 1982, 123–130, Owen 1960, cf. Reinhardt 1916, cf. Curd 2004.
[152] Cf. Mansfeld 2021, 203: 'this [i.e., Parmenides' poem] is an epic dressed in familiar cultural garb, presenting a cosmogony and a cosmology like Hesiod's *Theogony* and Orphic literature, though in an uncommon and original way'. Mourelatos 2008 was one of the first scholars to stress the philosophical function of traditional themes in Parmenides, but, see already Mansfeld 1964.
[153] On possible modalities of transmission, see Spelman 2018 and Spelman 2019.
[154] Cornford 1933, 98, cf. Barnes 1982.

to our notion of logical necessity—even more so given that they are personified (e.g., Justice, Necessity, Fate). The fact that Parmenides discusses the phenomena, as well as resorting to an account of the principles (i.e., Light and Night) that forbids other mortals from outracing him, is a further sign of continuity with the Ionians' cosmological project.[155] Thus, the belief that the *Doxa* is a useless and purely 'dialectical device',[156] is not supported by the fragments, as also Palmer concludes on the basis of his 'modal' reading of 'to be':

> Interpretations of the cosmology as a dialectical device, no less than interpretations of it as amalgam of contemporary theories targeted for critique, can now both be recognized as responses to a non-existent problem that arises only due to basic misunderstanding of Parmenides' metaphysics.[157]

In recent studies the idea that in the *Alētheia* Parmenides concerned himself with an investigation into the true essence of things rather than *only* into language has found several supporters.[158] This result, which reinforces Parmenides' continuity with other Early Greek philosophers, leaves open whether What-Is is a further constituent of the same substance (i.e., the cosmos), or functions as the essence that underlies everything (similar to Aristotle's *hypokeimenon*), or both.[159] Naturally, these considerations overlap

[155] Mourelatos 2008, 232–5, Mansfeld 2021, 213, Coxon 2008, 347, Sedley 1999.
[156] Owen 1960, Long 1963, Reinhardt 1916, cf. Clarke 2019.
[157] Palmer 2009, 163.
[158] E.g., McKirahan 2011, Palmer 2009, Tor 2017, Mourelatos 2008.
[159] Palmer 2009, 183, see also the discussion in Tor 2017, 285–303.

with the problems posed by the **logical** and **historical readings**. Thus, these considerations have an impact on how one should read Parmenides' Monism, and, more generally his **PWR**. For while the opposition between the **logical** and **historical readings** focusses on the sphere of influence of Parmenides Monism (i.e., language, the universe, or both), the latter considerations stress how Parmenides tackles the Problem of Composition *within* each of the two parts of the poem, which in turn affect our overall views of the **PWR**: can Parmenides be considered a champion of Strict Numerical Monism (**SNM**) or of another kind of Monism? According to supporters of **SNM**, Parmenides believed that exactly *one and indivisible* thing is (i.e., What-Is): What-Is *cannot* consist of numerically distinct parts. Rather, it must be an entity *without* parts, and essentially homogeneous, as it amounts to only one feature, namely, 'to be'.[160] From the perspective of the **logical reading**, this understanding of Parmenides' Monism is less problematic. For it does not require that What-Is is anything spatially extended or even corporeal, which solves the problematic relation with the corporeality of the phenomena, thus possibly easing the tension between the two parts of the poem. However, the logical reading would reach this result at the cost of minimising the *Doxa* and the questions it opens (e.g., why does Parmenides feels the need to add a cosmology and

[160] Tarán 1965, Owen 1960, Cornford 1933, Zeller 1967, Guthrie 1965 can be considered supporters of this view. Furthermore, it should be noted that scholars close to both the **logical** and the **historical readings** have endorsed the **SNM**. For example, Owen endorsed the **SNM** while being a supporter of the **logical reading**, and Guthrie or Cornford equally accepted the **SNM** while supporting the **historical reading**.

present it in such detail? Why do we perceive change and heterogeneity?). As several scholars, including Clarke in his recent study on Aristotle's reading of Parmenides' poem, have argued, What-Is appears to be something at least spatially extended, if not even corporeal.[161] As incorporeality is one of Plato's innovations, some scholars believe that it is probably safer to grant only spatiality to What-Is,[162] as it is explicitly referred to by Parmenides' himself in the fragments.[163] However, those views adherent to the **historical reading** are confronted with the challenge of clarifying the problematic relation between What-Is and the phenomena, whether the latter are mere illusions or entities existing to a lesser degree. For example, if What-Is is corporeal, as according to them he has not yet formulated What-Is in abstract terms, should not its signs be corporeal as well? If so, then, how are we to conceive of their union to form What-Is? Does the **SNM** hold? Furthermore, it is problematic to conceive of a different region for What-Is within the cosmos, given how

[161] Clarke 2019, 73–87, Sisko-Weiss 2015, Sedley 1999, Palmer 2009, Schofield 1970, Burnet 1930, 180. I think KRS 1983, 270 encapsulate well the matter of corporeality in Early Greek thought: 'It is true that the incorporeal was still unknown; but it does not follow from that that Parmenides was wishing to describe 'body' or 'a *plenum'*. On the contrary, the chief difficulty about Parmenides is that, while the incorporeal was still unknown, and no vocabulary therefore existed to describe it, he was none the less, […] feeling his way towards it. Melissus carried the discussion a step further; but it seems probable, even in the case of Parmenides, that had he been asked whether his 'Being' was solid (or 'body') his answer would have been a *hesitant* negative.' (emphasis mine), cf. Zeller 1967, 237.

[162] Already Calogero 1967, 146, Cornford 1933, 106, Guthrie 1965, 49.

[163] Mourelatos 2008, 330, although in the end he accepts the non-literal view of the sphere analogy.

according to Parmenides What-Is extends everywhere. But then, how can it be both an aspect of the cosmos and coextensive with it?[164]

Granted the problems faced by the **SNM** and the many ways in which the fragments can be read, scholars have formulated several accounts of Parmenides' Monism. Barnes was the scholar who strongly pushed for rediscussing Parmenides' alleged **SNM**,[165] arguing that Parmenides could accommodate many things that are essentially What-Is.[166] This however does not imply going as far as to say that Parmenides was a pluralist like other Early Greek philosophers (e.g., Empedocles or the Atomists), and no interpreter seems to have followed such a suggestion.[167] Still, especially after Barnes' attack on **SNM**, scholars started to consider other forms of Monism in order to resolve the above-mentioned theoretical tensions. Although Mourelatos did not discuss the possibility of rejecting **SNM** at length, he reached similar conclusions to Barnes, saying that he opted for the weaker 'nondualism'.[168] Next, Curd proposed that Parmenides was a 'predicational monist', arguing

[164] Cf. Mourelatos 2008, 123–4, Coxon 2009, 338–9. Furthermore, Mourelatos 2008, 329, suggests not to ascribe corporeality to Being on the ground that the comparison with a ball or sphere is not to be taken literally.

[165] See Barnes 1979, Barnes 1982. Stokes 1971, 143 already pointed it out, saying *homoion* does not mean *numerically one* in Presocratic thought, but it is Barnes who called into question the strict numeric monistic reading of Parmenides.

[166] Barnes 1982, 139–42, Barnes 1979.

[167] See however Sisko–Weiss 2015, who come close to this reading.

[168] Mourelatos 2008, 130–3.

that Parmenides maintained that each thing is a single nature (*physis*),[169] which can hold only one single predicate:[170] What-Is is 'one' in essence, rather than in number, and as such it admits numerical plurality. Like other interpretations, Curd's reading focusses on the linguistic aspects of Parmenidean philosophy as others do. But it has the merit of shifting our attention to the essence that holds the predication (i.e., What-Is), while combining it with a positive reconsideration of the *Doxa*.

Since I will discuss the shortcomings of some of these views later,[171] for now I wish to limit myself to saying that each has grasped something genuine of Parmenides' Monism.[172] Importantly, the rejection of **SNM** opens to the possibility that, in order to solve the One-Many problem that accompanies What-Is and its 'signs', Parmenides had formulated a **PWR** in the *Alētheia*, rather than just in the *Doxa*. Furthermore, it may be that given the different object of the *Alētheia*, the **PWR** in the *Doxa* relies on different principles. In order to explore these possibilities and the resulting account of Parmenides' **PWR**, we will focus on Aristotle's reading of Parmenides, while also arguing

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[169] Talking about *physis* for Parmenides can be misleading, as *physis* is inherently connected to change, which is exactly what Parmenides rejects. I will talk about 'essence' instead, as it seems to me to avoid the connotation of change.

[170] Curd 2004, xviii. Cf. Hussey 1997, 139, who says that this implies 'one and only one subject about which anything is true'. He adds that this is the most we can say with a degree of certainty.

[171] See **3.2.**

[172] I will reprise this discussion in my discussion of Parmenides' **B8 DK**, where I will expand on the strategies Curd and Mourelatos in particular exploited to offer an account of What-Is as something not subject to **SNM**.

for including overlooked sources. For, to be discussed first in the following section, Aristotle may be considered to have a better sense of Parmenides' preoccupations than what is usually assumed.

2.2 Aristotle and Theophrastus as Sources of Early Greek Philosophy

We might think we can reconstruct the philosophy of the Early Greek philosophers *exclusively* through their preserved fragments. However, the fragments are often cryptic and need further help to be interpreted. The challenge usually arises from difficulty in understanding terminology. The process of resemantisation certain terms undergo from Epic poetry to their *philosophical* understanding among the Early Greek philosophers motivates this unclarity. In order to determine the origin of their philosophical meanings, we can map out the uses of certain words, and in this sense parallels found in texts antedating or contemporary to the target Early Greek philosopher are crucial. However, without the help of testimonies, whose interest is *philosophical*, some semantic developments and their philosophical import may remain unexplored. Indeed, we should not forget the value of later philosophical testimonies, such as those of Aristotle.

As we saw in **Chapter 1**, exploiting Plato to reconstruct an Early Greek view is problematic, because Plato is not interested in providing a genuine portrait of the doctrines he mentions. Rather, he is interested in them as a way to set the framework for his own philosophical agenda. However, Aristotle, too, gets little credit as a reliable source for the Early Greek philosophers. It is well-known that Cherniss strongly challenged Aristotle's reliability as a historian of previous philosophers.[173] Scholars quickly reacted against his reading, arguing that it is extreme,[174] even though it was agreed that Aristotle uses the Early Greek philosophers for his own ends (i.e., establishing his own philosophical agenda). For it is possible to read between the lines and 'translate' Aristotle's terminology to extract doctrines that are, at least to some extent, ascribable to a certain Early Greek philosopher.[175] This outcome is encouraged by the extensive doxographical passages in Aristotle's *corpus*. The first book of the *Metaphysics* is probably the best example of Aristotle's doxographical approach, as Guthrie pointed out:[176] there, Aristotle is less interested in presenting his philosophical views than he is in setting up the premisses and background for them. But Guthrie's point holds for other books of the *Metaphysics*, such as Δ, not to mention other works of the Aristotelian

[173] E.g., Cherniss 1935.
[174] Already Guthrie 1957 reprising Jaeger 1948.
[175] Cf. Collobert 2002, 282, Barney 2012.
[176] Guthrie 1957.

corpus (e.g., the *Physics*, *On Soul*).[177] Gadamer even maintained that Aristotle (and Plato) are the 'sole philosophical access to an interpretation of the Early Greek philosophers'.[178] Although Gadamer's views may seem extreme, there is some truth in them. For Aristotle can offer support when one is trying to decipher the philosophical use and meaning of a certain term, or its philosophical implications, better than Plato. Furthermore, Aristotle is chronologically closer to the Early Greek philosophers than any other extant philosophical source (except for Plato). Aristotle could still read, and probably understand, Early Greek doctrines, better than other later sources. The approach with which Aristotle discusses and analyses his predecessors inevitably makes of him an important source for the Early Greek philosophers in general.

One relevant example of Aristotle's approach for our understanding of **PWR** are *Metaphysics* A and Δ. While the former book classifies all Early Greek philosophical views on reality, the latter book defines the most important terms for Aristotle's philosophy. Aristotle himself offers an overview of their past and present uses in everyday life and in philosophy. For example, we learn that different senses or meanings of 'one' were already available at his time, and therefore potentially to the Early Greek philosophers. His awareness

[177] For a more sympathetic reading of Aristotle's accounts of Early Greek views in works such as the *Physics*, see Hussey 2012, and Clarke 2019 who stress this idea in reference to Parmenidean philosophy.
[178] Gadamer 2000, 10.

of different senses of being 'one' (e.g., looser and stricter senses) suggests that there was not only an intergeneric distinction between Monists or Pluralists, but an intrageneric one between different species of Monism and Pluralism. Aristotle's conception of predicates such as 'one', together with others explicitly linked to it (e.g., 'continuous', 'similar', 'identical'), will offer historically accurate and therefore relevant accounts that can be used to determine what kind of Monism can be attributed to each Early Greek thinker. Furthermore, the discussion of the meanings of 'one' and other mereological terms in *Metaphysics* Δ can be supported by his account of Early Greek philosophy in *Metaphysics* A.[179]

Thus, notwithstanding some opinionated retort in support of his own doctrines, we can deploy the doxographical content found in Aristotle's works to reconstruct Early Greek views.[180] This approach requires care and presupposes a certain degree of understanding of Aristotle's philosophy. But, a balanced reading of the testimonia can avoid the unrealistic assumptions that sometimes lead interpreters astray.[181]

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[179] See e.g., Halper 2009, 143 who discusses the Early Greek background of Aristotle's discussions in *Metaphysics* A and Δ.

[180] Even if Clarke 2019 is primarily a book that deals with Aristotle's reading of Parmenides, he quite successfully employs Aristotle to shed light on Parmenides.

[181] E.g., Barnes 1982, 139ff. makes of Parmenides 'the first full-bodied metaphysician' relying on a certain *ad hoc* interpretation of Aristotle. Owen 1960, some scholars (e.g., Wedin 2014) accept that Parmenides' is exclusively interested in language and in the conceptual and linguistic implications of *to on* and its uses. Even if to a lesser extent Clarke 2019 as well falls victim to this line of thought. Although he claims to argue that Aristotle's reading of Parmenides is 'anti-cosmological' in the sense that Aristotle does not interpret Parmenides as a *physiologos* as other Early Greek thinkers, this conclusion can be reached only by adopting a very specific position in respect of Parmenides' use of the *Doxa*.

Another important source for the Early Greek philosophers, generally viewed as more reliable than Aristotle, is Theophrastus. Since in his *Metaphysics* and *On Sensation* he discusses the Early Greek philosophers with a degree of independence from Aristotle, he is at least as valuable as Aristotle.[182] Nonetheless, with few exceptions,[183] scholars tended to believe that the Theophrastean accounts of the Early Greek philosophers suffered from the same difficulties as the Aristotelian ones. Still, even someone as sceptical as McDiarmid admitted that Theophrastus supported the Aristotelian accounts with other works (i.e., texts by the Early Greek philosophers), which may provide further information.[184] Let us allow, with McDiarmid, that the scope and use Theophrastus makes of the Early Greek philosophers is different from Aristotle's, in the sense that he focussed on the

[182] This view is the result of recent scholarship (e.g., Baltussen 2000, Mansfeld 1995, Huby 1985), which was more interested in how Aristotelianism developed after Aristotle's' death. Interpretations that emphasise the continuity between Aristotle and Theophrastus are common (e.g., McDiarmid 1953), yet Zeller 1966 (360) noted Theophrastus' independence from Aristotle. As Sharples 2002 pointed out, in the Peripatos the concept of authority, so dear to Platonists, never arose. Thus, Theophrastus could openly argue against some Aristotelian doctrines, such as that of the unmoved mover. It is worth noticing that Zeller has a whole chapter dedicated to him (Zeller 1966, 335–442), and that it was clear to him that Theophrastus represented a core moment for Aristotelianism and the Peripatos.

[183] Against the reliability of Theophrastus, see Cherniss 1935, McDiarmid 1953. Reinhardt 1916 is hesitant, but, see e.g., Gilbert 1907 and Von Fritz 1953, Baltussen 2000 who evaluate Theophrastus' doxographies positively.

[184] McDiarmid 1953, 129, see Kahn 1960, 18 too: 'the Aristotelian influence is not equally distributed over the different parts [of his work] […] The expository section is in general much fuller than Aristotle's own mention of his predecessors' views, and there is in many cases no Aristotelian reference whatsoever to the doctrine reported by Theophrastus. The case of his critical judgement is similar. Sometimes the objections presuppose an Aristotelian point of view, but more often they are aimed at internal inconsistencies or incompleteness in the doctrines described.'

principles as causes of motion and ends.[185] This still does not produce a conclusive argument for rejecting his testimonia. On the contrary, owing to Theophrastus' difference from Aristotle, we should use his testimonia to develop a multifaceted interpretation of the Early Greek philosophers.[186] More recent scholarship has appreciated Theophrastus as a doxographer,[187] because, for example, he devoted much attention to the language used by the Early Greek philosophers, which suggests a careful exegesis.[188] Furthermore, some scholars have further supported the idea that he had direct access to the Early Greek texts.[189] For Theophrastus usefully summarises and discusses the context from which a direct quotation is taken, thus adding pieces of information which are useful to interpret the view of a certain thinker.[190] Moreover, although Theophrastus wrote in a philosophical context partly different from Aristotle's, he is still methodologically close to his teacher.[191] The independent use he makes of the Early Greek texts renders Theophrastus an important source who either complements the fragments, and Aristotle's reading of them, or grasps aspects of a Presocratic philosopher otherwise

[185] McDiarmid 1953, 89.
[186] See Kirk 1951, for reservations regarding Theophrastus being able to read Heraclitus directly.
[187] One critic of this view is Lebedev 2016.
[188] Baltussen 2000, 91.
[189] Kurfess 2021, Huby 1985. The latter pushes this thesis so far as to say that Aristotle was influenced by Theophrastus' knowledge about the Early Greek philosophers, because Theophrastus was only thirteen years younger than Aristotle (313). This position was popular in past studies (e.g., Zeller 1966), but after McDiarmid's criticism of Theophrastus, scholars grew more hesitant regarding the extent of texts he could read.
[190] Take for example A46 DK which introduces the famous **B16 DK**.
[191] Baltussen 2000.

undocumented. However, their use must be accompanied by awareness not informed by preconceptions on Parmenides' place in the history of philosophy, as unfortunately has been the case. In the course of the next sections, I will analyse Aristotle's interpretation of Parmenides' thought with specific focus on his views of Monism and **PWR**. My aim will be to do as much justice as possible to Aristotle's reading, while comparing his views with the evidence from Parmenides' fragments and other overlooked sources discussed in the section that follows. This approach will hopefully provide us with some starting points as to his views regarding the Composition Problem.

2.3 The importance of Considering Parmenides' Literary Context: Homer, the *Homeric Hymns*, Hesiod, and the *Hippocratic Corpus*

Scholars have done a good job in isolating the literary antecedents of Parmenides' poem. Mourelatos' monograph showcased how Parmenides saw his work in continuity with Epic (i.e., Homer).[192] After it, recent scholars such as Folit-Weinberg and Mackenzie have returned to discuss Parmenides' use of Epic poetry in relation to Homer.[193] In different ways, these scholars have

[192] Mourelatos 2008, 6–11, but see also Pfeiffer 1975, 16–22.
[193] Folit-Weinberg 2022, Mackenzie 2021.

shown how Parmenides consistently reproduces certain Homeric verses, ranging from simply using Homeric words and epithets, to copying their structure to thematise some philosophically relevant aspects. For example, the 'epic' journey that the protagonist of the poem undertakes becomes philosophical, where there seems to be no explicit intention to return home, as Odysseus did. For Parmenides rather aims to gain a firm grasp on reality, whatever this means. Furthermore, by creating words clearly drawn from Homer and employing them in a different context, Parmenides can be considered an innovator of both the Epic genre and the emergent genre of philosophy.[194] Yet, Parmenides' sense of 'philosophical' has to be understood quite differently from Plato's. For, while Plato clearly distinguishes ontological from cosmological and logical implications, Parmenides does not: Parmenides folds into his conception of What-Is different aspects such as ontology, logic, and more, with cosmology, as is visible from his use of different deities to express necessity. If we get a different picture when we read Plato, this is because Plato is very careful to underscore the ontological and linguistical aspects within Parmenides' conception of What-Is that are instrumental for his own doctrines.

The fact that Parmenides chooses verse rather than prose is more philosophically relevant than some may think. Not only does it illustrate how

[194] Mourelatos 2008, 44 n. 108, Pfeiffer 1975.

Parmenides himself considers his work to be in continuity with epic poets such as Homer and Hesiod, who are the backbone of Greek culture; it also indirectly communicates that Epic tradition is the framework he will deploy to illustrate his conceptions. Thus, although Parmenides starts to build proper arguments by making explicit the premises and the conclusions, it should not be surprising that he does not *always* do so: as an instance of Early Greek literary production, Parmenides' poem relies on drawing analogies, making the best out of the intertexts available to a Greek of his time.[195]

Reinhardt already noticed the connection between Homer, Hesiod, and Parmenides.[196] Furthermore, as I mentioned previously, Mourelatos,[197] and others after him,[198] focussed on how Parmenides makes use of Homeric vocabulary, motifs (e.g., the journey), and themes,[199] for philosophical purposes. Since then, others have reinforced Mourelatos's views and rightly pointed out Hesiod as an important source for Parmenides.[200] Still, with the exception of Pellikaan-Engel,[201] to some extent Tor[202] and Pfeiffer,[203] scholars

[195] On the argumentative strategies of Archaic Greek literature and thought see Lloyd 1966, 172–210.
[196] See Reinhardt 1916.
[197] See Mourelatos 2008.
[198] E.g., Folit-Weinberg 2022, Mackenzie 2019.
[199] For the distinction between 'theme' and 'motif' Mourelatos 2008, 11–12.
[200] E.g., Curd 2004, Palmer 2009, Cerri 1995, Tor 2017. Mansfeld 1964, more than on Hesiod expands on parallels with lyric and early Greek poetry.
[201] See Pellikaan-Engel 1974.
[202] See Tor 2017.
[203] See Pfeiffer 1975.

have not much explored Hesiod's *philosophical* relevance for Parmenides.[204] However, Hesiod shaped and directed the questions of the Early Greek philosophers in a way Homer could not.[205] For example, while Homer is less interested in determining how the universe unfolds,[206] by systematising how the gods and powers active in the universe work, Hesiod provides a reference point for any cosmological account of the universe. Even if Hesiod's view of the cosmos is not strictly speaking philosophical, Early Greek philosophers saw in his works the starting point of a number of philosophical issues regarding reality. So they developed their views of reality in dialogue with Hesiod.[207] In my analysis of Parmenides' Mereology, I will stress Parmenides' use of Hesiod, because the Hesiodic references can contribute not only to our general understanding of Parmenides' philosophy, but specifically of his **PWR**. Furthermore, insisting on the philosophical aspect of the connection with Hesiod has the advantage of anchoring Parmenides' enquiry into What-Is within his cultural framework, so as to avoid anachronistic readings.

A further corpus of texts that scholars seem to almost completely ignore when it comes to Parmenides is the *Homeric Hymns*. Scholars such as

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[204] As we will see in **Chapter 5**, while recent studies such as Morgan 2022 argue that Parmenides' Hesiodic reprises should be read for the sake of their philosophical relevance, they still find it difficult to determine in what way they enhance our understanding of Parmenides' doctrines (e.g., his view of What-Is).

[205] See Seaford 2012, 14, Gigon 1945, 13. Cf. KRS 1983, Du Sablon 2014 convincingly reconstructs the continuity between the Homer and Hesiod, without however denying the different approaches to the conception of the universe.

[206] See Strauss Clay 2015.

[207] See Miller 2018.

Mourelatos and Pfeiffer limit themselves to noting the terminological similarity between these *Hymns* and Parmenides. This is probably because it was only after 1989, when Strauss Clay's seminal work on the *Homeric Hymns* came out, that these texts started to receive increasing attention from scholars. But even afterwards their discussion has remained mainly confined to debates in Homeric studies. As a consequence, much remains to be done to appreciate how the *Homeric Hymns* could become valuable additions to our understanding of Early Greek Philosophy. Without any doubt, such a project on its own would require a separate study. However, I will show that, Parmenides' engagement with the Homeric Hymns may be more than a matter of terminological reprises. For although the nature of these hymns is difficult to grasp,[208] the *Hymns to Apollo*, *to Hermes*, *to Aphrodite,* to *Dionysos*, and to *Demeter* date between the eighth and the fifth century BCE. [209] Furthermore, not only were they circulating together with Homer's poems but also their themes are often cosmological and offer variations or further developments of Hesiod's cosmogony. [210] Thus, the thematic and terminological echoes in Parmenides' fragments make it perfectly possible that he exploited some of the episodes therein recounted within his account of What-Is.

[208] Many questions surround the origin of these texts, for example whether or not Homer composed them, already Thucydides discusses the issue in 3.104.2–6. See Faulkner 2011, and Nagy 2011.
[209] See Strauss Clay 1989, cf. Faulkner 2011.
[210] See Strauss Clay 1989, 3–17, cf. already West 1966, 186.

The *Corpus Hippocraticum* is one last addition to include in any account of Parmenides' philosophy, in particular after Curd's revaluation of the *Doxa*[211] in the context of previous scholarship's central focus on the *Alētheia*.[212] In the *Doxa*, Parmenides presents a cosmology that scholars were for a long time hesitant to trace back to him.[213] What is interesting is that our sources on this part of the poem tell us that the *Doxa* was a discourse on the nature of both the cosmos and man.[214] Although *prima facie* this warrants no connection to Ancient Medicine, early Hippocratic texts such as *On Water, Airs, and Places* or *On the Nature of Man* study the nature of man in close connection to that of the cosmos.[215] Furthermore, Parmenides himself discussed matters that pertain to Ancient Medicine, such as embryology.[216] In particular, as Tor has recently shown, even Parmenides' epistemology and psychology are very much connected to medical views.[217]

Taking medical texts into consideration together with the *Doxa* is not devoid of problems, especially from a chronological point of view: the earliest Hippocratic texts that show some links to Parmenides' views date between

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[211] See Curd 2004.
[212] E.g., Tarán 1965, the recent Vetter 2017, where the *Doxa* part is barely discussed. But see Bollack 2006, who devotes much attention to the *Doxa* and its astronomical and embryological fragments.
[213] Zeller 1967 and Burnet 1930 rejected the cosmology as not Parmenidean, McKirahan 2011, 171 maintains that Parmenides does not seriously believe in it, and still regards it as the best possible account of the phenomenal world. See Gregory 2008, 74 for a synthesis of the main positions scholars hold. Against this view, see, e.g., Curd 2004, Palmer 2009, Tor 2017.
[214] Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 13 1114B–C (= B10 DK).
[215] See Van der Eijk 2008, Eldstein 1952, Longrigg 1963.
[216] E.g., B18, A53, A54, A52 DK.
[217] See Tor 2020.

mid to late fifth century BCE.[218] Still, this date in principle would not make it impossible that Parmenides was familiar with medical doctrines transmitted orally. Furthermore, our epigraphical and archaeological sources encourage an active involvement with medicine on Parmenides' side. For they tell us that Parmenides himself was considered a φώλαρχος, a term that should indicate the leader of a society with philosophical, religious and medical interests (as attested in an inscription from Velia, where Parmenides lived).[219] Thus, it seems not just possible, but very much likely, that Parmenides was aware of medical theories, and that these shaped his views in the *Doxa.* Accounting for the parallels between medical theories and the doctrines Parmenides maintains in the *Doxa* may offer some interpretative advantages for our study of his **PWR**. For one of the aims of Hippocratic and non-Hippocratic medicine is to determine the right mixture of elements (i.e., parts) out of which the resulting constitution (*krēsis*) of man arises,[220] a view that seems to be in the background of Parmenides' epistemology and psychology.[221]

[218] See Craik 2015.
[219] See Ebner 1966, Ebner 1961, Nutton 1971 and the recent Galli 2014, which expands on the archaeological evidence for a medical school in Velia which saw in Parmenides its founder. Part of the epigraphical evidence that makes of Parmenides a figure interested in medicine and in religious practices linked to it can be found in Laks-Most 2016 labelled with P23 (= SEG XXXVIII 1020) with a brief comment *ad loc*. For a longer discussion of the epigraphic evidence see Ebner 1966, Nutton 1971, Greco 2012.
[220] Hippocrates, *Nat. Hom.* 1.1–1.25.
[221] See **B16 DK**.

2.4 Aristotle's Reading of Parmenides' Poem

Given that Aristotle's reading of Early Greek philosophers may contribute towards a deeper understanding of Parmenides' **PWR**, I have argued for supporting the extant fragments with his testimonia. The use of Aristotle to better grasp Parmenidean philosophy and his monism in particular is not new. Prior to Barnes, scholars employed Aristotle to maintain that Parmenides was a strong numerical monist,[222] or, alternatively, to suggest that Aristotle considered Parmenides nothing but a Material Monist.[223] A material monist is defined by the following doctrinal tenets, which are based on the definition of Material Monism put forward by Graham:[224]

1. All there is arises and comes back to a single source (i.e., the principle or *archē*).
2. Everything in essence boils down to that single source.
3. There is no (unqualified) coming into being or perishing. Thus, the kind of change that the single source experiences as it becomes different things is a form of alteration.
4. The source of all things can be either water, air, fire, the boundless (?), or earth.

[222] Yet it was also common to reject Aristotle's testimony altogether, as Tarán 1965, 291 who concedes no positive value to Aristotle's testimony, or Cherniss 1935.
[223] E.g., Curd 2004, xviii, who believes that Aristotle thought Parmenides *nothing more* than a Material Monist. For a detailed history of Aristotle's role in scholarship on Eleatic philosophy see Palmer 2009, 2–32. The difference between Material Monism and **SNM** is quite difficult to grasp. For in both cases scholars seem to use it to say that Parmenides believed in the existence of *one* entity (i.e., What-Is) as the matter of everything. Yet, Material Monism does not always imply **SNM**, as becomes clear in Aristotle's testimonia. One could say that **SNM** supporters do not seem to believe that What-Is is the matter of something else, while Material Monism may allow that something other than What-Is exists. On Parmenides' Material Monism see also Johansen 2021, 32–9.
[224] Graham 2006, 49.

I will argue that the conclusion that Parmenides supports **SNM** as well as Material Monism is the result of a rushed reading of the Aristotelian accounts. It should be conceded, though, that on the basis of Aristotle's account of Parmenides' What-Is, What-Is may respect some of the tenets of Material Monism.[225]

A detailed analysis of the Aristotelean text shows that Aristotle's testimony does not lead to the conclusion that Parmenides in the *Alētheia* supports **SNM**. Rather, Aristotle considers Parmenides as a specific kind of Essential Monist. For, at least in the *Alētheia*, Parmenides' material principle (i.e., What-Is) is also 'one according to definition' (i.e., one in essence). This result distinguishes Parmenides from the other *physiologoi* and puts him in a peculiar theoretical position.[226] For the moment it suffices to note that Aristotle's specification not only emphasises that Parmenides cannot support **SNM**, but also that he has a certain awareness of how to approach the One-Many Problem or the Problem of Composition. A further aspect that makes Aristotle's testimony relevant for us is his discussion of the principles that Parmenides employs in the *Doxa* (i.e., Light and Night), which lead Parmenides to endorse a view closer to Pluralism. Thus, given Aristotle's evidence, it seems likely that in the *Doxa*

[225] Although Graham 2006, 167–8 ascribes some sort of conscious or unconscious monism to Parmenides, he does not seem to consider him a *material monist*, at least due to Parmenides' rejection of 3. and 4. If we accept that What-Is is not a 'source' for anything else other than What-Is in the fashion of Thales' water, then Parmenides would also reject 1. and 2.

[226] Although the considerations in Johansen 2021 are different, Johansen reaches a similar conclusion about the Eleatics and Parmenides.

Parmenides provides an alternative account of how composition works, and consequently an alternative **PWR** to the one formulated in the *Alētheia*.

2.4.1 Composition in the *Alētheia*: 'One According to Matter' *and* 'One According to Definition'

One of the most famous passages where Aristotle engages with Parmenides is *Metaphysics* A 3. In this chapter, Aristotle introduces his doctrine of the four causes (i.e., the material cause, the efficient cause, the formal cause, and the final cause). As Barney has pointed out, Aristotle's predecessors are valuable in that they offer Aristotle a way to confirm his own ideas.[227] Indeed, Aristotle exploits his predecessors' views to show how they came up with doctrines that may account for different forms of causality, but were unable to distinguish them as clearly as he did.[228] Aristotle's focus on the causes his predecessors anticipated requires him to expand on Early Greek principles, because the way they act illustrates which and how many of the four causes they express.[229] As Johansen has noted, Aristotle's treatment of Eleatic philosophy, in particular Parmenides, within the context of Early Greek Material Monism, is peculiar:[230]

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[227] Barney 2012, 69.

[228] See Mansfeld 1986, 13, Johansen 2021, 20–31. For a general analysis of *Metaphysics* A 3, its aims and methods see Barney 2012.

[229] See Johansen 2021, cf. Mansfeld 1986, 13.

[230] Johansen 2021, 21.

> **T1** But to investigate this [i.e., the cause of change] is to look for a different principle (*to tēn heteran archēn zētein*), as we said, that is, the principle of change (*archē tēs kinēseōs*). Those who from the beginning (*ex archēs*) completely devoted their attention to this inquiry, and said that the subject (*to hypokeimenon*) is 'one', did not consider this a difficulty. However, some of those who say that it (*scil.* the subject) is 'one', as if defeated in this inquiry, maintain that the 'one' (*to hen*) (*scil.* subject) and nature as a whole (*tēn physin holēn*) are changeless (*akinēton*), not only regarding generation and corruption (*ou monon kata genesin kai phthoran*) (for this is an ancient view on which everyone agrees), but regarding every other kind of change, too (*alla kai kata tēn allēn metabolēn pasan*). And this is what is peculiar (*idion estin*) to them. Thus, none of those who said that the All (i.e., the universe) (*to pan*) is 'one' also happened to grasp (*synidein*) this cause (*aitian*) (*scil*. the cause of change) except maybe for Parmenides. This is in so far as he posited not only one but in some way two causes (*ou monon hen alla kai dyo pōs tithēsin aitias einai*). (Aristotle, *Metaph.* A 3. 984a26–b5)[231]

Aristotle starts his doxographical account with a division that identifies the main positions the Early Greek philosophers held regarding the principles.[232] In the chapter, Aristotle discusses several views of material monists, drawing on oppositions which can be found in a similar fashion in other parts of the

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[231] τὸ δὲ τοῦτο ζητεῖν ἐστὶ τὸ τὴν ἑτέραν ἀρχὴν ζητεῖν, ὡς ἂν ἡμεῖς φαίημεν, ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως. οἱ μὲν οὖν πάμπαν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἁψάμενοι τῆς μεθόδου τῆς τοιαύτης καὶ ἓν φάσκοντες εἶναι τὸ ὑποκείμενον οὐθὲν ἐδυσχέραναν ἑαυτοῖς, ἀλλ' ἔνιοί γε τῶν ἓν λεγόντων, ὥσπερ ἡττηθέντες ὑπὸ ταύτης τῆς ζητήσεως, τὸ ἓν ἀκίνητόν φασιν εἶναι καὶ τὴν φύσιν ὅλην οὐ μόνον κατὰ γένεσιν καὶ φθοράν (τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ ἀρχαῖόν τε καὶ πάντες ὡμολόγησαν) ἀλλὰ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην μεταβολὴν πᾶσαν· καὶ τοῦτο αὐτῶν ἴδιόν ἐστιν. τῶν μὲν οὖν ἓν φασκόντων εἶναι τὸ πᾶν οὐθενὶ συνέβη τὴν τοιαύτην συνιδεῖν αἰτίαν πλὴν εἰ ἄρα Παρμενίδῃ, καὶ τούτῳ κατὰ τοσοῦτον ὅσον οὐ μόνον ἓν ἀλλὰ καὶ δύο πως τίθησιν αἰτίας εἶναι·

[232] On the use of division (*diairesis*) in *Metaph*. A 3, see Barney 2012 and Mansfeld 1986, 7–23. On the basis for Aristotle's divisions and organisations of the views of his predecessors see Mansfeld 1986, who argues that Aristotle in *Metaph*. A uses doxographical accounts already available and circulated by sophists, in particular Hippias, on which see Andolfi 2023.

corpus.[233] In **T1** *kinēsis* is often translated as 'movement',[234] probably because Aristotle focusses on the efficient role of the principle, which by starting a kind of motion starts change, too.[235] However, the point Aristotle is making is about qualitative change rather than about movement, and this is suggested by two factors: **1.** 'generation and corruption' (*genesin kai phthora*) depend on some kind of qualitative change, which necessitates movement, but is not identical to it (for it is the change in the constitution of something, rather than just its movement that leads to destruction); and **2.** the use of *metabolē*, which stands for all kinds of change, includes *kinēsis*. Furthermore, it is often used interchangeably with *metabolē* in a broader sense of 'change', which entails *kinesis*.[236] In general, Early Greek philosophers did not make distinctions between movement and change.[237] Thus, Aristotle could be using it interchangeably with *metabolē*, especially in a context which tackles Early Greek views on the role of the material principles as efficient causes.

In **T1** Aristotle focusses on the Eleatics *qua* Early Greek philosophers who made the universe arise out of a single principle or cause, that is, matter,

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[233] E.g. Aristotle, *Phys.* 1 1. 184a10–b14, Mansfeld 1986.
[234]E.g., Berti 2015, Barney 2012.
[235] Aristotle, *Metaph.* A 3. 984a16–27.
[236] E.g. Aristotle, *Phys*. 3 1. 201a8–9, Heinaman, 1994.
[237] An alternative argument for the same position can be found in Curd 2004, 84ff. See also Waterlow 1982, 93, Heidel 1906. As Ross 1924, 133 points out, the problem Aristotle addresses is not finding a cause of change, which can imply movement, but rather 'thinking out the nature of change, that led them [scil. the Eleatics] to their doctrine of an unchanging universe'. Another reason to translate *kinesis* with 'change' rather than 'movement' is the close resemblance with Aristotle, *Metaph.* A 5. 986b10–987a2 (**T2**) and Aristotle, *De Cael.* 3 1. 298b14–24, where Aristotle is clearly making a point regarding change, rather than 'movement'.

as the mention of the 'subject' (*to hypokeimenon*) suggests. However, such a matter does not correspond to any of the elements found in Graham's definition of Material Monism. Next, Aristotle characterises their philosophy as rejecting alteration as well as generation and corruption. He proceeds to conclude that such an approach made them unable to discover the cause of change (i.e., the efficient cause), a further peculiarity of the Eleatics. For though they believe that everything is caused by a single stuff, one needs elemental stuffs and a principle of motion to account for change, and thus for the plurality of things within the universe (e.g., Thales).[238]

The sketch of the Eleatics that Aristotle offers does not call for distinguishing Parmenides from other Eleatic philosophers such as Melissus[239] until the final lines of **T1**.[240] Aristotle talks of 'nature as a whole' (*tēn physis holēn*) and 'the one' (*to hen*) *as if* they indicated the same entity. However, while this identification might be valid for Melissus,[241] this is not the case for

[238] Aristotle, *Metaph.* A 3. 983b20–4a5.

[239] Zeno's philosophy and his allegiance to the Eleatic principles has been quite discussed, Lee 1967, KRS 1983, 286–97, Barnes 1982, 182–231, McKirahan 2011, 174–92, Sedley 2017, Palmer 2009, 189–205. Aristotle never mentions Zeno in his reports on physics, because Zeno focussed on linguistical paradoxes, probably ignoring natural philosophy (see Makin 1982 on Aristotle's discussion of Zeno in *CG*), as the fact that Aristotle calls him father of dialectic (A10, A1) may suggest.

[240] According to Harriman 2019, 1, Palmer 2009, 218–24, Reale 1970, 31–2, Aristotle believes that Melissus represents a general Eleatic doctrine that does not take into account Parmenides' doctrinal peculiarities.

[241] Melissus' identification between 'nature' and 'one' could be suggested by the title of his poem, which is *On Nature, or On What-is* (Περὶ φύσεως ἢ περὶ τοῦ ὄντος), B1 DK. Recently Harriman 2019, 33–38 argued in favour of the authenticity of the title. If this were the case, then Melissus would be identifying what is 'one' in Eleatic philosophy (i.e., Being) with nature (φύσις). The use of ἢ suggests the identification between Being (ὄν) and nature (φύσις), which is unparmenidean. Already Reinhardt 1916, 71–2 developed a similar view. For he argued that

Parmenides. For with the term 'nature' (*physis*) Aristotle seems to indicate the whole universe, similar to Parmenides,[242] whereas 'one' *appropriately* refers only to What-Is.[243] The reason why Parmenides would avoid using 'nature' to talk about What-Is is implicit in the meaning of *physis* (i.e., *phyō*). For it indicates growth, and therefore change and separation.[244] This observation is confirmed by the fragments, where Parmenides argues that What-Is cannot grow, diminish, or even change its colour (i.e., change qualitatively in any way), because these possibilities would introduce division in its essence.[245] Furthermore, something already perfect does not need to modify itself in any way.[246] One might think that Aristotle could be referring to Parmenides as well, if he could find some textual evidence that Parmenides admitted a looser sense of unity that applies to the phenomena. Even if this were the case,

in Melissus B8 DK there is no denial of the phenomena, and that Melissus' conception of Being is the one found in Parmenides' *Aletheia*, but applied to the world of *Doxa.* Furthermore, although Melissus denied that Being has a 'body'(*sōma*), he nonetheless characterises it as something corporeal and spatial, though once again this is debated, see Harriman 2019, 126–33, KRS 1983, 400. Harriman 2019, 120–126 connects the use of the word to Xenophanes' criticism of traditional conceptions of the gods (B14, B23 DK). It is unclear what the meaning of body should be at the time Melissus is writing: however, it seems to imply an *organic* body, which would not deny some corporeality to Being, Cf. Palmer 2009, 205–16.

[242] Parmenides never uses *physis* in the *Aletheia*, but it appears exclusively in the fragments that come from the *Doxa*, 16B, 10B, 14B DK. This is not the case for Aristotle, where *physis* usually overlaps with the 'essence' or 'what something truly is', see e.g., Aristotle, *Metaph.* A 5. 986b10–987a2 (**T2**), *Metaph*. Λ 9. 1074b3, *Pol*. 2 8. 1267b28, *MA* 2. 699a25. Aristotle, *Metaph*. Δ 4. 1014b26–1015a13.

[243] **B8.6 DK**.

[244] On the use of 'nature' in Parmenides cf. Mourelatos 2008, 62–3, 246–7.

[245] **B8.41 DK**.

[246] **B8.42 DK**.

Aristotle's commitment to taking the Eleatics as a group would not do justice to the internal theoretical differences among them.

The clear-cut differentiation between Melissus and Parmenides is drawn only with reference to the problem of change that Aristotle is discussing: while, according to Aristotle, Melissus denies change altogether, and thus appears to have not anticipated Aristotle's efficient cause, in specific circumstances Parmenides seems to have admitted it. The efficient cause can overlap with the formal cause as we will see in **T2**, so that it may be ascribed to What-Is as well. Furthermore, as Johansen has emphasised, there is no correspondence between causes and principles, in the sense that even a single principle may be playing the role of different causes.[247] However, given that the discussion is specifically about the possibility of change, it is likely that here Aristotle is referring to how the efficient cause applies to the *Doxa*: by admitting change through positing two principles, Parmenides, implicitly or not, posits something that acts as an efficient cause (i.e., the Demoness, and then Eros),[248] and something that can be mixed, as Light and Night (or Fire and Earth, as in Aristotle's later example). Aristotle suggests that Parmenides' explanation of the phenomena is more successful than that of Melissus due to positing not only one cause, but in some way (*pōs*) two—though in an unclear way, as the use of the *pōs* may suggest. Due to this admission, which brings

[247] Johansen 2021.
[248] Aristotle, *Metaph.* A 3. 983a30ff., 3. 984b5–7, 5. 986b27–987a2, Betegh 2012, 109.

him closer to Aristotle's four causes, Parmenides is more positively assessed than the other Eleatics.[249]

It is now clear both that Parmenides figures among the material monists and that he posited some sort of efficient cause, which can be understood as formal cause, too.[250] Furthermore, one can reasonably suggest that, according to Aristotle, Parmenides in the *Doxa* posited some efficient and formal causes, too. This observation will later help us to gain some information regarding Parmenides' view of Composition in the *Doxa*. However, it is important to grasp what sort of other causes Parmenides may have posited, and in what sense the two causes mentioned contribute to his status as a monist.[251] Since he is grouped together with the other Material Monists, one would expect that Parmenides simply posited What-Is as a material principle. Thus, Parmenides might have anticipated Aristotle's material and efficient causes. However, when a little later on in *Metaphysics* A Aristotle returns to Eleatic philosophy, this seems not to be the case:

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[249] See Calogero 1977, 34ff. already noticed how Aristotle is generally more charitable with Parmenides than the other Eleatics, and Early Greek philosophers. Similar views in Palmer 2009, Coxon 2008.

[250] E.g., Aristotle, *Phys*. 1 7. 191a14.

[251] On the basis of how Aristotle concludes the passage, it is not clear if, by referring to two causes, Aristotle is referring to the two principles of the *Doxa*, or to his enquiry on the kind of causes that Early Greek philosophers were expressing within their use of the principles. Even if Aristotle here were referring to the principles of the *Doxa*, he would still be referring to the efficient cause. For to have change at least two things are required. Furthermore, Aristotle would nonetheless be granting to Parmenides the recognition of at least two causes. For in the passage we are about to discuss (**T2**), Aristotle says that Parmenides admitted of a 'one according to definition', which amounts to the formal cause, as Johansen 2021 concludes.

T2 On the other hand, there are some that talked of the All (*peri tou pantos*) (i.e., the universe) as if it were one single nature (*hōs mias ousēs physeōs*). However, not all of them spoke either equally well or according to nature (*kata tēn physin*). The discussion of these thinkers is not at all appropriate (*synarmottei*) to the present inquiry about the causes (*skepsin tōn aitiōn*). For unlike some of the natural philosophers (*enioi tōn physiologōn*) who posited that Being is 'one' (*hen hypothemenoi to on*), and nonetheless admitted generation from the 'one', taken as matter (*hōs ex hylēs tou henos*), these philosophers hold a different view. For while the former posited change (*kinēsin*) in the generation of the All (*to pan*) (i.e., the universe), the latter said that it is unchangeable (*akinēton*). Still, at least this is appropriate to the present inquiry: for Parmenides seems to have grasped the 'one' according to definition (*eoike tou kata ton logon henos haptesthai*), while Melissus according to matter (*kata tēn hylēn*) (on which grounds the former regards the 'one' limited (*peperasmenon*), and the latter unlimited (*apeiron*)). Xenophanes, the first to consider these things (*scil.* of the All) as unified (*henisas*) (they say Parmenides became his student) did not shed light on the matter. He did not even grasp anything appropriate about the nature of these things (*tēs physeōs toutōn*) (*scil*., the principles and causes), but having contemplated the whole heaven, he said that the 'one' is god (*ton holon ouranon apoblepsas to hen einai phēsi ton theon*). As we said, we must leave out of the present enquiry these thinkers, two of them (i.e., Xenophanes and Melissus) completely, for they are a little too simplistic. On the contrary, in some passages Parmenides seems to speak more appropriately. Indeed, claiming that beyond (*para*) What-Is there cannot be What-Is-Not, he believes that What-Is is necessarily 'one' (*ex anangkēs hen*), and that nothing else is (regarding this we have talked more clearly in our work on natural philosophy [scil. the *Physics*?]). But having necessarily to follow (*akolouthein*) the phenomena, and accepting that while it (i.e., What-Is) is 'one' according to definition (*kata ton logon*), it is 'more (than one) (*pleiō*) according to sensation (*kata tēn aisthēsin*)', Parmenides supposed two causes and two principles, namely, the Hot and Cold, which he calls, for

example, Fire and Earth (*hoion pyr kai gēn legōn*). Then he assigns (*tattei*) these two in this way: the Hot to What-Is, the Cold to What-Is-Not. (*Metaph.* A 5. 986b10–987a2)[252]

T2 is set in a discussion on the principles of all things (*archas tōn ontōn*) that started with the Pythagoreans.[253] Given the importance of numbers in relation to Pythagorean cosmology, the focus of the chapter would appear to be cosmology. Some scholars do not understand why Aristotle should return to the Eleatics in this context, especially since he *seems* to dismiss their interest in physics.[254] However, although in **T2** Aristotle admits that the Eleatics should not be mentioned while dealing with the inquiry about the causes of the cosmos, this does not rule out their interest in physics.[255] Rather, it seems to suggest that, in their enquiry, they posited ideas, such as denying that nothing

[252] εἰσὶ δέ τινες οἳ περὶ τοῦ παντὸς ὡς μιᾶς οὔσης φύσεως ἀπεφήναντο, τρόπον δὲ οὐ τὸν αὐτὸν πάντες οὔτε τοῦ καλῶς οὔτε τοῦ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν. εἰς μὲν οὖν τὴν νῦν σκέψιν τῶν αἰτίων οὐδαμῶς συναρμόττει περὶ αὐτῶν ὁ λόγος (οὐ γὰρ ὥσπερ ἔνιοι τῶν φυσιολόγων ἓν ὑποθέμενοι τὸ ὂν ὅμως γεννῶσιν ὡς ἐξ ὕλης τοῦ ἑνός, ἀλλ' ἕτερον τρόπον οὗτοι λέγουσιν· ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ προστιθέασι κίνησιν, γεννῶντές γε τὸ πᾶν, οὗτοι δὲ ἀκίνητον εἶναί φασιν) · οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τοσοῦτόν γε οἰκεῖόν ἐστι τῇ νῦν σκέψει. Παρμενίδης μὲν γὰρ ἔοικε τοῦ κατὰ τὸν λόγον ἑνὸς ἅπτεσθαι, Μέλισσος δὲ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ὕλην (διὸ καὶ ὁ μὲν πεπερασμένον ὁ δ'ἄπειρόν φησιν εἶναι αὐτό)· Ξενοφάνης δὲ πρῶτος τούτων ἑνίσας (ὁ γὰρ Παρμενίδης τούτου λέγεται γενέσθαι μαθητής) οὐθὲν διεσαφήνισεν, οὐδὲ τῆς φύσεως τούτων οὐδετέρας ἔοικε θιγεῖν, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸν ὅλον οὐρανὸν ἀποβλέψας τὸ ἓν εἶναί φησι τὸν θεόν. οὗτοι μὲν οὖν, καθάπερ εἴπομεν, ἀφετέοι πρὸς τὴν νῦν ζήτησιν, οἱ μὲν δύο καὶ πάμπαν ὡς ὄντες μικρὸν ἀγροικότεροι, Ξενοφάνης καὶ Μέλισσος· Παρμενίδης δὲ μᾶλλον βλέπων ἔοικέ που λέγειν· παρὰ γὰρ τὸ ὂν τὸ μὴ ὂν οὐθὲν ἀξιῶν εἶναι, ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἓν οἴεται εἶναι, τὸ ὄν, καὶ ἄλλο οὐθέν (περὶ οὗ σαφέστερον ἐν τοῖς περὶ φύσεως εἰρήκαμεν), ἀναγκαζόμενος δ' ἀκολουθεῖν τοῖς φαινομένοις, καὶ τὸ ἓν μὲν κατὰ τὸν λόγον πλείω δὲ κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν ὑπολαμβάνων εἶναι, δύο τὰς αἰτίας καὶ δύο τὰς ἀρχὰς πάλιν τίθησι, θερμὸν καὶ ψυχρόν, οἷον πῦρ καὶ γῆν λέγων· τούτων δὲ κατὰ μὲν τὸ ὂν τὸ θερμὸν τάττει θάτερον δὲ κατὰ τὸ μὴ ὄν.

[253] Aristotle, *Metaph.* A 4. 985b24–25.

[254] Schofield 2012, 159.

[255] In this I disagree with Clarke 2019, 10–8 who believes that Aristotle's reading of Parmenides is 'anti-cosmological'.

comes into being in any sense, that create tensions with the evidence of sense perception. Thus, they may appear to focus on aspects that go beyond physics and act as a prelude to metaphysics. In this sense, Aristotle's point would not be so different from the one he spells out more clearly in the *De Caelo*: the Eleatics started to tackle metaphysical problems without properly distinguishing them from physics as a special science. This approach is something Aristotle finds quite problematic: conflating different disciplines and their own specific principles is a methodological error that leads to a misunderstanding of reality.[256] According to this reading, Aristotle's point would be different from arguing that the Eleatics did not concern themselves with the study of nature, which at any rate is well attested in the fragments.[257]

[256] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Γ 3, in particular 1005a32–3 refers to some thinkers who 'investigated the nature as a whole (*holēs physeōs*), that is, being (*peri tou ontos*)' as if they were the objects of the same science, and thus deployed the same principles. Notice that the terms that Aristotle exploits echo those that in **T1** are attributed to the Eleatics. On metaphysics as a science different from *Physics*, see Aristotle, *Metaph*. E 1. 1025b3–1026a31, Donini 2007, 79–107, Bolton 1994, Code 1997, on metaphysics' priority to the other disciplines and sciences Johnson 2015.

[257] On Parmenides' interest in astronomy, see especially Graham 2013, 85–108, who discusses Parmenides' discovery that the moon's light is only the reflection of the sun's, Cerri 2012. A consequence of my reading is that I disagree with Clarke 2019, who argues that according to Aristotle Parmenides' views are 'anti-cosmological', in the sense Aristotle does not read Parmenides' doctrines as a philosophy committed to explaining the phenomena. Rather, Parmenides would be someone who abolished the role of the phenomena as mere appearances. Although Clarke stresses that his reconstruction is more about what Aristotle thought about Parmenides than about Parmenides himself, his reading of Aristotle's evidence seems to me to be grounded in an *a priori* **logical reading** of Parmenides. For even from this brief discussion of Aristotle's testimonia, it seems to me that the point Aristotle is trying to make is more nuanced: the Eleatics start to talk about the whole of reality (i.e., the universe) exploiting principles that are not appropriate to physics, but to metaphysics; in this sense, they may be considered to investigate metaphysics rather than physics. However, when it comes to Parmenides, it seems to me that Aristotle ascribes to him an interest in the study of the phenomena, while, as I will discuss, he has doubts as to how Parmenides combines What-Is, Light and Night.

As a matter of fact, Aristotle considers appropriate to the present enquiry on Early Greek cosmology what he next ascribes to the Eleatics.

There are two ways in which, according to Aristotle, the Eleatics said that their principle (i.e., What-Is) is 'one': [258] Parmenides maintained that What-Is is 'one' 'according to definition' (*kata ton logon*), while Melissus 'according to matter' (*kata ten hylēn*), which respectively identify Aristotle's formal and the material cause. Although Aristotle does not tell us why he regards Melissus' position as rather simplistic, a look at the Aristotelian function of matter both as a principle and cause may provide some clues. According to Aristotle, matter on its own usually does not suffice to explain what something essentially is. [259] Furthermore, when What-Is, taken as unchangeable material principle (i.e., what sometimes Aristotle calls 'being *simpliciter* (*haplōs*))[260] is the totality of nature (i.e., the universe), such a doctrine can be expected to explain the evidence perceived by the senses at best in a

[258] I agree with Palmer 2009, 37–8 that Parmenides may not have distinguished different senses of 'being' explicitly. Nonetheless, Aristotle shows us what are the different conceptions of 'one' that Parmenides uses, and how they affect Parmenides' philosophical beliefs about What-Is. These are, as it will emerge from our discussion, i) one according to matter, ii) one according to definition.

[259] Aristotle considers different things to be matter, but they all share one thing, namely the impossibility of becoming a substance, unless they receive the formal cause. Examples of different kinds of matter are the elements that make a body (e.g., fire, earth, water, air), and the substrate (*hypokeimenon*), which Aristotle introduces as that indeterminate something that provides the possibility for the existence and determination of substances, cf. Aristotle, *GC* 1 3. 319a19–20, *Metaph.* Z 1. 1028a36–1029a26, see Ebrey 2015, Lewis 1994.

[260] The use of *haplōs* is quite widespread in Aristotle's philosophy and has a very distinct doctrinal import, in that, it indicates that something is exclusively a certain X and consists of nothing else. This use of the term is clear, e.g., in Aristotle, *Metaph.* Z 4. 1030a18–26.

simplistic way.[261] What makes Melissus' theoretical position even more problematic is that the evidence suggests that he is also a supporter of **SNM**.[262] For failing to differentiate between the phenomena and What-Is creates the absurdity of having something numerically one, when the senses perceive 'nature' (*phusis*) as many things. In this regard, Parmenides is surely considered less simplistic, as he seems to have acknowledged the tension between what truly is, which is 'one', and what the senses perceive, which is 'many'.[263] First, I will focus on the former, whereas I will discuss the latter in the next section.

When Aristotle says that Parmenides admits a sense of 'one' that is 'according to definition', he is telling us that Parmenides anticipated his formal cause, which often coincides with the efficient cause[264] that he already attributed to him in **T1**: for a definition is an indemonstrable account of the

[261] How can there be knowledge of reality in its *complexity* if only What-Is *simpliciter* is? For only What-Is to exist, shouldn't we be able to gather information exclusively of What-Is from sense perception? Furthermore, if only What-Is *simpliciter* is, how can there be anything else as, on the contrary our senses would lead us to think? That these are the problems in the background can be suggested by Aristotle, *Metaph.* B. 4. 1001a29–1001b2: 'But if there will be a certain 'Being itself' and 'One itself' (*ti auto to on kai auto hen*), there will be much difficulty regarding how there will be something different beyond them–I mean how things will be more than one (*pōs estai pleiō henos ta onta*). For there is nothing different from Being, so that, according to Parmenides the discourse that all things are one and that this is Being necessarily follows. Both are difficult to explain. For both if the One were not substance and if there were the One itself, it is impossible for a number to be substance.'

[262] Barnes 1982, 142–81, KRS 1983, 298–306, McKirahan 2011, 293–302, Harriman 2019.

[263] Although individuating this cause and the material one is a big step forward in Aristotle's eyes, this is still insufficient to effectively describe all the aspects of reality. For even if we concede that Parmenides acknowledged something similar to the material, formal cause, and perhaps the efficient cause, Aristotle surely did not believe that Parmenides posited the final one, see Betegh 2012.

[264] E.g., Aristotle, *Metaph*. H 6. 1045a20–33, Rosen 2014, Charles 1994, 75–107.

essence of a thing,[265] which stands for the formal cause.[266] By advancing one of the senses in which Parmenides' regarded the principle as 'one', Aristotle is not only providing information as to what kind of role What-Is may have had, both as a principle and as a cause. For, as the following passage illustrates, being 'one according to definition', or in essence, illustrates the kind of monism Aristotle ascribes to Parmenides:

> **T3** Generally speaking, those things whose intellection (*noēsis*) is indivisible grasp (*noousa*) the essence (*to ti ēn einai*), and cannot be separated (*chōrisai*) either in time or in place or in definition (*logōi*). These (i.e., those things that are one in time, place, or definition) in particular are one, and of these most of all substances (*ousiai*). For, generally, those things that have no division (*diairesin*), are said 'one' *qua* things that do not admit of it, for example, if man *qua* man does not have division, it is *one* man, and if *qua* animal, it is *one* animal, if *qua* magnitude, it is *one* magnitude. (Aristotle, *Metaph*. Δ 6. 1016b1–7)[267]

In the context of the many meanings of 'one', **T3** expands on what follows from being essentially or definitionally one. In short, it means that something *qua* what it essentially is cannot be considered many in any respect, as in the case of substances, which, above all, can be said to be one according to definition. To be what it is, each substance cannot be understood simply as the

[265] Aristotle, *An. Post.* 2. 10ff., Sedley 2015, cf. Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 6. 1016a32–35.

[266] E.g., Aristotle, *Metaph*. A 2. 983a25ff., Aristotle *Metaph.* Δ 2. 1013b22ff.: τὰ δὲ ὡς τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, τό τε ὅλον καὶ ἡ σύνθεσις καὶ τὸ εἶδος.

[267] ὅλως δὲ ὧν ἡ νόησις ἀδιαίρετος ἡ νοοῦσα τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, καὶ μὴ δύναται χωρίσαι μήτε χρόνῳ μήτε τόπῳ μήτε λόγῳ, μάλιστα ταῦτα ἕν, καὶ τούτων ὅσα οὐσίαι· καθόλου γὰρ ὅσα μὴ ἔχει διαίρεσιν, ᾗ μὴ ἔχει, ταύτῃ ἓν λέγεται, οἷον εἰ ᾗ ἄνθρωπος μὴ ἔχει διαίρεσιν, εἷς ἄνθρωπος, εἰ δ' ᾗ ζῷον, ἓν ζῷον, εἰ δὲ ᾗ μέγεθος, ἓν μέγεθος.

many parts that constitute it: the essence of something, *qua* what it essentially is, only results when we see an entity as the unity out of its constituent parts.[268] This ontological consideration of 'one according to definition' also has an epistemological counterpart: when something is one according to definition (i.e., substances in particular), this something can be grasped only as a unity and through a single intellection. What is crucial for this kind of unity is that the *resulting* essence (*to ti ēn einai*) or substance (*ousia*) to define must be 'one', i.e., 'indivisible' in every respect, be it time, place, or definition (*logōi*). For, since unity is a necessary feature of individual substances (i.e., *tode ti*), they cannot be individuated if they are not in one place, at one time and by one definition. [269] Indivisibility (*adiairetos*) and inseparability (*achōristos*) are criteria that play analogous roles in conception of substances as Form plus Matter compounds.[270] However, while 'indivisibility' seems to underscore the impossibility of materially dividing a substance without destroying its essence, 'inseparability' seems to point to the conceptual impossibility of conceiving an essence without any of its essential features.[271]

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[268] E.g., Aristotle, *Metaph*. Z 16. 1040b5–16. See Haslanger 1994.

[269] Aristotle, *Metaph.* I 1. 1052a29ff.

[270] Cleary 1985, 17, Philippe 1948.

[271] e.g., Aristotle, *Metaph.* Z 9. 1035b22–24, 16. 1040b26ff. In other cases, Aristotle uses χωριστός to state the relation between sensible individual substances and their eternal forms (*eidē*). Although a substance is a substance (*tode ti*) in virtue of having its form, the form is always separable because it is eternal and unchangeable. In the passage quoted, Aristotle mentions inseparability (*me…chōrisai*) because he is talking about the form and essence of something, whose parts are *by necessity* inseparable. Even if a form can exist without its sensible instantiation, a sensible instantiation cannot exist without its form. On χωριστός and substancehood in Aristotle, see Polansky 1983, Spellman 1995.

As a result, to be 'one according to definition' does not straightforwardly indicate that something is not made out of parts, just as it does not necessarily mean that something is made of a single matter. In the first case, we can say that something is conceived *as if* it is numerically one, while it can have many constituent parts (in potentiality). As to the second case, even if the matter of, say, a man, is their body, such a body is materially constituted of many stuffs that make that matter of man some one thing (i.e., a body). Thus, being 'one according to definition' implies a more nuanced monism that is not incompatible with Material Monism and differs from the one that Aristotle attributes to his other predecessors.

When we join up these considerations with Aristotle's views of Parmenidean monism, it is possible to say that, according to Aristotle, Parmenides means that What-Is is essentially a 'one thing' that may consist of many constituents. Thus, it could present some qualitative differentiation, as in the case of many stuffs constituting the matter of a man (i.e., a body), or the parts of its definition. This view would avoid the supposition that What-Is is something necessarily numerically one and undifferentiated. However, such a view faces many theoretical difficulties[272] which are not eased by saying that 'being' and 'one' are interchangeable in their meaning (i.e., they mean the same thing). In passages such as the following one from *Physics* A,[273] Aristotle

[272] See for example the discussion in Cavini 2009, 181–7.

[273] For a similar criticism compare Aristotle, *Metaph.* B 4. 1001a2–b25 as well.

emphasises the problem that arise for Parmenides if everything that truly is has no feature other than 'being', and 'one', where these terms mean the same thing:

> **T4** To Parmenides apply these arguments too (*scil.*, those against Material Monism), but also some peculiar to him. The solution to him being that he assumes false premises and infers what does not follow from them. The false assumption is that What-Is is said 'simply' (*scil.* without qualification) (*hē haplōs lambanei to on legesthai*), when actually it is said in many ways (*pollachōs*). Regarding the inconclusiveness, if one took all things to be white, where 'the white' means 'one', nonetheless there will be still not just 'one' but many white things. For, the 'white' will be 'one' neither according to continuity (*tēi synecheiai*) nor according to definition (*tōi logōi*). 'White' will be different from what has the 'white'. This does not mean that there is anything that can exist separately, over and above what is white. For the white and that which is white differ in the definition, not in the sense that they are things which can exist apart from each other. But Parmenides did not see this distinction. It is necessary that he (*scil.*, Parmenides) accept that What-Is means not only 'one' when it is predicated of something, but that it is 'What-Is' *and* 'one'. […] But then 'What-Is' will not be a substance (*estai on ti auto einai*), unless What-Is means many things rather than 'one', in such a way that each individual thing (*hekaston*) is something (*einai ti*). However, it was posited that 'What-Is' means 'one'. (Aristotle, *Phys*. 1 3. 186a22–186b4)[274]

[274] καὶ πρὸς Παρμενίδην δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς τρόπος τῶν λόγων, καὶ εἴ τινες ἄλλοι εἰσὶν ἴδιοι· καὶ ἡ λύσις τῇ μὲν ὅτι ψευδὴς τῇ δὲ ὅτι οὐ συμπεραίνεται, ψευδὴς μὲν ἢ ἁπλῶς λαμβάνει τὸ ὂν λέγεσθαι, λεγομένου πολλαχῶς, ἀσυμπέραντος δὲ ὅτι, εἰ μόνα τὰ λευκὰ ληφθείη, σημαίνοντος ἓν τοῦ λευκοῦ, οὐθὲν ἧττον πολλὰ τὰ λευκὰ καὶ οὐχ ἕν· οὔτε γὰρ τῇ συνεχείᾳ ἓν ἔσται τὸ λευκὸν οὔτε τῷ λόγῳ. ἄλλο γὰρ ἔσται τὸ εἶναι λευκῷ καὶ τῷ δεδεγμένῳ. καὶ οὐκ ἔσται παρὰ τὸ λευκὸν οὐθὲν χωριστόν· οὐ γὰρ ἦ χωριστὸν ἀλλὰ τῷ εἶναι ἕτερον τὸ λευκὸν καὶ ᾧ ὑπάρχει. ἀλλὰ τοῦτο Παρμενίδης οὔπω συνεώρα. ἀνάγκη δὴ λαβεῖν μὴ μόνον ἓν σημαίνειν τὸ ὄν, καθ' οὗ ἂν κατηγορηθῇ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅπερ ὂν καὶ ὅπερ ἕν. […] οὐ γὰρ ἔσται ὄν τι αὐτὸ εἶναι, εἰ μὴ πολλὰ τὸ ὂν σημαίνει οὕτως ὥστε εἶναί τι ἕκαστον. ἀλλ' ὑπόκειται τὸ ὂν σημαίνειν ἕν.

In the *Physics*, Aristotle harshly criticises the Parmenidean conception of What-Is, often drawing conclusions that develop out of consequences which Parmenides may not have been aware of, as Aristotle attests when he says that 'Parmenides did not see this distinction'. Given that Aristotle is not reacting doxographically, as he does in *Metaphysics* A, we can better appreciate the theoretical problems that follow for a **PWR** that accepts that What-Is is 'one according to definition' and 'one according to matter'.

Compared to **T2**, in **T4** Aristotle is more explicit about Parmenides being an advocate for Material Monism. Still, he is a peculiar monist in that he not only accepts that What-Is is one 'according to matter', but also one 'according to definition'.[275] The main point of **T4** is to show that Parmenides cannot without absurdities accept oneness 'according to definition' and 'according to matter', because it leads What-Is being something simple, without further qualification (*haplōs*). For if I say 'What-Is is X', I am saying that the many Xs that are predicated of What-Is are nothing but a single something (i.e., 'being'),[276] which makes What-Is 'one' *haplōs*. But if this is so, then Parmenides'

[275] That Aristotle is still reasoning with reference to 'one according to definition' is made explicit by the lines that follow **T4**, i.e., *Phys.* 1 2. 185b5–25 where Aristotle discusses What-Is' 'indivisibility', and its being 'one according to definition'. Hence, it is not strictly correct to conclude with Johansen 2021 that Parmenides is not a Material Monist, but rather a Formal Monist.

[276] For reasons of consistency, and given that Aristotle is addressing Parmenides' views, I have decided to render *to on* with 'What-Is'. Still, it is notable that Aristotle uses *to on* to indicate his views on being as well. So, even if I translate *to on* with 'What-Is', considering that Aristotle is drawing some consequences that involve his philosophical principles, it is possible that Aristotle is playing on *to on* as it is used by Parmenides with his own use of *to on*, which would be rendered more appropriately as 'being'.

conception of What-Is can neither be a substance nor individuate actual substances. While, according to Aristotle, a substance is an entity that means exactly one thing, and cannot be predicated of anything or be in anything,[277] What-Is can be said in many ways (*pollachōs*), i.e., as many ways as Aristotle's categories. [278] Furthermore, just like 'one', which Aristotle considers interchangeable with What-Is, What-Is applies to everything that is, with the result that it is insufficient to define any substance.[279] Thus, Parmenides fails to actually talk about reality.[280]

Aristotle exemplifies the faults in Parmenides' argument with the example of 'white', understood as meaning 'one': the fact that there are many things that are white, and that 'white' means 'one', does not prevent there being a plurality of things that have the specific feature of being 'white'. For such a line of thought on its own neither suffices for making all the things that are white essentially 'one', nor for rendering them physically continuous with one another, and thus physically indivisible (i.e., one). Indeed, 'white' just like

[277] Aristotle, *Cat.* 1a20–b14.

[278] This outcome relies on the difficult and debated use Parmenides made of the verb 'to be' (*einai*). 'To be' in Ancient Greek can express four meanings: 1. Existence, 2. Identity, 3. Predication (i.e., partial identity), 4. Logical truth. One of the difficulties raised by Plato regarding the Parmenidean use is that he does not differentiate among these meanings. Accordingly, as in this case, whenever Parmenides says that What-Is is 'one' and, say 'continuous', he may be identifying it with both 'one' and 'continuous', which generates problems especially in terms of meaning 2., and 3. See Kahn 2003, and for its relation to Plato's *Sophist* Brown 1999, Leigh 2012.

[279] Aristotle, *Metaph.* B 4. 1001a29–b16. 'Being' and 'One' are so general they are not even a 'genus' in the proper Aristotelian sense, see Berti 2009, 121–6. Regarding 'One' and 'Being' as the only principles of all 'being' and substance see Cavini 2009, Berti 2003.

[280] Cf. Aristotle., *Phys.* 1 8. 191b9–10, Algra 2004, 116–20.

'being', 'white' does not capture the essence of a substance. Furthermore, as a feature 'white' cannot be identical with the many *instances* of 'white' that take part in the many things that populate the world.

As a result, **T4** underscores how Parmenides' attempt to have something essentially and materially one is problematic, on the basis of conceiving of What-Is as ultimately consisting of a single material *and* being a formal principle (i.e., being). Specifically, Aristotle is not so much concerned about the fact that Parmenides envisages each of these ways of understanding unity in the *Alētheia.* Rather, the point seems to be that he accepts both, and that Parmenides assumes 'one according to matter' in the same way as Melissus. For, if, like Aristotle, Parmenides had admitted that What-Is is, materially speaking, made of just as many constituents that differ from What-Is as the parts of the essence of 'human being' differ from the resulting human being, then his attempt to describe the essence of What-Is might have been more successful.

This discussion of **T4** further supports the view that Aristotle could interpret Parmenides as a non-supporter of **SNM**. Furthermore, it has also shown in what sense Parmenides is more than a simple supporter of Material Monism. However, there are still many questions left unanswered, with reference to Parmenides' conception of Composition and the resulting **PWR**. Granting that What-Is is nothing but What-Is, does it avoid being exactly the

sum of its parts, if we take What-Is to be the only part or constituent of What-Is? Does Parmenides have a nuanced conception of What-Is that is related to its structure? Ultimately, Aristotle seems to answer 'no' to all of these questions. Nonetheless, these upshots may suggest that, for Aristotle, Parmenides' views on Composition are more successful than those of other Early Greek philosophers. For 'one according to definition' pertains to substances, which Aristotle considers 'wholes', i.e., structured entities where the resulting entity is more than the sum of its parts, rather than to 'alls', which imply Composition as Identity.

As to the appropriateness of Aristotle's criticisms, although Parmenides' doctrine does not directly parallel Aristotle's account, the points Aristotle makes can be seen at work in Parmenides' *Alētheia*. Thus, Aristotle may have identified the core problematic aspects of Parmenides' **PWR**. The Aristotelian reports discussed above support the idea that Parmenides may be struggling with a model of Composition that is beyond that of Composition as Identity. For example, Parmenides attributes *many* characteristics to What-Is, and he calls it 'whole' rather than 'all'. Furthermore, Parmenides chooses terms that recall contact, which potentially relates many things (*pelazei*, *syneches*, *synechō*), though this tendency may be explained in ways that we will explore in the next chapters. It is contact, continuity, and the like that make What-Is one single entity, but this is possible only due to similarity (*homoion*) among its constituents. Indeed, the very conclusion that What-Is is indivisible, and thus

one, rests on the fact that What-Is is alike everywhere.[281] The fact that in the *Alētheia* Parmenides insists on the homogeneity of What-Is[282] could suggest a **PWR** that revolves around a set of features that are considered essential and qualitatively indistinguishable (i.e., indivisible) from What-Is, inasmuch as they all mean the same thing. But then Parmenides may be advocating for a conception of What-Is that is complex without generating multiplicity in the problematic way that Aristotle has indicated. It is possible to ask how such features can be parts of What-Is without generating some of the difficulties that Aristotle indicates (e.g., multiplicity). However, it is notable that in the *Alētheia* Parmenides avoids the language of parts. Thus, the very problem to address is how Parmenides could accommodate What-Is' structural complexity without relying on parts, which are what generates the problematic notion of multiplicity.

2.4.2 Composition in the *Doxa*: 'More According to Sensation'

Previously, I have discussed in what Aristotelian sense Parmenides may have conceived What-Is as 'one according to definition' and 'one according to matter'. The discussion of **T4** has underscored how the causes individuated by Parmenides apply to What-Is, so that we have gathered some specific clues

[281] **B8.22** DK.
[282] E.g., **B8.5**, **B8.23**, **B9 DK**.

on Parmenides' **PWR** in the *Alētheia*: the resulting provisional **PWR** seems to reject both **SNM** and Material Monism, as endorsed by other Early Greek philosophers.

Let us now turn to the *Doxa* and **T2**, where Aristotle says that it follows (*akolouthein*)[283] that, since Parmenides wants to explain the phenomena, he is compelled to say that 'it' (i.e., What-Is) is 'more (than one) (*pleiō*) according to sensation (*kata ttēn aisthēsin*)'.[284] Subsequent to this observation, Aristotle concludes that Parmenides posited two causes (i.e., the formal and the material) as well as two principles. Indeed, Aristotle's use of ἀκολουθέω suggests that Parmenides had to draw this consequence for the sake of consistency.[285] The principles Aristotle refers to are the Hot and the Cold: Aristotle exemplifies them (*hoion*) with Fire and Earth,[286] which he takes to be the basic principles active in the *Doxa* rather than the attested Light and Night. The reasons why Aristotle modifies Parmenides' views in this way could be

[283] Aristotle's use of 'follow' (ἀκολουθέω) is interesting here, as it gives the impression that Aristotle is talking of Parmenides decision as if it were guided by a sort of logical necessity and consistency. See note 285.

[284] Given that πλείων can indicate both many in degree and in number, for brevity in what follow I will render it with 'many' and 'more' interchangeably.

[285] See Aristotle's use in this sense e.g., in *Top.* 4 6. 128b4, *GA* 4 3. 768b13.

[286] Aristotle's initial mention of Hot and Cold paired with *pleiō*, which suggests a variation of degree, suggests that as in *GC* 1 4 Aristotle takes the Hot and Cold to be a qualitative continuum. Furthermore, rather than qualities such as Hot and Cold, only simple bodies such as Fire and Earth can be mixed, so that it is likely that *hoion* has to be understood as 'for example'. This use of *hoion* makes it possible that Parmenides may have considered Fire and Earth as entities that exemplify either the Hot or the Cold, given that a few lines later he exploits Hot and Cold again. Furthermore, this reading does not contravene the possibility that Aristotle considered Fire and Earth to be the most likely candidates, those that Parmenides *meant* if he wanted to describe change. Indeed, the Theophrastean passage 46A DK suggests that *many* entities (e.g., Fire, Light, Sound) are grouped together with the Hot, and others with the Cold (Earth, Night, Silence).

many. For example, Aristotle does not admit of mixtures among qualities (e.g., the Hot, Cold, or Light and Night): according to him only substances can mix.[287] Furthermore, following a long tradition on which Aristotle's views of elemental composition rely, the hotter something is, the more fiery it is as well as brighter (i.e., Light), while what is cold is usually associated with water and earth, which appear to be closely associated in archaic times.[288] Accordingly, Hot and Cold in Aristotle, as already in Anaximander, are considered the pair of primary oppositions that allow every constituent of the cosmos to be composed.[289] Moreover, among the entities that fall under the Hot and the Cold, Aristotle may have regarded Fire and Earth to be the right candidates to explain change. For his views on the elements consider the rest of the elements (Water and Air) to be the result of the mixture of Fire and Earth.[290] Furthermore, as Mourelatos has argued, Aristotle could be ascribing to Parmenides Fire and Earth as principles in order to highlight his doctrinal dependence on Xenophanes.[291]

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[287] Aristotle, *GC* 1 10. 327b10–22, on which see Kalderon 2015, 120–4.

[288] Aristotle, *GC* 2 4. 331a4–6. For the archaic associations see Lloyd 1966.

[289] On Anaximander see Lloyd 1966, 16–18, A10 DK, A17 DK, A17a DK. For Aristotle, see e.g., *GC* 2 1. 329b24–330b7. Notably, Aristotle introduces a further pair that results necessary to form compounds, i.e., Wet and Dry. While this is not Aristotle's innovation, as the two pairs are present in medical writings dated before Aristotle and in other Early Greek philosophers, Anaximander and perhaps even Parmenides may not have been using them together with or as much as the Hot and the Cold. For in the sources there seems to be no trace of this pair.

[290] Aristotle, *GC* 2 4. 331a23–b2, 10. 336b34–337a6. Aristotle's view of the cycle of change from an element of another indeed shows that Fire and Earth are the extremes of a continuum between entities that belong to the same genre (i.e., elements). See Krizan 2013.

[291] On the reasons why Aristotle mentions Fire and Earth, beyond those presented here, see Mourelatos 2022. Mourelatos says that Aristotle's introduction of Fire and Earth could be due to the too often unacknowledged dependence of Parmenides' cosmology on Xenophanes.

The fact that Aristotle refers to two principles for the *Doxa* suggests that Aristotle may be attributing to Parmenides a model of Composition, and ultimately a **PWR**, different from that of the *Alētheia*. Interestingly, while the term πλείων implies a quantitative plurality of what is perceived, it can also indicate a plurality in degree.[292] As such Aristotle's use of this term would be consistent with its application to Hot and Cold, which Aristotle considers to be a continuum. Thus, Aristotle may be pointing out not only that, according to sense perception, Parmenides' cosmos consists of more than one thing (i.e., the principles), but also that such a plurality rests on the varying degree of Fire and Earth present in a compound.

It is puzzling that Aristotle tries to establish a direct correspondence between the two principles and What-Is: Aristotle assigns (*tattei*) the Hot to What-Is, and the Cold to What-Is-Not.[293] If we understand What-Is and What-Is-Not purely in Parmenidean terms, Aristotle's reading appears to be heavily distorting. One can understand Aristotle's will to fill the explanatory gap regarding the relation between the *Alētheia* and the *Doxa*. However, even if in

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According to him, the difference between Light and Night and Fire and Earth is only verbal. Thus, there is room to think that Aristotle is trying to show how close Parmenides was to Xenophanes. **T2** would make good sense with Mourelatos' hypothesis: Aristotle says that Parmenides was Xenophanes' pupil, and a good way for Aristotle to make this evident was through ascribing Xenophanes' principles to Parmenides.

[292] E.g., Thucydides 1.90.

[293] Interpreters sometimes translate *tattei* with 'identifying', but Aristotle just says that the Hot can be grouped together or assigned to What-Is, whereas the Cold with What-Is-Not. I agree with Mourelatos 2008, 86, Tor 2015, 15, that the identification is misleading and that does not represent genuinely Parmenides' ideas. Furthermore, Tor 2015, 16 is right in saying that this misunderstanding in Aristotle may have originated from **B8.54 DK**, where in reference to the principles of mortal cosmologies the Goddess says 'one of which must not be named'.

the *Doxa* the phenomena are aspects associated to What-Is-Not, Light and Night are principles equal in power.[294] Furthermore, they *both* express features that may be connected to those of What-Is.[295] Thus, Night, Earth, or Cold cannot be linked exclusively to What-Is-Not.

Hence, one may be inclined to reject Aristotle's account as genuine. However, Aristotle's testimony can be salvaged by hypothesising that he is reasoning according to the principles *he* establishes for his physics, rather than those of Parmenides. Aristotle's association may be considered to some extent appropriate if we do not understand *to on* and *to mē on* in the way Parmenides uses them. Accordingly, the associations established by Aristotle may build upon his own concepts of subject (*hypokeimenon*), form (*eidos*), and privation (*sterēsis*). The reasons why this may be the case are several. First, the connection between Hot and What-Is or between Cold and What-Is-Not does not seem to be casual. On the one hand, both Hot and What-Is are considered productive of change, i.e., active, and linked to the formal or efficient cause. On the other, both Cold and What-Is-Not are associable on the basis that what is cold can be considered passive, and thus something that, to some extent, is not.[296] Furthermore, in **T2**, Aristotle refers specifically to the 'discussions found in the works on physics' (e.g., the *Physics*). Importantly, in the *Physics*,

[294] **B9 DK**.

[295] See Mourelatos 2008, 242–4, but cf. Mansfeld 2021, 212–3.

[296] For an account the tendency to connect the Hot with something productive and the Cold with something that may be considered passive, see already Lloyd 1966, 15–85, and Betegh 2020.

Aristotle explicitly attributes to the Eleatics a sense in which there may be coming-into-being from not-being (*mē ontos*), understood as privation (*sterēsis*), where privation verifies that the form of something is not *yet* present in that something.[297] This Aristotelian reading of Parmenides' views on the principles is not an isolated case, as it finds confirmation in *On Generation and Corruption*.[298] Aristotle's strategy may be considered a retroprojection of his views to Parmenides. However, it could also be that Aristotle is exploiting his own principles to make sense of the way the Hot and Cold work in Parmenides' *Doxa*. This may be strengthened by the fact that Parmenides characterises features connected to Night by exploiting privative terms, which may prompt Aristotle to associate his notion of privation with Night.[299] Thus, an interpretation of Aristotle's assertion that Parmenides envisions What-Is 'more according to sensation' must take into account that Aristotle considers

[297] Aristotle, *Phys.*, 1 8. 191b13–7. Aristotle's definition of privation Aristotle, *Metaph*. Δ 22. 1022b23–1023a6 states that privation stands in a relation of contrariety with form, just as Hot and Cold or Fire and Earth. On the process that starts with privation and reaches form, see Bostock 2006, 1–19.

[298] Aristotle, *GC* 1 3. 318a35–b16 where Aristotle explicitly considers Fire and Earth linked to What-Is and What-Is-Not as contraries in terms of form and privation: 'In fact, we distinguish between what we say to mean a 'certain something' (*tode ti*) and those things that do not (*ta d'ou*), because from this follows what we are looking for. For it makes a difference into what the changing thing changes (*eis ha metaballei to metaballon*). Surely as, on the one hand, the path (*hodos*) of coming-into-being (*genesis*) into fire is 'simply' (*haplōs*) is, and coming-into-being is not 'simply', but it is 'destruction' (*phthora*) of a certain something (e.g., Earth). On the other hand, the coming-into-being of Earth generates something, but this coming-into-being is not 'simply', even though its corruption is 'simply' (e.g., of Fire). It is just as Parmenides says, that they (i.e., the principles of change) are two: Being and Not-Being, which he calls respectively Fire and Earth. […] Just as the Hot is said (*kategoria*) [to be] a something (*tis*) and a form (*eidos*), the Cold is privation (*sterēsis*).'

[299] For example, in **B9 DK** Light (*phaos*) is opposed to Night, which is considered '**un**gleaming' (***a**phantou*).

Fire and Earth not so much as What-Is and What-Is-Not, but rather as opposites *qua* form and privation, respectively.

When Aristotle says that something is established according to sensation, he does not mean to criticise sense perception as a criterion for knowledge. Rather, sense perception constitutes a first step towards knowing the essence of something, because it helps us to engage epistemically with what is first available to us.[300] So, the fact that this modality of being 'more' is ascribed to Parmenides need not be interpreted as a criticism of Parmenides *per se*.

Similar to the case of 'one according to definition', in **T2** Aristotle is drawing a distinction that not only has ontological and cosmological, but also epistemological import. Aristotle's views on how sense perception occurs are hotly debated, and this need not be discussed extensively here.[301] What matters is that knowledge is a process that starts from our ability to grasp the many sensorial data as something that is 'one', in respect of one of the categories:[302] it is when our sense organs can perceive something as one that we can know it, as our senses allow the apprehension of a given single form and definition.[303] If this is right, then, just as in the case of 'one according to

[300] E.g., Aristotle, *Metaph.* I 1. 1053a31–b3, *Phys.* 1 1. 184a24–5, see Castelli 2010, 141–2.
[301] For an overview of the main readings of Aristotle's view on sense perception, see Caston 2005.
[302] E.g., Aristotle, *DA* 3 6.430b7–20, where a line is in principle divisible in parts, but it is perceived as one thing according to quality and time. On how our senses perceive something as 'one', and on the actual unity of sensible properties, see Freeland 2021, 165–6.
[303] Aristotle, *DA* 3 6.430b17–8.

sense perception', the concept of mixture, which is a form of *unification*,[304] becomes crucial to understanding what Aristotle means by 'many according to sensation' when he ascribes it to Parmenides. For it is only when something is truly mixed that it can be perceived as one thing. Accordingly, are we to interpret Aristotle's claim that the principles are 'more according to sensation' in the sense that there cannot be actual mixture between Fire and Earth? If this were the case, then, according to Aristotle, Parmenides would not be able to conceive compounds of Fire and Earth as something 'one'. Furthermore, by rejecting the possibility of any genuine mixture, one could argue that Aristotle rightly concludes that Parmenides would be denying the idea that there is unity *tout court* in the phenomena. As a result, Parmenides' **PWR** in the *Doxa* would be nihilistic, as Compositional Nihilism embraces the existence of many particles, but rejects the possibility of mixture as well as the existence of any unitary compounds. By denying even a *loose* sense of unity to the interaction between the elements, Parmenides would be attributing *no* value to the phenomena. Furthermore, it would follow that Parmenides has no positive evaluation of the doctrine of principles that the Goddess tells the *kouros*.[305] However, this interpretation raises several problems.

On the one hand, such an interpretation of the Goddess' speech would require a lot of footwork: in recent years, scholarship has increasingly

[304] Aristotle, *GC* 1 10.328b20–24.
[305] **B8.45–50 DK**.

attributed a more positive role to the cosmological doctrine that the Goddess presents. Particularly so, inasmuch as the scientific views illustrated through Light and Night reflect Parmenides' genuine interest in astronomy and embryology.[306] As a result, one may say that, though not comparable to the views provided in the *Alētheia*, the Goddess' principles provide mortals with a likely (*eoikōs*) account of reality that surpasses other mortal attempts. Although Light and Night offer a view of reality that is inherently false, as it relies on multiplicity, it is in some way closer to the truth than those formulated by mortals.

On the other hand, a nihilistic upshot would be at odds with the overall Aristotelian reading of Parmenides, because it would lead to the conclusion that the phenomena are mere illusions although Aristotle actually ascribes to Parmenides not only a doctrine that accounts for the phenomena, but one that fares better than Melissus'.

Circling back to the problem of Composition in the *Doxa*, the evidence encourages us to pursue an understanding of 'more according to sensation' that maintains the multiplicity of the phenomena, while at the same time granting them some degree of unity. For it may be possible that in the *Doxa* Parmenides' **PWR** exploits a looser notion of unity that reflects the ontological inferiority of the phenomena, as well as their multiplicity.

[306] In particular, see Graham 2013, Cerri 2012, cf. Gregory 2014.

At this point, it is important to consider whether Aristotle's account ultimately allows for the possibility that his **PWR** is based on something other than Compositional Nihilism. In order to do this, it is important to more carefully consider Aristotle's own reference to those works that are on physics, such as the *Physics* and *On Generation and Corruption*. If we do so, Aristotle may turn out to be right about Parmenides' rejection of a strong sense of unity in the *Doxa*. Nonetheless, Aristotle would be deducing this conclusion from his own views of mixture, which need not correspond to how Parmenides reached the same conclusion. Parmenides need not have rejected genuine mixtures to grant multiplicity in the universe: according to him, such a result might be possible through the positing of two elements. However, the same cannot be true for Aristotle, or for other Early Greek philosophers (e.g., Empedocles). For, in principle, if there were a genuine mixture of everything that is, that mixture would be a single substance.

On this interpretation, Aristotle in **T2** would not be saying 'many according to sensation' because there is no unity *tout court* in the phenomena *as Parmenides conceives them*. Rather, Aristotle would be saying that even if Parmenides were to grant multiplicity on the basis of mixture, his conception of the interaction between the two principles would not allow it. Aristotle would not be criticising Parmenides' account of the phenomena because it relies on a plurality of principles; for only a plurality of principles can form

compounds, produce a genuine mixture, and thus be a single substance.[307] Rather, the point would be that Parmenides' account of the phenomena does not make of each compound of Fire and Earth a genuine case of mixture (*mixis*) or blending (*krasis*), but rather instances of Aristotelian composition (*synthesis*). Indeed, Aristotle's discussion of mixture in Early Greek philosophy reveals that Parmenides failed to provide an appropriate account of mixture.[308]

Aristotle defines 'mixing' (*mixis*) as the unification (*henosis*) of what has been mixed (*mikton*) after a process of alteration (*alloiothenton*).[309] However, it differs from generation and corruption *tout court*[310] and from mere 'alteration' in that it requires generally two or more mixables to occur. Furthermore, 'alteration' consists of a temporary affection (*pathē*) within a *single* substance.[311] Thus, while 'mixing' involves 'alteration', 'alteration' *per se* happens without 'mixing'. Accordingly, to Aristotle genuine 'mixture' is possible only when:[312] **i)** everything that takes part in the mixture belongs to the same genus, **ii)** there is opposition (*enantiōsis*) among the quality of the parts,[313] **iii)** there is mutual

[307] Aristotle, *Phys*. 1 7. 190b10–22.
[308] Aristotle, *GC* 1 2. 315a29–b1. Aristotle addresses this criticism to all his predecessors, including Plato.
[309] Aristotle, *GC* 1 10. 328b20–24.
[310] Aristotle, *GC* 1 10. 327b2–10.
[311] Aristotle, *GC* 1 2. 317a22–27: 'some believe that all change is alteration, but the facts differ from this. For some things are present in a subject either according to definition or to matter (*kata ton logon to de kata tēn hylēn*). Hence, when change happens according to one of these it will be generation or corruption, but when in the affections and accidentally (*en tois pathesi kai kata symbebekos*), it will be alteration', cf. Aristotle, *Cat.* 8. See Bowin 2011.
[312] For a different and more nuanced account, see Fine 1995, 274–9, Wood-Weisberg 2004, 683, elaborated another list of requirements, which includes: 1. Uniformity, 2. Recoverability, 3. Potentiality, 4. Equilibrium, 5. Alteration, 6. Incompleteness.
[313] Aristotle, *GC* 2 3.330b31–331a6.

interaction between the constituents of the 'mixtures', in accordance with proportions (e.g., more, less, equal), which implies eliminating any excess and excluding the possibility that one component overpowers the other, as this would not result in a mixture at all,[314] **iv)** the elements that make the mixture must both remain intact during the mixing process and stay within the mixture. Thus, mixing produces a new substance, that is, a whole over and above its parts (e.g., flesh, bones).[315] When Aristotle discusses Early Greek views of the elements, at first he seems to grant that Parmenides deployed the concept of 'mixture' appropriately, as it allowed him to obtain two substances (i.e., Air and Water):

> **T5** Then those who from the outset (*euthus*) make the elements two, as Parmenides did with Fire and Earth, make the intermediates (*ta metaxu*) the mixtures (*migmata*) of these, as for example Air and Water. (Aristotle, *GC* 2 3. 330b13–15)[316]

Aristotle introduces Parmenides by saying that he and others posited two elements 'from the outset' (*euthus*). This information distinguishes Parmenides' views on mixture from those that start from one, three (i.e., Plato) or four elements (Empedocles). Specifically, Parmenides posits two simple bodies (*hapla sōmata*),[317] Fire and Earth, to obtain the mixtures (*migmata*) of the

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[314] Aristotle, *GC* 2 7.334b11ff., Frede 2004, 295, 305, and Williams 1982, 175–6, who finds Aristotle's view inconsistent.

[315] See Johachim 1922, 179, Solmsen 1960, 370–1, Boogaard 1979.

[316] Οἱ δ' εὐθὺς δύο ποιοῦντες, ὥσπερ Παρμενίδης πῦρ καὶ γῆν, τὰ μεταξὺ μίγματα ποιοῦσι τούτων, οἷον ἀέρα καὶ ὕδωρ.

[317] Notice that simple bodies are the specification of primary qualities (i.e., the Hot and the Cold. While Fire belongs to the Hot, Earth belongs to the Cold).

remaining four elements, which Aristotle considers necessary to explain change.

Aristotle's 'mixtures' (*migmata*), which he uses to characterise Parmenides' 'intermediates' (i.e., Water and Air), may indicate genuine mixture, because *migma* denotes the result of a process of mixture. However, given Aristotle's distinction between an ordinary sense and a specifically Aristotelian sense of mixture, we are not permitted to conclude that Aristotle is attributing to Parmenides any genuine 'mixture'. Actually, if we return to the criteria of Aristotelian genuine mixture, **iv)** (i.e., the indestructability of the constituents within the mixture) amounts to one of the problems regarding Early Greek views of mixture. For prior to Aristotle, philosophers only posited that the contraries are reciprocally affected.[318] Thus, no philosopher—not even Democritus [319] —could provide a doctrine of mixture that explains the composition of mixtures without, among other things, implying the destruction of its components. [320] However, according to Aristotle, the problem regarding the preservation of the constituents of a mixture can be solved by appealing to potentiality and actuality.

It is important to understand what kind of process the other philosophers, specifically Parmenides, may have been considered genuine

[318] Aristotle, *GC* 1 7. 323b1–15.
[319] Aristotle, *GC* 1 2. 315a34–5.
[320] Anagnostopoulos 2021, Krizan 2018.

cases of 'mixture'. As it touches on the role of sense perception in connection to being 'one', and thus genuinely mixed, the following passage may prove useful:

> **T6** We need to examine the following difficulty, that is, whether mixture is linked to sense perception (*pros tēn aisthēsin*). When the things being mixed (*ta mignumena*) are thus divided into small parts (*mikra*), and they have been placed one close to the other (*tethē par'allēla*) in this way, and each is indistinguishable (*mē dēlon*) to sensation, have they been mixed or not? Or is it when any and every one of the parts is close to a part of the other? It is said in the latter sense as, in the case of barley grains mixed (*memichthai*) with wheat grains, when any of them are placed close to one another (*hetisoun par'hontinoun tethē*). But if a body is completely divisible, since a body mixed with another body is homogeneous (*homoiomeres*), then any and every part of each constituent must become close (*par'hotioun*) to a part of the other. Yet no body can be divided into its smallest parts (*eis talakista*). So, composition (*synthesis*) is not identical to mixing (*mixis*), but something different. It is clear that so long as the mixtures (*ta mignumena*) are to be preserved (*sōzomena*) according to small parts (*kata mikra*), we must not say that they are mixed. For composition (*synthesis*) will be neither blending (*krasis*) nor mixing (*mixis*), nor will the parts have the same definition as the whole (*ton auton logon tōi holōi to morion*). If indeed we maintain that mixture has occurred, the mixed thing must be homogeneous, just as any portion of water is water, so too what is blended is a portion of what is blended (*tou krathentos*). But if the mixture is composition according to the small parts (*kata mikra*), nothing of this sort will happen (i.e., homogeneity in the mixture), but it will be mixed only in relation to sensation (*memigmena pros tēn aisthēsin*) (and although the thing is mixed

for one person, if their sight is not sharp, it is not combined for Lynceus). (Aristotle, *GC* 1 10. 327b31–328a16)[321]

T6 is set in the context of Aristotle's criticism of his predecessors' conception of mixture, and excludes the possibility that any of them has really formulated it correctly. Insofar as the passage employs sense perception to argue against an Early Greek conception of unity that results from mixing, **T6** can be connected to **T2**. Throughout the passage Aristotle exploits both his own conception of mixture and another one that may be considered ordinary. As most commentators agree, **T6** specifically focusses on rejecting two models of mixture, which rely on sense perception as a criterion for it. The first model presents quite a naïve conception of composition, while the other appears Democritean. However, the first model need not be straightforwardly equated to a popular and ordinary view. It is possible that Aristotle's criticism is directed against those thinkers who embrace a continuum theory (e.g.,

[321] Διὸ ταῦτα μὲν ἀφείσθω· τὸ δὲ συνεχὲς τούτοις ἀπόρημα διαιρετέον, πότερον ἡ μίξις πρὸς τὴν αἴσθησιν τί ἐστιν. Ὅταν γὰρ οὕτως εἰς μικρὰ διαιρεθῇ τὰ μιγνύμενα, καὶ τεθῇ παρ' ἄλληλα τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ὥστε μὴ δῆλον ἕκαστον εἶναι τῇ αἰσθήσει, τότε μέμικται ἢ οὔ, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ὥστε ὁτιοῦν εἶναι μόριον τῶν μιχθέντων; λέγεται μὲν οὖν ἐκείνως, οἷον κριθὰς μεμίχθαι πυροῖς, ὅταν ἡτισοῦν παρ' ὁντινοῦν τεθῇ. Εἰ δ' ἐστὶ πᾶν σῶμα διαιρετόν, εἴπερ ἐστὶ σῶμα σώματι μικτὸν ὁμοιομερές, ὁτιοῦν ἂν δέοι μέρος γίνεσθαι παρ' ὁτιοῦν. Ἐπεὶ δ' οὐκ ἔστιν εἰς τἀλάχιστα διαιρεθῆναι, <οὐδὲ> σύνθεσις ταὐτὸ καὶ μίξις ἀλλ' ἕτερον, δῆλον ὡς οὔτε κατὰ μικρὰ σωζόμενα δεῖ τὰ μιγνύμενα φάναι μεμίχθαι. Σύνθεσις γὰρ ἔσται καὶ οὐ κρᾶσις οὐδὲ μίξις, οὐδ' ἕξει τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον τῷ ὅλῳ τὸ μόριον. Φαμὲν δ', εἴπερ δεῖ μεμίχθαι τι, τὸ μιχθὲν ὁμοιομερὲς εἶναι, καὶ ὥσπερ τοῦ ὕδατος τὸ μέρος ὕδωρ, οὕτω καὶ τοῦ κραθέντος. Ἂν δ' ᾖ κατὰ μικρὰ σύνθεσις ἡ μίξις, οὐθὲν συμβήσεται τούτων, ἀλλὰ μόνον μεμιγμένα πρὸς τὴν αἴσθησιν (καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῷ μὲν μεμιγμένον, ἐὰν μὴ βλέπῃ ὀξύ, τῷ Λυγκεῖ δ' οὐθὲν μεμιγμένον) […].

Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Parmenides in the *Doxa*).[322] Both views can be considered similar in that they rely on particles for their compounds,[323] and owing to the fact that they end up with something that is not properly speaking a 'mixture', namely, 'composition' (*synthesis*).

'Composition' is one of the modalities of being 'one' that sometimes Aristotle brings up[324] and, as **T6** informs us, it consists in positioning several constituents close to one another, so that they touch. Just as Aristotle's organic unity, composition relies on the notion of contact.[325] However, contact is insufficient to obtain a whole: as **T6** shows through the example of barley and wheat grains, while composition happens without requiring a specific order between the parts, an organic unity does not. Furthermore, on the one hand, a whole is a natural unity, because the resulting one entity does not require an external force to make its parts stick together, and it does not consist of parts 'in actuality'.[326] On the other, a composition has parts in actuality. Mentioning the actuality of parts allows Aristotle to use one of his stock arguments against Atomists: there can be no division according to something's smallest parts or *minima* in actuality; that would lead to a regress, because an impossible

[322] Johachim 1922, 184, Rashed 2005, 149, but cf. Frede 2004, 293 who in my opinion rightly rejects the idea that the first position is a popular one, and thus prefers to attribute it to continuum-physicists.
[323] Aristotle, *GC* 1 6., see Frede 2004, 293.
[324] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 4. 1013b20–3, N 5. 1092a26.
[325] On the difference between organic unity, substances and artifacts, see Kelsey 2015 and Witt 2015.
[326] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 4. 1014b16–26, 1015a14–19.

conclusion, that the infinite exists in actuality, would follow.[327] Furthermore, in cases of composition, parts can stick together only if there is an external force or necessity that binds them together, so that one may regard it as an artificial unity (like sticks held together by glue).[328] Once again the example of grains is useful: there will not be any composition between barley and wheat grains if there is nothing combining the two. Hence, Aristotle concludes that the continuum-physicists and the Atomists fail to show that there is unity according to sense perception, and ultimately, they do not talk about genuine mixture. Linked to this conclusion are the following two considerations.

First, not being able to satisfy unity according to sense perception, the models of Composition that the continuum-physicists and the Atomists advocate for can neither account for mixture, nor for wholes. For according to Aristotle, only a genuine mixture produces a whole, i.e., an *organic* compound that is more than the sum of its constituents.[329] Although usually Aristotle does not consider water to be a 'whole', but rather an 'all',[330] in the context of *On Generation and Corruption* he does: to be water a mixture must consist predominantly of parts of water, [331] given Aristotle's conception of

[327] On the arguments against the Atomists, see Frede 2004.
[328] For this Aristotelian example, see *Metaph*. Δ 6. 1016b12–7.
[329] This is the reason why, while the products of the arts make good examples of 'wholes', they are ultimately wholes to a *lesser* degree than organic bodies. For their becoming whole is *natural* to them, in the sense that a craftsman is not necessary for the elements to perfectly integrate in tissues such as flesh whose constituting parts are present only in potency.
[330] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 6. 1016a18–23.
[331] e.g., Aristotle, *GC* 1 10. 328a23–8.

homogeneous parts (*homoiomeres*). For homogeneity is a feature that can only belong to genuine mixtures such as flesh. Although flesh is composed out of a certain proportion of the four elements, the fact that they are mixed makes them something over and above what they were before being mixed. The fact that the elements are mixed effects a change that is substantial and produces a whole (i.e., flesh), which, even if divided into parts, only consists of flesh: within a genuine mixture the elements are indistinguishable from one another, so that in this sense the definitions of the parts is identical to that of the whole.[332] Accordingly, as the example of water illustrates, the continuum-physicists and the Atomists will not be able to obtain a definition for the resulting compound. For the parts of water will not be 'water' collectively, but only individually.

Second, contrary to what Frede has argued, Aristotle's argument against mixture according to sense perception does not make sense perception a useless criterion for determining whether something is mixed or not.[333] Rather, Aristotle seems to build on the fact that there are occasions where sense perception may be tricked, so that the senses may mistake compositions for genuine cases of mixture. However, this is not the norm. For, taking for granted the usually reliable role of sensation in Aristotle's philosophy, this

[332] On Aristotle's conception of homogeneous parts, see Aristotle, *GC* 2 7, Johachim 1922, 185, Rashed 2005, CXVII, Krizan 2018. On the relation between the conception of mixture in *GC* 1 10. and *GC* 2 7., see Anagnostopoulos 2022, Krizan 2018, Frede 2004.
[333] Frede 2004, 293.

does not mean that a properly working sense perception cannot distinguish composition from genuine mixture. Indeed, Aristotle specifies that someone whose sense organs work excellently, such as Lynceus[334] will be able to determine that composition is not a genuine mixture. As a result, even if sense perception may consider the constituents of a composition 'one', ultimately compositions are to be considered 'many according to sense perception'. For a properly working sense perception will distinguish them from a mixture, that is, something truly one.[335]

If we return to **T2,** it becomes clearer in what sense Aristotle understands 'more according to sensation' when he refers to Parmenides' *Doxa* and why this makes Parmenides' views overall more consistent, and yet unsatisfactory. For, while Parmenides may have appealed to small parts to identify something, according to Aristotle, this does not offer a model of mixture that makes him any better than other Early Greek philosophers. Nevertheless, Aristotle's testimony provides us with crucial information as to how Light and Night work by mixing with one another, and with this in hand we can better grasp Parmenides' view on the Composition Problem, as well as the resulting **PWR**. Aristotle does not appear to interpret Parmenides as a

[334] We do not know who Lynceus was, but Rashed 2005, 150 has hypothesised that Aristotle refers to a member of the expedition of the Argonauts, whose sight was impressive, cf. Apollonius of Rhodes, *Arg.* 1.151–55, which is consistent with the message Aristotle wants to convey.

[335] As I think this reconstruction of Aristotle's argument shows, one need not to think that sensation turns out to be useless when it comes to mixture, as Frede 2004, 293 concludes.

compositional nihilist. Rather, it seems that in the *Doxa* Parmenides has developed a **PWR** that may introduce some innovations, compared to the Ionians. These philosophers attempted to explain the numerically and qualitatively many things in the universe by starting from something that is qualitatively speaking one (i.e., Water, Air, the Unbounded). However, qualitative multiplicity is unlikely to derive from something that is undifferentiated. Even if one appeals to processes such as desiccation or condensation, the point is that a single principle is insufficient. This is where Parmenides' answer to the Composition Problem shows innovation: his introduction of two contrary principles, supported by a specific view on mixture, offers an explanation both for how change happens and how natural objects are structured. For heterogeneity permits mortals to recognise compounds on the basis of sense perception and names:

> **T7** But since all things (*panta*) have been named (*onomastai*) Light (*phaos*) and Night (*nux*)
> And what belongs to their own powers (*dynameis*) is assigned to these and to those,
> Everything is in the same way completely full of Light and ungleaming Night (*pan pleon estin homou phaeos kai nuktos aphantou*),
> Both of them equal (*isōn*), since nothing is amidst either of them.[336] (Parmenides, **B9 DK = D13 L.-M.**, tr. L-M modified)

[336] αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ πάντα φάος καὶ νὺξ ὀνόμασται
καὶ τὰ κατὰ σφετέρας δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τοῖσί τε καὶ τοῖς,
πᾶν πλέον ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ φάεος καὶ νυκτὸς ἀφάντου
ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων, ἐπεὶ οὐδετέρωι μέτα μηδέν.

While in the *Alētheia* Parmenides presents a negative evaluation of names and language, in the *Doxa* they appear to have a crucial function, in continuity with Early Greek literature. For ever since Homer and Hesiod, names determine the identity of something and distinguish it from everything else so as to make it 'one'.[337] According to this line of thought, as we can conclude from **T7**,[338] Light and Night obtain names because they are the only perceptible things. In this sense, though names are established by mortals through convention, they can nonetheless be paired with sense perception to provide an explanation of the phenomena.[339] For they can determine the nature of each compound that derives from the mixture of Light and Night:

> **T8** For the narrower ones [*scil.* rings] were filled (*plēnto*) with unmixed fire (*puros akretoio*),
> The next ones [*scil.* rings] with night (*nuktos*), but an allotted portion of flame (*phlogos aisa*) rushes along.
> And in the middle of these (*en de mesōi toutōn*), the divinity (*daimōn*) who governs all things.
> For she directs the hateful birth and mingling (*mixios*) of all things,
> Leading the female to mingle (*migēn*) with the male and again, in the opposite direction

[337] See Salvadore 1987, Vergados 2020.
[338] For a commentary of the fragment Coxon 2008, 359–61, Bollack 2006, 226–30, Tarán 1965, 161–4, Vetter 2017, 136–9.
[339] Parmenides, B19 DK. Simplicius reports that the following lines come after the Goddess has provided the order of the perceptible things (*tēn tōn aisthētōn*): 'In this way, according to opinion (*kata doxan*), these things have been born and now they are,
And later, having grown strong, starting from that point they will come to their accomplishment (*teleutēsousi traphenta*).'
For these things, humans have established a name that indicates each one (*tois d'onom'antrhōpoi katethent' episēmon ekastōi*).' (tr. L.-M. modified)

> The male with the female.[340] (Parmenides, **B12 DK = D14 L.-M.**, tr. L-M modified)

In **T8** the Goddess presents the structure of the Parmenidean cosmos, its formation, and its relation to what inhabits it.[341] This cosmological doctrine is probably a development of Anaximander's, relying on a combination of observational evidence and associations deriving from beliefs found in epic poetry (e.g., Homer).[342] The passage describes a universe formed by concentric rings (*stephanai*). What is crucial for our argument is that the nature of each entity that makes the universe is determined according to the presence of different degrees of Light and Night within a mixture. This is particularly evident regarding the formation of the milky way as well as the other heavenly bodies. For they all derive from the mixture of Light and Night, which our source presents in terms of Hot and Cold.[343] In this context, Parmenides also resorts to terms such as *αἶσα*, which directly denote a portion of something as it has been allotted by a divinity, usually Fate. Furthermore, Aisa can be conceived of as an actual divinity.[344] On the basis of our surviving evidence,

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[340] αἱ γὰρ στεινότεραι πλῆντο πυρὸς ἀκρήτοιο,
αἱ δ' ἐπὶ ταῖς νυκτός, μετὰ δὲ φλογὸς ἵεται αἶσα·
ἐν δὲ μέσωι τούτων δαίμων ἣ πάντα κυβερνᾶι·
πάντων γὰρ <ἡ> στυγεροῖο τόκου καὶ μίξιος ἄρχει
πέμπουσ' ἄρσενι θῆλυ μιγῆν τό τ' ἐναντίον αὖτις
ἄρσεν θηλυτέρωι.

[341] For a commentary on this fragment, see Coxon 2008, 362–72, Vetter 2017, 141–3.

[342] Cerri 1999, 266–67, see also Nightingale 2007, 178–82.

[343] A40 DK.

[344] Homer, *Il.* 5.209, *Od.* 5.113, Pindar, *P.* 9.56. On Aisa as a divinity Homer, *Il.* 20.127, cf. *Od.* 7.197

the proportioned mixtures of Light and Night would appear to make up everything in the cosmos, from the heavenly to organic bodies.[345]

It is within Parmenides' discussion of organic bodies that we find the term again πλείων, that is, which Aristotle appealed to in **T2**. Its use indicates the degrees or portions of one of the elements in an organic mixture,[346] in a way that appears consistent with its use in Early Medical texts such as *On the Nature of Human Beings*.[347] Given the correspondence between the degree of an element in the mixture and the resulting entity, it is possible to see how Parmenides' notion of Composition in the *Doxa* may depend on specific quantitative and qualitative proportions. Hence, we might consider it to depend on a certain arrangement of the parts, which makes the **PWR** of the *Doxa* 'structured'. However, unfortunately the exact formulas for each mixture are not spelled out.

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[345] With regards to organic bodies the evidence in B18 DK is particularly interesting, as our Latin translation of Parmenides' verses explicitly refers to mixing the male and female seeds, and, depending on which of the powers within them dominates the mixture, the child will be either male, female, or even both.

[346] Parmenides, B16 DK, where Parmenides may be using 'the more' to indicate that it is being more present in quantity and degree that ultimately determines what the resulting thought is: 'For as each time it has the blending (*krasis*) of much-wondering limbs (*meleōn*), so too is mind (*noos*) present in humans: 'For it is this, in all humans and in each thing, that which thinks (*hosper phroneei*), that is, the nature of the limbs (*physis meleōn*). For the more (*to pleon*) is thought (*noēma*)'. See also similarly Parmenides, A53 DK: 'It is the opposite for Parmenides [scil. from Empedocles]: males grow in the north, for they share more of what is dense (*puknou metechein pleionos*); females in the south, because of the thinness (*araiotēta*)' (tr. L.-M. modified).

[347] Hippocrates, *Nat. Hom.* 7.48–52: 'All these things (i.e., the elements), then, are always present in the body of a man (*to sōma tou anthrōpou*), but as the year goes round, they become now more (*pleiō*) and now less (*elassō*) [*scil.* in degree and quantity], each in turn (*kata meros*) and according to its nature (*kata physin*)'.

Although in the *Doxa* Parmenides' **PWR** appears to be structured, one cannot conclude that it excludes Composition as Identity. For in **T7** we are told that there is nothing beyond Light and Night, so that it seems hard to grant that there are new substances in the style of Aristotle's mixture. Although from a linguistic perspective each mixture is provided with a different name that makes something one according to sense perception, ultimately each thing will not be anything over and above its constituents (i.e., Light and Night). In this sense, one could agree with Aristotle that Parmenides' obtains different entities only by composition. Furthermore, it seems difficult to ascribe to Parmenides that any of the entities of the *Doxa* can be considered a 'whole' in the Platonic or Aristotelian sense; considering them an 'all' appears more appropriate.

In conclusion, it is thanks to the many arrangements of the elements according to sense perception and the use of names that Parmenides could identify each mixture in the *Doxa* as 'one'. Such an entity, as it is subject to change, will be 'one' just for so long. However, it will have an internal structure that belongs specifically to *that* entity, due to the proportions according to which it is mixed.

In the *Doxa* Parmenides freely resorts to 'names', which rest on mortal convention. This still does not make the **PWR** presented in the *Doxa* less interesting or useful for a mortal. However, it makes it less exact than that developed to discuss What-Is. Nonetheless, even if mortals are responsible for

determining the unitary entities that make the cosmos, the fact that this mortal approach is the one that the Goddess recommends makes it less inconsistent and unreliable than others. Since it relies on more appropriate principles, the resulting **PWR** is to be preferred to any account of the phenomena. For due to its own internal coherence, it can provide a sketch of the internal structure of each thing. Even if in actuality the mixtures of Light and Night are nothing but compositions, sense perception, and names established through convention, may be sufficient to identify something as 'one' in a serviceable way. Clearly, the sense in which there seems to be unity in the *Doxa* is not exactly comparable to that for What-Is. However, this is not necessarily something undesirable for Parmenides, as Aristotle's testimony stresses: multiplicity is necessary to allow for change and explain the phenomena, because each thing that is 'one' in a looser sense must be divisible to combine into a further entity. Thus, Parmenides in the *Doxa* provides an alternative **PWR** that can be considered a second best, inasmuch as it is enough to navigate and understand the phenomena as much as possible. However, the scantiness of our sources do not allow us to speculate further.

2.5 Conclusion

From this analysis it is apparent that Parmenides conceived the One-Many Problem or **PWR** differently from the other Eleatics. In the *Alētheia* he develops

a view of reality that goes to its heart without relying on ordinary sense perception, which is insufficient to grasp What-Is. The moment Aristotle ascribes to Parmenides the claim that What-Is is 'one according to definition', he makes explicit that the characteristics that determine the essence of What-Is (e.g., unity, continuity), though many in number, could correspond to a single essence, as the features of What-Is could all express nothing but the different aspects (i.e., essence) of What-Is. While this conclusion is not without problems for Aristotle, it nonetheless makes room for an innovative answer to the Composition Problem. For, as the discussion of 'one according to definition' suggests, Aristotle at times oscillates between views that may make the *Alētheia*'s **PWR** prefigure Plato's and his own conceptions of 'whole', while still presenting the traits of an 'all'. Accordingly, Aristotle's testimony permits the possibility that What-Is may be a structured 'whole'.[348]

As for the *Doxa*, Aristotle's conception of 'more according to sensation' provided us with an understanding of the doctrines regarding the phenomena that employs a specific **PWR**, which answers the Composition Problem in alternative ways when compared to the *Alētheia*. Although the views on Compositions expressed in the *Doxa* do not correspond to those about true reality (i.e., What-Is), they are nonetheless fundamental for mortals. For they

[348] As Mourelatos 1999, 122–3 notices, the inability to grant to Parmenides' What-Is a complex essence, while calling into question the **SNM**, is one of the shortcomings of Curd's 'predicational monism'.

constitute the backbone of their account of the phenomena, which relies on mixtures and names established through convention.

Even in this case, Parmenides' **PWR** may be considered structured inasmuch as each mixture follows a certain proportion between the only two basic constituents of reality (i.e., Light and Night). However, Parmenides does not seem to conceive of the unitary entities of the *Doxa* as wholes. Rather, it is functional to his conception of the phenomena that everything consists exactly in the sums of its parts.

In sum, the view that Parmenides offers in the *Alētheia* could more significantly impact Plato's **PWR**, as it might approximate a Platonic 'whole'. Accordingly, the second part of this thesis will focus on the **PWR** that Parmenides puts forward in the *Alētheia.* However, as the next section argues, such a study requires us to approach Parmenides through his literary context.

CHAPTER THREE: Parmenides' Philosophical Methodology

3.1 The Goddess' Role within the Proem (B1 DK = D4 L.-M.) and Its Epistemological Implications

As Bryan has discussed, contemporary scholarship has developed a diverse range of interpretative approaches to Parmenides' poem.[349] With different degrees of emphasis, some scholars have interpreted it as a mystic or even shamanic allegory, as a religious experience or revelatory journey,[350] while others have praised its rationalistic and analytic nature.[351] All these approaches and their nuances, aside from allegory, which appears to be anachronistic,[352] pinpoint some relevant aspects of Parmenides' strategy. Choosing between one interpretative line or the other would not do justice to the many literary genres Parmenides draws on and his apparent will to play with different associations.[353] Furthermore, Parmenides' equally multifaceted figure would become simplistic. For even the use of Epic hexameter is a sign

[349] Bryan 2021. On this topic, see also Osborne 2006, 218–24.
[350] Diels 1897, Burkert 1969, Kingsley 2003, Robbiano 2006, Marciano 2008, Coxon 2008.
[351] Owen 1960, Barnes 1982 who considers the Proem 'of little philosophical relevance' (156), Wedin 2014.
[352] Mackenzie 2021, 98, Gemelli Marciano 2008, Mourelatos 2008, 32–3, Palmer 2009, 52–3, but see Granger 2010, who defends an allegorical interpretation.
[353] See for example Miller 2016, who examined Parmenides' use of ambiguity within the proem.

that he regarded himself *both* as a poet *and* as a thinker with a specific philosophical agenda in mind that requires poetry.

Recently, scholars have returned to the importance of Parmenides' poetic framework.[354] They have emphasised how placing Parmenides in his cultural context can allow us to better make sense of his philosophical project without overstressing the mystic or religious component of the poem, which is but a part in a far more complex arrangement of themes and motifs taken from different gernes. In this section I build on the re-evaluation of Parmenides' poetic framework starting from the proem (**B1 DK**) and focus on its impact for his philosophical project. First, I expand on Parmenides' Goddess and compare her with other divine female figures that appear in Homer (i.e., the Muses and Circe) and their roles[355] to argue that Parmenides deploys this divine female agent (i.e., the Goddess) just like Homer and Hesiod, that is, as a didactic agent. Next, I discuss the epistemology underlying the way Homer's divine female agents communicate their knowledge to human beings; to show in what way Homer's set of

[354] Folit-Weinberg 2022, Bryan 2021, Mackenzie 2021, Tor 2017, Palmer 2009, Robbiano 2006, but already Morgan 2000. In doing this these scholars build their contributions on Mourelatos 2008, 1–45 who already delved into Parmenides' relation to Homeric poetry in particular.

[355] Homer and Hesiod are not the exclusive point of reference for Parmenides, as there is similarity with e.g., Pindar's use of certain images (e.g., the image of the chariot, on which see Iribarren 2018, Fränkel 1960, 158 and that of paths found for example in *O.* 1.110, *O.* 9.47) and vocabulary (e.g., Parmenides' ὁδὸν…πολύφημον, B.1.2 and Pindar's characterisation of a dirge as πολύφαμος in *I.* 8.58). For more parallels in Archaic Greek Literature, see Primavesi 2011, 214–17. Folit-Weinberg 2022 has to some extent convincingly argued that these are closer in function to Homer in this case.

epistemological assumption and methods constitute Parmenides' starting point. The results of this section should allow us to put into context how Parmenides' conceives of the Goddess' didactic role within his epistemology, specifically in view of our discussion of **B7 DK**. For there the Goddess articulates and teaches to the *kouros* a new methodology for knowing genuine reality, whose applications in **B8 DK** will have important consequences for Parmenides' conception of What-Is and the corresponding **PWR**.

Before discussing the role of the Goddess and its epistemological value in relation to Parmenides' models (i.e., Homer and Hesiod), let me quote the section of the proem where Parmenides introduces the Goddess:

> **T9** The axle in the naves emitted the whistle of a flute
> As it was heated (for it was pressed hard by two whirling
> Wheels, one on each side). While the maidens of the Sun (*Hēliades kourai*)
> Hastened to bring me, after they had left behind the palace of Night (*dōmata Nuktos*)
> Towards the light (*phaos*) and had pushed back the veils from their heads with their hands.
> That is where the gates of the roads (*keleuthōn*) of Night and Day are,
> And a lintel and a stone threshold (*oudous*) hold it on all sides.
> Themselves aethereal (*aitheriai*), they are filled with great doors,
> And much-punishing (*polupoinos*) Justice holds the keys of interchange (*amoibous*).
> The maidens, cajoling her with gentle words (*logoisin*),
> Wisely persuade her to thrust quickly back for them
> The bolted bar from the gate. And when it flew open

It made a gaping chasm (*chasm' achanes*) as they were thrown back, after rotating interchangeably (*amoibadon*)
In their sockets the two bronze pivots
Fastened with pegs and rivets. There, through them,
The maidens guided the chariot and horses straight along the way.
And the goddess (*thea*) welcomed me graciously, took my right hand (*cheira de cheiri*)
In her own hand (*dexiterēn helen*), and spoke oracle (*epos*) addressing me:
Young man, companion of immortal (*athanatoisi*) charioteers, you who
Have come to our home by the mares that carry you
I greet you: for it is no evil fate (*moira kakē*) that has sent you to travel
This path (*hodon*) (for indeed it is beyond the beaten track of men (*ap'anthrōpōn ektos patou estin*),
But Right (*themis*) and Justice (*dikē*). It is appropriate (*chreō*) that you are instructed (*puthesthai*) on everything,
Both the untrembling heart of well-persuasive (*eupeitheos atremes*) (or: well-rounded (*eukukleos*))[356] reality (*alētheiēs*)
And the opinions of mortals (*brotōn doxas*), in which there is no genuine trust (*pistis alēthēs*).
But nonetheless you will learn (*mathēseai*) this too: how the things that are regarded highly (*ta dokunta*)
would have to be acceptable (*chrēn dokimōs*), penetrating all things (*dia pantos panta perōnta*).[357] (Parmenides, **B1.6–32 = D4.6–32 L-M.**, tr. L-M modified)

[356] Simplicius' (*In Cael.* 557.26) and Proclus' (*In Tim.* 2.105b) reading εὐκυκλέος is *difficilior* than εὐπειθέος, which is found in most of our sources (e.g., Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.111, Clement of Alexandria, *Strom*. 5.59), because this genitive form is irregular, and as such should be considered a Parmenidean coinage aimed at fitting the style and metre. Furthermore, Diels believed that εὐπειθέος was a conjecture designed to clarify the verse. Thus, according to Diels 1897, followed by Tarán 1965, εὐκυκλέος is the reading to accept. Mourelatos 2008, 154–7, Coxon 2008, do not follow Diels' reading, and opt for εὐπειθέος, which is now the preferred reading. However, see already Kurfess 2014, who reassesses the sources and argue on further grounds in favour of εὐκυκλέος. I am printing the Greek reading preferred by scholars. This decision does not affect the arguments I am making. However, I do see much appeal in εὐκυκλέος, both philologically, compositionally, and philosophically speaking.

[357] ἄξων δ' ἐν χνοίῃσιν ἵει σύριγγος ἀυτήν

Parmenides' poem famously starts with the *kouros*' travel on a chariot, guided by the mares, that leads on a path beyond (*ektos*) the one travelled by ordinary men. Several scholars have focussed on the symbolic associations that recall initiation, its similarities with Orphism,[358] and the role of Light, which traditionally is associated with knowledge and divine agents—not to mention the much-debated problem regarding the trajectory of such a travel (is it an

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αἰθόμενος (δοιοῖς γὰρ ἐπείγετο δινωτοῖσιν
κύκλοις ἀμφοτέρωθεν), ὅτε σπερχοίατο πέμπειν
Ἡλιάδες κοῦραι, προλιποῦσαι δώματα Νυκτός,
εἰς φάος, ὠσάμεναι κράτων ἄπο χερσὶ καλύπτρας.
ἔνθα πύλαι Νυκτός τε καὶ Ἤματός εἰσι κελεύθων,
καί σφας ὑπέρθυρον ἀμφὶς ἔχει καὶ λάινος οὐδός·
αὐταὶ δ' αἰθέριαι πλῆνται μεγάλοισι θυρέτροις·
τῶν δὲ Δίκη πολύποινος ἔχει κληῖδας ἀμοιβούς.
τὴν δὴ παρφάμεναι κοῦραι μαλακοῖσι λόγοισιν.
πεῖσαν ἐπιφραδέως, ὥς σφιν βαλανωτὸν ὀχῆα
ἀπτερέως ὤσειε πυλέων ἄπο· ταὶ δὲ θυρέτρων
χάσμ' ἀχανὲς ποίησαν ἀναπτάμεναι πολυχάλκους
ἄξονας ἐν σύριγξιν ἀμοιβαδὸν εἰλίξασαι
γόμφοις καὶ περόνησιν ἀρηρότε· τῆι ῥα δι' αὐτέων
ἰθὺς ἔχον κοῦραι κατ' ἀμαξιτὸν ἅρμα καὶ ἵππους.
καί με θεὰ πρόφρων ὑπεδέξατο, χεῖρα δὲ χειρί
δεξιτερὴν ἕλεν, ὧδε δ' ἔπος φάτο καί με προσηύδα·
ὦ κοῦρ' ἀθανάτοισι συνάορος ἡνιόχοισιν,
ἵπποις ταί σε φέρουσιν ἱκάνων ἡμέτερον δῶ,
χαῖρ', ἐπεὶ οὔτι σε μοῖρα κακὴ προὔπεμπε νέεσθαι
τήνδ' ὁδόν (ἦ γὰρ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἐκτὸς πάτου ἐστίν),
ἀλλὰ θέμις τε δίκη τε. χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι
ἠμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐπειθέος ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ
ἠδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθής.
ἀλλ' ἔμπης καὶ ταῦτα μαθήσεαι, ὡς τὰ δοκοῦντα
χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντὸς πάντα περῶντα.

[358] Kingsley 1999, Kingsley 2003, Marciano 2008, Cosgrove 1974 provides a good account of the many classic views on this aspect, discussing their shortcomings.

anabasis[359], *katabasis*[360] or an *apobasis*?[361]).[362] The place where Parmenides meets the Goddess and thus where it takes place is unclear. As Mansfeld has convincingly argued, it seems to be an intermediate region, which as such presents characteristics of the world of the *Doxa*, where everything is made out of Light and Darkness: [363] the doors of Night and Day are made of aether, which according to Parmenides should be either a product of the mixture of Light and Darkness according to a certain balance or the result of the purity of Light in this region of the universe;[364] the reference itself to Day and Night hints to the world of ordinary human beings and their beliefs. At the same time, this place presents more evidently than the world of phenomena features that are increasingly distinctive of What-Is. As a result, according to Miller, the proem can even be divided in different phases, each of which corresponds to a progressive approach to the truth of What-Is: first the *kouros* travels through all cities (B1.1–10), next through the gates of Night and Day (B1. 11–

[359] Diels 1897, Fränkel 1960, 157–97, cf. Furley 1973, 15, Owens 1979, Tor 2015.
[360] Morrison 1955, Mansfeld 1964, 222–47, Gallop 1984, Sedley 1999, Kingsley 1999, Palmer 2009, Primavesi 2011, cf. Burkert 1969, 15, who suggests that the journey is best understood as one to the Beyond.
[361] Miller 2006, cf. Curd 2004, 19.
[362] See Primavesi 2011, 181–90 for a reassessment of these positions. I will not discuss this matter because, although the direction of the travel can influence some aspects regarding the nature of the knowledge the *kouros* acquires, none of these views impacts it at its core. Similar to what Burkert 1969 already noticed, the travel, be it upwards or downwards, is functional to representing how one obtains a knowledge that transcends mortals.
[363] Mansfeld 2021, 223, cf. Furley 1973, 29.
[364] See **B9 DK**, from which we learn that all things result from Light and Night, whose mixture and purity in **B10 DK** determines the identity of something (i.e., the moon, the sun). However, the details of this process remain uncertain.

21), and finally to the place where he meets the Goddess (B1.22–32), who represents the apex of the *kouros'* journey towards What-Is.[365]

The associations and symbols found in **T9** are worthy of attention as Parmenides designs them consciously for his audience, yet only some of them are relevant for my present purpose. Of particular importance here is the fact that in Parmenides all divine agents are female.[366] Furthermore, of the many female divine-like figures, only the Goddess delivers a speech, while at the same time introducing female divinities relevant in the discussion on What-Is in **B8 DK** (i.e., Fate, Right, and Justice).[367] The predominance of female divinities in Parmenides has been noticed before as a peculiarity, and explained resorting to Parmenides' alleged association with either Orphism or Pythagoreanism, and more.[368] While these associations are ultimately impossible to confirm, what is sure is that Parmenides must have been drawing at least to some extent from Epic tradition.[369] Particularly interesting in this respect are the Homeric poems (but also Hesiod's works), where the association between female and divine agents manifests a set of

[365] Miller 2016.

[366] Notice however that in the *Doxa*, also Eros, qualified as the first created god is mentioned (B13 DK).

[367] The way Parmenides characterises them here and in in the course of **B8 DK** suggests that these divinities are to be seen as personified agents who express different aspects of the necessity that binds What-Is and thus delimits what it means to be What-Is, see the recent Tor 2023.

[368] See Diels 1987, 18, Burkert 1969, 381, Tarán 1965, 29, Flashar 2013, 456.

[369] I cannot discuss the issue at length now, but the physiology of the *Doxa* further suggests that these associations between female and divine could be grounded even in observation, in particular starting from the role of Light and its connection to everything that is hot.

epistemological assumptions on the mortals' capacity to access divine knowledge, which Parmenides seems to have reprised.

Given that the Goddess is the only deity that actually speaks to Parmenides to inform him regarding his journey, it follows that the Goddess has the most important role in the *kouros'* journey towards What-Is. For not only does she communicate with the *kouros*, but she teaches him how all of reality works (i.e., What-Is and the phenomena). Furthermore, at the end of **T9,** the Goddess' use of πυνθάνομαι indicates that her didactic role consists in a specific teaching which may follow a precise methodology that will lead the *kouros* to acquire a knowledge normally prohibited to mortals. Specifically, πυνθάνομαι differs from μανθάνω in its emphasis on the fact that the Goddess' knowledge cannot be something that the *kouros* finds out completely on his own with the help of his mortal senses. Πυνθάνομαι does not exclude the active involvement in the process of knowing. Actually, it can even point to the already exceptional degree of knowledge of the *kouros* when compared to other mortals. For the fact that the *kouros* is called 'knowing man' (*eidōs phōs*)[370] at l.**3**, together with the fact that he travels towards the Goddess himself, may indicate that even before the contact with the Goddess he was superior to other men. However, especially here, where the object of the

[370] On the *kouros*' knowledge before the Goddess' revelation, see Mansfeld 1964, 225–27, Fränkel 1973, 160. Notice however that Mansfeld 1964, 251 disagrees on the active role of the *kouros* in the process of knowledge.

Goddess' knowledge (i.e., What-Is) is so far from ordinary mortal knowledge, it is necessarily accessible to a mortal through a specific teaching which is part of a divine revelation.[371]

Thus, by providing a knowledge that is divine,[372] the Goddess expresses the traditional opposition between divine and mortal knowledge, which usually is combined with the one between female divine agent and male agent, be it the hero or the poet. As Bergren remarks, there seems to be something about female agents in Greek literature, in particular divine ones, that makes them the privileged messengers of truth.[373] While though sometimes their speech can also be deceptive, women are often teachers, prophets and voices of truth. Furthermore, it is rare if not unheard of that a male divine agent should instruct the hero with their divine knowledge.[374] Although to some extent differently, both Homer and Hesiod well represent the association between female divinities and knowledge that Parmenides

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[371] Although I agree with Robbiano 2006, 52–3 regarding the fact that the *kouros* is an active rather than a totally passive knower, it is hard to read πυνθάνομαι as entailing that the *kouros*' knowledge of What-Is is independent from the Goddess' revelation. It is true that πυνθάνομαι does not always imply that someone communicates to someone else a piece of information, and that in this sense it can also mean 'to find out'. However, even if we opted for this translation in **T9**, we would still need to admit that the *kouros* receives this knowledge from the Goddess. Furthermore, πυνθάνομαι results in a process different from the one implied in μανθάνω, which refers to learning by experiencing or self-reflection without any reference to an external agent acting as a facilitator. Still, the two processes however are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

[372] Bergren 1983, Tor 2017, 72–94.

[373] Bergren 1983, 70, Hussey 1990, 11.

[374] One could think of Mentor's speech (Homer, *Od* 1.279–90) or Tiresias' (Homer *Od.* 11.100–37) as possible counterexamples. However, in the first case it is Athena under disguise who speaks, while in the latter case Tiresias is a mortal man, in no way an actual divinity, whose divine knowledge depends on Persephone's, yet another female goddess, concession of *noos* to him (*Od*. 10.494), but cf. *Il*. 14136.

adopts.[375] The similarities with Hesiod are pronounced especially in the case of the first passage (**T10**).[376] However, the following passages will illustrate that, overall, when it comes to the role of female divine agents, Parmenides seems to take examples that better fit his narrative from Homer,[377] as will become clear when we discuss Circe's speech.[378] First, let us have a closer look at Homer's characterisation of the Muses as facilitators of knowledge, which best contextualises the epistemological framework for Parmenides' Goddess:

> **T10** Tell me now, Muses, who have houses (*dōmat'echousai*) on Olympos—
> For **you** (*hymeis*) are goddesses (*theai*), you are **present** (*pareste*), **and know all things** (*te iste te panta*),
> whereas **we** (*hēmeis*) **(i.e. mortals)** only hear a report (*kleos oion akouomen*), and **know nothing** for certain (*oude ti idmen*)—
> who were the leaders and princes of the Danaäns?
> As for their great number, I could never report their name,
> Even if I had ten tongues, ten mouths,
> an unbreakable voice, and a brazen heart within me (*chalkeon de moi ētor eneiē*),
> had I not the Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus of the aegis,

[375] See Tor 2017, 79–81 for the thematization of the opposition between human and divine (female) voice in Hesiod, *Th*. 31–2.
[376] For example, Hesiod too presents the Muses as teachers or instructors (*Th.* 22: αἵ νύ ποθ' Ἡσίοδον καλὴν **ἐδίδαξαν** ἀοιδήν), see Schwabl 1963 already for a study of the relation between Parmenides' proem and the speech of the Muses in Hesiod's *Theogony*.
[377] On some of the differences between Parmenides, Hesiod and Homer when it comes to the role of female agents as models of inspiration, see Morgan 2000, 73–5. Particularly relevant in this sense is Folit-Weiberg 2022, who concludes that, contrary to Hesiod, Parmenides' Goddess is not associated to false things, which is quite pronounced in Hesiod. On truthfulness and Parmenides' Goddess', see also Mourelatos 2008, 164, 228.
[378] I assume it as unproblematic, given the overall consensus of scholars (e.g., Burkert 1969, Aubenque 1987, Curd 2004, Robbiano 2006, Mourelatos 2008, Cassin 1998, Coxon 2009, Palmer 2009) on Parmenides' preference for the *Odyssey* over the *Iliad*.

to remind me (*mnēsaiath'*) of all those who came beneath Ilion.[379] (Homer, *Il.* 2.484–492)

T10 presents the structural difference between mortal ignorance and divine knowledge, as the poet asks the Muses, who are goddesses, to provide him with the necessary knowledge and memory to name the leaders of the Danaäns. The contrast between the Muses and human beings, here represented by the poet, is emphasised through the opposition between the pronouns you (*hymeis*) and us (*hēmeis*) at the beginning of the second and third lines. Importantly, **T10** establishes a strong connection between the highest degree of knowledge and the idea of being present (*pareste*), as opposed to knowing by report (i.e., indirectly), which is typical of mortals: it is the Muses' divine capacity to have everything there is to know present, as if it were in front of their eyes,[380] that provides them with omniscience. Their knowledge is thus direct, and since it is 'of all things', it extends over all that has happened, is happening, and will happen.[381] By contrast, the knowledge of the poet is

[379] Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι·
≥ ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε πάρεστέ τε ἴστέ τε πάντα,
≥ ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἷον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν·
οἵ τινες ἡγεμόνες Δαναῶν καὶ κοίρανοι ἦσαν·
πληθὺν δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω,
οὐδ' εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν γλῶσσαι, δέκα δὲ στόματ' εἶεν,
φωνὴ δ' ἄρρηκτος, χάλκεον δέ μοι ἦτορ ἐνείη,
εἰ μὴ Ὀλυμπιάδες Μοῦσαι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο
θυγατέρες μνησαίαθ' ὅσοι ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθον·

[380] On the fundamental connection in Early Greek culture between vision and knowledge see already Snell 1978, Lesher 2008.

[381] This characteristic is particularly emphasised in Hesiod's account of the Muses at the beginning of the *Theogony* (32, 38).

indirect because it is grounded in hearsay rather than in direct experience. This latter aspect is interesting because Parmenides seems to part ways with the Homeric model, inasmuch as the *kouros* can partake more directly of divine knowledge (i.e., knowledge of What-Is); contrary to the typical Homeric and Hesiodic model, where it is the Muses who come to the poet, in Parmenides the *kouros* himself travels to where the Goddess resides.

Because of this unbridgeable opposition between mortal and divine knowledge, it has been argued that Homer is a sceptic, in the sense that he dismisses that mortals can know anything.[382] However, Zellner has convincingly shown that **T10** is the proof that, when assisted by the divine in some way, human beings can acquire a knowledge that is divine, though perhaps only for a limited time:[383] the Muses' assistance to the poet allows him to recall (*mnēsaiath'*) what happened in Troy.

In a few lines **T10** draws and illustrates three overlapping themes and oppositions that also appear in **T9**: the opposition between the poet (or hero) and the female divine figures manifests the opposition between mortal and divine, which ultimately boils down to that between ignorance and knowledge. However, **T10** does not actually illustrate how a divine female

[382] Barnes, 1982, 137, Hussey, 1990, 11–7, who argues that to some extent Homer is a sceptic, though not a full-bodied one. For knowledge is to some extent granted to human beings, even when intrinsically doubtful given the object at hand and its circumstances (e.g., a dream, something very far in the past).
[383] Zellner 1994, Hussey 1990, 14.

agent would instruct a mortal through her speech, which is provided in the following passage:

> **T11** So we were busying ourselves with these things, but Circe was not
> unaware that we had returned from Hades: very promptly
> she got ready, and came out, and at the same time, the handmaids (*amphipoloi*) with
> her brought
> bread and much meat, and red wine.
> She, bright with fire among goddesses (*aithopa* […] *dia theaōn*), now standing in the midst of us (*en messōi*), spoke:
> 'Wretched men, who went down to the house of Hades alive,
> two times dead, when other men die only once!
> But come now, eat food and drink wine here
> all day long; then, when Dawn brings light,
> set sail. But I'll show (*deixō*) you your **path** (*hodon*) and **indicate to you the signs** (*sēmaneō*)
> for each thing. That way, **no ruinous bad decisions** (*mē kakorraphiē alegeinē*),
> at sea or ashore, will leave you in desperate trouble.' […]
> And when the Sun set and darkness came,
> They went to sleep in the stern of the ship,
> But she, **taking me by the hand** (*eme cheiros elousa*)**, led me away** (*aponosphin*) from my companions,
> took a seat, spoke and asked me every thing,
> And thus I recounted all things in full detail (*kata moiran*).
> Then, queen (*potnia*) Circe spoke at length to me, saying:
> 'All that, then, has been accomplished (*pepeirantai*). Now listen (*akouson*) to what
> I shall tell you: a god (*theos*) will remind (*mnēsei*) you of it.
> First, you'll reach the Sirens. […]
> Then, when your companions have rowed you beyond the Sirens,

from that point on, **I'll no longer tell you in full detail**
which of the two is the path (*hodos*) **to follow, but *you* yourself**
must take counsel with your heart (*thymō bouleuein*)**. I shall present you with**
both (*amphoterōthen*).[384] (Homer, *Od*. XII.16–28, 31–39, 55–58)

T11 highlights a crucial figure for Odysseus, namely, Circe. The passage structurally and thematically shares many similarities with **T9**, as Mourelatos pointed out.[385] While some of the similarities have direct philosophical implications, others highlight that by both repeating or varying certain images, Parmenides presents his take on divine communication after this Homeric model. For example, Circe, like Parmenides' Goddess, is in the company of handmaids who usually serve divinities. She lives in a place secluded to

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[384] ἡμεῖς μὲν τὰ ἕκαστα διείπομεν· οὐδ' ἄρα Κίρκην
ἐξ Ἄϊδεω ἐλθόντες ἐλήθομεν, ἀλλὰ μάλ' ὦκα
ἦλθ' ἐντυναμένη· ἅμα δ' ἀμφίπολοι φέρον αὐτῇ
σῖτον καὶ κρέα πολλὰ καὶ αἴθοπα οἶνον ἐρυθρόν.
ἡ δ' ἐν μέσσῳ στᾶσα μετηύδα δῖα θεάων·
'σχέτλιοι, οἳ ζώοντες ὑπήλθετε **δῶμ'** Ἄϊδαο,
δισθανέες, ὅτε τ' ἄλλοι ἅπαξ θνήσκουσ' ἄνθρωποι.
ἀλλ' ἄγετ' ἐσθίετε βρώμην καὶ πίνετε οἶνον
αὖθι πανημέριοι· ἅμα δ' ἠόϊ φαινομένηφι
πλεύσεσθ'· αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ δείξω **ὁδὸν** ἠδὲ ἕκαστα
σημανέω, ἵνα μή τι κακορραφίῃ ἀλεγεινῇ
ἢ ἁλὸς ἢ ἐπὶ γῆς ἀλγήσετε πῆμα παθόντες.' […]
ἦμος δ' ἠέλιος κατέδυ καὶ ἐπὶ κνέφας ἦλθεν,
οἱ μὲν κοιμήσαντο παρὰ πρυμνήσια νηός,
ἡ δ' ἐμὲ χειρὸς ἑλοῦσα φίλων ἀπονόσφιν ἑταίρων
εἶσέ τε καὶ προσέλεκτο καὶ ἐξερέεινεν ἕκαστα·
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τῇ πάντα κατὰ μοῖραν κατέλεξα.
καὶ τότε δή μ' ἐπέεσσι προσηύδα πότνια Κίρκη·
'ταῦτα μὲν οὕτω πάντα πεπείρανται, σὺ δ' ἄκουσον,
ὥς τοι ἐγὼν ἐρέω, μνήσει δέ σε καὶ θεὸς αὐτός.
Σειρῆνας μὲν πρῶτον ἀφίξεαι, […]
αὐτὰρ ἐπὴν δὴ τάς γε παρὲξ ἐλάσωσιν ἑταῖροι,
ἔνθα τοι **οὐκέτ'** ἔπειτα διηνεκέως ἀγορεύσω,
ὁπποτέρῃ δή τοι **ὁδὸς** ἔσσεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς
θυμῷ βουλεύειν· ἐρέω δέ τοι ἀμφοτέρωθεν.

[385] Mourelatos 2008, 24, n. 38.

mortals, just as Parmenides' Goddess, who inhabits a remote place beyond ordinary space and time. Furthermore, Circe's speech is not directed to Odysseus' companions, who represent the common man. This image, together with that of shaking hands, in particular recalls **T9**, where the Goddess mentions how the *kouros* is someone who has departed from the path of ordinary man.

The key to Circe's speech is the idea of the path, the *hodos*, which is typical of Homeric poetry[386] as well as of Parmenides' Goddess' speech. In Circe's speech the *hodos* is not only the path to follow as a series of steps, but also the physical journey that Odysseus must undertake, similar to the *kouros.* Just as Circe knows what path Odysseus needs to follow to go back home, Parmenides' Goddess knows what path the *kouros* has to follow in order to grasp What-Is. Circe's speech in itself is a presentation of the steps necessary to return home, and each of these steps is a sort of proof or challenge to withstand, starting from the Sirens, to Scylla and Charybdis.[387] Furthermore, as Folit-Weinberg argues, the *hodos* requires Odysseus to make a choice (*krisis*) between two options (i.e., Planctae or 'wandering rocks', Sylla or Charybdis).[388] This aspect is also illustrated at the end of the passage, where

[386] Folit-Weinberg 2022, 119–43.
[387] Homer, *Od.* 12.85ff.
[388] See Folit-Weinberg 2022, 157–71, cf. already Mourelatos 2008, 24. Even if one translated ἀμφοτέρωθεν as 'one both sides', which could suggest a single road, one then would nonetheless be required to acknowledge the presence of two choices or paths within this. While the Goddess herself rules out the path that leads to the two rocks, the following case is left open: experienced mariners (very rare among mortals) must themselves choose what to

Circe concludes that, after Odysseus has been guided throughout the first choice, he has learned enough to himself choose the next paths to follow. Interestingly, this scheme of argumentation, which presents two possible paths and requires Odysseus' to decide, is paralleled to the basic decision the *kouros* has to make between the path 'that is' and the path 'that is not', or even that between opposed features of What-Is in **B8 DK** (e.g., changeable-unchangeable, generated-ungenerated). Crucially, similar to Parmenides' Goddess, for Circe these steps to follow are conveyed through signs (*sēmaneō*). In Homer, 'signs' refers to in some way visible and constantly available aspects of something. However, the term is also interestingly linked to the idea of challenges that must be overcome or proofs that are required.[389] To know the 'signs' means to become aware of what something is. In this sense, knowing the 'signs' prompts successful strategies for overcoming a challenge, say, the Sirens (e.g., beeswax earplugs).[390] For Circe indicates exactly what the signs of the Sirens are, and what Odysseus and his companions should look for when they meet them: for example, a distinctive sign of the Sirens is that they bewitch mortals with their voices, and the 'path' of action is to put beeswax in

do (*Od.* 12.115–26), though she will provide some help (i.e., information regarding what to expect). For that Circe is telling Odysseus to avoid the vortexes close to Charybdis, that is, avoiding Charybdis completely, to prefer to lose six of his companions heading towards Scylla, implies two roads and one decision.

[389] E.g., Homer, *Il.* 22.30–1. On the use of 'signs' in Homer, see Nagy 1983, Nagy 1990**a.**

[390] Cf. Heraclitus, B93 DK for Parmenides' idea that signs can be conceived of as challenges someone has to overcome to come to the true meaning behind a god's words.

one's ears.[391] Thus, it seems fair to say that Circe's words provide accurate descriptions and instructions of the reality Odysseus and his companions will experience. Just as the Muses in **T10**, she *has in front of her eyes* and thus *knows* what Odysseus will face, which suggests that the steps of the path itself are not only descriptions and instructions, but also actual signs (*sēmata*) that prove the genuineness of Circe's words.[392] This way, Circe becomes the most reliable source to relevant and true pieces of knowledge.

It would be possible to further develop this analysis, to focus on evidence that goes beyond these specific passages and even expands beyond Homer. However, this is not necessary my argument. For that Parmenides attributes to the *kouros* and the Goddess features both pertaining to either heroes (e.g., Odysseus) or poets, and to divine figures (e.g., Circe, the Muses) highlights the parallels between Parmenides and Homer in terms of learning and teaching strategies for acquiring divine knowledge.[393] In **T10** and **T11** the female divine figures' main role is that of instructing extraordinary mortals. Since they know all things, they are authorities when it comes to knowledge, and the fact that they decide to share it makes their role didactic. When we now compare these Homeric passages with **T9**, it emerges not only that Parmenides reprises the connections between female divine agents and

[391] Homer, *Od.* 12.40–55.
[392] Cf. Folit-Weinberg 2022, 157, on the relation between *sēma* and some sort of proof of genuineness, see below **3.3**.
[393] *Contra* Mansfeld 1964, 230 who denies the continuity between Odysseys and the *kouros* in particular.

revelation, or the opposition between divine knowledge and mortal ignorance. For he also picks up and develops the didactic role played by the Muses, and in particular the modalities of divine communication of knowledge found in Circe's speech. Parmenides' Goddess too turns out to be an authority[394] inasmuch as she grounds an authoritative account of all reality (i.e., What-Is and the phenomena). At the same time, she also grounds the principles designed to describe the phenomenal world, notwithstanding that these are defective compared to What-Is. In other words, the Goddess is the kick-starter of a philosophically transformative experience, where she is the only means through which the *kouros* can not only know What-Is, but also everything else that exists to a lesser degree in the *Doxa*.[395] As a result, Parmenides shows a more optimistic view regarding the mortals' capacity to know, compared to other Early Greek thinkers, such as Xenophanes.[396] For the *kouros* has access to genuine reality (i.e., What-Is), just as the gods, though the need to also learn the doctrines found in the *Doxa* leads us to think that his contact with the divine may be limited in some way. Nonetheless, having apprehended What-Is, in the *Doxa* the *kouros* will be able to see other signs, which will be consistent with one another, though essentially different from those of What-Is. Thus, the

[394] The idea that the Goddess is an authority can be also grounded in the fact that her speech is a *mythos*, that is, a form of speech associated with authoritative figures e.g., Homer, *Il.* 1.388, 9.51, 431.
[395] Cf. Tor 2015, 22.
[396] For a compelling analysis of Xenophanes' epistemology and knowledge versus 'corrigible belief' influenced by divine disclosure, see Tor 2017, 133–54.

kouros will succeed in orientating himself, and the phenomena may be intelligible only insofar as it follows the principles introduced by the Goddess. These principles share some similarities with What-Is, and the *kouros* will probably grasp their workings thanks to his knowledge of What-Is.[397] However, this this does not mean that What-Is is something that bears any direct relation, especially causal, to the world of the *Doxa*.[398]

In conclusion, the results of this section have shown that Parmenides was heavily influenced by Homeric epistemological views and the modalities implied in his conception of divine female agents. Thus, Parmenides uses Homer's characterisation of divine female agents in the rest of the poem to build and shape his discussion regarding What-Is and its knowability. I will go on to argue that the modalities of divine communication found in particular in Circe's speech could also prove fundamental to a correct assessment of Parmenides' mereology. However, these modalities together with the notion of 'signs' to which Homer appeals require further analysis in order to account consistently for Parmenides' view of reality.

[397] For an alternative reading of the phenomena's dependence on the *kouros*' cognition of What-Is, see Cherubin 2017.
[398] Mourelatos 2008, 277–8, xxxi, Tor 2015, Johansen 2016.

3.2 A Review of Predicational Approaches to Parmenides' What-Is and an Alternative Approach

Previously,[399] I briefly discussed how scholars after Barnes now generally agree that Parmenides rejected the claim that exactly one thing exists (i.e., **SNM**). Accordingly, scholars have attempted to show that Parmenides in a way allowed plurality within What-Is.[400] However, we also saw that if Parmenides is a monist who nonetheless allows plurality within What-Is, we must ask in what way and if at all he accounted for this in his conception of the essence[401] of What-Is. In order to do this, we have to explain what is What-Is' relation to the features that make its essence (i.e., ungenerated and imperishable, whole, of a single kind, untrembling, accomplished). In other terms, to conceive of What-Is consistently Parmenides needs to have developed to some extent an account of the **PWR**.

In scholars' accounts of What-Is, the **PWR** has not been directly addressed, but tackled in various respects within the discussion of Parmenidean monism. Since Parmenides' characterisation of What-Is in the *Alētheia* depends to some extent on the way the verb 'to be' works, that is, on predication, the majority of scholars have articulated their understanding of

[399] See **Chapter 2.2**.
[400] E.g., Barnes 1982, Curd 2004, Mourelatos 2008.
[401] Contrary to other scholars (e.g., Curd 2004) I prefer avoiding the use of 'nature' to talk about the genuine reality of something when discussing Parmenides' philosophy, as the term nature is intrinsically linked to the notion of change that Parmenides excludes. Cf. Mourelatos 2008, 246.

Parmenides' What-Is starting from a discussion of the uses of this verb. Thus, let us overview the main results of this study with reference to how it can specifically contribute to establishing whether Parmenides conceived of What-Is as a 'whole' or as an 'all', and the relation between its features.

To determine the way 'to be' works necessitates taking a stand regarding the uses of the verb 'to be' that were likely available to Parmenides. The amount that has been written on the matter is astonishing,[402] and I will limit myself to overview the most influential studies. Scholars believe that the verb 'to be' in Ancient Greek has either a 'complete' or an 'incomplete' use. Often the 'complete' use is connected with the 'existential' meaning of 'to be' (e.g. 'there is X'),[403] while the 'incomplete' one has been connected with the 'predicative' or 'copulative', and 'veritative' meaning,[404] given that in this case one needs a complement to get a meaningful sentence (e.g. 'X *is* Y').[405] If saying that 'one things exists' (i.e., the 'existential' use of 'to be') allows one to maintain that Parmenides is not a strict numerical monist as What-Is is one entity due it its being qualitatively 'one', this result does not facilitate understanding of how the features of What-Is relate to one another within

[402] See Aubenque 1987, 157–69, for a detailed overview of more nuanced views, Sedley 1999, 114–6, see also Kahn 2004 for an updated overview of more recent scholarly views.
[403] Scholars who maintain that the verb to be is used existentially are e.g., Owen 1960, Tarán 1965, 85, Stokes 1971, 131–2, Barnes 1982, 126, Gallop 1984, 7–9.
[404] Kahn 1973 argues that it is veritative and that this use does not overlaps with either the existential or the specific uses of the predicative uses, but cf. Kahn 2002. Supporters of the 'predicative' view: e.g., Calogero 1977, Curd 2004, Mourelatos 2008.
[405] Still, there are exceptions as the complete and veridical *esti tauta*, meaning 'these things are true'.

What-Is. Kahn isolated the numerous possible meanings available for the 'predicative'-'copulative' use, highlighting their interconnections in many articles.[406] Although problems concerning the possible values of the verb 'to be' are far from being solved, in the last few decades scholars have come closer to the view that Parmenides' use of 'to be' is 'predicative'-'copulative'.[407] The advantage of this use is that it can express a variety of values that include the existential one. Furthermore, at a deeper level it can better account for the definite features of something.[408] Indeed, I believe that this is the reason why scholars interested in understanding the essence of What-Is and its relation to the *Doxa* have endorsed this view.[409] Still, I think Kahn is right in saying that emphasising too much all these distinctions (e.g., between 'complete', and 'incomplete' and thus, between 'existential' and 'predicative' or 'veritative') risks missing a more complex and dynamic picture, where all these distinctions are likely to be present, and be deployed by Parmenides himself as needed.[410]

Given that in general the 'predicative'-'copulative' reading seems to be the best strategy by enquiring regarding Parmenides' What-Is, let me focus on how Mourelatos and Curd articulated this use of the verb 'to be' in reference to the following two questions: **1.** What is the *philosophical* use of predication

[406] These articles can all now be found collected in Kahn 2009.
[407] E.g., Nehamas 2002, Curd 2004, Palmer 2009, Tor 2017.
[408] Kahn 1988, 241.
[409] E.g., Curd 2004.
[410] Kahn 2002, also Aubenque 1987, 168 maintains this view.

that Parmenides needs to conceive of What-Is as something one, notwithstanding its numerous features? **2.** What is Parmenides' Monism, and how does it support in conceiving the **PWR** in the *Alētheia*? Depending on how these views account for Parmenides' **PWR**, we may consider whether this approach suffices or needs support from an alternative approach. In particular, I would like to start by focussing on Curd's use of predication, which she characterises as follows:

> Each thing that is can be only *one* thing; *it can hold only the one predicate* that indicates what it is, and must hold it in a particularly *strong way*. To be a genuine entity, a thing must be a predicational unity, with a single account of what it is; *but it need not be the case that there exists only one such thing*. Rather, the thing itself must be a unified whole. If it is, say F, it must be all, only, and *completely* F. On predicational monism, a numerical plurality of such one-beings (as we might call them) is possible.[411]

Curd named her view 'Predicational Monism', even if sometimes it is referred to as 'Essential Monism'. By her own admission Curd's interpretation depends on a certain understanding of how Parmenides conceived predication that derives from Mourelatos' 'Speculative Predication'.[412] Similar to Mourelatos, she posits that, according to 'Predicational Monism', 'to be' informs us and even reveals the essence of a thing. In other words, ultimately it is an identity claim that embraces the totality of something's essence.[413] With her view of

[411] Curd 2004, 66, my emphasis.
[412] Mourelatos 2008, 56–60.
[413] Curd 2004, 39.

'Predicational Monism', Curd's work has the merit of trying to build a common ground for both parts of the poem. By positing that each thing that is is *essentially* one because it satisfies the features of What-Is enumerated in **B8 DK**, 'Predicational Monism' allows for a plurality of entities to exist.[414] Accordingly, Curd exploits the possibility that 'to be' expresses identity statements. Curd's strategy is successful in the sense that she can isolate more than one entity that respects Parmenides' criteria for genuine being, including the principles of the *Doxa*. Thus, Curd legitimises Parmenides as a natural philosopher interested in the phenomena as well as in an enquiry about its principles. Furthermore, she succeeds in showing that Parmenides is a philosopher of his age, in dialogue with Ionic philosophers, but at the same time a stepping stone for his successors. Yet, before tackling her 'Predicational Monism', this approach faces some potential difficulties: why should some of the *Doxa*'s principles satisfy *only* some of the criteria for being What-Is while not others? Had Parmenides wanted the phenomena to perfectly overlap with the criteria for What-Is presented in the *Alētheia*, why then did he opt for a cosmology that does not perfectly meet those criteria?

'Predicational Monism' faces some difficulties that ultimately make it insufficient to account for Parmenides' **PWR**. In her interpretation, Curd emphasises that, to be a genuine entity, something must be a 'predicational

[414] Curd 2004, 5.

unity', which means that *only one predicate* can indicate something's true essence. But if this is so, 'Predicational Monism' is so broad in scope that it makes no difference between What-Is and the many things that figure in the *Doxa*. As a result, the ontological gap between What-Is, and Light and Night reduces, although such a result seems precisely what Parmenides wants: the *kouros* travels to discover the essence of What-Is, which is presented with the uttermost solemnity and therefore ontological importance, *so that* he can have also a better understanding of the phenomena. This observation alone suggests that although both aspects of existence are important, the better understanding of the phenomena depends on grasping What-Is, which makes the latter ontologically prior.[415] Furthermore, even if Parmenides may recognise that the things in the *Doxa* share some features with What-Is, these are never found within the same entity, by contrast with the case of What-Is.[416]

From another perspective if one considers Light, Night and what is to be genuine entities to the same extent, they result in being 'one' *in the same way*. But is Parmenides pushing so strongly the idea that the entities in the *Doxa* are qualitatively 'one', in the same sense as with What-Is? While in the *Alētheia* Parmenides constantly goes back to the idea that What-Is is 'one', either

[415] I cannot discuss the matter extensively here. See Johansen 2016, who has persuasively shown that the two parts of the poems mirror each other. So, the *Doxa* can be considered a *verisimile* reflection of the *Alētheia*, inasmuch as they work analogously. However, Parmenides designed them to work according to different principles and even desired to keep What-Is causally separated from the *Doxa*. Cf. Nehamas 2002, 63.

[416] On this, see Mourelatos 2008, 241–53.

because it is 'simple' or because it is 'continuous', in the *Doxa* Parmenides' language not only allows, but *requires* plurality. Otherwise change would be impossible.[417] Furthermore, when one considers Light and Night specifically, Curd's 'Predicational Monism' makes of these principles two undifferentiated entities, though this does not seem to be the case.[418]

[417] If one looks closely at Parmenides' dissatisfaction with other cosmological accounts, with Nehamas 2002, Coxon 2009, Tor 2017, Sattler 2020, 120 we could argue that that one mortal error is positing 'only one form (*morphē*)' (**B8.53 DK**), when they ought to be two, because one cannot be named *without* the other. Nevertheless, this is not the only possible reading of the text, which could mean that while one of these forms must not be named, *it is right to name the other*. However, this reading seems unlikely based on the cosmology that the Goddess advances (see Palmer 2009, 170). Thus, it seems preferable to prefer the former, according to which mortals divided a single body (i.e., a single perceptible form) into opposites (*antia*) according to its perceptual nature (see Coxon 2009, 346, Tor 2017, 185), a strategy adopted by Ionic philosophers (e.g., Anaximander). Only by positing two principles we can consistently account for change, as change requires at least two different things. How could there genuinely be two things if the principle of all things is one (e.g. water, air, the apeiron) and plurality derives from it in some unclear way from it (cf. Nehamas 2002, 61–2)? For example, Anaximander posited that the contraries (i.e., plurality) come about from the *apeiron*, which acts as a generative seed for contraries. Furthermore, all things come into being from it. However, the reading of this line has passed under many scholars' scrutiny, see Vetter 2017, 134. For the text could also be translated 'of which the one form is not necessary' (tr. L.-M.). If we follow this reading (as e.g., Curd 2004, Mourelatos 2008, 81–5, Laks-Most 2016), Parmenides' criticism is that, by referring to two forms, mortals are using not only What-Is to talk about the phenomena, but also What-Is-Not. But this is impossible, because What-Is-Not cannot even be thought. Thus, Parmenides would be saying that only one form (i.e., What-Is) is necessary. A difficulty of this reading is that it presupposes that for Parmenides What-Is has a causal effect on the phenomena, when this is not obvious. Furthermore, **l.53** is set in the Goddess' transition to the views of the *Doxa*, where the dualism she will offer in **B9 DK** is said to surpass other mortal views (**l.60**) (see Barnes 1982, 157).

[418] Thus, I do not believe that Light and Night are genuine entities as much as What-Is, though they are not nothing at all, and would be considered as What-Is inasmuch as they both present *some* of its features. My reading of the *Doxa* diverges from Curd's, and it is closer to the one in Tor 2015, 2017, Johansen 2016, Mansfeld 2021: Parmenides presents the doctrines of the *Doxa* as a kind of *knowledge*, because What-Is is not the only thing that is something. However, that knowledge and the status of the *Doxa* principles are to be subordinated to the doctrines of the *Aletheia*. Parmenides in various parts of the poem (**B8.50–60**, **B10**, **B9 DK**) attributes numerous features and even entities to Light and Night. For example, Light is light in weight, is aether, flame, fire, while Night is without light, dense and heavy, ungleaming. The fact that Parmenides does not distinguish between abstract features and concrete entities is unproblematic, see Mourelatos 1973.

A further problem associated with the way Curd conceives of the continuity within the whole of Parmenides' poem, and the resulting equal application of 'Predicational Monism', concerns the *Alētheia*. If in the case of things in the *Doxa* 'Predicational Monism' establishes the identity between them and the essence of What-Is, how does this translate in the *Alētheia*? How do we escape the implication that 'to be' in the *Alētheia* risks identifying What-Is at times with 'continuous', while at other times with 'one', or 'ungenerated'? For this is a necessary consequence of Curd's minimisation of the strong asymmetry that Mourelatos rightly posited between the subject of a predicate of the form 'X ___*is*___' and its object (i.e. 'Y'). Accordingly, differently from Mourelatos, What-Is would be predicated in a strong sense of *any* of the features found in **B8 DK**, and *vice versa*, so that What-Is would paradoxically become *identical* to *any* of such features.[419] Since this is precisely what Parmenides needs to avoid to have a consistent account of What-Is, one has to suppose that Parmenides' 'predicative' use does not express identity, as Curd

[419] Coxon 2009, 21–2 argues that the relation between What-Is and its features is a relation of identity, so that each feature of Parmenides' What-Is need not be numerically distinguished from What-Is. While this reading may solve the problem, it consists of a weaker and different kind of identity than the one Curd ultimately commits to. According to her, in fact, What-Is, 'ungenerated', 'imperishable' are all identical in a stronger sense, because they are *one and the same predicate and thus functionally interchangeable*. For other characteristics of the asymmetry between subject and object Mourelatos 2008, 57–8, for Curd's admission that the asymmetry should not be considered so relevant Curd 2004, 40, n. 46: Curd says that when I say that 'X is Y', Y expresses X's nature, but X does not completely capture Y's nature. However, in the world X and Y become interchangeable, so that they are identical in the information they provide. I confess that what she means is not exactly clear to me, but I take this to mean that X and Y end up being identical because they can provide the same essence, even if they are different. I am not sure this is possible, as the consequences she would face are the ones I outlined above.

would argue. For such predications would lead us to identify the essence of What-Is with *a single* feature, when Parmenides' What-Is can only be identified *collectively* with *all* of them. In conclusion, by privileging the *Doxa* Curd's account of What-Is makes of What-Is something intrinsically contradictory.

But even if it were consistent with Parmenides' principles, 'Predicational Monism' would not grant that What-Is is a complex entity, though one, as Mourelatos noticed in passing while reviewing Curd's book:

> Granted that the F at issue is no accidental predicate but the *entire physis*, 'nature', of a thing, why shouldn't that *physis* be *complex*, why should it not comprise predicates G, H, … K, as well as F? If pluralism per se is not incompatible with Parmenides' argument, why does complexity within a thing's nature have to be ruled out?[420]

Even though Curd largely draws from Mourelatos is 'Speculative Predication', his view would probably account more satisfactorily for complexity within What-Is. Thus, it could be a better starting point to discuss Parmenides' **PWR**. First, for a predication of the form 'X is Y' Mourelatos maintains a strong asymmetry between X and Y, which allows X to be the *explanandum* and Y the *explanans*. As a result, the difference between What-Is and its features is not blurred, but rather emphasised. Thus, though Y belongs *essentially* to X, Y is *not identical* to X. In other words, 'ungenerated' belongs essentially to What-Is, but they are not the same essence.[421] Furthermore, the way 'Speculative

[420] Mourelatos 1999, 122–23, my emphasis.
[421] Mourelatos 2008, 57.

Predication' behaves not only connects things and enables essential predication without flat identity on the basis of asymmetry.[422] For, it has an eminent epistemological function, in that these features that 'Speculative Predication' allows us to discuss one at a time can reveal the essence of something gradually and fix it so that nothing additional would be needed. Notice that this result, however, does not lead to include within What-Is' essence anything that 'is not', as what the 'Speculative Predication' can do is stress the similarity between the features of What-Is, and how such a similarity can make What-Is be a single complex entity. However, 'Speculative Predication' is not devoid of difficulties. For example, how does one decide that 'to be' has fully entailed the essence of something if the predication can express something weaker than identity? Furthermore, even if in this case we succeed in grasping What-Is as something complex and yet one, can predication alone provide us with further details on the structure of What-Is and in what way each feature of What-Is relates to another making it essentially 'one'? How does this view further advance our understanding of Parmenides' **PWR**?

Although Mourelatos' 'Speculative Predication' is a good way of reading Parmenides' use of the verb 'to be' to account of its complex and unitary structure, it is not sufficient. As I briefly mentioned before, Kahn

[422] Mourelatos 2008, 57.

stressed the necessity of rejecting such neat distinctions between 'existential' and 'predicative' uses of the verb 'to be'. This is because, among other things, even in its 'existential' use the verb is not necessarily 'complete', as complements can be added to it.[423] Furthermore, Kahn noticed how, although Parmenides uses the verb 'to be' in a 'predicative' way, there are cases in which he deploys it 'ordinarily', where with this terminology Kahn means those instances when Parmenides uses the verb simply to connect or attribute a feature to something not necessarily in a technical way.[424] These considerations make relying exclusively on the 'predicative' use of 'to be' a weaker theoretical tool than we would like, because without analysing the complements of 'to be', its functions within a sentence cannot be expressed unambiguously. Furthermore, these considerations seem to stress the features or the complements that are predicated of What-Is, as well as to the verb 'to be'. Although I believe that Mourelatos' 'Speculative Predication' offers the key to understanding Parmenides' **PWR**, I wish to propose a different approach, which aims to be sound whatever the specific understanding of the verb 'to be'. Such an approach expands on the signs of What-Is *qua* essential features of What-Is and their mutual relationships, in order to establish the complex structure of What-Is and ultimately answer the question regarding Parmenides' **PWR**.

[423] Kahn 1988, 247.
[424] Kahn 1988.

An appropriate analysis of the relation between the features of What-Is is not exhausted by merely defining what each feature stands for. For as a quick read of **B8 DK** shows each of them is obtained through a specific methodology that relies on deductions. Thus, before discussing the features of What-Is it is necessary to clarify the method Parmenides employs. Since **B8 DK** is part of the Goddess' speech, I will expand on the Goddess' role within the poem. In particular, I will argue that her role is crucial as her speech, from the very beginning of the poem, aims to provide the *kouros* with the appropriate theoretical tools and mindset to progress in the understanding of genuine reality, which culminates in the step-by step discussion of the features of What-Is in **B8 DK**.[425] I will conclude that the Goddess illustrates and establishes the epistemological requirements and rules for drawing correct inferences about the essence of What-Is. Specifically, Parmenides will use the Goddess as a divine authority that reveals and instructs the *kouros* about what is necessary to do and know, in continuity with the roles divine agents have in Hesiod and Homer. But while the Goddess exposes the *kouros* to a modality of enquiry for knowing genuine reality that relies on specific 'signs' (*sēmata*)

[425] I think that Parmenides is more traditional than one may think in the way he establishes continuity with and reliability to the doctrines found in the *Doxa* as well as in the *Alētheia*. This method is highly typical of Greek Epic and revolves around the role of the Female divine figures found in Homer and in Hesiod. As Folit-Weinberg 2022 masterfully argues, Parmenides employs the Goddess to instruct the *kouros* about the steps of the path he has chosen similarly to the way Circe instructs Odysseus on how to reach the end of his journey. I cannot argue for this extensively here, but in a nutshell, I believe that Parmenides deploys the Epic trope of female divine truth-telling to substantiate and ground both the *Alētheia* and the *Doxa*, persuading the *kouros* where philosophical reasonings cannot.

to indicate the specific features of What-Is, she is also critical of how traditional models deploy signs to determine the identity of something: an example of such a model can be when Penelope requires Odysseus to prove his identity through 'signs' (*sēmata*) that are distinctive and heuristically sufficient features of Odysseus evident to the senses. In conclusion, as a further result of the discussion of the role of the Goddess, it will result that Parmenides formulates a specific understanding of 'signs' that is opposed to the use of 'names', which are unable to characterise the essence of What-Is, and that is designed to grasp What-Is as 'one' in all of its 'aspects'.

Accordingly, in **Section 3.1** I have discussed Parmenides' proem to frame its philosophical impact and build the right context for discussing the role the Goddess plays. I will show that the role Parmenides attributes to the Goddess, while being employed in an original way, also shares several similarities with the way Epic poetry represents revelation and divine agents as facilitators for genuine knowledge. Furthermore, in **Section 3.3** I will build on the results of the **Section 3.1** to introduce the method that the Goddess offers and teaches to the *kouros* within her revelation. Specifically, I will take into consideration **B7 DK**, where the Goddess contrasts the role of sense perception to the role of the *logos* to ensure that the *kouros* makes the right choice (*krisis*) regarding the road to investigate. I will discuss the distinction between an ordinary way of reasoning that resorts to ordinary sense perception and contrast it with a use of it that allows mortals to penetrate all

reality, as if they were gods. I will conclude that it is this latter extraordinary sense perception that allows the *kouros* to grasp What-Is.[426] Furthermore, I will argue that what the Goddess asks the *kouros* to do in this specific instance will be deployed again in the course of **B8 DK** to deduce the signs of What-Is. Thus, the method that the Goddess presents is structurally fundamental to understanding the essence of What-Is.

3.3 The Epistemological Grounds and Methodology of Parmenides' Mereology (B7 DK = D8.1–6 L.-M.)

Previously, I have stressed the underlying epistemological optimism that pervades Parmenides' project and the *active* role of the *kouros* in the pursuit of knowledge, which is fully accomplished only through the divine agency of the Goddess. In the analysis of the proem, I have expanded on the analogies between the roles played by the Goddess and the *kouros* compared to Homeric divine female agents (i.e., Circe, the Muses) and mortal agents (i.e., Odysseus *qua* hero, the poet). First, Circe's words to Odysseus not only show that it is through 'signs' (*sēmata*) that Odysseus can determine the correct path back to Ithaca, but also how to employ these 'signs' for that end (i.e., Ithaca). For signs reveal the distinctive features of things, as well as the potential challenges that

[426] I will make a case for the appropriateness of sense perception within this discussion in **3.3**.

such things will pose: Circe tells Odysseus how to recognise what he will find during his journey by their signs (i.e., the Sirens), so that those signs can be deployed to develop strategies to overcome the challenges and tests they anticipate. Thus, through Circe's speech Odysseus *learns* what it is necessary to know and do in order to accomplish his *nostos*, just as the poet, thanks to the Muses, learns and reaches his own end (i.e., performing an appropriate account of the information divine agents provide). Both Homer and Parmenides consider divine female agents as didactic means to facilitate the transmission and *use* of knowledge in view of a specific end. Furthermore, in both authors we see that signs always imply an action (e.g., performing a sacrifice, proclaiming a story, judging) which will determine whether one's end is reached. Still, there are important differences between Homer and Parmenides, given that in Parmenides, the philosophical aim is key, as the poem addresses how to acquire knowledge of genuine reality (i.e., What-Is).[427]

In this section, through an analysis of **B7 DK** I will highlight the differences between Homer's and Parmenides' use of didactic poetry to focus on the didactic methodology that the Goddess teaches the *kouros* and its impact on the discussion of What-Is in **B8 DK**. In order to do this, I will build on **Section 3.2** where I stressed the similar didactic role female divine agents

[427] This observation automatically disqualifies the possibility that the didactic component that **B7** and **B8 DK** share with the proem is merely an aspect of style and thus that it should not impact the way Parmenides conceives of What-Is.

qua possessors of divine knowledge have in Homer and Parmenides. Specifically, I will delve into the epistemological prerequisites that the *kouros* must satisfy to have an appropriate understanding of What-Is as presented in **B7 DK**. On the basis of a better articulated opposition between the immortal and mortal capacities to grasp all aspects of reality, I will show that Parmenides' enquiry advances a different understanding of the role of ordinary sense perception when it comes to knowing genuine reality. What Parmenides considers to be a way of inquiry or methodology for attaining knowledge of What-Is is developed in contrast to those that rely on Homeric strategies. I will argue that Parmenides redefines what it means to *prove* to have knowledge. For the methodology that the Goddess deploys not only determines how to choose what is appropriate to the path 'that is', but also the pre-requisites for the enquiry into What-Is, that is, how to have an appropriate 'thought' (*noēma*). The Goddess' attention to the epistemological pre-requisites for the enquiry into What-Is requires the *kouros* to go beyond mortal or ordinary sense perception in order to receive the same grasp of things that gods have, which relies on a particular kind of sense perception. But this does not mean that Parmenides conceives of thinking and knowing What-Is as something that excludes all kinds of sense perception.[428] Furthermore, the

[428] Against Lesher 1994, who argues that to some extent Heraclitus and above all Parmenides introduce a 'reflective' way of knowing that does not employ sense perception of any kind. Recently Evans 2021 too has presented a criticism to this view.

'scrutiny' developed by the Goddess will prove to be the appropriate method of enquiry for grasping What-Is, which consists of negative and affirmative commitments. First, by in this occasion rejecting a method of enquiry into *things* that at least to some extent 'are not' (i.e., the phenomena), which is grounded in traditional accounts of knowledge (i.e., Homeric), the Goddess provides a negative determination of the modalities required to investigate What-Is. For it informs us that What-Is is not knowable through ordinary sense perception and ordinary mortal experience of the world. Within this context, Parmenides seems to reject the Homeric notion of 'signs' and their application in order to develop his own, which is at play in **B8 DK**: while in Homer signs are usually aspects of something that can be grasped with the senses, Parmenides seems to connect signs to the way immortals experience reality to make them something impertinent to mortals, unless the gods allow it. The second commitment leads the Goddess to offer a positive determination of her methodology that builds on the use of *logos* to reach a decision regarding reality.[429] The introduction of the *logos* as the specific means that allows the *kouros* to choose the right path to knowing What-Is is crucial, as it acts as something that enables him to grasp what is necessarily the case: the *logos* provides us with a binding necessity that confirms the need for inferences that

[429] The resulting account of the *elenkhos* contrasts readings such as Austin 1986, 12 ('the entire elenchus operates within a framework of negative proof') and Sattler 2020, 93, 108–9, and Bernabé 2019a, 100–5, who believe that the *elenkhos'* function is mainly if not exclusively negative. Nonetheless, I agree with Bernabé that the negative aspect of the *elenkhos* is designed to criticise traditional views that Parmenides rejects.

are epistemologically and ontologically relevant in order to know genuine reality.

Thus, my analysis of **B7 DK** will illustrate how Parmenides, while building on Homeric epistemological conceptions, distances himself from them, especially regarding the modalities of acquisition and the results of genuine knowledge. My account of Parmenides' method for genuine knowledge does not simply apply to choosing the right path of enquiry, but it can also be used to enquire about What-Is, given that ultimately it serves to establish something's identity or essence. Thus, it will result that the didactic element becomes fundamental for setting the *kouros*' enquiry into What-Is in **B8 DK** in the right epistemological framework.

Let us see how **B7 DK** introduces fundamental epistemological requirements for understanding What-Is in **B8 DK**, and thus for grasping Parmenides' mereology, by quoting the fragment:

> For in no way could you master this (*touto damē*), namely, that things that are not are (*einai mē eonta*).
> But as for *you* (*sy*), I bar (*eirge*) your thought (*noēma*) from this path (*hodou*) of research (*dizēsios*)
> And do not let much-experienced habit (*ethos polupeiron*) force (*biasthō*) you onto this road (*hodon*),
> To employ (*nōman*) an erratic eye and an echoing ear
> And tongue (*glōssa*), but decide (*krinai*) by *logos* (*logōi*) the much-controverting (*poludērin*) scrutiny (*elenkhon*)

That *I* have uttered (*ex emethen rhēthenta*).[430] (Parmenides, **B7 DK = D8.1–6 L-M.**)

The Goddess precludes to the *kouros* the path of *things* (*eonta*) that are not[431] and calls his attention to the fallibility of the senses. Given that the Goddess' focus on *the path* not to follow is similarly emphasised in other fragments,[432] scholars maintain that here the Goddess is more concerned with the paths of enquiry than with their objects.[433] However, even if the Goddess were exclusively referring to the paths of enquiry, this would still have consequences for the objects of such paths (i.e., What-Is, the things that are not), and the way they can be known or not.[434] Although the idea that the main new piece of information of **B7 DK** would be a rejection of sense perception[435] has been dismissed several times,[436] some scholars still seem to maintain it.[437]

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

[431] I agree with Tarán 1965, 76–7 that here Parmenides is addressing the phenomena, but the problem is that Tarán assumes that the phenomena are identical to What-Is-Not. Yet, given the reference to 'things' (*eonta*) in the plural, it is unlikely that Parmenides is flagging the 'road that is not' to refer to What-Is-Not. Such an idea is now usually rejected by scholars, see Curd 2004, Mourelatos 2008, Tor 2017. Provided the reference to *things* (*eonta*) that are not, which must to some extent be beings (compare the term *eonta* with to *eon*), and the reference to the senses, it is more likely that Parmenides is addressing quite generally any view regarding the phenomena that fails to grasp What-Is.

[432] E.g., **B6 DK**, **B2.5–8 DK**.

[433] See Tarán 1965, 73–81, Lesher 1994, 26, Mourelatos 2008, 91, Palmer 2009, 123.

[434] For a similar view cf. De Rijk 1983, 35.

[435] E.g., Guthrie 1965, 120, Coxon 2008, 308ff., Tarán 1965, 77–9, where the latter two even took the fragment to be a refutation of the sensible world and its objects altogether.

[436] E.g., by Laks 1999, Lesher 1984.

[437] See Cosgrove 2016, Sattler 2020, cf. Curd 2004, 60–1 who seems to be more cautious, but nonetheless considers any kind of sense perception useless to grasp What-Is.

However, as is known, the fact that in **B7 DK** the Goddess criticises sense perception does not authorise us to reject sense perception altogether, or to oppose it to *noein* and *noos*, so as to obtain the classic opposition between sense perception and reason.[438] Furthermore, maintaining that *noein* and *noos* do not necessarily preclude all kinds of sense perception does not even permit the conclusions that sense perception and reasoning are the same thing, or that *noein* is an ordinary way of thinking.[439]

A closer reading of **B7 DK** suggests that the Goddess' message is quite specific, and does not allow such a totalising rejection of sense-perception. Rather than dissuading the *kouros* from relying on the senses or judging through them *tout court*, the Goddess forbids (*eirge*) him to trust 'much-experienced habit' (*ethos polupeiron*). Accordingly, it seems that her criticism is about a specific kind of experience made through the senses, namely, that which relies on what is *habitual* and as such has been consolidated by much experience (*polupeiron*). For, a consolidated habit acts as a force (*bia*) that risks leading the *kouros* on the path of enquiry concerned with the things other than What-Is (i.e., the phenomena).

A focus on the meaning of the word *polupeiron*, rather than only on how the senses are later characterised (e.g., echoing ear, erratic eye) offers a

[438] E.g., Calogero 1932, 32, Tarán 1965.
[439] I will not discuss this possibility. Lesher 1994 and Laks 1999 show that it neither applies to Parmenides, nor to other Early Greek philosophers (e.g., Heraclitus).

different angle for considering the idea that Parmenides admits a specific kind of sense perception. It clarifies the Goddess' strategy and its philosophical relevance, with particular reference to her method for genuine knowledge (i.e., scrutiny) and its possible use in **B8 DK**.[440]Although I believe that Mourelatos is right in arguing that the term *polupeiron* is derived from Homeric language, I am a bit doubtful regarding its particular connection to πολύτλας, which indicates the suffering of a man who has to resist to what the senses dictate.[441] Without downplaying the relevance of Mourelatos' observation, I would like to explore an alternative understanding of *polupeiron*. In order to do this, I will start from its connection with 'experience' and the meaning of terms that share with it the root **per-* and propose that Parmenides is criticising a specific method of enquiry that can be traced back to Homer.

Terms derived from **per-* refer to experience, making an effort to achieve something, or proving and showing something through experience and direct observation.[442] Interestingly, we find the latter aspect consistently deployed by Homer through the verb πειράω. Particularly relevant for us are its uses in conjunction with 'sign' (*sēma*), which already on its own bears some connection to sense data, proving, and overcoming challenges. For example, when Penelope wants evidence or proofs that the stranger in front of her is

[440] See Laks 1999, for a defence of the idea that Parmenides is not rejecting sense perception *tout court* based on these terms.
[441] Mourelatos 2008, 24.
[442] See Chantraine 1999, 870, e.g., Alcman 63, Theognis 571, Pindar, *N.* 4.76, Solon (Plutarch, *Sol.* 2,1) uses the term in connection with observation (*historia*).

Odysseus, she uses the verb πειράω.[443] Penelope puts the stranger through tests that require clear signs or indicators that require nothing more than the habitual and consolidated use of sense perception to be interpreted. From his scar[444] to knowing where his bed was located before he had left Ithaca,[445] all these are unmistakeable signs (*sēmat'anagnousē*)[446] that, on their own, refer to ordinary experience and reasoning to prove that that stranger in fact *is* Odysseus.[447] For they provide features that can *only* belong to him. Given the acknowledged importance and frequence of Homeric echoes in Parmenides, it is likely that this is the use of experience Parmenides refers to and criticises with *ethos polupeiron*.[448] This reading reinforces the idea that in **B7 DK** the emphasis is not on preventing the *kouros* from the use of sense perception altogether. On the contrary, as the signs it grasps result from ordinary sense perception, **B7 DK** points to a specific and inappropriate way of knowing reality (i.e., What-Is). Thus, Parmenides not only criticises but also responds to views that rely on ordinary observation, and its appeal to evident signs as means to prove the genuine essence of something.

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[443] E.g., Homer, *Od.* 19.215–19, 249, 387, cf. 22.206.
[444] Homer, *Od*. 21.217,
[445] Homer, *Od.* 23.187–205.
[446] Homer, *Od.* 23.206.
[447] Cf. Lesher 1994, 30.
[448] Though with different approaches and specificity other Early Greek Philosophers, such as Xenophanes and Heraclitus rejected that observation (*historia*) and ordinary sense perception could provide us with genuine knowledge regarding reality, on which, see Lesher 1978, Finkelberg 1997.

Accordingly, the idea that Parmenides would be developing a strong 'rationalising' approach to knowledge, that is, one according to which sense perception becomes almost irrelevant to determine the essence of What-Is, is not fully satisfactory.[449] But the 'rationalising' approach is unsatisfactory for other reasons as well. First, this approach has consequences for the kind of entity we consider What-Is to be. Furthermore, the 'rationalising' approach, by overemphasising the 'abstract' character of Parmenides' What-Is, brings Parmenides closer to anachronistic views. For otherwise it is difficult to account for what sort of object for thought What-Is is. Second, that Parmenides is just imagining this journey, so as to make it something purely fictional, is hard to maintain for numerous reasons.[450] For example, the way the proem is designed and its general use in Epic makes it unlikely that the *kouros* is not actually experiencing a journey that is beyond an ordinary dimension. Third, this reading also presents some inconsistencies regarding the modalities in which the *kouros* receives the Goddess' teachings, as well as Parmenides' physiological conceptions of human beings: these are all necessary aspects to take into consideration to grasp What-Is, and they require some sort of sense

[449] Lesher 1984, Cosgrove 2016, 21, Alcocer Urueta 2023, cf. Laks 1999, de Rijk 1983, Curd 2004, 60–2.

[450] One way this would be possible is through an allegorical interpretation, which, however, Parmenides himself is unlikely to have implied (for more details, see Primavesi 2011). Against Fränkel 1960, Robbiano 2006, 97–8, cf. Lesher 1994, 30, Marcinkowska-Rosół 2010, 90, and Mansfeld 1999, 331–32, with whom I agree except for the fact that he considers Parmenides' reference to sense perception linked to a social dimension rather than to a psychological and biological one. I cannot discuss the matter here, so I point the reader to Tor 2020, who stresses the psychological and biological aspects of sense perception and thinking in Parmenides.

perception. We could assume that the *kouros*' receiving of the Goddess' words is an ordinary experience, as the Goddess may willingly make her teaching accessible to mortals through their sense perceptions (i.e., hearing, seeing). However, the very journey and what the *kouros* experiences during it (e.g., What-Is), can hardly figure as ordinary, as the Goddess herself says.[451] In fact, in order to access and experience such a dimension, which is divine, the *kouros* seems to require something that ordinary human beings do not have, and that ultimately depends on his physiological composition. For example, in the case of What-Is, its grasp seems be determined by constant reference to physiological processes that, by involving the *kouros'* bodily constitution, require some sort of sense perception.[452] However, the fact that Parmenides rejects ordinary sense perception, and therefore the ordinary physiological processes linked to it, make us wonder what sort of sense perception, experience, and psychological processes Parmenides connects to grasping What-Is. These aspects, in particular, what it means to 'think' in Parmenides, will be the focus of my next arguments.

In **B7 DK** the Goddess mentions the *kouros*' capacity to choose the path that refers to his 'thought' (*noēma*). Only if his *noēma* is fit for the path that is,

[451] **B1.27 DK,** see also Mackenzie 2021, 78 who points out that the Goddess' speech offers a visual experience of the enquiry on What-Is.

[452] A46 DK. As Tor 2020 notices the *kouros'* constitution must be leaning towards the hot, and maximise his sense perception and thought in ways that are extraordinary for mortals. On the relation between thought and physiology, see Hussey 2006 who is close to the view I adopt and Dilcher 2006 who in contrast maintains that thought has nothing in common with the bodily or elemental dimension.

will he be able to inquire into the essence of What-Is. The point is to establish what kind of processes, according to Parmenides, lead to forming a 'thought' (*noēma*), and their relation to sense perception. In order to do this, we need to discuss the meaning and use of *noēma*, *noein*, and *noos*. The word *noēma*, sometimes rendered as 'thinking' or as 'mind', does not refer to an activity or to something immaterial and independent from sense perception.[453] Rather, if not the very organ of thought (i.e., 'mind'), it at least indicates a 'thought' as either what results from the activity of 'thinking', or the object of further 'thinking', which in Early Greek thought is something no less material.[454]

Parmenides presents us with two kinds of thinking that result in a *noēma*. Both could qualify as the specific way of thinking What-Is, namely, *phronein* and *noein*. On the basis of **B16 DK** and some Homeric passages,[455] it could be argued that while *noēma* is the resulting content of *noos,* it need not necessarily derive from or be connected to *noein*. After all, in **B16 DK** it is *phronein* that produces *noēma* in mortals.[456] Still, Parmenides' fragments

[453] For example, in Empedocles, B110 DK, which is surprisingly similar to **B7 DK** in certain respects, Empedocles tells Pausanias to gaze upon, that is, to know, only what is appropriate (i.e., the action of the elements) and avoid what is not. Here, *noēma* seems to indicate the result of thinking (*phronein*) at its best, but there is no opposition to sense perception, see also B105 DK, where *noēma* is the blood found around the heart. One could also mention Homer, *Od*. 7.36, 13.330, 14.273, *Il*. 10104, where *noēma* indicates thinking and its object, and *Od*. 20.346, *Il* 19.218 where it means mind.

[454] Laks 1990, 7 n. 19 defines it 'a concrete instance of thinking', Gallop 1984, 87 understands it as content of thought'.

[455] E.g., Homer *Od*. 2.363, 14.273, 15.326, cf. 17.403, *In Ven.* 289, where *noēma* is connected with the *phren* in the sense that the *phren* contains the *noēma*.

[456] On the wider context of **B16 DK** and Theophrastus, see Laks 1990, Bollack 2006, 315, Tor 2017.

indicate that he associates *noein* with What-Is and its appropriate enquiry. Thus, we may conclude that in **B7 DK**, when the *kouros* follows the Goddess' prohibition to rely on ordinary sense perception, the *noēma* of the *kouros* must be produced by *noein*.[457] **B16 DK** itself can be used to suggest that in Parmenides *phronein* is more likely to pertain to the way mortals on each occasion think due to their constitution. However, as **B7 DK** suggests, something *in* the *kouros* must and indeed does change in order to understand the Goddess' revelation and thus become able to grasp What-Is, that is, his very way of thinking, which must become like the divine one. Furthermore, **B16 DK** mentions *phronein* in connection with a theory found in the *Doxa*, which from the outset relies exclusively on ordinary sense perception. With this we can conclude that *phronein* refers to knowing through ordinary sense perception. However, this still neither specifies why *noein* should be adequate for the enquiry into What-Is, nor how it functionally differs from *phronein*.

Noein is a verb[458] that can point to many activities, such as knowing, recognising by looking, understanding, planning; previous scholarship

[457] B2.1, B5, B6.1, **B8.34–7, 50 DK**.

[458] Scholars have struggled to find an appropriate translation for this term, as already in Homer it presents a variety of meanings that the translation 'thinking', recently supported by Marcinkowska-Rosół 2010, 44, may not adequately capture. It is unclear what the process(s) it stands for is or are. Opting for one translation rather than another informs the way one understands the process. Given that *noein* can cover many processes and meanings, and what a specific translation would capture only one of them, I have opted for 'thinking'. For it seems to me a general enough term that can accommodate several processes and features that are implied in *noein* at once. Von Fritz dedicated several contributions to the uses and meaning of the verb *noein* in Early Greek Philosophy (Von Fritz 1945) and in Homer (Von Fritz 1943). In short, according to his reading *noein* entails an instantaneous grasp and recognition of something, which is closely linked to the sense of sight. If this link to sight is quite literal in

determined it to be unrelated to sense perception.[459] However, *noein* also refers to activities which appear directly linked to sense perception.[460] In Homer, the verb *noein* is used in both ways, so that there is no clear differentiation between *noein* and *phronein:* both refer to processes connected to ordinary experience.[461] Nevertheless, we could possibly say that in Homer *phronein* is more connected to processes that also involve emotions, while *noein* seems connected to drawing inferences.[462]

After Homer, Early Greek philosophers emphasise specific aspects of *noein*, which result in shifts from the Homeric use of *noein* and *noos*. In particular, in contrast to Homer,[463] Early Greek philosophers do not grant *noos* and *noein* indifferently to gods and mortals. If in Homer it seems that the

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authors such as Homer, when one reaches Parmenides, who according to Von Fritz, is a turning point, such a connection is lost. For we are dealing with a kind of noetic and intellectual sight or intuition that is *beyond* sense perception, though to some extent still dependent on it. However, as Lesher 1981, 1994 demonstrated, even in Homer there are a few passages, where *noein* and *noos* already point to processes where perception is not directly involved. Recently, Marcinkowska-Rosół 2010, has reassessed the Parmenidean evidence to reinforce the idea that at this stage of Early Greek thought *noein* is not opposed to sense perception.

[459] In different ways this view has been accepted by many scholars, e.g., Snell 1960, 13, Von Fritz 1945, Fränkel 1973, Lesher 1994, Mourelatos 2008.

[460] Already Von Fritz's studies highlighted how the activity of *noein* can be considered a kind of perceiving, but at the same time a kind of mental grasping, and even a kind of intuitive grasp that neither involves sense perception nor reasoning. After him scholars continued to look for a better understanding of *noein*, which resulted in many possible ways of translating it. Other studies underlined how, on the contrary, it is a process originally linked to sense perception, as its etymology leads to 'hearing' (Heitsch 1991, 144). For a detailed discussion of scholarly views and of all the possible renderings of the term see Marcinkowska-Rosół 2010, 17–44.

[461] For a study of Homer's use of *noein* and *phronein* see Sullivan 1988, 177–207.

[462] Homer at times draws some differences between *noein* and *phronein* and perhaps Parmenides could have developed Homer's way of at times differentiating the two, e.g., Homer, *Il*. 24.39–40, *Od*. 8.559: here *noēmata* are opposed to *phrenas*, as the former seem to be less linked to the seat of emotions (i.e., *phren*).

[463] E.g., Homer *Il.* 16.684–90, Hesiod, *Th.* 613, *Op.* 105.

difference between mortal *noos* and *noein* and immortal counterparts is a matter of degrees of perfection,[464] in Early Greek philosophy it indicates a totally different status that does not belong to mortals. For example, Xenophanes tells us that, because mortals and immortals are structurally different, the way they experience reality is different:[465] only god truly knows and thinks (*noein*), while through careful enquiry (*zētountes*)[466] and ordinary sense perception[467] mortals at best have a more or less correct opinion.[468] The fact that in Xenophanes divine *noos* and thinking are qualitatively different from their human analogues.[469] According to Heraclitus having *noos* is a divine feature that belongs to the god who grasps the common *logos* and steers all things,[470] while ordinary men may at best know in a defective way which does not permit access to the cosmic *logos* by *phronein* alone.[471] Furthermore, similar to Parmenides, for Heraclitus knowledge deriving from ordinary sense perception does not appear sufficient for acquiring genuine or divine knowledge, which requires *noos*.[472]

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[464] E.g., Homer *Il.* 16.688, where Zeus' *nous* is said to be stronger (*kreisson*) than the human one, *Il.* 24.39ff., cf. *Od*. 18.136, and see *Od*. 9.174–6, 1.3. Similar observations are valid for Hesiod, *Th.* 89 613, *Op.* 661.

[465] Xenophanes B23 DK.

[466] Xenophanes B18 DK.

[467] This conclusion can be drawn when one reads testimonia such as Xenophanes, A33 DK, where we are told that Xenophanes defended the view that the human race faced destruction both because of drought and flood by observing marine fossils on mountains.

[468] Xenophanes B34, 35 DK.

[469] Xenophanes B24, in particular B25 DK.

[470] Heraclitus, B1, 41 DK, see Schofield 2015.

[471] Heraclitus, B17 DK.

[472] Heraclitus, B40 DK.

From this analysis of the use of *noein*, it results that aspects other than *mortal* sense perception and experiential evidence become more relevant. For the process denoted in these cases by *noein* acquires a specific association with divine cognition, which, while it grants as higher cognitive status, does not obtain without sense perception. Rather, the evidence suggests that *noein* is based on a specific kind of sense perception, equally divine. By expressing the way the gods think, *noein* also necessarily refers to the way they experience reality through their sense perception, which transcends mortal categories, and shapes their cognitive activity. For example, Xenophanes clearly grounds the difference between gods and mortals in their formal difference in terms of both body (*demas*), which implies sense organs, and thought (*noēma*).[473] As scholars noted, this happens because Xenophanes wants to emphasise that the ontological divide between mortals and gods is owed to the fact that mortal experience of reality is limited,[474] with the result that it is impossible to grant that gods should have the same access to reality as mortals do: while divine seeing and hearing directly lead to *noein* on the grounds of their extraordinary capacity to grasp reality through the senses, the same cannot be said for mortals. Furthermore, Xenophanes' emphasis on *demas* underscores that the difference lies in the fact that their divine sense organs do not provide them

[473] Xenophanes, B23 DK.
[474] Mogyoródi 2006, 135–41, Mackenzie 2021, 30–4, Lesher 1978, 10, Hussey 1990, 24, Finkelberg 1997, 14.

with ordinary sense perception. Thus, this seems to be the likely source for their ability to penetrate reality through a certain use of the senses. Furthermore, it is not self-reflection that separates divine from mortal *noein.* But if this follows, perhaps we should question the conclusion that Parmenides employs *noein* as a modality of thinking that relies not only on ordinary sense perception, but also that it uses it as a stepping stone for some sort of intellectual or 'reflective' thinking disconnected from the senses.[475]

Parmenides can be considered overall consistent with Xenophanes' account of the differences between mortals and immortals. Actually, we could regard his considerations on *noein* clearer than Parmenides'. In Parmenides' **B4 DK** *noein* and *noos* still involve an extraordinary sight that echoes the divine one, which allow us not to interpret the passage as a metaphor as otherwise required. Rather, Parmenides, like Xenophanes, here reprises the usual characterisation of Zeus as his *noos* is said to penetrate and see all things.[476] Furthermore, the Goddess' invitation to make What-Is present (*pareonta*) to the *kouros* through looking (*leusse*), points to observing and in a way perceiving, and *then* thinking with the *noos* (*noōi*) things that are far away (i.e., absent) (*apeonta*). Thus, it allows the *kouros* to see and know, all at once, something

[475] Lesher 1994, 7, 23, cf. Von Fritz 1945, who believes that in Parmenides *noein* means 'logical reasoning' (238), so that there seems to be *a clear separation* from sense perception, which leads to link *noein* to an intellectual intuition that does not rely on the senses. Nonetheless, Von Fritz also notices how *nous* 'perceives' sounds as well as silence (see **B16 DK** with **A46 DK**), which seem to be more than pure and simple perceptual data. For pure sensual data refer to the principles of the *Doxa*, i.e., Light and Darkness (241–3).

[476] Homer, *Il.* 15.80, in addition to Xenophanes' fragments mentioned above, cf. also B26 DK.

that is remote to the ordinary senses, namely, What-Is.[477] Even in Parmenides what really seems to make the difference between gods and mortals is that the former exercise sense perception in a qualitatively different way, which provides them with a genuine and complete knowledge of reality. Consequently, mortals will have *noos* only if their access to reality changes radically through acquiring features that are structural to the gods, such as an extraordinary sense perception that allows them to penetrate all at once reality, and as a result to *noein*.

Now that we have established the form of thought that corresponds to the formation of the appropriate *noēma* and its features, we can draw a few conclusions regarding the initial part of the Goddess' method. First, it leads to a rejection of methods that rely on ordinary sense perception, as well as its signs, to acquire firm knowledge of genuine reality. Second, at the same time, it is an invitation to rely on a way of thinking that is appropriate to What-Is, that is, *noein*, which usually pertains to the gods. For it relies on a grasp of reality that is impossible to humans, whose sense organs are not up for the task. Third, although in **B8 DK** Parmenides relies on signs, we can grant that these will differ from those of Homer, because they belong to What-Is, which cannot be investigated with ordinary means of knowledge. Another difference

[477] Cf. Homer, *Il*. 15.80ff., Parmenides, **B4 DK**: λεῦσσε δ' ὅμως ἀπεόντα νόῳ παρεόντα βεβαίως·
οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ ἐὸν τοῦ ἐόντος ἔχεσθαι
οὔτε σκιδνάμενον πάντη πάντως κατὰ κόσμον
οὔτε συνιστάμενον.

with Homer is that Parmenides adds an extra step to becoming able to grasp the appropriate signs of something. For he requires a principle capable of determining the signs necessary to What-Is. This is why in the final lines of the fragment the Goddess attributes to the *logos* the role of inferring the signs of genuine reality.

The positive part of the Goddess' teaching is signalled at **l.5**, where she uses δέ to contrast[478] the 'much-experienced habit' to the act of 'deciding' (*krinai*) with *logos*. The kind of enquiry that she presents consists in a specific way of making a choice or judgement which is called 'scrutiny' (*elenkhos*) and emphasises the active role of the *kouros'* in the process of acquiring knowledge:[479] whether the *kouros* will be granted knowledge of What-Is

[478] As far as I know Kurfess 2011 and 2012 is the only one who has offered an alternative reading of the Greek. His arguments are sensible, but there are no real reasons to accept them, all the more considering his reconstruction of the Greek text, which, though much learned, is not devoid of problems. He takes the ἀλλὰ σύ to be too strong an adversative to accept that δέ reads as another adversative. This reading results in assuming that the ἀλλά-δέ should be read as progressive, so that the δέ is comparable to the preceding καί (Denniston 1934, 21). However, there are reasons why this reading is unlikely. First, ἀλλά is not on its own, but combined with σύ and an imperative (εἶργε), which leads us to think that it plays a role on its own, without the need to combine it with a very distant δέ. For it implies an exhortation and a command (Denniston 1934, 13–4) that fits perfectly with the context of the fragment. Furthermore, in verse μέν can be omitted, so that the δέ can nevertheless express opposition between a certain use of the senses and another that relies on *logos* (Denniston 1934, 165). Another sign of the δέ as expressing contrast is the fact that, even from a compositional perspective, δέ breaks the accumulation of several καί. As a result, the Goddess would be criticising a certain kind of use of this sense organ, *and* of this, *and* this other one, *but* balancing this negative view with the use of *logos*.

[479] Mansfeld 1964, 89 argues that the capacity to *krinai*, is not an ability belonging to the *kouros* independently from the Goddess' speech, but that it is possible only due to the *elenkhos* she teaches to the *kouros*. And yet we must suppose that he is always able to *krinai* as other mortals do it all the time, whilst in error. Thus, the point is not so much that the *kouros* cannot make a decision without the Goddess' help, but rather that he cannot make the *right* decision. Once we acknowledge this, it is not necessary to conclude that the *kouros* is a passive epistemic agent, and that all he does is repeat the message of the Goddess: 'Parmenides im Grunde *nichts*

depends on his ability to judge, which in turn depends on his ability to use such a *logos*. The ambiguity on how to interpret the word *elenkhos* has led many to wonder how one should understand this term. In its early occurrences the term is related to shame and morality, as it figures in contexts which involve comparing and determining what is better among a set of options.[480] However, already in Bacchylides it is used to indicate that something's essence is being tested, so that its meaning and use do not necessarily emphasise the moral aspect as much as the act of scrutinising something to determine its identity.[481] Some scholars, in particular those who are closer to the **logical reading**, believe that *elenkhos* refers to a rigorous 'deductive proof', or 'refutation', while others favour 'test', which would emphasise the process of drawing appropriate inferences, without stressing its alleged contemporary logical aspect too much.[482] In continuity with Lesher, I believe that Parmenides' *elenkhos* is an orderly examination that, through tests, leads us to know What-Is.[483] My translation is an attempt to highlight that the result of the *elenkhos* is not, properly speaking, negative as in the case of 'refutation', which excludes

anderes tut als iher [der Göttin] Rede zu wiederholen'. (Mansfeld 1964, 252, my emphasis). See also Verdenius 1967, 99 n. 2.

[480] E.g., Hesiod, *Op.* 714, see Lesher 1984 for an analysis of other instances.

[481] E.g., Bacchylides, fr. 14, Herodotus, 11.115, where Paris is proved wrong (*elenkhos*) and this is something bad because proving someone wrong is possible only if one lies.

[482] Respectively, Furley 1973, 1987, Coxon 2009, 311, Lesher 1984. The latter has shown how accepting that the *elenkhos* is a deductive proof or a refutation would bring Parmenides too close to Aristotle and Chrysippus.

[483] Lesher 1994.

that something might be the case.[484] Furthermore, it stresses the carefulness of the examination, which ultimately offers an affirmative conclusion regarding what to do.

In order to scrutinise anything, one requires a principle capable of orienting and justifying one's decision. Otherwise, one could not account for the necessity of a conclusion, which could be either wrong or rest on subjective assumptions. Furthermore, contrary to Homeric proofs of something's identity, sensory evidence is not all it takes to orient or justify a conclusion. Thus, the Goddess' scrutiny must rely on a principle that is beyond mortal ordinary sense perception and its evidence, that is, the *logos*, which can be accessed only when a mortal learns how to *noein*. The meaning of *logos* is controversial as well as its translation, given the variety of meanings it can have in general, and thus in **B7 DK**, too.[485]

Cordero and others believe that translating it 'with reason' leads to an anachronism,[486] because there is in fact no faculty or aspect of the individual that can be compared to 'reason'. While this consideration is appropriate and can be accepted in other fragments[487], the context of **B7 DK** and the way *logos* is used in other Early Greek authors allows for a less trivial reading than

[484] For this more positive use see e.g., Pindar, *N*. 10.45, *O*. 10.52–5, Thucydides, 3.61.1.
[485] Kurfess 2011, 160–1 offers a summary of the alternative translations that scholars have proposed.
[486] Cordero 2004, 134–8, Curd 2004, 61, 63 n. 109 acknowledges the difficulties and does not provide one translation for *logos,* but adds that it can be understood in different ways (e.g., thought, reckoning, discourse) Kinglsey 2003.
[487] E.g., B1.15, **B8.50 DK**.

'speech'.[488] For even if one renders *logos* with 'speech', its philosophical relevance within the fragment cannot be downplayed, as is noticeable already from a compositional point of view: it is hardly casual that at **l.5** *glōssa* is opposed to *logos*. The former term not only stands for 'tongue' as the organ for speech, but also for ordinary 'language', a mortal product of convention that relies on attributing many names in a contradictory way on the basis of habitual experience (i.e., convention). Whether it is translated with 'speech' or not, *logos* connects with the divine dimension that can reveal the truth about reality. Thus, the idea that Parmenides seems to be putting forward is that ordinary language is opposed to the *logos*, which as a result must be something other than an ordinary speech that relies on names.[489]

Next, let us focus on the way the Goddess asks the *kouros* himself to determine by the *logos* the *elenkhos* that she uttered. The fact that the *kouros* can use *logos* (*logōi* can be an instrumental dative) as if it is something that *belongs to him* seems to suggest that the *logos* is something similar to 'reason' or 'rational principle'.[490] In other words, it looks as if in this context *logos* could be something that is accessible but external to the *kouros*, while also being something that the *kouros* can use as if it is his own. To be sure, even a claim

[488] E.g., Cordero 2004, 136, Coxon 2009, 62, though in his commentary he talks about the 'judgement of reason' (311), already Verdenius 1967, 100.
[489] For a similar perspective, see Sattler 2020, 85.
[490] Marcinkowska-Rosół 2010, 88 has advanced a similar view, which however I find too radical in that it identifies the *logos* with an 'intellectual faculty in the Platonic sense' (als sein festes intellektuelles Vermögen im Sinne des Platonischen […] λογιστικόν aufgefasst wird). See below.

about the possibility on the *kouros'* part to use the *logos*, does not mean that the *logos* is a faculty. Rather, as I will go on to argue, the *logos* may be an expression of the necessity that directs all of reality, which he can now grasp and exploit owing to the teaching of the Goddess.

In the Early Greek authors more or less coeval to Parmenides, it is not uncommon to have *logos* being used in this way. In Pindar, *logos* is something that all reality shares because it is an expression of the necessity that rules all things both individually and cosmologically: since it is connected to Fate (*Moira*), according to whom all things happen, *logos* expresses a necessity that acts as a natural law in the universe. Specifically, Pindar refers to how the *logos* determines what happens to the daughters of Cadmus (Semele and Ino) and affirms that not even Chronos can modify it once Fate (i.e., necessity) has decided it.[491] In Heraclitus, *logos* similarly expresses the lawful necessity that directs the cosmos[492] and that mortals do not usually grasp. Yet Heraclitus seems to be aware that there is more than this. Any mortal can conceive of the 'common' *logos*, but, due to belief (*dokos*), their access to *logos* is wrong, and thus it boils down to ignorance.[493] Furthermore, *logos* is also something that

[491] Pindar *O*. 2.20–40, cf. *N*. 4.31.
[492] Particularly interesting in this respect is B1 DK, where Heraclitus says that there is a *logos* according to which everything happens, and that men never understand no matter whether they have listened to it or not. See also Schofield 2015.
[493] On this aspect, see Wilcox 1993, 14–6.

pertains to their soul,[494] particularly that of the wise.[495] Mansfeld has noted the similarity between Heraclitus' and Parmenides' use of *logos*, particularly in connection with its individual and cosmological roles.[496] Whether one considers the evidence in Heraclitus controversial or not,[497] Epicharmus' evidence can be of great importance, because, while the term's use is philosophical, it also expresses the term's common usage. According to him, the *logos* plays a double role in the cosmos as well as in the individual: there are two kinds of *logos*, divine and mortal; the former not only governs all things, but also teaches and accompanies the latter.[498] On the basis of our evidence, I think it is likely that in **B7 DK**, *logos* can represent something

[494] Heraclitus, B115, 92, DK.

[495] Heraclitus, B26, 41, 50, 59 DK (since fire is the elemental manifestation of the *logos*, already Guthrie 1965, 432).

[496] Mansfeld 1999, 341–2, for a similar opinion but on different grounds Robinson 1989. On Parmenides' echoes of Heraclitus and on their being roughly contemporaries, see Osborne 2006, 230–7.

[497] As with Parmenides scholars are divided on whether in Heraclitus one should render *logos* as 'speech' (e.g., West 1971, 161, 172–9, Kahn 1981) or as a 'plan', 'rule', that is, a sort of cosmic principle according to which all things work (Kirk 1954, 39, Graham 2006). But see the more nuanced view introduced by Johnstone 2014, 21, and accepted by Neels 2023, who argues that 'Heraclitus denotes by the term *logos* neither his own discourse nor a cosmic law, but rather the world's orderly and intelligible (i.e., comprehensible, understandable) presentation of its nature to us throughout our lives'. This latter reading seems to me to some extent to capture how Parmenides understands *logos* in **B7 DK** as well.

[498] Epicharmus, B57 DK: ὅ τε κωμικὸς Ἐ. σαφῶς περὶ τοῦ
λόγου ἐν <τῆι Πολιτείαι> λέγει ὧδέ πως·
ὁ βίος ἀνθρώποις λογισμοῦ κἀριθμοῦ δεῖται πάνυ·
ζῶμεν [δὲ] ἀριθμῶι καὶ λογισμῶι· ταῦτα γὰρ σώιζει βροτούς.
εἶτα διαρρήδην ἐπιφέρει·
ὁ λόγος ἀνθρώπους κυβερνᾶι κατὰ τρόπον σώιζει τ' ἀεί.
ἔστιν ἀνθρώπωι λογισμός, ἔστι καὶ θεῖος λόγος·
ὁ δέ γε τἀνθρώπου πέφυκεν ἀπό γε τοῦ **θείου λόγου**,
<καὶ> φέρει <πόρους ἑκάστωι> περὶ βίου καὶ τᾶς τροφᾶς.
ὁ δέ γε ταῖς τέχναις ἁπάσαις συνέπεται θεῖος λόγος,
ἐκδιδάσκων αὐτὸς αὐτούς, ὅ τι ποιεῖν δεῖ συμφέρον.
οὐ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος τέχναν τιν' εὗρεν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς τοπάν.

similar and that as a result the *kouros* can deploy to make the necessary choice that leads to the essence of What-Is. As discussed previously, the Goddess' *elenkhos* consists in an examination that appeals to *logos* justify the inferences that the *kouros* draws. For it expresses a kind of necessity that is both conceptually and cosmologically binding, as divine necessity rules over everything.

As the aorist *rhēthenta* suggests, the Goddess' *elenkhos* in **B7 DK** specifically excludes one of the two options that the Goddess presented before, as well as its object, i.e., 'the path that is not', and that which is not What-Is.[499] However, I have raised the possibility that the 'scrutiny' is deployed even in **B8 DK** to determine the essence of What-Is. The fact that the word *elenkhos* never occurs again in the poem may lead to think that this is the only time the Goddess uses this method to teach the *kouros* something about genuine reality. However, some scholars have noted that the Goddess could be employing the *elenkhos* even in what follows.[500] On the one hand, as Lesher pointed out, the judgement that concludes *this* scrutiny, namely, that the path to choose is the one 'that is', may need to be continually reaffirmed, as it is in **B8.15–6 DK** through the same language of *krisis*, due to the internal conflict among and

[499] Verdenius 1967, 64, Tarán 1965, 81, Lesher 1984.

[500] With much emphasis Mansfeld 1964, 106 mentions that the Goddess must engage in a strategy very similar tot he one I have argued for, however he does not seem to connect it with **B7 DK**: 'Denn in Fr. 8 wird niergendwo *explizit* gesasgt, daß man die σήματα ausainander und aus der κρίσις folgen darf, und doch operiert die Göttin mit dieser Methode!'. Lesher 1994, 1984, 19 who shows how even at the end of B1 DK we are presented with a proof that can be considered an *elenkhos*, Robbiano 2006, Tor 2015.

inferiority of human beings in comparison with gods.[501] On the other, the structure of **B8 DK** recalls the method that the Goddess presented in **B7 DK.** For throughout the fragment the Goddess presents the *kouros* with a choice between two alternatives many times, but only one ultimately belongs to the path 'that is' and is essentially attributable to What-Is. Furthermore, what is to be chosen is determined only after an argument is developed that relies on the *logos*, which functions as a kind of logical consistency that the *kouros* uses, as well as a kind of cosmological necessity represented through the intervention of divine agents which express different aspects of necessity.[502] According to this interpretation, the *elenkhos* becomes the core of the Goddess' teaching. For it provides the *kouros* with a consistent method to choose among the possible signs of What-Is and select those that are appropriate (i.e., necessary). Accordingly, by saying that the scrutiny is 'much-controverting' (*poludērin*), Parmenides might be hinting at the difficulty and controversy surrounding the *kouros*' decision. The 'signs' of What-Is refer to a dimension that evades mortal experience because it refers to being 'ungenerated', 'unchangeable', and 'whole'—things mortals are not ordinarily presented with. Furthermore, in order to be accessed, What-Is requires that one can make use of the *logos*. Consequently, since mortals usually cannot deploy the *logos* and thus, they

[501] Cf. Lesher, 1984, 29.

[502] Lesher 1994 seems to foreshadow a position similar to the one I hold, because he says that there can be other 'tests' aside from the one in **B7 DK**. In particular, Lesher (25) takes them to refer to five specific aspects of What-Is, namely, generation, destruction, division, movement, temporal development.

cannot access the Goddess' method for knowing What-Is, they are unable to determine or judge (*akrita*)[503] consistently the principles of all things.[504]

In conclusion, in this section I have stressed the didactic role of the Goddess to argue that the 'scrutiny' (*elenkhos*) she presents in **B7 DK** provides a fundamental methodology to determine the structure of What-Is. Specifically, I have argued that scrutiny is a method which consists of two operations: one excludes what is not relevant for an enquiry, and serves to make sure that the *kouros* is aiming at what is appropriate for knowing What-Is, while the other establishes what is necessary to maintain by way of a decision that depends on the use of *logos*.[505] First, the Goddess requires that the *kouros* acquire the right epistemic posture regarding the enquiry into What-Is. In order to do this, first the Goddess illustrates what the enquiry into reality is *not* concerned with. She teaches the *kouros* that he must go beyond ordinary sense perception and access a dimension that usually pertains to the gods to align his *noēma* to the path 'that is'. Next, she offers a way to prove that the path 'that is' is the right one to follow by telling him to use the *logos.* This principle, which at first may appear to be simply an 'argument' or a 'speech', can also be interpreted as something divine that expresses necessity and that

[503] **B6.7 DK**.

[504] In this case one can also think about Ionic philosophers, who chose elements such as Water, Air as the principle of the cosmos.

[505] Therefore, I do not share the view that *logos* refers to the principle of non-contradiction mentioned in **B3 DK**, as Coxon 2008, 311 does. Here logos seems to have a wider scope that can include the principle of non-contradiction on the basis that *logos* expresses an aspect of necessity.

can be grasped only by leaving ordinary sense perception behind. By resorting to *logos* the *kouros* will be able to conclude successfully his scrutiny and judge what path to choose. For Parmenides also introduces the *logos* as a tool to make the appropriate and thus necessary choice about something's essence. As a result, not only does the *kouros* learn what to exclude from his enquiry, namely, the phenomena and what is not, but he also gains access to the pre-requisites to grasp something about What-Is. For What-Is implicitly figures as something that is extraordinary and connected to the divine dimension. This conclusion then leads us to notice that there are two possible conceptions of sense perception at play in the two parts of the poem. Only sense perception as it is discussed in the *Alētheia* contrasts sense perception as it is ordinarily understood and deployed by human beings. For **B7 DK** does not reject the use of sense perception *tout court*. Rather, in the *Alētheia*, ordinary (i.e., mortal) sense perception does neither pertain nor suffice to the enquiry on What-Is. In order to take in consideration with the *logos* the right signs of What-Is, the *kouros* requires some change in his bodily constitution, which will bring him closer to have a divine one. Thus, divine sense perception grounds a certain thinking which is consequently divine as well, and will enable him to grasp, with the help of the Goddess, What-Is in its totality.

In the *Doxa*, where Parmenides develops his understanding of the phenomena according to the principles that the Goddess posited, sense perception *is fundamentally human* rather than divine. Furthermore, it is

sufficient to shape the kind of thinking required to navigate the phenomena. The point seems to be that in the *Doxa*, the difference between the person who 'knows' and those who do not lays 'only' in the very principles chosen to undertake this enquiry. Accordingly, not even in this case would Parmenides be criticising the working of sense perception. Mortals who have been exposed to the Goddess' revelation are *exclusively* requested to accept that what is given to their sense perception *to begin with* is two principles, namely, Light and Night. For nothing more is probably possible for their faculties. Thus, in the *Doxa*, Parmenides relies on ordinary sense perception, which, however, must apply to principles that are different from those of other thinkers. The point being that sense perception plus principles other than Light and Night result in less epistemically successful principles and consequently accounts of the phenomena. Why this is so a mortal will probably never know. However, it seems necessary that a mortal does not wonder about such matters, in the *Doxa*.

I have also suggested that the Goddess' scrutiny stands in a polemic with those methods of enquiry which rely exclusively on evidence provided by 'signs' perceived through ordinary sense perception. The paradigmatic example of these methods is that found in Homer. In **B7 DK** the Goddess' method is applied mainly to the question of whether the path to choose is the one 'that is' or the one 'that is not'. However, the passage also provides information both on how the *kouros* can access What-Is, and on its essence. Furthermore, on the basis of the argumentative structure of **B8 DK**, it seems

possible to think that Parmenides uses the Goddess' methodology as a deduction of the signs of What-Is. For, on the one hand, the application of the Goddess' scrutiny in **B8 DK** would put the *kouros* in the right condition to grasp What-Is. On the other, it would allow him to deduce its signs with a reliable method that is grounded in necessity and that makes each sign follow from the other step-by-step continuously, which ultimately reveals What-Is in its entirety. In what follows I will employ the results of this section to investigate Parmenides' conception of What-Is and the consequences for our understanding of his mereology.

CHAPTER FOUR: B8.1–50 DK (= D8.6–54 L.-M.):

Textual Considerations and Translation

In this section I present the most recent edition of **B7** and **B8 DK** by Laks-Most, which, on the basis of Sextus' text, includes **B7 DK**, though originally Diels separated it from **B8 DK**.[506] Furthermore, only lines 1–50 of **B8 DK** are set out here, because the lines that follow transition to the doctrines of the *Doxa*, which do not pertain to this analysis.

Given the complexity of fragment **B8 DK** and its relevance for Parmenides **PWR**, I will discuss some difficult readings (in **bold**) and collocation problems, which are philosophically relevant. Furthermore, I will signal whether I opt for a reading different from the one offered by Laks-Most.

I will exclusively refer to the way the lines are numbered in the DK edition, which I have included in square brackets. However, since Laks-Most's text is the basis for my analysis, I am including their numbering outside the brackets. Sextus reports fragment **B7 DK** immediately after the end of the proem, which, according to some scholars, is not problematic and should be preferred to Simplicius' text.[507] However, Laks-Most, like Tarán, prefer to keep it separated

[506] Sextus' text adds a few lines to the proem, the last of which (*l.35–6: ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα. μόνος δ'ἔτι θυμὸς ὁδοῖο λείπεται.) echo the beginning of **B8 DK** (μόνος δ' ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο λείπεται ὡς ἔστιν). Thus, reading μόνος found in Simpl. *In Ph.* 142, 34, in place of μοῦνος found in Simpl. *In Ph.* 78,8 et 145,1 permits the combination of **B7 DK** and **B8 DK**. Against the printed text favoured by Laks-Most, see Ferrari 2010 and Guerrieri 2024 for discussion.
[507] Kurfess 2011, 163–4. For a through discussion, see Kurfess 2012, 18–84, for a similar view Guerrieri 2024.

from the end of the proem[508] to associate it with **B8 DK**. I will not defend this editorial choice as it concerns the relation between **B1 DK** and **B7 DK**, leaving unchanged the usual ordering of the fragments (i.e., **B7 DK** comes *before* **B8 DK**). Furthermore, my focus is on showing how the theoretical aspects found in **B7 DK** inform our reading of Parmenides' What-Is and the resulting **PWR** in **B8 DK**.

4.1 B8.1–50 DK (= D8.6–54 L.-M.): Some Textual Problems

οὐ γὰρ μήποτε **τοῦτο δαμῇ** εἶναι μὴ ἐόντα· **[B7]**
ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆσδ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ διζήσιος εἶργε νόημα
μηδέ σ' ἔθος πολύπειρον ὁδὸν κατὰ τήνδε βιάσθω
νωμᾶν ἄσκοπον ὄμμα καὶ ἠχήεσσαν ἀκουήν
καὶ γλῶσσαν, κρῖναι δὲ λόγῳ πολύδηριν ἔλεγχον 5
ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα. μόνος δ' ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο [**B8**]
λείπεται ὡς ἔστιν· ταύτῃ δ' ἐπὶ σήματ' ἔασι
πολλὰ μάλ', ὡς ἀγένητον ἐὸν καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν ἐστιν,
οὖλον μουνογενές τε καὶ ἀτρεμὲς **ἠδὲ τελεστόν**· 10 **[B8.5]**
οὐδέ ποτ' ἦν οὐδ' ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν,
ἕν, συνεχές· τίνα γὰρ γένναν διζήσεαι αὐτοῦ;
πῇ πόθεν αὐξηθέν; οὔτ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐάσω
φάσθαι σ' οὐδὲ νοεῖν· οὐ γὰρ φατὸν οὐδὲ νοητόν
ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστι. τί δ' ἄν μιν καὶ χρέος ὦρσεν
ὕστερον ἢ πρόσθεν, τοῦ μηδενὸς ἀρξάμενον, φῦν; 15 **[B8.10]**
οὕτως ἢ πάμπαν πέλεναι χρεών ἐστιν ἢ οὐχί.

[508] In favour of Simplicius' reading, see Tarán 1965, 76.

οὐδέ ποτ’ ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐφήσει πίστιος ἰσχύς
γίγνεσθαί τι παρ’ αὐτό· τοῦ εἵνεκεν οὔτε γενέσθαι
οὔτ’ ὄλλυσθαι ἀνῆκε Δίκη χαλάσασα πέδῃσιν,
ἀλλ’ ἔχει· ἡ δὲ κρίσις περὶ τούτων ἐν τῷδ’ ἔστιν·
ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν· κέκριται δ’ οὖν, ὥσπερ ἀνάγκη,
τὴν μὲν ἐᾶν ἀνόητον ἀνώνυμον (οὐ γὰρ ἀληθής
ἔστιν ὁδός), τὴν δ’ ὥστε πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι.
πῶς δ’ ἂν ἔπειτα πέλοι τὸ ἐόν; πῶς δ’ ἄν κε γένοιτο;
εἰ γὰρ ἔγεντ’, οὐκ ἔστ’ οὐδ’ εἴ ποτε μέλλει ἔσεσθαι.
τὼς γένεσις μὲν ἀπέσβεσται καὶ ἄπυστος ὄλεθρος.
οὐδὲ διαιρετόν ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ὁμοῖον·
οὐδέ τι τῇ μᾶλλον, τό κεν εἴργοι μιν συνέχεσθαι,
οὐδέ τι χειρότερον, πᾶν δ’ ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος.
τῷ ξυνεχὲς πᾶν ἐστιν· ἐὸν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει.
αὐτὰρ ἀκίνητον μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν
ἔστιν ἄναρχον ἄπαυστον, ἐπεὶ γένεσις καὶ ὄλεθρος
τῆλε μάλ’ ἐπλάχθησαν, ἀπῶσε δὲ πίστις ἀληθής.
ταὐτὸν τ’ ἐν ταὐτῷ τε μένον καθ’ ἑαυτό τε κεῖται
χοὔτως ἔμπεδον αὖθι μένει· κρατερὴ γὰρ Ἀνάγκη
πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἔχει, τό μιν ἀμφὶς ἐέργει,
οὕνεκεν οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον τὸ ἐὸν θέμις εἶναι·
ἔστι γὰρ οὐκ ἐπιδευές· ἐὸν δ’ ἂν παντὸς ἐδεῖτο.
ταὐτὸν δ’ ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὕνεκεν ἔστι νόημα.
οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ᾧ πεφατισμένον ἐστίν,
εὑρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν· οὐδὲν γὰρ <ἢ> ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται
ἄλλο πάρεξ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐπεὶ τό γε Μοῖρ’ ἐπέδησεν
οὖλον ἀκίνητόν τ’ ἔμεναι· **τῷ πάντ’ ὄνομ’ ἔσται**,
ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ,
γίγνεσθαί τε καὶ ὄλλυσθαι, εἶναί τε καὶ οὐχί,
καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διά τε χρόα φανὸν ἀμείβειν.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πεῖρας πύματον, τετελεσμένον ἐστί

[B8.15] **[B8.20]** **[B8.25]** **[B8.30]** **[8.34]** **[8.35]** **[8.36]** **[B8.40]** **[8.41]**

πάντοθεν, εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκῳ,
μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντῃ· τὸ γὰρ οὔτε τι μεῖζον
οὔτε τι βαιότερον πελέναι χρεών ἐστι τῇ ἢ τῇ. 50 **[B8.45]**
οὔτε γὰρ οὐκ ἐὸν ἔστι, τό κεν παύοι μιν ἱκνεῖσθαι
εἰς ὁμόν, οὔτ' ἐὸν ἔστιν ὅπως εἴη κεν ἐόντος
τῇ μᾶλλον τῇ δ' ἧσσον, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ἄσυλον·
οἷ γὰρ πάντοθεν ἶσον, ὁμῶς ἐν πείρασι κύρει. **[8.50]**

The textual tradition of Parmenides' poem is extensive, but compared to other authors, relatively straightforward, as one can discover in Cordero's detailed study, which includes a review of the first editions of Parmenides' poem.[509] Furthermore, the fact that Parmenides follows the Epic hexameter could make it easier for us to choose one variant over another. For example, in **B7 DK**, one should prefer the printed **τοῦτο δαμῇ**, though (E) and even Plato's manuscripts (Ar. A^b) present respectively τοῦτ' οὐ δαμῆ and οὔτ' οὐδαμῇ, on the basis that these latter options are unmetrical.[510] However, in case of textual corruptions, conjectures and emendations are necessary but not decisive, so that establishing the 'true' Parmenidean text results in being impossible. For either they present textual and philosophical difficulties, or at best they are equipollent and thus subject to an interpreter's theoretical assumptions for Parmenides' philosophy.

[509] Cordero 1987, but see also Palmer 2009, 352–62.
[510] Palmer 2009, 351, Coxon 2008, 308–10, cf. Tarán 1965, 74.

One major problem of **B8 DK** is the collocation of lines 34–41, which Laks-Most print following Simplicius, on the grounds of its excellence. It should be signalled that already Barnes[511] felt that these lines were out of place. For they interrupt the arguments regarding the characteristics of What-Is to introduce remarks on the poor status of mortal understanding. Furthermore, Palmer reads Sextus' passage as saying that Parmenides' poem was disorderly arranged, and that lines were quoted at random without respecting their original order.[512] On these grounds Ebert[513] proposed strong arguments in favour of moving lines 34–41 right after the beginning of the transition to the doctrines of the *Doxa*, where the Goddesses presents the problems linked to mortal understanding. Palmer has defended Ebert's suggestion, because it aligns best with the sequence of arguments Parmenides introduced at the beginning (B8.3–4), and with the Goddess' account. Furthermore, this re-collocation seems to better account for the transition to lines 52–3, which deal with the principles of the *Doxa.*[514] For my part, although I appreciate the advantages of Ebert's suggestion, I have decided to stick to Laks-Most text for two reasons: **1**. my line of argument for Parmenides' **PWR** is not greatly affected by leaving the text as it is; **2**. nothing precludes that Parmenides is deploying those lines for didactic purposes. In other words, Parmenides

[511] Barnes 1982, 180.
[512] See Palmer 2008, 354. Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.111, on which, see Mansfeld 1995, 228–9.
[513] Ebert 1989.
[514] See Palmer 2009, 353–4.

would be interrupting the flow of argument in order to maintain the attention of his audience, while at the same time offering a didactic intermezzo that anticipates what will follow; **3.** According to my reading these lines can be kept in their original order, because they are included in Parmenides' discussion of the signs of What-Is.

4 οὖλον μουνογενές: The term μουνογενές is already found in Hesiod,[515] and present in the majority of our sources for the fragment. It can be read in two ways: on the one hand, it can indicate something 'unique' (usually in numerical terms),[516] 'of a single kind' (in qualitative terms), or 'single-born'. The latter understanding could sound contradictory, given that what is ungenerated cannot be 'single-*born*'. Thus, Diels[517] hypothesized that it was on these grounds that expansive readings such as οὐλομελές found in Plutarch (*Adv. Col.* 1114C) and Proclus are attested. However, others (e.g., Untersteiner, Burnet) preferred οὐλομελές ('wholly complete [in the limbs]') for stylistic and philosophical reasons. [518] In particular, Untersteiner prefers this alternative because it was typical of Early Greek thinkers to think of the

[515]E.g., Hesiod, *Op.* 376, *Th.* 426, 448.
[516] In this case the term as Barnes 1982, 8–9 and Mourelatos 2008, 113 observe would stem from γένος rather than from μόνος + γίγνεσθαι. Guthrie 1965, 26, Tarán 1965, 92, Mansfeld 2011, 325, Coxon 2008, translate as 'unique'.
[517] Diels 1987, 74–5.
[518] Untersteiner 1958, XXIX–XXX.

universe in terms of biological compounds, which would explain employing the term 'limb' (μέλος).[519] Although this observation is true and maybe relevant for Parmenides, because it reinforces the possibility that What-Is is something 'living',[520] it is ultimately untenable: Parmenides avoids at all costs terms that could imply the presence of parts within What-Is. Furthermore, the idea that What-Is is in some sense a living entity can be maintained even (or perhaps even more rigorously!) without mentioning parts.[521] Emphasising the reliability of the sources that print it,[522] Owen,[523] Tarán,[524] and Coxon[525] strongly argue in favour of οὖλον μουνογενές, which is equally interesting when one considers Parmenides' **PWR** (e.g., Mourelatos interpreted it as an anti-Hesiodic move on Parmenides' part).

4 ἠδ'ἀτέλεστον: This half of the line is particularly problematic and Coxon considers the text corrupted.[526] Not only do all sources except Simplicius end the verse with ἠδ᾽ ἀγένητον, but Simplicius himself in other passages quotes

[519] Unteersteiner 1958, XXX.
[520] See already Coxon 2008, Tor 2017, 307–8, Sedley 1999, Evans 2021.
[521] As we know Aristotle argues that what is is one in the strongest sense as it is a substance, it is a 'whole' that is characterised in biological terms without mentioning parts if not in potency (*Metaph*. Δ 26.1023b33–6).
[522] Palmer 2009, 382.
[523] Owen 1960, 101.
[524] Tarán 1965,
[525] Coxon 2008, 314.
[526] Coxon 2008, 315.

the text with ἠδ'ἀτέλεστον (*in Ph.* 30.2, 78.13 and 145.4).[527] The printed text seems to be the best option, since it presents parallels with the previous line (B8.32). However, as Owen[528] and Coxon[529] suggested, it is likely to be a Homeric corruption (*Il.* 4.26), as ἠδ'ἀτέλεστον means 'without end', which contrasts What-Is's completeness, from temporal (i.e., Simplicius' reading), spatial, and ontological perspectives. Given this insurmountable difficulty, some (e.g., Mourelatos,[530] KRS,[531] Coxon,[532] Tarán[533]) translate in accordance with line 32 following Owen's emendation ἠδὲ τέλειον, i.e., 'and perfect', on the basis of Aristotelian (*Cael.* I 9,279a11) and Platonic (*Tim*. 92c) which, as Coxon argued could be what Parmenides wrote.[534] As Palmer mentions, the alleged absence of evidence for the adjective τελεστόν, which represents (according to him) the true obstacle to accepting this emendation rather than Owen's, disappears once we consider that τελεστόν is found in a scholium on Oppian, *Halieutica* 2.4, though true that this would be a single a single and later parallel.[535] Although it is tempting to read ἠδὲ τελεστόν, with Palmer and

[527] On the details regarding Simplicius' quotations see Tarán 1987.
[528] Owen 1960, 77.
[529] Coxon 2008, 315.
[530] Mourelatos 2008.
[531] KRS 1983.
[532] Coxon 2008.
[533] Tarán 1965.
[534] Coxon 2008, 315.
[535] Palmer 2009, 383.

Tarán, perhaps we should further consider Brandis' conjecture οὐδ' ἀτέλεστον, which would allow a similar reading understanding.[536]

38 τῷ πάντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται: Scholarship is more or less equally divided between **τῷ πάντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται** and **τῷ πάντ'ὀνόμασται**.[537] Woodbury[538] argued in favour of the latter reading, which can be translated as 'to it [scil. What-Is] all things have been named', on textual bases. Furthermore, the MSS that have this reading are better than the others that report **τῷ πάντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται** ('so that a [mere] name will be all the things', tr. L.-M.). Although Sider's re-assessment of the manuscripts seems to conclude that ὀνόμασται is the better reading,[539] Laks-Most still opt for the latter, though they indicate that the other as possible. Furthermore, according to Mourelatos, **τῷ πάντ'ὀνόμασται** best captures Parmenides' technical use of the notion of 'naming'. For Parmenides' use of 'naming' can be considered as a 'verbal recipe to help us select or recognize the phenomenon' or as providing 'an abbreviated description' of something. [540] However, though this characterisation of Parmenides' names might be appropriate in some cases, it

[536] See Brandis 1813, 109–10.
[537] In favour of τῷ πάντ'ὀνόμασται: Woodbury 1958, Long 1963, 97, Mourelatos 2008, Furley 1973, 7 n. 22, KRS 1983, Gallop 1984; in favour of τῷ πάντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται: Diels and Kranz 1951, Tarán 1965, 129, Cordero 1984, Coxon 2009, Cassin 1998, Tor 2017.
[538] Woodbury 1958, 145–53.
[539] See Sider 1985, 366, for other textual considerations, see Palmer 2009, 385, and Mourelatos 2008, 182.
[540] See Mourelatos 2008, 183–84.

potentially misreads Parmenides' relation between names and the essence of What-Is. I have decided to reproduce Laks-Most's reading, because Tor has recently provided a compelling argument for this reading on textual grounds.[541] It is possible to translate **τῷ πάντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται** without supplementing unwarranted 'mere' before 'name', which would be required if we interpreted the τῷ as an inferential particle. Following Tor's translation 'all things will be its name', which is both natural (τῷ works as demonstrative pronoun referring to What-Is) and, in my opinion, allows us to see Parmenides in dialogue with Hesiod's use of names. I will return to these ideas and their importance for my understanding of Parmenides' **PWR** in the more general analysis of **B8 DK**.

[541] Tor 2017, 205–6 and in particular n. 93.

4.2 B8.1–50 DK (= D8.6–54 L.-M.): A Translation

1 [**B7**] For in no way could you master this (*touto damē*), namely, that things that are not are (*einai mē eonta*).

But as for *you* (*sy*), I bar (*eirge*) your thought (*noēma*) from this path (*hodou*) of research (*dizēsios*)

And do not let much-experienced habit (*ethos polupeiron*) force (*biasthō*) you onto this road (*hodon*),

To employ (*nōman*) an erratic eye and an echoing ear

5 And tongue, but decide (*krinai*) by consideration (*logōi*) the much-controverting (*poludērin*) scrutiny (*elenkhon*)

That *I* have uttered (*ex emethen rhēthenta*). [**B8.1**] There only remains the story (*mythos*) of the path that

[8.**2**] "Is." On this one there are signs (*sēmata*),

Very many of them: that What-Is

is ungenerated (*agenēton*), indestructible (*anōlethron*),

whole, of a single kind, (*oulon mounougenes*), untrembling (*atremes*) and accomplished (*teleston*)

10 [**B8.5**] And neither it was, nor will it be, since it is now (*nyn*), all alike (*homou pan*),

One (*hen*), continuous (*syneches*). For what birth (*gennan*) could you search (*dizēseai*) for it?

[**8.7**] How, from what could it have grown (*auxēthen*)? Not from What-Is-not—I shall not allow

[**8.8**] You to affirm (*phasthai*) nor to think this (*noein*): for it cannot be affirmed (*phaton*) nor thought (*noēton*)

That "is not"; and what need could have impelled it

15 [**B8.10**] To grow (*phyn*) later rather than sooner, if it had had nothing for its beginning (*tou mēdenos arxamenon*)?

In this way (*outōs*), it is necessary (*chreōn*) that it either be (*pelenai*) altogether (*pampan*) or not at all (*ouchi*).

And neither will the strength of belief (*pistios ischus*) ever affirm (*ephēsei*) that out of what is not

Something is generated besides itself (*gignesthai ti par'auto*). That is why Justice (*Dikē*)

Has not, loosening its fetters (*chalasasa pedēisin*), allowed it either to be born (*ginnesthai*) or to be destroyed (*ollusthai*),

20 [**B8.15**] But holds it fast (*all'echei*). The decision (*krisis*) on these matters depends upon this:

"Is" or "is not"? Well, it has been decided, as is necessary (*anagkē*),

To abandon the one [scil. road] as unthinkable (*anoēton*), without name (*anōnumon*) (for it is not

The real (*alēthēs*) road), and [scil. deciding] thereby that the other, by consequence,

[18] exists and is genuine (*etētumon*).

How then could What-Is be afterward? And how could it be born?

[20] For if it was born, it is not, not even if it is going to be someday.

In this way generation (*genesis*) is extinguished (*apesbestai*), and destruction unheard of (*apustos olethros*).

Nor is it divisible (*oude diaireton*), since all of it is alike (*pan estin homoion*),

Nor is there in some place in some way more (*mallon*), which would preclude it from being continuous (*sunechesthai*),

Nor is there in some place in some way less (*cheiroteron*), but all (*pan*) of it is completely full of What-Is (*empleon estin eontos*).

30 [**B8.25**] That is why all of it is continuous (*xuneches pan*): for What-Is clings (*pelazei*) to What-Is.

But in a way (*autar*), unchangeable (*akinēton*) within the limits of its great bonds (*megalōn en peirasi desmōn*),

It is without beginning (*anarchon*), without stop (*apauston*), since generation (*genesis*) and destruction (*olethros*)

Were smitten very far away—genuine belief (*pistis alēthēs*) pushed them away.

Remaining (*menon*) the same (*tauton*) and in the same place (*en tautōi*), it lies outstretched (*keitai*) by itself (*kath'eauto*)

35 [**B8.30**] And thus it remains firmly (*empedon*) there; for strong Necessity (*kraterē Anagkē*)

Holds it fast within the bonds of a limit (*peiratos en desmoisin echei*), which

encloses it all around (*to min amphis eergei*).

This is why it is not right (*themis*) that What-Is (*to eon*) is unaccomplished (*ateleutēton*).

For it is not lacking (*epideues*) in anything, but if it were, it would lack all of it (*pantos*).

[**8.34**] The same thing is both for thinking (*noein*) and that because of which there is thought (*noēma*).[542]

[**8.35**] For not without What-Is, in what has been affirmed (*pephatismenon*),

[**8.36**] Will you discover thinking (*to noein*).[543] For nothing else <either> is or will be

But What-Is, since Fate has fettered it (*Moir'epedēsen*)

To be whole (*houlon*) and unchangeable (*akinēton*). All things will be its name (*tōi pant'onom'estai*)

that mortals have established (*katethento*), convinced (*pepoithotes*) that they are genuine (*alēthē*),

45 [**B8.40**] Both to be generated (*gignesthai*) and destroyed (*ollusthai*),

To be and be not,

And to change their place (*topon allassein*) and exchange (*ameibein*) their bright colour (for another).

But in this way, since (*autar epei*)[544] it has a furthest limit (*peiras*), it is accomplished (*tetelesmenon*)

From every point of view (*pantothen*), resembling to the bulk of a well-rounded ball (*eukuklou sphairēs enaligkion onkōi*),

From the centre (*messothen*) to every direction equally balanced (*isopales*): for it must be (*chreōn*)

50 [**B8.45**] Neither in any way larger (*meizon*) nor smaller (*baioteron*) in one place than another.

For neither is there What-Is-Not (*ouk eon*), which could stop it from reaching (*ikneisthai*)

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[542] On the possible translations of **B8.34 DK** see Tor 2017, 305.

[543] See Tor 2017, 306–7, Kraus 1987, 77, Palmer 2009, 164, for the possible constructions of verses **B8.35–6 DK**. Alternative constructions can be found in Cornford 1939, 34, Long 1996, 136, Sedley 1999, 20, Mourelatos 2008, 175–6.

[544] For this rendering of αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ, see e.g., Homer, *Il*. 1.458, 2.432, Hesiod, *Th*. 880.

What is similar (*eis homon*); nor is What-Is in such a way that it might be What-Is

More (*mallon*) in one place and less (*ēsson*) in another, since all of it is inviolable (*pan estin asylon*).

54 [**8.49**] For, it is everywhere equal (*ison*) to itself, it lies within (*kurei*) its limits similarly (*homōs*).

CHAPTER FIVE: B8 DK (= D8.5–54 L.-M.): What-Is and Its Mereological Structure

A. The Arguments of B8 DK and the Signs of What-Is

Let us turn to the core aspects of Parmenides' conception of What-Is, and consequently, to the **PWR** he advances in the *Alētheia*. There is a great variety of readings and sub-readings of **B8 DK**, but I will limit myself to two very broad ones that have been previously introduced and capture the main divide among scholars: the **logical** and the **historical readings**. Champions of the former approach make of **B8 DK,** and of Parmenidean philosophy, a perfectly consistent logical demonstration.[545] The latter, probably more concerned with Parmenides' actual acquaintance with rudiments of logic, conclude that **B8 DK** cannot be considered a demonstration *strictu sensu*.[546] This does not preclude that in the arguments Parmenides employs there is some awareness of what will be in effect considered logical principles (e.g., the principle of non-contradiction). This latter approach is certainly more in line with the evidence, though the results of both readings are to some degree unsatisfactory. Part of

[545] Wedin 2014 is one of the most recent and refined examples of this approach, but see already Owen 1960, and to some extent Mansfeld 1964.
[546] See Lesher 1984, McKirahan 2008.

the problem is, I believe, that in general scholars do not stress **B8 DK**'s continuity with the proem, and treat it as if it were unrelated to **B7 DK**. While this approach leads to a better focus on the core philosophical contents of the fragment, at the same time, it confers less importance to the fact that **B8 DK** is part of the Goddess' speech.[547] As a result of these readings, **B8 DK** seems to lack the didactic aspect essentially linked to the Goddess' scrutiny, and to enquire into its object of knowledge, which is divine. For given the necessary dramatic continuity between **B8 DK** and the rest of the Goddess' speech, the philosophical strategies and methodology connected to Epic and didactic poetry must still be at work.[548] If one compares the proem with **B7** and **B8 DK**, the didactic tone of the Goddess is apparent in her illustration of the features of What-Is. Some examples of the didactic play of the Goddess in **B7** and **B8 DK** are the way the Goddess guides the *kouros* towards a correct understanding of the signs (*sēmata*) (**B8.2 DK**) of What-Is by telling him *exactly* what she will not allow him *to do* (**B8.7–8**), or her use of emphatic pronouns

[547] Mackenzie 2021, Wright 1997**b**, already Mansfeld 1964, who interestingly also attributes to Parmenides fully formal logical arguments in the form of the modus ponens, and tollens, which are actually formalised by the Stoics. While this specific emphasis on the advancement of Parmenides' logic is quite problematic, both methodologically and in the results it obtains, I agree with Mansfeld that **B8 DK** has a didactic aspect linked to the revelatory role of the Goddess. Cf. Fränkel 1973, who however stresses too much the mystic component of **B8 DK**.
[548] Bryan 2012, 103 emphasises the importance of the Goddess and of her revelation, which ultimately overlaps with the inquiry into What-Is. However, she neither develops her suggestion extensively nor stresses the didactic modalities proper of Epic poetry.

e.g., 'you' (*su*), which once again stress the opposition between the status of the Goddess and of the *kouros*. Although scholars usually start from **B8 DK** to understand the philosophical import of the proem,[549] or treat **B8 DK** as something that can be wholly understood on its own,[550] on the basis of arguments presented in **Chapter Three** I connect them as much as possible. To my knowledge, scholars have seldom investigated Parmenides' reaction to the didactic strategies found in Epic, their modalities and their possible philosophical relevance.[551] Consequently, the relationship between the philosophical discourse of **B8 DK** and Parmenides' appropriation of Homeric strategies and modalities for the transmission of divine knowledge remains unarticulated.

Fragment **B8 DK** constitutes the centrepiece of Parmenides' conception of What-Is. Here the Goddess presents its features, which some scholars see as being in tension with Parmenides' claim that What-Is is 'one' and 'simple',[552]

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[549] Bryan 2012, an example of this approach can be Palmer 2009.
[550] E.g., Curd 2004, Wedin 2014.
[551] Some works may be thought to come close to this, as they discuss the similarities between the speech of Circe and the Goddess; however, they do not explore the consequences of these similarities on Parmenides' ontology (Folit-Weinberg 2022). Other contributions recognise that Parmenides is making use of didactic poetry (e.g., Mackenzie 2021, but already Wright 1997**b**, Osborne 1997), and that the Goddess is part of this approach. Nevertheless, they do not delve into the philosophical consequences this has for Parmenides' philosophy as a whole. But, though his approach is different from mine, see Tor 2017, 250–77 and his analysis of **B1 DK** in connection with Parmenides' psychology, theology and epistemology.
[552] E.g., Mason 1988.

especially in relation to the problem of predication. For those many features would imply that something that is 'one' is also 'many', challenging any straightforward conception of Parmenides' Monism. **B8 DK** best highlights Parmenides' struggle to characterise What-Is while being limited by the use of mortal language, that is, their use of names (*onomata*), which seems unable to capture something that is beyond ordinary experience, such as What-Is.[553] Scholarship has examined **B8 DK** countless times, obtaining very different readings and results. This is because, as Barnes has underscored, the arguments that Parmenides presents are only apparently clear.[554] Since my focus ultimately is on Parmenides' **PWR**, I will not discuss extensively aspects such as whether the list of the signs the Goddess provides is complete. Rather, I will assume that, if not complete, the list is at least sufficient to start from and deduce other features of What-Is.[555] Furthermore, I will assume that the subject of **B8 DK** is What-Is, understood as something similar to a physical or spatially extended entity in the style of Ionic philosophy. Only in the last part of this section will I advance some remarks on what kind of entity What-Is may be.[556]

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[553] On Parmenides' use of language to characterise What-Is see Tor 2023.
[554] Barnes 1982, 141.
[555] On this aspect, see Coxon 2008, 316–17,
[556] For other views regarding the subject of B8 DK, see Robbiano 2016, Curd 2004, Coxon 2008, Mourelatos 2008, and Tarán 1965. McKirahan 2008, 192 believes the subject is whatever is and the point of the whole fragment is to show that such an entity exists truly.

Comparing the way Parmenides presents What-Is against Hesiod's cosmological conceptions, in particular, will suggest that in Parmenides' philosophy What-Is represents an entity that on the grounds of its being 'one' and 'many', *prima facie* appears self-contradictory in essence, and yet is comparable to a type of divine entity that Hesiod struggles to characterise essentially through *one* name, that is, a 'monster' (πέλωρον).

My analysis of **B8 DK** will rely on the results of the analysis of the Goddess' didactic method and on the account of **B7 DK** that I have previously advanced. Accordingly, the method for enquiring into What-Is corresponds to the Goddess' scrutiny (*elenkhos*) consisting of two operations: first, an operation that excludes a sign from pertaining to What-Is, second, an operation that establishes the right sign of What-Is by means of the *logos*. Thus, I take **B8 DK** to be an application of the Goddess' scrutiny (*elenkhos*) of the essence of What-Is, rather than a systematic proof that follows the strategies of contemporary logic. [557] Such an approach has some advantages for explaining difficulties such as why the Goddess has resorted to negative language to characterise What-Is.[558] For negative language serves to exclude

[557] For such an approach, see Wedin 2014, Austin 1986.

[558] For these difficulties, see for example Austin 1986, 11–43 Owen 1960, Furth 1968, Nussbaum 1979, Tarán 1965, Gallop 1984, Barnes 1982. For the interpretation that sees negative language in **B8 DK** as a collection of inadmissible features of What-Is, and thus possible features

that something belongs to the essence of What-Is and ultimately to its essential characterisations. Furthermore, it stresses Parmenides' use of divine signs, which I take to be key to understanding his mereology, as they contrast those arbitrarily established by mortals through human language. Thus, Parmenides treatment of signs demonstrates his attempt to come to terms with the difficulties of human language. Equally important is that this approach also emphasises the likelihood that the characterisations of What-Is follow necessarily one from the other.[559]

In this section, my aim is to show that, by combining the scrutiny of the Goddess with an increased attention to the signs of What-Is, we can develop an account of What-Is and of its internal structure. This makes Parmenides the first Early Greek Philosopher to have developed a tentative answer to the **PWR**. The signs of What-Is refer to features that are beyond ordinary experience, and the *kouros* can grasp them only after the Goddess has taught him how to make them the object of his thought. Furthermore, as something conveyed by the Goddess, these signs contrast mortal language as well as the signs that mortals may establish themselves. Thus, signs are not 'names' of What-Is, because

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through double-negation, see Fränkel 1973, 354–6, and Mourelatos 2008, 54, who considers the negations as 'rejections *de dicto* of negations made *de re*'.

[559] Hence, I disagree with Mason 1988 and Robbiano 2016, 275–82, who do not think that **B8 DK** offers a characterisation of What-Is.

What-Is admits only of *one* name, namely 'What-Is', which the Goddess correctly identifies due to her divine status.[560] Rather, they can be considered aspects of What-Is, that is, particular ways of looking at or thinking of it. Focussing on signs as identifying aspects of What-Is has the advantage that we do not need to introduce the term 'part', and so plurality, to make sense of the structure of What-Is. Furthermore, we also avoid making What-Is an undifferentiated entity. For aspects depend on the point of view that an observer (e.g., the *kouros*) adopts. Accordingly, depending on the perspective that the *kouros* will opt for, that is, depending on the sign he will start from, he will know a specific aspect of What-Is, which will grant him access to all the others. According to this approach, then, signs are conceived epistemologically: they are means to know What-Is that *do not* exist in What-Is as parts or constituents of What-Is. Although one might still say that an aspect is something that grants only a 'partial' access to What-Is, this holds true only from the perspective of a mortal who is in the *process of learning* all the signs of What-Is. Even if one wants to refer to parts, these parts are not

[560] In Early Greek literature the gods have an exclusive relation to the act of naming, especially if what is named is another deity. In contrast to gods, mortals, due to the fear of gods, rarely utter only the one *exact* name of a divinity. Rather, they prefer calling the gods appealing to many names (*polyonymos*), periphrases or descriptions based on their powers as a sign of respect, see Salvadore 1987 and Gambarara 1984. See e.g., Homer, *Il.* 1.36, Sappho, 1.1., Hesiod, *Th.* 784, *In Ap.* 82. As a result, the Goddess' act of naming 'What-Is' should be read in this context.

actual parts (i.e., names) of What-Is, but at best a way for mortals to describe and conceptualise What-Is with their language. Furthermore, even if possible, this 'partial' access to What-Is is only momentary, as by the end of **B8 DK** the *kouros* has captured all the aspects of What-Is as a single entity. The fact that each aspect can be deduced from another further shows how they cannot be separated, and ultimately constitute different ways of looking at an entity that is similar to itself throughout itself (i.e., 'one').

Thus, Parmenides' What-Is figures as something that is complex, but nonetheless 'one', where the way it is 'one' prefigures certain notions that will become crucial for Plato's mereology. As a result, Parmenides' What-Is ends up being in some ways close to what Plato considers a 'whole', and consequently different from an 'all'. However, at the same time, Parmenides' formulation is still not enough to satisfy especially Aristotle's more detailed conception of a 'whole'. Although in Parmenides the conception of a structured entity may be anticipated, but it is neither explicit nor as developed as Aristotle's. As a result, Parmenides' What-Is can be neither considered an 'all' nor a 'whole', but rather something that approximates the latter.

In order to argue for these views, this chapter is divided into two sections. In **Section A**, I provide an overview of **B8 DK**, which articulates the overall dynamic of the deductions of the Goddess and hopefully makes the

overarching strategy clearer. Here I will also provide an analysis of the different kinds of necessity that rule over What-Is. I will argue that each divine agent, who represents a different aspect of necessity (e.g., Justice, Fate), is linked to a specific sign of What-Is, and that this contributes to a better understanding of What-Is. In **Section B**, I will focus on specific features of the Goddess' strategy, in particular on her use of the notion of 'continuity' and 'similarity', and on the role of bonds. Delving into these specific aspects of **B8 DK** will allow us to come to some conclusions regarding how What-Is can be a structured entity, and in what sense Parmenides can be said to present a **Cumulative PWR**.

5. Overview

The Goddess opens her *mythos*, a specific form of discourse that is usually connected to authoritative figures,[561] by referring to the conclusion reached in **B7 DK** regarding the path to choose if one wants to understand What-Is. She proceeds to illustrate what are the 'signs' of What-Is that one finds on this path,

[561] For example, the Muses' revelation in Hesiod's *Theogony* is a *mythos*, Hesiod, *Th.* 24. *Mythos* usually denotes wise words (e.g., Homer, *Od.* 3.23) that explain something (Homer, *Od.* 3.94, 140) according to the truth.

emphasising that there are many. The clear echoes to Circe's strategy signal that, analogous to the case of Odysseus, the goal will be fully attained only at the end of the Goddess' scrutiny. Accordingly, the *kouros* will progressively learn those aspects of What-Is that will make its essence completely apparent. It is perhaps worth it mentioning that this strategy can be appreciated when one compares the beginning of **B8 DK** with its final lines (**ll.42–50**): at the beginning What-Is has an almost point-like essence, that is, something one-dimensional and difficult to visualise, while at the end What-Is is conceived of as a sphere, something three-dimensional, easy to visualise and perfect.[562] This already may hint that as the Goddess deduces its signs, What-Is progressively emerges from a basic to a more complex singularity.

As we already discussed, signs are fundamental in Homeric epistemology, because they illustrate clearly to the senses, and thus prove, the identity of something. Parmenides follows Homer regarding the relevance of signs, but at the same time he moves away from how Homeric tradition conceived them. First, even if in Homer 'signs' were already linked to the

[562] What-Is' point-like, almost immaterial character may be suggested by how its being 'now' is presented (**ll.4–5**). These lines do not require interpreting What-Is as something extended, whereas its progressive extension appears for example at **ll.23–5** or **45**, as the Goddess refers to the What-Is' being What-Is to the same degree in all the space it occupies, culminating with the Goddess' reference to the sphere.

divine dimension, this was not always the case (e.g., Penelope's case).[563] Furthermore, especially in such cases, in Homer signs often refer to aspects that are self-evident within everyday experience, which makes them graspable with ordinary sense perception. As a result, they cannot grasp genuine reality as it is expressed through What-Is. Furthermore, in a context where knowledge belongs to the elite or to the initiated,[564] signs will be steadily associated with the divine, which is not evident either to ordinary sense perception or ordinary people, so that they will require being exposed to a specific education or revelation to be accessed. They will need to be either interpreted or, as in Parmenides, directly revealed by a divine agent who has *noos*, that is, a divine thinking capacity that transcends mortal limitations.[565] The signs that the Goddess introduces in **B8 DK** cannot be understood (*noein*) through ordinary sense perception, because, by pointing to aspects that are not the object of everyday enquiry, these do not correspond to mortal categories of thought and experience.[566] Thus, they do not seem to be connected to mortal language, as in Parmenides everything that is divine is

[563] See for in addition Scodel 2002, Foley 1997, 72–81.
[564] On which see for example, Tor 2017.
[565] On this see, for example, Heraclitus, B93 DK, where Heraclitus says that the Delphic oracle neither speaks nor conceals, but rather provides 'signs' (*sēimanei*).
[566] As a result, the point is not whether the 'signs' of What-Is are physical or not (Mourelatos 2008, 25, n. 40), but what dimension they belong to. See Bryan 2012, 82–6.

contrasted with its mortal counterpart. If the *kouros* does grasp them, it is because his *thymos'* striving combined with the Goddess' consent made him access a divine dimension where, through her teaching, he could experience and understand what these extraordinary signs indicate. Parmenides' model to some extent seems in continuity with Homer, as inferences regarding What-Is' identity depend on being able to judge that something is really the case:

> Eurymachus, I do not bid you to provide me with guides!
> I have my own eyes, ears, and even both of my feet,
> not to mention a *noos* in my breast fashioned in no shameful way.
> I will exit the door with these, for I grasp an evil (*noeō kakon*) coming upon you
> that none of you suitors will escape or avoid,
> who here in the house of Odysseus equal to gods do violence to men and devise wicked folly (Homer, *Od.* 20.364–70)[567]

Interestingly, the godlike (*theoeidēs*) prophet Theoklymenos here grasps something that to him is a clear visible sign (though the word *sēma* is not used) through *noos*. These signs consisted in noticing or rather seeing and hearing

[567] Εὐρύμαχ', οὔ τί σ' ἄνωγα ἐμοὶ πομπῆας ὀπάζειν.
εἰσί μοι ὀφθαλμοί τε καὶ οὔατα καὶ πόδες ἄμφω
καὶ νόος ἐν στήθεσσι τετυγμένος, οὐδὲν ἀεικής·
τοῖσ' ἔξειμι θύραζε, ἐπεὶ νοέω κακὸν ὔμμιν
ἐρχόμενον, τό κεν οὔ τις ὑπεκφύγοι οὐδ' ἀλέαιτο
μνηστήρων, οἳ δῶμα κατ' ἀντιθέου Ὀδυσῆος
ἀνέρας ὑβρίζοντες ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάασθε.

aspects of the banquet that are unusual or even hidden from others' notice, such as tears and blood coming down from the suitors' faces or cries of desperation instead of laughter.[568] The way Theoklymenos grasps for a moment a godlike knowledge through a privileged access to reality may be considered comparable to Parmenides'. For in Homer there is a whole dimension that is beyond ordinary sense perception, which appeals to a specific sight and hearing, and makes those aspects of reality that transcend ordinary mortal experience not only visible and hearable, but apparent. However, since, according to this Homeric model, it is unclear how Theoklymenos in some way concludes that these signs necessarily lead to a tragic outcome, Parmenides cannot accept them as sufficient to justify or prove the essence of What-Is. This, in combination with Xenophanes' criticism of divinatory practices,[569] is probably why Parmenides grounds the consistency of such inferences by establishing a connection between the appropriate signs that are available to the few and *logos*, the latter being an aspect of necessity that guides one to draw necessary inferences. Whether or not certain signs express the essence of X depends on whether such signs follow according to *logos* or necessity. For it is necessity that grants that they belong to X. Given

[568] Homer, *Od.* 20.347–50.
[569] On which, see Tor 2017, 104–28.

that the essence of What-Is is obtained through a chain of necessary implications or deductions from one *sēma* to the other, it is important to first focus on how each sign connects to the other within the arguments found in **B8 DK** by appeal to the method elucidated in **B7 DK**.[570]

Although it is debated whether the list provided at the beginning of the fragment is exhaustive, the Goddess may have considered it sufficient to specify what What-Is is like, given that then she moves on to the *Doxa*. The signs of What-Is thus constitute essential aspects of What-Is, but at the same time, the fact that the *kouros* progressively finds more along his deductive journey suggests that, similar to Circe's signs, they can be used as a guide to make his understanding more precise and confirm that he is approximating to a fuller cognition of What-Is.[571]

There is no consensus regarding how the list of the signs should be approached. Scholars not only recognise different sets of signs, privileging some over others according to their agenda, but they also disagree regarding what signs should be considered only mentioned rather than fully discussed within the deduction of **B8 DK**. At times scholars argue that one sign is not

[570] Cf. Mansfeld 1964, 104 and his conception of the *sēmata* as *implikativen Zeichen*.
[571] Cf. Curd 2004, 67, who maintains that the signs are both characteristics of What-Is and principles to follow to reach an adequate account of What-Is, and Palmer 2009, 139.

discussed at all, at others that it is mentioned and discussed several times, not to mention that depending on a scholar's premises certain arguments can be taken to draw very different conclusions.[572] Given these difficulties, neither the list and subdivision nor the reconstruction of the arguments that I am proposing is to be taken as definitive. Rather, it should be viewed as a guide to make sense of Parmenides' argumentative strategy and its outcomes, so as to expand on the interrelations between the signs of What-Is, which may lead to a better understanding of it and, consequently, his **PWR**. The signs the Goddess mentions at the beginning are the following:

1. Ungenerated (*agenētos*) (6–18)
2. Indestructible (*anōlethros*) (18–22)

[572] Some even struggled to find within the fragment the discussion regarding all the features the Goddess mentions at the beginning, for example, Cornford 1939, 35–6, Guthrie 1965, 28, 34 n.1, who argue that the list goes on to include timelessness. Mourelatos 2008, 91 mentions: 1. Ungenerable, 'perhaps' (91) 'unperishing' (8.6–21), 2. Continuous, or indivisible (8.22–5), 3. Immobile (8.26–31), 4. 'not incomplete' (8.32–3), 5. Completed (8.42–9) He understands lines 35–41 to be on thought and reality without being part of the deduction. Austin 1986, 52, distinguishes three main groups of signs: 1. Time: ungenerable and imperishable, 2. Place and Mass: whole and of a single kind, unmoving, 3. Sphere: proof of 'perfect'. Curd 2004, 69, mentions only four signs: 1. Ungenerable and indestructible; 2. Indivisible; 3. Immobile; 4. Complete or perfect. I find it difficult to group signs such as complete and perfect together as if they imply the same thing, because, as the rest of the argument suggests, even if one implies the other and *vice versa* because they are similar and both belong to What-Is, this does not make them the same thing. McKirahan 2008, selects six groups of signs: 1. Ungenerated, imperishable; 2. Whole, complete, all together, holding together; 3. Never was, will not be, is now, 4. Changeless, motionless, 5. Steadfast; 6. Unique, one. Palmer 2009, 140–58 distinguishes: 1. Ungenerated and Deathless (8.5–21), 2. Whole and Uniform (8.22–5), 3. Still (8.26–33), 4. Perfect (8.42–9).

3. Of a single kind (*mounougenes*) (22–8)[573]
4. Whole (*oulon*) (28–38)[574]
5. Untrembling (*atremes*) (26–31, 38–41)
6. Accomplished (*teleston*) (42–50)[575]

Scholars generally agree that the arguments are deductive, though there is some disagreement regarding the type of deductions involved.[576] As already Kirk-Raven-Schofield noted, the overall argument is continuous,[577] which, while showing how it is probably not the best to ignore the interrelation between signs, surely it makes it hard to individuate and focus appropriately on each theoretical cluster. Nonetheless, I have attempted to divide the fragment according to the Goddess' enumeration of the signs. Each subsection will focus on the relevant lines of **B8 DK** indicated in the brackets. 'Ungenerated' and 'indestructible' could be discussed together, given that they deal with different aspects of the same type of change, at least inasmuch

[573] Mansfeld 1964, 98 takes lines 22–5 to be about 'all alike', 'one', and 'continuous'. However, as it will become clear from the analysis, while these signs are addressed within those lines, these are not what the argumentative cluster is about, as it revolves around being indestructible. McKirahan 2008, 193 on the other hand, does not devote to this feature of What-Is a dedicated discussion because he believes that the Goddess advances no argument for it and that it coincides with those for 'ungenerated'.
[574] But according to Untersteiner 1958, CXLVI 'whole' is implicitly discussed in lines 22–5.
[575] According to Curd 2004, 87, this sign is discussed in two places, namely, ll.32–3 and 42–9, Schofield 1970 considers 42–9 Parmenides' argument for What-Is' equipoise.
[576] KRS 1982, 272, Coxon 2008, 312, cf. Owen 1960, who maintains that Parmenides' arguments are horizontal deductions, while Barnes 1982, 140 rejects the idea that they are *horizontally* deductive.
[577] KRS 1983, 273, Barnes 1982, 139, Fränkel 1960 talks of a chain of reasons (Begrundungskette).

as they rule out any sort of coming into being from what is not and into what is not. However, the fact that something is ungenerated does not make it directly indestructible. Because of this, I believe that each of the two deserves a specific subsection. **Lines 22–41** constitute a controversial theoretical cluster, because it is at times problematic to determine where a specific sign is discussed (if it is discussed at all!). For example, 'untrembling' (or 'unchanging') seems to be discussed within the deduction of 'of a single kind' and 'whole', but at the same time under a different respect later. This is a further reason why these subdivisions must be considered a working tool, rather than something set in stone. Perhaps, the difficulty regarding our capacity to isolate univocally theoretical units for each sign can be eased if we take notice that 'of a single kind', 'whole', and 'untrembling' or 'unchanging' are conceptually close to 'indestructible'. Each of them can be considered a specification of the idea of not facing destruction (though 'of a single kind' and 'whole' not so much *prima facie*), so that it becomes even harder to keep considerations for each one aspect separated: by expressing 'indivisibility', 'of a single kind' specifies that destruction for What-Is would be, if it were divisible. 'Whole', on the other hand, would suggest that indivisibility is not sufficient to be 'indestructible', as being indivisible does not automatically imply that there is nothing missing from What-Is, and that being complete is

also required. If something were not included in What-Is, this would make it subject to destruction, because it would introduce change within its constitution. Lastly, 'untrembling' or 'unchanging' could be seen as a kind of indestructability provided that any sort of change within What-Is amounts to destroying its inner constitution. Thus, given their conceptual proximity the specific arguments for each of these signs could be harder to distinguish from one another within the overall argument, without affecting their being different signs. As to 'accomplished', scholars overall agree that it is aptly placed at the end of the fragment, and this makes sense from a compositional point of view, too.[578]

5.1 Ungenerated (*agenētos*) (6–18)

Scholars usually discuss 'ungenerated' together with 'indestructible', given the hendiadys that connects the two signs. However, since each of the two has

[578] McKirahan 2008 can be considered an exception to this consensus, as he believes that What-Is' being accomplished is deduced at lines 32–3, because of the term 'unaccomplished' (*ateleutēton*). The same observation is valid for Hesiod's Muses in *Th*. 31–4 (on which, see Purves 2004, according to whom Zeus' rule can be considered an eternal 'now'). However, there is at least one major difference between the Homeric-Hesiodic understanding of 'now'. The Hesiodic gods are generated *at some point in time* within the *Theogony*. Even if they are 'now', there is a strong emphasis on the diachronic and processual aspect of time that opens to change and thus to being unaccomplished on their part.

its own specificities, I will discuss them separately. The argument starts with the statement that What-Is is 'now' (*nun*), rather than in the past or in the future, which serves to show that it is 'ungenerated', and in what sense it has to be so. The Parmenidean formulation recalls **T10**, where the Muses were considered omniscient due to their being always present (*pareste*). As it is a way mortals use to describe their status, 'present' implies that the Muses are equally witnesses of all past and future events, so that any differentiation within time does not really apply to them. The fact that at a single glance they know all things all at once tells us that their existence is similar to a constant 'now' or 'present', where everything of the world, be it an event or an entity, can be known. This condition is opposed to that of mortals and everything else, which is subject to change. The Homeric 'present' can be comparable to Parmenides' 'now', because, for the Muses, only the present moment exists as something that may be ultimately considered either a 'complete' time or 'timeless' present.[579] Nevertheless, granted that What-Is is 'now' in one way or the other, What-Is is subject to it in its entirety (i.e., as something that includes what mortals call present, past, and future).[580] With this I am not

[580] See the review of the possible interpretations in Sorabji 1983, 99–108, and also Palmer 2009, 140–50. The debate seems to have started with Owen 1960, who believed it to be 'timeless' (together with Guthrie 1965, 29–30, and against Fränkel 1960, Tarán 1965, Stokes 1971, 128–30,

saying that Parmenides is not critical of how Homer and Hesiod would have conceived the gods as beings that are temporal; rather I am trying to show what Parmenides' background models for Parmenides.[581] What is important is that, since the distinction between past, present and future makes sense only in mortal terms, as the divine dimension does not partake in time in the same way, we can better understand why Parmenides says that What-Is is 'all alike' (*homou pan*). Although this characterisation along with 'one' and 'continuous', are not devoid of spatial determinations (which we will see at play in the following signs[582] with comparable results e.g., qualitative similarity), the point here is mainly temporal. Thus, these all serve to explain in what sense What-Is is 'now', and hence they do not seem to me to be part of a 'subsidiary programme' of signs, as Palmer believes.[583]

Robinson 1987, 58– 9, Gallop 1984, 13–4 who rejected this idea). While these interpretations did not distinguish the status of What-Is from that of the verb 'to be', Mourelatos 2008, 103–11 rightly distinguishes between the timeless or not timeless use of the verb 'to be' and What-Is as a timeless or not entity. Furthermore, he is unsure whether Parmenides considered What-Is as something in an ever-present time or as a timeless entity. Similar ideas can be found in Barnes 1982, 192–4.

[581] See for example, Heraclitus, B30 DK who says that the cosmic fire 'was, is, and will be'.

[582] Though the temporal reading seems the most obvious, I do not think that the spatial one should be rejected, but as Palmer 2009, 145 rightly points out, these considerations become relevant within the discussion of signs such as 'of one kind', 'whole'. For the reference to the concept of growing (*auxanetai*) implies spatiality (**l.7**). On this, see Owen 1960, and the discussion on *syneches* in **5.7.1**, on the role 'one' and 'continuous' have in the next signs see also Schofield 1970, Coxon 2008, Guthrie 1965.

[583] Palmer 2009, 142. For alternative reconstructions of the argument, see Mourelatos 2008, 98–104, Coxon 2008, 317–24, Curd 2004, 76–7. Curd tries to establish a connection between the

The introduction of 'all alike' (*homou pan*) allows Parmenides to introduce two features that are conceptually related to it, namely, 'one' (*hen*) and 'continuous' (*syneches*). The latter especially stresses the absence of gaps in What-Is' constitution, without however granting that What-Is can be conceived as something totally undifferentiated. For 'continuous' opens to the possibility that 'one' is attributed in a very specific sense which allows internal differentiations, and yet enough similarity to make What-Is internally connected. The example of the difference between 'now', 'past', and 'future' can be instructive, because What-Is appears to be temporally 'all alike' in a very specific sense that can include some internal differentiation or structure without resulting in a plurality. Furthermore, it suggests compatibility between aspects which under a certain perspective make What-Is qualitatively 'one'.

After introducing these basic conceptions at play for deducing the ungeneratedness of What-Is, the Goddess provides the necessary reasons to choose 'ungenerated' over 'generated' as a feature of What-Is. The Goddess presents a series of questions which direct the enquiry (*dizēsis*), according to the methodology of the 'scrutiny' found in **B7 DK.** The Goddess first reprises

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argument Parmenides is making and other Early Greek philosophical views about generation and destruction.

the thesis that *noein* can be only of What-Is. Furthermore, through the οὔτ'…οὐδέ and then οὐ…οὐδὲ she builds a parallelism and correlation between 'affirming' (*phasthai*) and *noein* and between *phaton* and *noēton*,[584] so that *noein* becomes linked to What-Is.[585] 'Affirming' is a relevant addition in respect of **B7 DK**. For its root connects with φήμη,[586] the speech prompted by a divine agent that reveals the truth about something and the idea of having an opinion or belief,[587] which is embedded in φάσκω. [588] The two meanings do not necessarily clash with one another, at least if one specifies that the opinions to which the Goddess refers are genuine beliefs regarding What-Is. Thus, affirming can be seen as a prerogative of divine communication and language that can be grouped with the *logos* of **B7 DK**, in contrast with mortal speech and naming.

The reasons the Goddess offers function as the *logos*, which points to absurdities and inconsistencies to convince the *kouros*' thinking faculty to

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[584] According to Denniston 1934, 194–6 these uses can be referred as 'responsive' of the second kind, where οὔτ'…οὐδέ and οὐ…οὐδὲ serve to give a reason, but at the same time it can work as a hendiadys with καί, on which, see 323–24, cf. Aubenque 1987, 50.

[585] The connection between speaking and *noein* cf. already Barnes 1982, 158 and Palmer 2009, 72. B6 DK presents *legein* and noein paired together, but only in **B8 DK** do we find the pair *phasthai* and *noein*. That *phasthai* should refer to a divine way of speaking may be further encouraged by Hesiod, *Th*. 29, 167, 306 *Op.* 662, 558, where the verbs qualify exclusively the speech of gods to mortals and of gods among gods, see Leclerc 1996, 34–5 for a complete list.

[586] E.g., Homer, *Od.* 2.35, 20.100.

[587] **B8.12 DK**.

[588] E.g., Homer, *Od*. 17.584, *Il.* 8.153, *Il.* 2.37.

draw the appropriate inference. In other words, they can be considered a manifestation of the necessary *logos*. Accordingly, in order to answer the previous questions she introduced, the Goddess says that she *will not let* the *kouros* think (*noein*) and affirm (*phasthai*) that it is possible that something is 'born', 'generated' (*gennan*), or 'obtained' from what is not. For the motivation offered by the Goddess is an inescapable law of necessity that applies to how the *kouros* thinks: he cannot think or affirm anything about such an entity because there would be no resulting affirmation (*phaton*) or thought (*noēton*) (i.e., no existing object of reference) correspondent to it. Next, the Goddess reinforces this idea with another argument that proceeds from necessity: nothing compels What-Is to grow or generate (*phyn*) at a certain moment in time rather than another, because possibility does not imply necessity. Thus, in the case of What-Is there is *necessarily* no birth for it. The vocabulary that Parmenides uses has something biological to it, as Coxon argued, and indicates the idea of growing, developing and thus changing (*auxesis*, *phyomai*).[589] Such expressions cannot refer to What-Is, but they could apply to the phenomena. The whole argument could thus be a way to necessarily exclude that What-Is is generated, while maintaining the possibility that

[589] See Coxon 2008, 317.

something different from it exists at a lesser degree *qua* subject to generation (i.e., the phenomena). In other words, this line of thought would grant What-Is' necessary essence, while at the same time making room for what is 'possible' rather than necessary. As a result, Parmenides would justify the *Doxa* and its principles, because growth and generation are possible only if there is something that necessarily is (i.e., What-Is), which makes everything else possible. [590]

After these two arguments, the use of οὕτως (**l.11**) indicates that the Goddess is approaching to the conclusion regarding this sign, introducing some final considerations to further grant that What-Is is ungenerated. [591] Accordingly, she reprises the point made at **l.5**, where, on the basis of the idea that What-Is is always 'present' (*nyn*), it is 'all alike' (*homou pan*), and thus 'one' and 'continuous'. Here the Goddess deploys the term 'altogether' (*pampan*) to indicate that, in line with its being 'now', What-Is is 'altogether' because it is

[590] This has generally gone unnoticed by scholars except McKirahan 2008, 193, who noted that the Goddess' argument simply rules out the possibility of generation and growth if there is nothing at all.

[591] McKirahan 2008, 194–5 argues against the idea that οὕτως indicates the conclusion of this argument, and overall, I agree but on different grounds. According to him, *pampan* by meaning 'completely' is equivalent with accomplished (*teleion*), which is discussed only later, but given the difficulty to understand how this result would be relevant for the argument about being ungenerated οὕτως cannot indicate the conclusion. In a nutshell, we can say that part of the problem in McKirahan's reasoning is that he takes *pampan* to be identical to *teleion*, when they only apparently mean the same thing. For a similar reconstruction of the role of these lines in Parmenides' argument, see Evans 2021, 13–15.

fully formed and 'one' in the sense of including everything, either temporally or spatially. This however does not mean that this term is indistinguishable from 'accomplished' (*teleion*), which stresses different aspects of not lacking anything.[592] *Homou pan* and *pampan* primarily express a specific sense of being some one thing, and only secondarily do they refer to completeness. Furthermore, in this context, Parmenides uses these terms in a very specific and limited sense that serves to illustrate that, since What-Is is 'now', 'all alike', 'one', and 'continuous', it must be 'altogether' an 'ungenerated' unity. Next, again resorting to her power to forbid certain inferences, the Goddess emphasises the role of belief in determining the status of generation from What-Is-Not: just as before it followed that only something that is can derive from What-Is, now strong belief (*pistis ischus*) will avoid that anything besides What-Is-Not can be generated from What-Is-Not.[593]

The Goddess concludes the whole discussion on 'ungenerated' by referring to Justice, which is a divine and cosmological expression of necessity. This is an interesting move, as up until now the Goddess has appealed to the *kouros*' own ability to see and use necessity through his *logos*. Why the

[592] McKirahan 2008.
[593] On the role of belief within **B8 DK** as another personified divinity, see Mourelatos 2008, 136–63, Tor 2023.

Goddess should feel the need to refer to Justice as a divine agent remains unclear, unless one recalls two things. First, as it emerged before in respect to Epicharmus, in Parmenides there seems to be a double understanding of *logos*: on the one hand, the *kouros* can deploy it as something that is his own[594] probably as an object of thought, while on the other, it is a reality that pertains to all that to some degree is, including the cosmological dimension. Secondly, in addition to being an object of thought, What-Is must be a reality endowed with a cosmological dimension. Thus, it seems unproblematic that Parmenides places it in a divine dimension that is beyond ordinary experience and the phenomena. Thus, one can hypothesise that, not only does What-Is need to be accounted for through the *kouros*' individual *logos*, but also through a form of cosmological necessity, such as Justice.[595] The image of Justice loosening her fetters is quite common in Epic and cosmological contexts, for example, in the chaining of the Titans in Hesiod's *Theogony* or in many Homeric passages.[596] Nonetheless, here Parmenides is providing the reference to Epic with a strong philosophical relevance. Justice's act of holding What-Is 'altogether'

[594] Coxon 2008, 318 too seems to notice something similar, at least inasmuch as he maintains that through the language of the *logos* the Goddess acts as a guarantor of necessity for *human beings*, which opens up the possibility that there is, as I have argued, another kind of necessity, consistent with the mortal one, but active at a broader level, that is, a cosmological necessity.
[595] For the idea that Justice expresses a necessity that also holds logically cf. Curd 2004, 79.
[596] E.g., Hesiod, *Th*. 807–18, Homer, *Il.* 22.5, 4.517, *Od.* 8.274–99, 12.160–4.

materially ensures that it is neither born, nor destroyed. For bonding impedes action, leading thus to a situation where there can be no change. If change were possible, What-Is would not be necessarily 'now'. Thus, the lack of stillness would introduce the possibility of destruction, which is discussed in what follows.[597] So, in conclusion, once the arguments for being 'ungenerated' have been addressed from both the individual perspective and the cosmological perspective, the Goddess can select what is necessary (*anagkē*) to attribute to What-Is, in continuity with the basic *krisis* presented in **B7 DK** between 'is' and 'is not': being 'ungenerated', which is consistent with the path 'that is', must be selected.[598] Although this clear reprise of **B7 DK**'s *krisis* is a unicum, the following deductions implicitly employ the same procedure. For the signs chosen always pertain to the path 'that is'.

5.2 Corollary: Indestructible (*anōlethros*) (18–22)

'Indestructability' is mentioned explicitly for the first time in lines 13–4, where the Goddess draws to her conclusions regarding 'ungenerated'. Since it is derived deductively as a corollary or consequence of being ungenerated,

[597] Cf. Curd 2004, 69.

[598] The Goddess mentions a path that is unthinkable (*anoēton*) in the privileged sense typical of divine dimension, and this path is without name (*anōnumon*). It is unclear whether this path refers univocally to What-Is-Not or rather to the phenomena. On this see Palmer 2009.

scholars treat indestructability together with 'ungenerated'.[599] Although I agree with this, it still seems to me that this sign is emphasised, though briefly and with a series of remarks that build on being 'ungenerated'. The fact that something is 'ungenerated' *per se* does not seem to guarantee that it is equally indestructible. Nevertheless, even though it is unquestionable that, at least ever since Ionian philosophy, the basic constituents of reality have been considered 'imperishable'. For even if What-Is is not subject to an actual destruction into nothing, it could face a structural change which would be comparable to 'death', which the term ὄλεθρος usually implies.[600] Thus, by change into something else, in this sense it would be perishable. From a textual perspective, the reprise of some aspects discussed regarding 'ungenerated', which would otherwise be difficult to justify, seems to be preparatory to a corollary on 'imperishable'. Thus, it is odd that Parmenides does not feel the need to address this aspect explicitly.

The deduction of 'indestructible' starts with questions that build on what has just been excluded as absurd. The Goddess asks how What-Is (which is

[599] E.g., Mourelatos 2008, 96, McKirahan 2008, a proper argument for 'imperishable' could be read into the text only by accepting an unnecessary emendation at **l.8.19** (see Coxon 2008, 322–24) which would lead to read ἔπειτ' ἀπόλοιτο ἐόν (could, moreover, perish, what is) in place of ἔπειτα πέλοι τὸ ἐόν (could what is be afterward).

[600] E.g., Homer, *Il.* 11.174, 10.174, 6.143, *Od.* 4.489.

'now') could come into being (*peloi*) at a later moment, and how it would have been born.[601] When the Goddess says that even if it was born, that is, if it was in the past, this would imply that it is not 'now', she refers back to the argument of **l.5**, so that it cannot be What-Is. Furthermore, the same follows when one supposes that it could be at a later point, because both cases require generation which can neither have happened nor be happening.[602] The impossibility of responding to these questions and the previous conclusions are sufficient to rule out completely that any kind of destruction relates to its essence; destruction is thus 'unheard of'. Still, as we will see, even if What-Is escapes this specific kind of change, this does not mean that it is also free of other types of change that could impact its essence differently and lead it to a certain kind of destruction.

a. Justice (*Dikē*)

Divine agents within Parmenides' poem are crucial for his conception of What-Is. Not only is Justice the first one to appear in the context of **B8 DK**, but

[601] I agree with McKirahan 2008, 196 that here Parmenides is not addressing the atemporality or everlastingness of What-Is, but rather its *per absurdum* possible generation in the future.
[602] See the discussion in Palmer 2009, 147–50.

she is actually also the first one to appear in the poem as a whole. Already in **B1 DK** she holds the keys that rule over the interchange (ἀμοιβή) between Night and Day. This information allows us to infer that Justice is a divine agent that acts in both the realm of the phenomena and that of What-Is. In respect of the phenomena her role is in line with tradition: beyond being called 'much-punishing', as in Hesiod,[603] she is represented as a retributive agent that directs the cosmos according to justice, that is, according to just retribution (ἀμοιβή).[604] The use of ἀμοιβή to refer to the cyclic interchange between Night and Day highlights the idea that the alternation of opposites proceeds according to what is due. This fact is consistent with the traditional belief that justice is a divine power that acts to ensure that the processes of the cosmos and everything in it, including mortals, are harmonious.[605] As a result, she is connected to the concept of equality and due measure.[606] Since Justice is responsible for change within the phenomena she is also particularly linked to the idea of time-flow, its regularity and the inevitability of things, which is

[603] Hesiod, *Th.* 222ff, 256ff, see Pfeiffer 1975, 97–8 for the parallelisms between Hesiod's depiction of Justice and Parmenides'.
[604] See for example Hesiod, *Op.* 332–334, where the idea is that one has to retribute what is due just or unjust actions, and Homer, *Il.* 19.180, where the idea is that one will not receive more than what is just.
[605] On this see Lloyd-Jones 1971, 161–2.
[606] E.g., Aristophanes, *Nub.* 1292. On this see already Greene 1944, 224, Vlastos 1947, Harrison 1974, 516–8, 531–5.

indicated by her directing the necessary diurnal cycle:[607] the alternation between Night and Day according to certain times happens always according to the same fixed rules.[608] Be it the goddess herself or her abstraction, being able to act according to justice requires knowledge. Since she is linked to solving conflicts, Justice requires one to choose a penalty and judge according to what is right[609] even in legal contexts.[610] Furthermore, traditionally Justice is an active power who is personally responsible for the natural laws at play in the phenomena, and an agent who maintains order within the cosmos, ruling out conflicts, by always knowing what is due. Notably, as Fränkel argues on the basis of its use in medical works, Justice never acts through violence (*bia*).[611]

In Parmenides, in addition to these aspects, Justice is also equally responsible for What-Is,[612] so that, similar to Necessity and Fate later on in the poem, she can be considered an expression of the necessity that both the Goddess and the *logos* represent.[613] However, the way Justice acts on What-Is

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[607] See e.g., Herodotus, 87.8, Euripides, *Hec*. 1240–2.

[608] E.g., Homer, *Od.* 11.218–22, 19.168, 14.58–9, *Il.* 1.542, 8.431. For this aspect of Justice independent of considerations on Parmenides cf. Yamagata 1994, 62, see Greene 1944, 14, 224, Hirzel 1907, 56–64, Harrison 1974, 516–8.

[609] E.g., Homer *Od*. 2.282, 13.209, 11. 569–70, Il. 16388, Solon fr. 4, Hesiod, *Op*. 220–4, 213–28, Yamagata 1994, 61–71, 78.

[610] E.g, Hesiod, *Op.* 219, 250, Homer *Il.* 18.508.

[611] Fränkel 1960, 170–2.

[612] Evans 2021, Fränkel 1960, 165, Tarán 1965, 117, Austin 1986, 106, Coxon 2008, 320, Cordero 2004, 171–2.

[613] Cf. Curd 2004, 79: 'The image of Justice holding what-is tightly in fetters shows that Parmenides thought that these claims hold of necessity'. While I agree with this view, it will

differs from how she acts on the phenomena, because what is just for What-Is differs from what is just for the phenomena: Justice's role in the former case is to maintain the bonds that force What-Is to be changeless, rather than administrating its change. Notwithstanding this, the details of her action and her relation to What-Is are not clear. If we analyse the passage in **B8 DK** in which Justice figures, her role emerges as the force that allows What-Is to be separated from the phenomena and their laws.[614] According to Bollack this implies that, given her connections to the act of making judgements, Justice has the power to include and exclude what is that pertains to What-Is.[615] This reading surely has its merits and brings to the fore the philosophical relevance of Parmenides' forensic terminology, which is at play even in the Goddess' scrutiny.[616] In **B8 DK** Justice's act of holding What-Is permits the decision (*krisis*) regarding whether or not generation pertains to What-Is. Furthermore, such a decision also highlights Justice's close relation to Necessity (not yet personified)[617] as an aspect of the *logos* that the *kouros* must respect because

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also become clear within this discussion of **B8 DK** that each divinity represents a different kind of necessity specifically designed to grant specific conclusions regarding What-Is.

[614] Bollack 2006, 91, Fränkel 1960, 165 n. 2 in particular.

[615] Bollack 2006, 155–6.

[616] On this, see Heidel 1913, 718–23, Bryan 2012, 80–1, although I agree with Mourelatos 2008, 150, when he says that 'one must concede that the juridical vocabulary in Parmenides is too general to sustain the specific image of action in court'.

[617] On the relation between Justice, and Necessity, but also Fate, and Right, see e.g., Hesiod, *Op.* 259. Greene 1944, Pfeiffer 1975, 113 maintain that they can be used as synonyms, but as is

Justice makes sure that the right conclusion follows.[618] At the same time, the introduction of Justice in a context most pertinent to natural philosophy or cosmology must not be overlooked: what the Goddess is also doing is presenting What-Is as something that belongs to all of reality.

As some have argued, Justice should be present *within* all of What-Is, and yet she is represented as something outside of What-Is and distinguished from it, which could conflict with the idea that What-Is is all that is.[619] However, it is also true that not all that exists in Parmenides must have the same ontological status of What-Is.[620]

In conclusion, just as other divine agents in the course of **B8 DK**, Justice is active on two fronts that usually go together in Greek Epic, that is, words and deeds: on the one hand Justice literally binds What-Is to prevent it from being subject to generation and destruction, while on the other it conceptually binds it to follow the necessary laws of the scrutiny.[621] Justice makes What-Is an object appropriate for an enquiry that at first may appear cosmological, but

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apparent already from this discussion of Justice, each goddess has a specific scope of action, and is concerned with a certain feature of What-Is. cf. also the account of Justice in Fränkel 1960, 163–73.

[618] Cf. Pfeiffer 1975, 100–101.

[619] This aspect was noticed already by Vlastos 1947, 362, Mourelatos 2008, 153.

[620] On this, see Tor 2017, Kraus 2006, 133–5, Bryan 2012, with reference to *eikota* as a positive attribute for the Goddess' account of the phenomena.

[621] Cf. Fränkel 1960, 161.

is so much more, inasmuch as it stabilises[622] its essence, removing the possibility that it is set in time. Thus, in a way, as Evans correctly stressed, while Justice is a cause for What-Is to be the way it is, she is also a normative power that sets the rules for its being in a certain way.[623] However, her role she does not seem to overlap completely with that of the other divine agents mentioned in **B8 DK.**

5.3 Of a single kind (*mounougenes*) (22–8)

The argument regarding being 'whole' and 'of a single kind', sometimes understood as 'unique', starts off directly from the corollary on indestructability. This suggests that divisibility may be considered something other than destructibility that threatens the essence of What-Is. With *mounogenes* Parmenides seems to specify in what sense not only What-Is is 'one' and therefore 'indivisible', but also in what sense it can be 'whole'. Parmenides' use of μουνογενής may be clarified by discussing how Hesiod employs this term. Hesiod uses μουνογενής in three places,[624] two of which refer to divinities who are single-born because they are an only child, so it

[622] On the stabilising character of Justice, see Evans 2021, Cherubin 2004, 16.
[623] Evans 2021, 33, cf. Fränkel 1960, 173.
[624] Hesiod, *Th.* 426, 448, *Op. 376.*

could be that the term in Parmenides must be translated as 'single-born'. However, it is also true that this would generate tensions with Parmenides' thesis that What-Is is not generated. Furthermore, as Mourelatos has pointed out,[625] Parmenides here may be polemically referring to a specific point of Hesiod's *Works and Days* to criticise his conception of the gods, in particular Strife. Hesiod maintains that there is not just one birth of Strife, but two, so that there are two Strifes.[626] What Hesiod has in mind here is that these two Strifes are sisters very similar to one another (one might compare them to heterozygotic twins), yet not identical, and even opposed in their functions. In order to emphasise their similarity as conflict-generators, Hesiod's strategy seems to be that of making them bear the same name while keeping them numerically and to some extent functionally distinct.[627] By rejecting Strife's monogenetic birth, Hesiod ultimately employs the idea of siblinghood to illustrate both the difference and yet the similarity between the two Strifes. In other words, he bifurcates Strife into two types that nonetheless bear the same name. Although Hesiod's strategy generates *two* entities, he provides them

[625] Mourelatos 2008, 113–4. I reconstruct the reference to Hesiod slightly differently from Mourelatos.
[626] Hesiod, *Op.* 11–12.
[627] In Hesiod, *Op.* 11–27, both types of Strife have spirits opposed to each other: one brings war and conflict, while the other is better for men, as she prompts men to become better versions of themselves.

with only one name. However, since names serve to individuate precisely one essence, this result is contradictory.[628] For the fact that both Strifes are distinguished functionally should require two names for them. As a result, according to Parmenides, Hesiod may be culpable of resulting into an untenable dualism, as he makes something that is one, being individuated by a single term, many, due to being numerically and functionally distinct.

What results from this is that whatever translation we apply to μουνογενής, in Parmenides it cannot refer to an actual act of generation in time. It can however, refer to having been conceived of as an entity endowed with a structure that is one because it is internally consistent without being necessarily homogeneous. Rather, it should be 'monogeneous', and in this respect 'of a single kind',[629] because the way μουνογενής is used in authors comparable to Parmenides, such as Hesiod, does not suggest homogeneity, but rather a sense of belonging that may introduce likeness to one another rather than identity, which is most appropriately associated to homogeneity.[630] In this sense, What-Is shares a feature which usually belongs to living being,

[628] On Hesiod's use of names to determine precisely an essence and the correspondence between name and thing, see Vergados 2020.
[629] Against the view that considers that μουνογενής means homogeneous see, for example, Curd 2004, 81, with whom I agree.
[630] See e.g., Hesiod, *Op.* 376, Herodotus, 7.221, where being of a single kin does not entail being homogeneous. Particularly interesting are Plato, *Tim.* 31b3, 92c9, where Plato's use of μονογενής echoes Parmenides, but it is attributed to the cosmos.

that is, being some one thing *without* being perfectly homogeneous. If these are Parmenides' points of departure, then it becomes likely that, by granting that What-Is is 'indivisible', Parmenides is not so much embracing a numerical monism, but rather qualitative similarity, which in this case is expressed by *pan estin homoion* and echoes the *homou pan* found within the discussion of 'ungenerated'.

The Goddess builds her argument for indivisibility on two signs of What-Is mentioned before, namely, 'continuity' (*syneches*) and being 'all alike' (*pan homoion*). However, she considers them from different perspectives.[631] The language here is unmistakably spatial, almost material,[632] as here we are talking about spatial rather than temporal divisibility, and later the goddess clearly denies the possibility that there is more or less What-Is in this region of space rather than in the other. The Goddess considers that either one or the other of these signs is sufficient to grant that What-Is is 'of a single kind'. She does not tell us explicitly, but as it becomes apparent from her arguments, this is because, continuity and being all alike mutually imply one another.[633] Thus,

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[631] Therefore, disagree with McKirahan 2008, 199, that this part is clarificatory and is not part of an actual argument.

[632] For this position Mourelatos 2008, 111, contrary to this line of interpretation Táran 1965, 108; Coxon 2008, 194 is rather unclear in his saying that What-Is is presented as not extended in space, and the unity is to be understood as an indivisibility in a non-spatial entity.

[633] This was already possibly foreshadowed at l.8.5–6, where from 'now' follow 'all alike', 'continuous', and 'one'. Within the argument 'all alike', 'continuous', and 'one' serve to

as both terms guarantee its being a single entity, starting from either one or the other to argue that What-Is is 'of a single kind' does not really make any difference.[634]

From her initial argument, which employs 'all alike' (*pan estin homoion*), the Goddess deduces What-Is' being indivisible (*oude diaireton*) in two movements, first relying on 'more' and then on 'less'. One would be able to infer that What-Is is divisible only if it were possible to modify its structure so to produce a lack of similarity that would make it 'in some area somewhat more (*mallon*)' (**l.23**), and in another 'less' (*cheiroteron*) (**l.24**). Clearly, the inner similarity of What-Is is affected by either adding something that is *not*, or by subtracting something that *is*.[635] Generally speaking, when it comes to 'adding' the problem is not the addition itself. For given its inner similarity, even if one could add 'more' What-Is to What-Is this would not affect its inner structure. Nevertheless, due to the established principle that What-Is only comes from What-Is, no such a change would be ever possible. One can even question that

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strengthen the idea that, for What-Is being is something that happens continuously, and in a 'now' that is one. For there is no major distinction between 'present', 'past', and 'future'. Being 'all alike' implies 'continuity', just as 'continuity' implies being 'all alike', and all in turn imply being 'one'.

[634] As a result, the argument Parmenides develops is a conditional of the following form: where A=all alike, B=Continuous, C=indivisible, then $(A \rightarrow C) \wedge (B \rightarrow C)$, which is equivalent to $(A \vee B) \rightarrow C$.

[635] On this point, see Curd 2004, 78.

the vey act of adding something has happened: for What-Is would still be cohering (*sunechesthai*) with What-Is totally unaffected. Consequently, only adding something that is not to What-Is would we be actually adding something to it, so as to produce an alteration in its constitution. As a result, What-Is would become internally dissimilar, discontinuous with itself and divisible or divided (*diairetos*), depending on how one understands the meaning of the adjective in Greek.[636] However, such a result is impossible too, since it would contradict the principle expressed in **B8.12–3 DK** according to which only What-Is comes from What-Is, and that what is not comes only from What-Is-Not. Thus, since such an addition is impossible, divisibility is impossible, and with it a specific change in its constitution that would lead to destroying its essence.

Symmetrically, if one subtracted something from What-Is, What-Is would lack something. However, lacking something that is, would make What-Is have within its structure something that is not. For, it would make it dissimilar with itself, discontinuous, and thus subject to division. But this result is impossible for reasons analogous to the ones mentioned above. As a consequence, the fact that What-Is cannot be either 'more' or 'less' seems to

[636] See the discussion in Palmer 2009, 151.

imply both a similar density and a qualitative similarity, which leads the Goddess to conclude that What-Is is all full of What-Is (*empleon estin eontos*), and thus indivisible. Notice that Parmenides with this is not generally implying quantity as in the case of numbers, where each one can be spatially conceived as merely in contact with the another, but a continuum such as a surface. Given that ἔμπλεος provides a sense of abundance, and is used to qualify something that is full to the highest degree,[637] in this context it serves to emphasise that What-Is not only is *equally* but also *exclusively* full of being.

As to *mallon* and *cheiroteron*, they can feature a quantitative reading, where the idea would be that of having no difference in the density of What-Is, which seems to entail no qualitative difference within it: everything is equally full of What-Is. Another reading, which I find quite valuable, though not necessarily incompatible with the first one, is a 'sociological' reading.[638] According to it *mallon* would indicate what is 'better', while *cheiroteron* what is 'worse', so that one would obtain that there are entities that can be grouped together due to their being 'better' or 'worse'.[639] But since there is no better or

[637] E.g., Homer, *Od*. 14.113, Xenophanes, B22 DK.

[638] For this terminology, see Mourelatos 2008, 112.

[639] These terms are associated with the concept of dignity (*timē*), which is found in Empedocles in relation to the elements (B8, 24, 45, 48) and in tragedy, e.g., in Sophocles, *Ajax* 158–61. Here the opposition should be read in the light of the oppositions between *megaloi* and *baioi*, and *megas* and *smikros*.

worse within What-Is, there cannot be such a distinction. Thus, What-Is cannot be distinguished according to these two degrees of value. What I like about this second reading is that it more explicitly suggests the possibility that What-Is is not an undifferentiated entity. In other terms, the idea is not simply that What-Is is undifferentiated and even, but that everything within it has the same 'value', though it may differ in some aspect.

The Goddess' second argument is very brief and employs 'continuity' to analogously deduce that What-Is is indivisible. Continuity (*synecheia*) was already hinted at in the previous argument by the verb *sunechesthai*. Previously the Goddess started from 'all alike' to deduce indivisibility. Now the Goddess starts from continuity to show that it is indivisible, while also hinting to the concept of 'all alike' when she says that What-is 'clings' (*pelazei*) to What-Is, which is a different phrasing for the idea that What-Is does not admit of anything that is not. Furthermore, in order to 'cling' to What-Is, What-Is must be 'all alike' and *vice versa*. Thus, it is impossible to divide, given that division, like subtraction, can happen only by modifying its constitution, which means introducing something that is not in What-Is.

The meaning of *pelazei*[640] implies the coming in contact of two or more things as a result of an oriented motion. This verb creates a tension within Parmenides' conception of What-Is, and it may even seem to lead to a contradiction:[641] if the verb πελάζω implies motion, and above all the idea of uniting things that are separate, how can this not lead to the idea that What-Is is either divisible or subject to change? Parmenides dispels this apparent contradiction with a brief discussion of immobility or unchangeability introduced by αὐτάρ[642] and argued through the notion of 'untrembling'.[643]

Palmer considers that the Goddess' introduction of divine bonds to be sufficient to rule out both motion and change in genera.[644] This stance is consistent with how in Archaic times language itself was considered to act as a bond and thus to have a concrete effect on reality.[645] Indeed, ever since Homer and Hesiod, the objects of language are conceived of as concrete objects

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[640] Homer, *Il.* 13.1, 2.744, 4.123, 14.435, 15.418, *Od.* 21.93, which is particularly interesting because the act of bringing into contact implies a movement with a specific direction and end, *In Ap.* 504, *In Merc.* 523, Hesiod, *Op.* 431, 732.

[641] McKirahan 2008, 197 and Palmer 2009, 151, interpret this line as something 'figurative', but as I argue, there is no need to assume that Parmenides is using figurative language. Moreover, my reading does not face the difficulty of introducing a moment when What-Is is not near to What-Is, because in the preceding set of arguments for What-Is' ungeneratedness, the fact that What-Is is subject to time in an ordinary, mortal sense was dismissed.

[642] Together with Curd 2004, 84 I take the αὐτάρ as progressive rather than adversative, see Denniston 1934, 55.

[643] Already Tarán 1965, 109 pointed out that *akinēton* stands for *atremes* as it both indicates movement and qualitative change, cf. Curd 2004, 83.

[644] Palmer 2009, 154.

[645] On this, see Marston 2007.

of the world endowed with powers of limitation and constraint. One can think of the Homeric formula σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων,[646] where words are presented as something that can escape the threshold of the mouth, or other episodes, where the words one pronounces physically bind the subject to their effect.[647] In formal and cosmological terms, Hesiod uses ring composition to bind the Titans in Tartarus.[648] Thus, it should be unproblematic that such bonds also exclude the possibility of divisibility and change normally implied by the verb *pelazei*. Moreover, the Goddess proceeds to draw further inferences that rule out any further kind of change within What-Is, including those that the previous arguments had already ruled out, such as: 'without beginning' (*anarchon*) (temporal), 'without stop' (temporal) (*apauston*), 'generation' (*genesis*) and destruction (*olethros*).[649] However, now, she rules out *any* kind of destruction, not only the temporal one.[650] As with the case of 'ungenerated', where the discussion concludes by reference to the strength of belief, here we find true belief (*pistis alēthēs*), which has 'smitten far away' generation and

[646] E.g., Homer, *Il.* 4.350. For more details on this formula and the relation between words and objects, see Zanker 2019, 103–64.
[647] E.g. Bacchylides 11, 45, Aeschylus, *Eumen*. 306, 331, 344. See Schreckenberg 1964, 135 – 45,
[648] Hesiod, *Th*. 807–18, on this passage, see Clay Strauss 2021, 29–30.
[649] **B8.27 DK**.
[650] Cf. the reconstruction of these lines in Palmer 2009, 153–4.

destruction, this time starting from indivisibility.[651] McKirahan maintains that the appeal to bonds implies that they are themselves unchangeable or unmovable (*akinēton*),[652] while What-Is is not necessarily so.[653] However, this seems to me problematic, as the Goddess' arguments for indivisibility indirectly show that movement and change cannot constitute What-Is. Furthermore, even if only the bonds are unmovable and unchanging, the point of their application is to produce the same condition in What-Is, so that it is undivided.

Thus, although the fact that What-Is clings to What-Is may imply movement and divisibility, the bonds around it serve to impede it, like the fetters in the previous discussion, which express once again the divine agency and its conceptual and cosmological necessity. Furthermore, given the role of words as bonds, we could say that, by resorting to divine bonds, Parmenides here is not trying to find an easy way out of the possible linguistic inconsistency. Rather, through language Parmenides seeks to identify the

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[651] This wording is Epic, along with the dynamics that picture belief as the hero that fights off his enemies, as Tor 2023, 263 implicitly acknowledges. Furthermore, it is consistent with what we saw with 'ungenerated', where there is reference to a sort of conflict too. Furthermore, it echoes **B7 DK,** where the Goddess says that that the *elenkhos* is 'much-controverting' (*poludērin*).

[652] I agree with Coxon 2008, 327 that *akinētos* here primarily refers to change, but includes being unmovable as well. For readings that privilege 'unmovable', see Hutchinson 2020, 207–8 and McKirahan 2008.

[653] McKirahan 2008, 200.

salient features of reality together with its causal and normative impact on it. However, he is deploying a language that, though coming from a divine source (i.e., the Goddess), is still human and as such struggles to apply to something as far removed from the human dimension as What-Is. Especially in combination with the primary role of divine agents (e.g., Justice), this use of words as bonds has a strong philosophical relevance, because in Parmenides' eyes it represents a successful cosmological or even ontological justification that something necessarily is the case for What-Is. The necessity expressed by divine figures and the Goddess herself through bonds both physical and linguistic can resolve the ambiguous sense of change and division implied by *pelazei*. Thus, for example, the idea of unity expressed by *pelazei* comes to the fore, as the necessity expressed by the bonds, with this ambiguity resolved, is a 'cosmological' guarantee of the necessity of the Goddess' arguments.

In conclusion, by deducing indivisibility, the Goddess' arguments end up ruling out more generally the idea that What-Is moves or changes. This conclusion is reinforced by the introduction of the bonds of necessity, which exclude any possible sense in which *pelazei* may imply divisibility.

b. Necessity (*Anagkē*)

Necessity is a divine agent whose power is considered to be superior to that of all other gods, and the way her action is described seems to originate from the practice of slavery and exploitation, especially through the image of the yoke.[654] In Homer, as well as in later authors, Necessity results in being particularly connected to delimiting, binding, and giving orders.[655] Her power is opposed to free-will because it forces both mortals and immortals to undertake certain actions and behaviours.[656] In Homer and Hesiod the immediate result of Necessity's binding can be a physical inability to move, or do something. Furthermore, Homer and Hesiod both employ it as a means to explain why something does or does not happen.[657] Unsurprisingly, in Hesiod, Necessity has a more pronounced cosmological role, given that her action explains the way the cosmos acquires the order it does.[658]

In Parmenides, Necessity figures as a personified divine agent twice, one time in the context of **B8 DK,** while the other is in the context of the *Doxa* (**B10**

[654] See the study by Schreckenberg 1964, in particular 20–7, and e.g., Aeschylus, *Ag*. 1071, *Prom*. 108, Euripides, *Or*. 1333, Herodotus, 8.22.
[655] Homer, *Il.* 14.200, *Il.* 20255, *Od.* 17. 398, Euripides, *Alc.* 984, Aeschylus, *Pers*. 72, 745.
[656] Homer, *Il.* 9.429. Because of her forceful character it is unproblematic that she should figure in association with Fate (*Moira*), e.g., Homer, *Il*. 4.517, 22.5, *Od*. 11.292.
[657] Homer, *Od*. 4.469, *Il.* 23.585
[658] Hesiod, *Th.* 517, 615, cf. *Op*. 15.

DK), where the text seems to compositionally echo **B8 DK**.[659] Interestingly, there Necessity plays a similar role, as she binds together the sky and everything within it, so that it is one. However, there is only so much similarity between the two fragments:

> You will know (*eisēi*) the aethereal nature (*physin*), and in the aether all
> The signs (*panta sēmata*), and of the pure torch of the brilliant sun
> The blinding works, and from where they came into being (*exegenonto*),
> And you will learn (*eidēseis*) the recurrent works of the round-eyed moon
> And its nature (*physin*), and you will also know from where the sky (*ouranos*), which is all around (*amphis echonta*),
> Was born (*ephy*), and how Necessity led and enchained it (*epedēsen Anagkē*)
> To maintain the limits of the heavenly bodies (*peirat'echein astrōn*). (Parmenides, **B10 DK= D12 L.-M.**, tr. L.-M. modified)[660]

The use of *physis* clearly points to the world of change we are discussing, and with it all of the processes that we know to be regulated by Justice as well as by an anonymous female divinity mentioned in **B12 DK**.[661] This world is

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[659] For example, the way Parmenides uses *amphis*, *sēmata*, and refers to the moon as something that being round reminds of the features of What-Is, see Coxon 2009, 352, but above all Mourelatos 1974, and Mourelatos 2008, 248.

[660] εἴση δ' αἰθερίαν τε φύσιν τά τ' ἐν αἰθέρι πάντα
σήματα καὶ καθαρᾶς εὐαγέος ἠελίοιο
λαμπάδος ἔργ' ἀίδηλα καὶ ὁππόθεν ἐξεγένοντο,
ἔργα τε κύκλωπος πεύσῃ περίφοιτα σελήνης
καὶ φύσιν, εἰδήσεις δὲ καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀμφὶς ἔχοντα
ἔνθεν ἔφυ τε καὶ ὥς μιν ἄγουσ' ἐπέδησεν Ἀνάγκη
πείρατ' ἔχειν ἄστρων. ˘ ˘ | – ˘ ˘ | – ˘ ˘ | – –

[661] **B12 DK**.

populated by many things, each of which has a distinct nature that follows its own laws, as the Goddess' stress on learning about each of them may suggest. The verb the Goddess uses to characterise the kind of learning of the *kouros* (*eisēi*, *eidēseis*) is noteworthy; although it denotes a modality of knowing, such a modality is based on ordinary sense perception (though it may be shaped by the Goddess' divine revelation), thus contrasting with Parmenides' use of *noein* in the *Alētheia.* The **id-* root contained in εἴδομαι notoriously suggests knowing by seeing, which is exactly what is required to know about the heavenly bodies. Furthermore, it is unclear and perhaps unlikely that the *kouros* will deploy the *logos* to know (*eisēi* and *eidēseis*) these phenomena, as the *logos* is accessible only through an act of *noein*.

Turning to Necessity, inasmuch as she grants that the different heavenly bodies are kept within the sky (*ouranos*)[662] as an entity that is spatially and conceptually wide, her role is consistent with **B8 DK**. The impression we get is that if it were not for Necessity, these entities would not keep together, for they are many and their natures are all rather different. Perhaps only once the

[662] The term at the time Parmenides is writing is unlikely to indicate the whole cosmos as in later authors, and thus it is more likely to refer only to everything that is above the Earth, in continuity with the Homeric tripartition of the cosmos into the reign of Zeus (i.e., the Sky), reign of Poseidon (i.e., the Sea), and reign of Hades (i.e., the Underworld); the Earth is a shared possession of all other gods.

kouros has been instructed by the Goddess about the principles of Light and Darkness, will the conceptual necessity of grouping them together become apparent. After all, these are all bodies whose mixture is predominantly made of Light.[663] Noticing this aspect clarifies how the essentially different objects examined in **B8 DK** and in **B10 DK** determine Necessity's role: while in the phenomena things can be differentiated and considered independently from one another, even if they are similar, this is impossible for What-Is. Necessity in the phenomena acts as a power that forces us to focus on the fact that a thing is to be considered *as if it were* one, whereas in the case of What-Is its essence must be considered one *on the grounds* that it *is necessarily* one in all respects. Furthermore, this latter role of Necessity can be grasped only through *noein* and thus the *logos*, because it involves granting the consequences of the Goddess' arguments, so that Necessity acts as the guarantor of consequentiality.[664]

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[663] Importantly, the features that make all the heavenly bodies similar because they group together characteristics that belong to Light as a principle are enumerated at the end of **B8 DK**, where the Goddess presents the basics of the cosmological doctrine regarding the phenomena which will be the focus of the *Doxa.* There Light is introduced as 'ethereal fire of flame' (*phlogos aitherion pyr*), and is considered 'mild' (*ēpion*), 'very light in weight' (*elaphron*), the 'same as itself everywhere' (*heōutōi pantose tōuton*) which are characteristics that are echoed in every heavenly body introduced in **B10 DK**. For the heavenly bodies are 'aethereal', fiery ('torch'), 'pure', which could be considered equivalent to unmixed and thus the 'same as itself everywhere'.

[664] Cf. Cherubin 2004, 20.

5.4 Whole (*oulon*) (28–38)

Scholars have noticed that up until now there is no explicit discussion of 'whole' (*oulon*), and because of this it has been proposed that it has the same meaning as 'of a single kind'.[665] However, it is not obvious that something that is 'of a single kind' is also 'whole': by admitting the addition of other features, provided that they are of the same kind, 'of a single kind' does not imply that all that is of a single kind (i.e., What-Is) is also entire (i.e., complete). As a matter of fact, had Parmenides not included wholeness in the signs of What-Is, he could have considered What-Is to be unlimited (*apeiron*) (i.e., not complete (*oude teleutēn*)) as Melissus did.[666] The term 'whole' appears only at **B8.38 DK**, at the conclusion of a series of arguments that discuss not only uniqueness, but also different kinds of unchangeability. Although the idea of wholeness is lingering in the background, it is only made explicit once the Goddess has shown that What-Is is 'of a single kind', and 'untrembling', beyond 'ungenerated' and 'indestructible'. Accordingly, one may think that the Goddess does not need a specific argument for 'whole', as what it means for What-Is to be 'whole' becomes clear only after the deducing these aspects.

[665] Palmer 2009, 152.
[666] See Melissus B2, B3 DK, and Harriman 2019, 65–94. For the relation with Parmenides' view that What-Is is finite, see Harriman 2019, 13–5.

Nonetheless, there is an aspect of being 'whole', as something that lacks nothing, that 'of a single kind' and 'untrembling' or 'unchanging' cannot account for, that is, the aspect of being delimited and thus entire under an epistemological perspective. For it suggests that a successful cognitive grasp of What-Is must also be 'whole'. I believe that this aspect is argued for specifically in **ll.33–38**. The previous lines (**ll.31–33**), which are usually taken to belong to the argument for 'untrembling', can also be considered part of the argument for 'whole', though more from an ontological perspective rather than from an epistemological perspective. Furthermore, now that the Goddess has specified what 'of a single kind' and 'untembling' mean, these can serve to construct Parmenides' understanding of What-Is as 'whole'. In particular, **ll.29–31** provide a characterisation of What-Is as something that stretches everywhere in its essence. Independently from the use of a spatial vocabulary, which provides What-Is with bi-dimensionality, the idea that these lines convey is that there is nothing besides What-Is, because it alone occupies all the spatial extension available. Furthermore, a little later on, the Goddess refers to the bonds of Necessity, who fixes What-Is all around with them: by surrounding What-Is, Necessity's bounds delimit it, and so provide it with a *peras*. Additionally, the idea of being delimited and the idea of expanding through all the available space prefigure, from a spatial perspective, the idea

that What-Is is entire, because it is both delimited and complete. Accordingly, for Parmenides What-Is is something that is delimited *and* expands everywhere and lacks nothing. Thus, it is all there is, and, due to its being limited, it is entire.[667]

Such associations are made explicit by the Goddess' assertion that as a result, What-Is is not 'unaccomplished', which is to be read alternatively from 'accomplished'. As Palmer has convincingly argued, this term is necessary for the present argument to clarify the meaning of *epideueis*.[668] As a result, the term 'not unaccomplished' is advanced in order to stress the 'wholeness' of What-Is through the previously stated idea that everything is full of being, and therefore, it cannot lack anything. That this is the way one should interpret these lines is also suggested by the intertextual reference back to the discussion of 'of a single kind', where we were already informed that What-Is lacks nothing.

The position of the lines that follow has been debated. Assuming that we do not understand these lines as a parenthesis in the Goddess' argumentation, [669] the focus would now be on the kind of cognitive grasp

[667] Cf. McKirahan 2008, 199, according to whom though whole means that What-Is contains all of it or that none of it is missing.
[668] Palmer 2009, 154.
[669] McKirahan 2008, 201, but cf. Coxon 2008, 207.

necessarily associated with such an entity. Provided that the meaning of 'whole' in spatial terms clarifies in what sense something is entire, due to being delimited, the resulting epistemological aspect should be quite unproblematic. Since What-Is is 'whole' in the sense that it is of a single kind, unchangeable, and ungenerated, its intellection must also be entire (i.e., simultaneous), and completely delimited (i.e., complete under all perspectives). Once this has been made clear, the Goddess has better grounds to argue some ideas already advanced in **B7 DK** regarding the fact that What-Is constitutes the basis not only for thinking, but also for affirming. Indeed, since there is nothing besides What-Is, the whole of thinking (*noein*) must be about What-Is, which Fate (*Moira*) (a divinity particularly connected with division and assigning what is due) grants to be whole and unchangeable, from a cognitive perspective (i.e., be thinkable as something entire) and an ontological perspective (i.e., exist as something entire).

c. Fate (*Moira*)

Traditionally, Fate is particularly close to Necessity, as she directs and allots what is necessary without ethical connotations.[670] The main reason why the Goddess associates *Moira* with the sign 'whole' may be that, prior to fixing one's fate, *Moira* denotes one's share or part of something.[671] Similar to Necessity, Fate too is a power often considered above all the gods.[672] Furthermore, like Justice it can represent cosmic order, though in this case it usually represents a portion of it, as the etymology (i.e., 'lot', 'share') itself indicates.[673] As has been noted, Parmenides' appeal to this divinity may to some extent appear contradictory:[674] *Moira*, who inherently represents division and portioning, serves to establish that What-Is is 'whole', both as an entity and as an object of intellection. Furthermore, it could not be otherwise,

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[670] See for this role e.g., Aeschylus, *Prom*. 294, Homer, *Il.* 10.253, 16.68, *Od*. 4.97, where it is used for example to indicate the parts of night, or the parts of one's property or field.

[671] E.g., Homer, *Il.* 15.195, 1.278, 9.616, 15.189 *Od*. 4.97, 20.171, 5.335, 11.338, 8.480, Hesiod, *Th.* 413.

[672] Homer, *Il.* 20.127, 24.209, 24.525, *Od*. 1.17, 3.208, 7.197. See also Greene 1944, 16. When Fate is presented as being above all of them, it is represented as above all but Zeus, who then represents the god who controls and assigns Fate to the other gods as well as to mortals, see Yamagata 1994, 111 cf. Lloyd-Jones 1971, 5. Especially in Early Greek literary production, *Moira* appears in the singular, aside a few exceptions (e.g., Homer, *Il.* 24.49 cf. Hesiod, *Th*. 217ff.).

[673] E.g., Homer, *Il.* 15.186–209. On this aspect, see Yamagata 1994, 97.

[674] See Tor 2023, 265, Cherubin 2017, 258.

because *Moira* always allocates the right share.[675] However, this could simply indicate that Parmenides is ruling out the possibility that What-Is has parts. In conclusion, Fate is responsible for determining What-Is' 'share', that is, to be 'whole' and without parts. Furthermore, given Fate's connection to orderly partition, she may be responsible for the relation between various aspects of What-Is. However, I believe that the evidence may be too scanty to determine how this works.[676]

5.5 Untrembling (*atremes*) (26–31, 38–41)

Scholars usually consider 'untrembling' to be an alternative term for 'unmovable' or 'unchangeable', which we already saw involved in the deduction of indivisibility. For the way the Goddess discusses how divisibility happens not only implies a sense of movement (e.g., with the use of *pelazei*), but also a sense of change. So, while the main argument for 'untrembling'

[675] See for example, Pindar, *Isth.* 5, 12–6, Homer, *Od.* 9.352, 15.170, 15.203 where *kata moira* can be translated with 'orderly' or 'rightly', see Schreckenberg 1964, 107–8.
[676] Cf. Cherubin 2004, 26, who tries to detail in what way Fate relates various aspects of What-Is.

(ll.**26–31**) appears within that of indivisibility,[677] **ll.38–41** appear to articulate the cognitive implications of 'untrembling'.[678] Given that **ll.26–31** have been sufficiently analysed, I will focus on the epistemological part of the argument in **ll.38–41**.

The Goddess now argues that the fact that What-Is is 'whole' for intellection also necessitates that it is unchanging, which clearly focusses on the epistemological perspective. For how could there be any firm grasp of something in constant change? It is not at all odd that the argument she uses boils down to rejecting those conceptions of reality that include change, because these do not constitute the right objects to gain genuine knowledge, this being knowledge of What-Is. First, we must remember that, according to Parmenides, as well as Homer and Hesiod, language affects the way something is and is understood.[679] Accordingly, the way one attributes names to What-Is affects the way it is conceived of as an entity. Indeed, when the Goddess criticises how, from a linguistic point of view, mortals provide all sorts of names for What-Is,[680] she points to the catastrophic results of their

[677] As it is recognised by Curd 2004, 76, Palmer 2008, 140 n. 7, Tarán 1965.
[678] On the connection between stability and intellection, see for example Curd 2004, 87.
[679] See Salvadore 1987, who shows how in Archaic Greek literature names were provided to allow the reader to individuate straightaway something's peculiar features (or essence).
[680] Coxon 2008, 208–12, Tarán 1965, 141–4, argue that here Parmenides is simply criticising mortal thought, but Curd 2004, 89 n. 64 interprets it as 'an account of the fit between thinking

actions. On the one hand, this operation ends up being consistent with how mortals refer to the gods, including in the essence of What-Is not only many names, but also those names that attribute to it features that cannot be part of it. On the other, no less importantly, the act of naming implicitly introduces the idea that each name identifies one single entity and makes it distinct, independent from and potentially contrary to other entities. Thus, the effect of providing various names for What-Is ends up raising the possibility that it has parts and is many. Furthermore, consequently, these aspects from a linguistic point of view entail actually introducing change in the constitution of What-Is, which risks displacing it from its appropriate place (i.e., its necessary ontological and cosmological status). For, the change in place may suggest the absurd displacement from the divine dimension that What-Is would face, if it had many names. Furthermore, if this displacement happened, What-Is would need to respect those processes of cyclical change from one condition to the other, when this is absurd. That this is what Parmenides may have in mind is suggested by the use of ἀμείβω, which indicates interchange between opposites (e.g., Day and Night as ἀμοιβή implied in the proem).

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and what-is, stressing that what-is alone is the true object of thought'. So, what we have here is a 'reminder' of this relation between thinking and What-Is.

5.6 Accomplished (*teleston*) (42–50)

Both compositionally and theoretically, postponing the sign 'accomplished' to the end is most appropriate. This sign is introduced by αὐτάρ, just as in the case of 'unchangeable', and could similarly work as a specification of what was said before. In this case, the Goddess tells us that, despite what mortals may conclude from their ways of talking about What-Is (i.e., that it is changeable in many respects), since it is not *apeiron* but has limits, it is 'accomplished'. Here the reference to the limits may serve to rule out as unthinkable views such as that of Anaximander, who posited that every pair of contraries came from the unbounded (*apeiron*).[681] Next, she proceeds to show how to deduce that What-Is is 'accomplished': she presents a sphere as the model that best represents what sort of reality What-Is is. According to Mourelatos, each claim asserted for What-Is can be applied to the sphere, and each can even be considered an appropriate definition of the sphere as a solid.[682] Furthermore, as Mourelatos argued, Parmenides' use of ἐναλίγκιον is not to be interpreted as a simile, but rather as something stronger, because What-Is *has* the features that constitute essential characterisations of the

[681] E.g., Fränkel 1960, 193. For other references and parallelisms between Parmenides' What-Is and Anaximander's conception of the cosmos, see Vlastos 1947, 162–3.
[682] Mourelatos 2008, 124–5.

sphere.[683] Some Homeric uses of the term reinforce this idea. This term often refers to an individual whose possession of a particular characteristic is nearly indistinguishable in degree from that of a deity.[684] It is tempting to think that in the next few lines the Goddess uses the sphere as a visual proof that What-Is is 'accomplished'. What makes this suggestion likely is that while characterising What-Is as a sphere, the Goddess recounts the different steps of her deduction, mentioning aspects of What-Is consistently with the order presented throughout **B8 DK**. At the same time, the reference to the sphere also serves to conclude the deduction, as it completes the progressive materialisation of What-Is: if at the beginning of the Goddess' deduction What-Is appeared as a point-like entity, whose aspects were hard for the *kouros* to grasp, the progressive accumulation of signs confers upon What-Is a more concrete existence. Indeed, the opposition between *meizon–baioteron*, that is, 'larger' and 'smaller' in this context, strongly suggests three-dimensionality rather than bi-dimensionality. The fact that every point of the surface of the

[683] Cf. Mourelatos 2008, 124, who however dismisses the possibility that Wha-Is is a spatially extended sphere. Scholars (e.g., Vlastos 1947, Owen 1960, Curd 2004) who present What-Is as something more abstract that does not exist either in space or time dismiss Parmenides' language as purely metaphorical. However, the progressive physicality that What-Is gains in **B8 DK** is but one of the reasons to challenge this reading. For an analysis of further difficulties of this line of thought, see Palmer 2009, 156.

[684] E.g., Homer, *Il.* 5.5, 22.410, 13, 242, 19.250, 17.583, *Od*. 13.89, 7.5., 1.371, 4.310, *In Ap*. 351, *In Merc.* 147.

sphere is equidistant from its centre, and that each of these points is in no way different from the other, recalls the previous characterisation of What-Is as equally full of What-Is. For example, the What-Is is both said to be continuous *and* internally similar (*homon*), though this time these ideas are conveyed by a different verb, which while it suggests motion, equally conveys the idea of reaching something (i.e., ἱκνέομαι) and may point to the notion of being accomplished.[685] The opposition between 'more' and 'less' is reprised later, with a term that is particularly poignant, that is, 'inviolable'(**l.49**). Though its meaning is obscure, interpreters consider this term comparable to being perfectly continuous, thus impenetrable and 'indestructible'. [686] This interpretation is sensible because in other contexts the term refers to a safe place, such as a sanctuary, or the laws applied in sanctuaries, according to which anybody who entered was considered not prosecutable.[687]

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[685] E.g., Homer, *Od.* 8.227, 14.265. Cf. Sophocles, *Adj.* 1365. Particularly interesting are those uses where it indicates having reached a specific place, which well connects with the theme of the *kouros*' travel towards What-Is, such as, *Il*. 2.138, 3.233, 6.367, 9.393, *Od.* 1.173, 17.524, 9.530. Coxon 2008, 339 notes that the verb expresses the actuality of coming up together, but to avoid a literal reading which may result in being problematic he maintains that Parmenides 'expresses a nonphysical but in some sense active union'.

[686] This adjective appears to be used here for the first time, as Tarán 1965, 147 notes, and hence it is particularly difficult to understand exactly what this should mean. According to Tarán 1965, 147 ἄσυλος means that 'it cannot be interrupted by anything', which following the argument of the Goddess leads to the conclusion that What-Is is indestructible. Cf. Palmer 2009, 158, and Fränkel 1960, 197.

[687] IG 92(1).582.18 (III a.C.), Euripides, *Med*. 387, LXX 2 Ma.4.34, cf. POxy.1639.19 (I a.C.).

The end of the deduction of being 'accomplished' is a good example of ring composition, because it concludes by returning to the use of limits as something that equally and uniformly embraces both the sphere and What-Is, making both accomplished in every respect. Hence, the Goddess enumerates all of the features implied by each of the signs. Specifically, it is the fact that they are all co-present in What-Is that ultimately makes it accomplished, i.e., permits it to have 'accomplished' as a sign.[688] Furthermore, it becomes possible to distinguish two slightly different but not incompatible nuances of 'accomplished' within the argument: first, the limits of What-Is delimit it, as something that is all there is and it never changes, so that it is thereby accomplished; second, What-Is figures as something that is accomplished because now the *kouros* can enumerate all of its signs as co-present, and co-observable all at once in a single entity. The fact that Parmenides introduces the sphere while discussing the features of What-Is previously mentioned is relevant. These signs differ from names, are divine ones, and illustrate something's essence by making apparent its aspects. Accordingly, they require that we understand what What-Is is through the same sense of sight

[688] According to this reading Parmenides' argument is not circular as Gallop 1984, 19 believes, because it builds on aspects of What-Is that were previously deduced, cf. Wright 1986, 64.

and cognitive faculty that is pertains to the gods. For it is through observing and thinking (*noein*) something in its entirety that we can grasp what it is.

It is tempting to infer that the Goddess' review of the signs of What-Is, and the inclusion of the sphere, is an attempt to spell out the reciprocal relation each sign has within What-Is. For only at the end of the Goddess' deduction can the *kouros* finally see that each sign corresponds to one aspect of What-Is: just as in a sphere all of its surface is equally distant from the centre, every aspect of What-Is is in the same relation to What-Is, and it is in this way that each expresses its essence. If a difference appears, thus, it is only a matter of perspective, which is solved once one reaches the end of the deductions and grasps What-Is in its entirety. When one looks at a sphere, no difference that is dependent on the point of view of the observer can exist.[689] Ultimately, Parmenides uses the sphere as something that almost incarnates What-Is, and this makes it likely that Parmenides understands What-Is as an entity that has the conformation of a sphere. Of crucial importance in this respect is noting that, grammatically speaking, 'from the middle equally advanced in all

[689] Although Sedley 1999 follows a different line of reasoning, I agree that when Parmenides mentions the sphere what he is trying to do is make us realise that the way we look at things, or the perspective from which we approach What-Is, is crucial. As Sedley notes the sphere may be considered made of parts only because of a mortal misconstrual of reality, that is, an error in perspective (121–2).

directions' (μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντῃ) refers to What-Is, not to the sphere, as Sedley emphasises.[690] This is a possibility will be discussed in section **B**.

d. Right (*Themis*)

Since Parmenides tends to deploy divine agents in line with the Epic tradition to make them serve a philosophical purpose, and since Right is mentioned together with Justice in **B1 DK**, it would seem odd if he did not assign the former a role. Contrary to the other deductions, which conclude by mentioning the role of a specific divine agent, that regarding 'accomplished' does not. The only mention of a divinity that points to this feature is within the discussion of What-Is' indivisibility and unchangeability, where the Goddess says that, according to what has been said so far, 'it is not right (*themis*) to say that What-Is is *un*accomplished (*ateleutēton*)' (l.32). Since the reference to being accomplished is in the alpha-privative form, at this point the Goddess is not yet discussing 'accomplished'. Rather, she *excludes* the possibility that What-Is is *un*accomplished, because on the basis of the arguments she has presented there is no reason to believe the contrary. However, this is no proper deduction. The actual discussion of 'accomplished' comes only in the last part

[690] Sedley 1999.

of the fragment (**ll.41–50**). On this basis, it seems likely that the divinity that Parmenides links to this feature of What-Is is *Themis*.

In contrast to other divine agents, Right is not typically personified.[691] One could think that Right differed from Justice inasmuch as the former represents the institutions or ordinances of mortal society, whereas the latter is emblematic of cosmic or natural laws.[692] However, *themis* can also be used to refer to laws concerning the natural order of things, which are more typically connected to Justice.[693] Although the impact of Themis' power is more readily perceivable in the mortal dimension, laws that originate from 'right' are nonetheless of divine origin.[694] One standard function of Right is that of presiding over and regulating assemblies, both of those of mortals and those of immortals, which illustrates that she is facilitating decision-making.[695] Compared to Justice, which is concerned with 'change', Right is fixed, as her etymology (from τίθημι) suggests. Since what Right establishes must be

[691] On this point, see Yamagata 1994, 78.
[692] See e.g., Homer, *Il.* 11.807, *Od.* 14.56–61, 9.106. See the discussion in Harrison 1974, 480–2.
[693] One may consider natural laws that direct biological generation or those of the seasons, of which she is considered mother, e.g., Homer *Il.* 9. 131-4, 19.175–8, 24.652, *In Ap.* 540–41, Pindar, Fr. 30 Snell-Maehler, see Greene 1943, 401.
[694] Homer, *Il.* 11.779, 14.386, *Od.* 3.45, 9.268, even if Justice has an impact on mortals as well, she acts on them as part of a sphere that is not exclusive of mortals, but of the whole cosmos and its laws (Homer, *Od*. 11.216–21). See Yamagata 1994, 78.
[695] Homer, *Il.* 20 4–6, *Od*. 2.68–9, this aspect is also visible in *In Zeus*, 23.2–3, where Themis not only accompanies Zeus but counsels him, cf. Hesiod, *Th.* 901–4, see Stafford 1997, 87–8.

protected from change, the immutability of Right is granted through applying and administering Justice accordingly.[696] Furthermore, in contrast to Justice, Right is not a figure associated with constraint, but rather with the act of guarding over the constraints that have been set, so as to firmly maintain them without incurring any change.[697]

When we consider this picture, it becomes easier to see why Parmenides associated her with 'accomplished'. First, Right is herself the expression of something fixed that needs nothing else, and which is in this sense 'accomplished'. Furthermore, since Right's function is that of maintaining a certain set of constraints, she is considered the right divinity to safekeep the deductions established through the application of *logos*. This suggestion is strengthened by three considerations. First, traditionally Right is also associated with decision-making, and this could further ensure that the *kouros* attends to all of the Goddess' arguments regarding to the essence of What-Is. Second, the term ἄσυλος is linked to the laws that apply in sanctuaries, locations particularly linked to the necessary order established by gods. Third, aspects that highlight accomplishment, either as not lacking anything or being definitive, seem particularly relevant from a compositional point of view. For

[696] E.g., *In Ap.* 540–1, Harrison 1974, 483, see already Bonner-Smith 1930, 10.
[697] See Harrison 1974, 485–6, 516–7.

the lines that discuss 'accomplished' both lead to the conclusion that What-Is is 'accomplished' and provide an overview the previous signs.[698] Thus, they constitute the final judgement regarding the essence of What-Is as a whole.

B. What-Is as a Structured Unity and Parmenides' PWR

In the previous section I have presented my reading of the whole of the Goddess' deduction of the signs of What-Is. The analysis of these signs, as well as of the deities that express different aspects of necessity, has shown that Parmenides' discussion of What-Is is both continuous with the Ionic philosophy of nature, and a breakthrough. For, among other things, each of the signs of What-Is is ensured by Justice, Necessity, Fate, and Right, each of whom has a specific function within reality in all of its aspects, including the *Doxa.* Notably, throughout **B8 DK,** Parmenides contrasts ordinary language and names to the divine language and signs that the Goddess uses. In continuity with Circe's speech her language employs signs, which illustrate and make manifest something's features without referring to arbitrary 'names'.

[698] On the connection between 'inviolable' and being 'accomplished' cf. Fränkel 1960.

Furthermore, I also discussed how signs are crucial to Parmenides because they represent aspects of What-Is, avoiding referring to 'parts', contrary to names. It resulted that the Goddess' strategy is consistent with the method of the scrutiny presented in **B7 DK**.

Now, it is important to keep in mind that her deductions are continuous and deploy 'continuity' in a peculiar way that I will discuss in due course. The continuity that the Goddess establishes among the many signs of What-Is through an accumulation of signs leads the *kouros* to grasp the essence of What-Is in its entirety only progressively by the end of the scrutiny. For the Goddess' scrutiny accomplishes What-Is and makes it 'present' to the *kouros* only through the progressive introduction of signs that necessarily follow from one another. Interestingly, while this result is conceptual, it also provides the *kouros* with a better grasp of the spatial or material manifestation of What-Is, that is, the sphere. The introduction of the sphere is a crucial step in **B8 DK,** and for Parmenides' **PWR**, because it illustrates in what sense the signs are aspects rather than parts of What-Is, and how they relate to one another. The sphere is a solid where each point on its surface is in an equal relation to the centre of the sphere, and this observation should apply to What-Is from a conceptual point of view as well. Furthermore, given that the sphere does not have different faces, as other solids do, it does not matter from what

perspective we choose to observe it: each one will necessarily point to all of the sphere. Analogously, it does not matter from which sign one starts the deduction: all of them are linked by necessity, so that each argument for What-Is will necessarily produce the same complete account of What-Is, and will go through the same argumentative steps.

Although these results already shed some light on Parmenides' conception of What-Is and its **PWR**, it remains unclear exactly how Parmenides deploys the Goddess' scrutiny to reduce the signs of What-Is to something that is conceptually one. In order to explore this, in the next two sections I will address how Parmenides deploys both the signs and continuity to present What-Is as something that is similar throughout, and thus 'one', even according to diverse points of view. Furthermore, I will expand on the language of 'bonds' to explore what Parmenides takes What-Is to be in order to further specify, the structure of What-Is and its relation to mortals. In **5.7.3**, I will build on **Sections 5.7.1 and 5.7.2** to present a plausible account of Parmenides' **PWR** and discuss whether What-Is can be considered an 'all', a 'whole', or something else.

5.7.1 Of a Single Kind, Similar, Continuous: Aspects of Parmenides' PWR

One of the aims of the Goddess in **B8 DK** is to illustrate how the signs of What-Is lead the *kouros* to conclude that it is 'one'. As **B8 DK** itself makes clear, there are many ways in which something can be considered 'one'. Of the signs that the Goddess provides, two can be considered directly linked to the idea of singularity, namely, 'of a single kind' (*mounougenes*), and 'whole' (*oulon*). For within these signs one finds necessarily embedded the condition of being something singular. However, singularity alone is insufficient to obtain each of these signs. For to be 'of a single kind', something needs be qualitatively *similar* all throughout itself, while to be 'whole', beyond qualitative similarity, something requires lacking nothing from its constitution. The other terms, that is, 'ungenerated' (*agenēton*), 'indestructible' (*anōlethron*), 'untrembling' (*atremes*), and 'accomplished' (*teleston*), are not directly connected to being something one, because their definitions and etymologies do not refer to singularity.[699] It is the apparent difficulty to grant the conceptual continuity

[699] In this case a comparison with Aristotle's list of what it means to be 'one' and 'whole' (*Metaph.* Δ 6.1015b17–1017a7, 26.1023b26–1024a10) can be instructive, as he seems to share at least this with Parmenides, that something of a single 'kind' (*genos*) and 'whole' is necessarily one by definition, because we are talking of being qualitatively 'one'. Furthermore, something can be 'one' according to the way it changes, in order to relate to 'generation' and 'destruction' only according to specific circumstances, and similar things can be said for being

and similarity between these features that has prompted scholars to reconsider Parmenides' Monism, in the absence of any fully cogent or conclusive account of What-Is' unity. Furthermore, scholars have often applied conceptual tools that are anachronistic to Parmenides' philosophical framework.

Recently, Ferella[700] has offered an interesting suggestion that on the basis of Earlier Greek literature helps us understand how Parmenides conceptualises What-Is as something structurally complex, and yet one. She starts from Parmenides' use of μουνογενής, rejecting the idea that it means 'of a single kind' to prefer 'single-born'. I do not think that it is necessary to prefer the translation 'single-born' to accept her point. For the fact that Parmenides engages in dialogue with Hesiod, allows us to maintain that Parmenides plays with the Hesiodic meaning of μουνογενής in the interest of his philosophical beliefs. Thus, there may be a further layer of meaning that implies being an entity in some way living, without renouncing the reference to internal similarity. Ferella argues that μουνογενής should be read together with the *Derveni Papyrus* and its Orphic background. In the *Derveni Papyrus*,

'accomplished' (*Metaph*. Δ 16.1021b11–1022a4). For 'accomplished' primarily implies the idea of something being perfect under every respect, which only secondarily leads to think that it is 'one'.

[700] Ferella 2019.

Zeus swallows all of the other gods to impose his rule over the universe as the only supreme god. Once he has done this, he is considered μουνογενής. Interestingly, according to this view, the identities and plurality of the other gods have not been destroyed, but are still in some way differentiable in Zeus, who is now μοῦνος ἔγεντο.[701] Thus, in Orphic theogonies one entity can represent the whole of what there is, and Zeus ends up being one but, also contains those who are within him.[702] This parallel is relevant, as it shows that there are ways in which What-Is may be something structurally complex whilst remaining singular. Furthermore, it suggests that What-Is may be conceived on the basis of a biological explanatory model which would consider What-Is a living being.

A problem with Ferella's comparison is that it does not offer any viable solution regarding how What-Is is internally articulated, because it does not

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[701] *Derv. Pap.* col. XVI 3–6 = OF 12: πρωτογόνου βασιλέως αἰδοίου· τῶι δ' ἄρα πάντες
ἀθάνατοι **προσέφυν** μάκαρες θεοὶ ἠδὲ θέαιναι
καὶ ποταμοὶ καὶ κρῆναι ἐπήρατοι ἄλλα τε πάντα,
ὅσσα τότ' ἦν γεγαῶτ', αὐτὸς δ' ἄρα μοῦνος ἔγεντο.
Here it is worth it to notice that the use of προσέφυν could resemble Parmenides' use of φῦν in in **B8.10 DK**. On the meaning of this verb and the resulting interpretation of the passage, cf. Burkert 2008, 583–5. It is impossible to tell, but, in principle, given the references in this passage to different moments in which divinities are born (Zeus included), one could think that Parmenides is also dismissing an Orphic model of reality. For a different reading of Parmenides' relation to the Orphic model, see Ferella 2019, but, see in particular Betegh 2004, for the relevant parallelisms between the cosmology of the *Derveni Papyrus* and Parmenides (they both rely on Light and Darkness as opposite principles of the phenomena).

[702] On this feature of Orphic theogonies and of the *Derveni Papyrus* in particular, see Betegh 2004, 178.

explain what in Parmenides' poem could be comparable to the act of swallowing.[703] Even if we grant that swallowing is a viable strategy to indicate that something acquires the features of something else, as Hesiod himself testifies,[704] this remains an insufficient explanatory model for characterising the complexity of Parmenides' What-Is. First, even if it shows us that on the basis of one or another piece of evidence What-Is may have not been perceived as something contradictory in reference to the question of being 'one' and 'many', Parmenides' philosophical project seems to be directed against these explanatory models. Furthermore, Parmenides' focus on consistency in argumentation has been noted many times,[705] so that a model that relies on

[703] Ferella 2019, 71–3 draws further parallels with Orphic representations of Zeus, telling us that he is often considered πολυώνυμος due to the names he acquires from swallowing other divinities. She proceeds to argue that this strategy overlaps with what Parmenides is doing, with the result that What-Is has many names exactly in this sense. However, this reading is problematic because Ferella ends up talking about 'parts' and 'names' of What-Is, when both are rejected in the context of What-Is. As we have seen, Parmenides never uses terms that allow us to infer that What-Is has parts. Furthermore, having many true names (given a specific understanding of true names) makes impossible the idea that something is truly a single entity, which is why there may be only one true name of What-Is, and it is 'What-Is'. Finally, the model that Ferella suggests does not take into account Parmenides' deductive style, or his interest in deductive consistency.

[704] This is apparent if we consider Zeus' epithets, as names that express his essential features. In the *Theogony*, he is called μητίετα or μητιόεις (Hesiod, *Th*. 56, 286, 457, 520, 904, 914), and when Hesiod explains how Zeus attains such features that come with the epithet, he traces it back to Zeus' swallowing of Metis herself (*Th.* 887–900). On Hesiod's strategy, see Vergados 2020, 95–6. In continuity with what Ferella notes within the *Derveni Papyrus* Metis remains operative within Zeus, because we are told that after swallowing her Zeus advises him about good and evil (900). For a different reading of the meaning of swallowing that relies on the evidence of the *Derveni Papyrus*, see Betegh 2004, 172.

[705] See for example the discussion in Sattler 2020, 87–91.

swallowing does not fit with Parmenides' methodology. Second, even if such a model could provide an account for the complexity of What-Is, it would not make clear on what grounds the features of What-Is necessarily lead to one essence. For in order to obtain such a reading Parmenides would need a method capable of establishing a conceptual continuity and a necessary bond not only between the signs 'of a single kind' and 'whole', which already point to being a singularity, but also among the other features of What-Is (i.e., 'ungenerated' (*agenēton*), 'indestructible' (*anōlethron*), 'untrembling' (*atremes*), 'accomplished' (*teleston*)). For only all together can they identify What-Is.

Given the pervasiveness and relevance that the Goddess' methodology acquires throughout the poem, I believe it is possible to clarify how Parmenides constructs conceptual continuity among the features of What-Is. For even 'ungenerated' (*agenēton*), 'indestructible' (*anōlethron*), 'untrembling' (*atremes*), 'accomplished' (*teleston*) can mean, in an indirect way, being 'one', in ways comparable to 'whole' and 'of a single kind'. If we retrace the deductive steps, the specific premises, and scope for discussion that the Goddess sets out in **B8 DK**, these features follow one from the other both consistently and *continuously*. The whole deduction produces a conceptual continuity between the features of What-Is, which constitutes an actual spatial continuity (*sunecheia*) for What-Is, because, in Epic poetry, a poet's words have

the power to directly affect reality.[706] Furthermore, such a continuity establishes that all the features of What-Is revolve around a specific understanding of being a single entity that allows a complex structure, that is, 'similarity'. Let me start from expanding on what 'continuity' is, and then focus on its role in the Goddess' scrutiny. For it will help us to focus on how all of the features of What-Is can both be seen as entailed (i.e., in continuity) with one another and be considered one through the emphasis on its inner similarity.

The term continuity in Ancient Greek is a compound of the verb ἔχω and the prefix σύν, which is used to indicate that some things are kept together, a meaning that even ἔχω on its own can convey. Indeed, συνέχω derives from ἔχω, and their meanings overlap at least to some degree, especially at a non-technical level, where they can both mean to 'hold together'.[707] If we were to detect a difference, we could say that συνέχω points to a specific way of being kept together.[708] Moreover, while this is clear for later authors such as

[706] See in particular Strauss-Clay 2021.
[707] E.g., Homer, *Od.* 11.219, 10.42, Aeschylus, *Th.* 98, Aristophanes, *Plut.* 101.
[708] See e.g., Aristotle, *Phys.* 5 3. 227a10–12, where Aristotle says that being continuous (*to synechon*) 'as the name implies' (*kai hōsper sēmainei tounoma*) means that the limits of something hold together. However, he considers *echomenon* to indicate something looser than continuity, that is, 'contiguity' (*Phys.* 5. 3. 226b18–21). On the conceptual closeness between 'continuity' and 'to have/to hold' in Aristotle, see Castelli 2010, 85–7, Pfeiffer 2018, 63–4.

Aristotle,[709] I do not think the same goes for Parmenides, where the distinction appears rather blurred. Nevertheless, in Parmenides the two terms serve to indicate two roles that continuity plays in What-Is.

In **B8 DK**, in the context of deducing that What-Is is ungenerated and indestructible, we are told that it is temporally continuous, in the sense that it is always 'all together'. By the end of this deduction, when the goddess says that Justice holds it fast, it does not seem that anything different from being continuous is implied. Similar considerations follow when the Goddess discusses What-Is' indivisibility, where after showing that What-Is is continuous in space, and thus one, What-Is is held together in the bonds of a limit by Necessity (*peiratos en desmoisin echei*) (**l.30–1**). Already from the context, by holding What-Is, both Justice and Necessity make sure that all of What-Is is continuous and self-cohering. Furthermore, in support of this, it is even more significant that it is only in these two places, where we have an explicit reference to continuity, that the verb ἔχω appears. Thus, it is safe to say that Parmenides uses the two terms *almost* interchangeably to indicate that What-Is is continuous. While συνεχής and συνέχω refer to the internal continuity of What-Is, the verb ἔχω suggests that such a continuity is secured from the

[709] See for example, Aristotle, *Phys.* 1 3. 186a22–b4, 5 3. 227a10–12.

outside as well. Still, it is unclear how 'continuity' and 'holding together' can apply to What-Is. On the basis of our discussion of **B8 DK** we can say the following. Given that What-Is appears to be something physical and extended, Parmenides wants to grant an actual continuity and completeness within all of What-Is. In other terms, he wants to make sure that the relation between all the aspects of What-Is is the one expressed by the relation between a sphere and all the points of its surface. Furthermore, bonds tie down What-Is externally not only to grant that it is continuous and one, but also that it is finite, delimited, and thus physically or spatially 'accomplished'. Given Parmenides' correspondence between What-Is and what can be thought and expressed, this literal application of continuity must have applied also on conceptual grounds.

In order to understand better what Parmenides may have in mind, and perhaps further clarify his literal application of continuity as well, we need to delve a bit more into what it means to be continuous. Of course Parmenides' conception and use of continuity differs from Aristotle's. However, there are a few interesting observations that we can make regarding continuity in Parmenides if we go back to Aristotle's discussion in Metaphysics Δ, which,

as we know, presents *endoxa* held by Early Greek philosophers and other thinkers:[710]

> We call continuous *per se* (*kath'auta*) what is one not merely due to contact (*aphē*). For if you were to lay some wooden sticks one in contact with the other, you would not say that these, either the wooden stick or the body, or anything else that is continuous, are one. Generally speaking, we consider things to be continuous even when they have joints, but more rightly so those that do not have joints. For example, the shin or the thigh are more 'one' than the leg, because the movement of the leg need not be one. Furthermore, the straight line is more 'one' than the bent line: the line that is bent and has an angle is 'one' and 'not one', because its movement could be both simultaneous (*ama*) and not simultaneous, whereas the one of the straight line is always simultaneous (*ama*). And there is no part (*morion*) that has magnitude that stands still (*eremei*) while another is moving, as in the case of [the parts of] a bent line. (Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 6. 1016a6–17)[711]

Aristotle discusses continuity in many parts of his corpus (e.g., *Physics*), but the discussion found in the *Metaphysics* is most relevant because there Aristotle directly considers 'continuity' as a kind of unity that is required for anything

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[710] See Waschkies 1977, 196–7 who connects the following account found in *Metaphysics* Δ together with Passages from *Physics* 5 to Early Greek thought, in particular with Parmenidean views, but, see already Ross 1924, 25, Solmsen 1960, 198–9.

[711] καθ' αὑτὰ δὲ συνεχῆ ὅσα μὴ ἁφῇ ἕν· εἰ γὰρ θείης ἁπτόμενα ἀλλήλων ξύλα, οὐ φήσεις ταῦτα εἶναι ἓν οὔτε ξύλον οὔτε σῶμα οὔτ' ἄλλο συνεχὲς οὐδέν. τά τε δὴ ὅλως συνεχῆ ἓν λέγεται κἂν ἔχῃ κάμψιν, καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον τὰ μὴ ἔχοντα κάμψιν, οἷον κνήμη ἢ μηρὸς σκέλους, ὅτι ἐνδέχεται μὴ μίαν εἶναι τὴν κίνησιν τοῦ σκέλους. καὶ ἡ εὐθεῖα τῆς κεκαμμένης μᾶλλον ἕν· τὴν δὲ κεκαμμένην καὶ ἔχουσαν γωνίαν καὶ μίαν καὶ οὐ μίαν λέγομεν, ὅτι ἐνδέχεται καὶ μὴ ἅμα τὴν κίνησιν αὐτῆς εἶναι καὶ ἅμα· τῆς δ' εὐθείας ἀεὶ ἅμα, καὶ οὐδὲν μόριον ἔχον μέγεθος τὸ μὲν ἠρεμεῖ τὸ δὲ κινεῖται, ὥσπερ τῆς κεκαμμένης.

that is a 'whole'. According to his doctrine of substance, Aristotle establishes a direct proportionality between 'continuity', 'unity', and 'wholeness': the more something is continuous, as an organic body is, the more it is 'substance' in the Aristotelian sense, and therefore 'whole'.[712] Still, not everything that is continuous is necessarily a 'whole'. As Aristotle himself illustrates, though the components of a shoe kept together with glue in the wrong arrangement are continuous, they do not make it recognisable as something unified and to any extent 'whole'. For such a continuum cannot perform its function (i.e., being used as a shoe): they merely stick together.[713] In contrast to something that is continuous without a proper arrangement and inorganic, an organic body has a proper arrangement that is continuous and does not require any external force to keep it together.[714] For its continuity depends on its specific shape (*morphē*) or form (*eidos*), which convey its essence as something complete in itself and 'whole'.[715]

Aristotle specifies what it means to be continuous by contrast with 'contact'. Although contact is necessary for being continuous, not everything

[712] On the correspondence between different degrees of continuity, being a substance and being whole see Castelli 2010, 86–91, 100–105.
[713] Aristotle, *Metaph*. Δ 6. 1016b12ff.
[714] On these aspects of continuity in the sense of 'one' see the **Appendix**.
[715] Aristotle, *Metaph.* I 1. 1052a15–9.

that is 'in contact' is continuous. For example, sticks bound together touch one another, but are still separate things. In other words, contrary to something such as a line, which is conceivable as some one thing, things that are merely in contact retain their multiplicity: contrary to a line, not only is there an external binding agent, but the binding does not suffice to make the many sticks hold together as a single big stick. This is due to the fact that the limits of each of the sticks remain distinguishable even if they are bound. By contrast, in something continuous such as a line the limits of the points that compose it must merge one into the other and become indistinguishable, so as to be one.[716] When something is continuous Aristotle's emphasises the characteristics of outer limits stressing the resulting unity, which makes the constituents disappear as single portions of something, especially from a conceptual point of view.[717] Even if Aristotle talks about parts, something that is completely continuous has no parts in actuality, but only in potency.[718] As a result, in contrast to something merely in contact, something continuous can be recognised as some 'one' thing that, as the cases mentioned above emphasise,

[716] See in this sense what Aristotle, *Cat.* 5a1–6 where Aristotle tells us that a line is one precisely because there is a common boundary at which its parts join together (i.e., a point). On the difference between 'contact' and 'continuity' in relation to the concept of 'limit' see the useful discussion in Pfeiffer 2018, 90–121, 147–90.
[717] For a similar view cf. Pfeiffer 2018, 171, 64–5, Wieland 1975, 257–8.
[718] Cf. Aristotle, *Cat.* 5a1–4, see Castelli 2010, 93.

is a 'whole'. Importantly, indistinguishability between the limits of something does not necessarily mean that everything that is continuous as a whole is qualitatively homogeneous: the kind of unity and continuity that obtains within an organic whole (that is, an organic unity, *symphysis*) is considered 'natural' because there is a feature that all of its constituents share. Furthermore, it is this feature that causes all of its constituents to be one essence that is structurally complex, qualitatively speaking.[719]

This being said, let us consider how Aristotle's theory of continuity impacts on our understanding of continuity in Parmenides. From the physical or spatial perspective, the Aristotelian account provides a conception of continuity that is comparable to what we found in Parmenides. According to both, being continuous means to have no gaps within something, differs from 'contact', and ultimately means to be 'one' in a specific sense, which requires sharing one feature and ultimately being similar.[720] Crucially, the considerations we made regarding continuity do not require us to import any specific aspect of Aristotle's ontology to help us deal with Parmenides. Rather, they allow us to determine that continuity plays a crucial role in deducing not

[719] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 4. 1014b 22–6.

[720] Actually, a similar understanding of continuity can be already implicitly traceable in Homer (e.g., *Il.* 20. 415, 4.133, 20.368), where continuity serves to make something one.

only What-Is' being 'ungenerated' and 'imperishable', but also 'untrembling', 'of a single kind', and 'whole', from which then its being 'accomplished' follows. In a sense continuity acts as a bond among the different features of What-Is. I have suggested several times that Parmenides' What-Is is structurally complex while being one, but if previously it was hard to see on what grounds this might have been possible, now continuity seems to offer a solution to several difficulties, such as: **1.** how What-Is can be something complex and yet one; **2.** how Parmenides can grant and obtain the resulting conception of What-Is from literal, spatial and conceptual points of view.

While I will develop further **1.** and **2.** in the next section, for now we can say what follows. Given that in Aristotle something is continuous provided that all that something shares enough similarity, I want to suggest that in **B8 DK** Parmenides deploys 'continuity' to establish the essence, structure, and the relation among the signs of What-Is. From a literal perspective this would reinforce the idea that What-Is is a continuum where all its features, both in their spatial dimensions as actual aspects of reality and in their conceptual aspects *qua* objects of thought, are continuous with the other. Furthermore, the outer limits of each aspect are 'blurred' because they overlap with one another, so that What-Is conceptually and materially results in something one, complex *and* without parts. For parts require

distinguishable limits, as we saw during the deduction of indivisibility as well. However, since this dimension is something that concerns the relation of the knowing agent with What-Is, rather than What-Is itself, continuity in this case would operate at the level of the Goddess' scrutiny. Specifically 'continuity' would be the epistemologically informed result of the logical and necessary consistency of her chain of deductions.

If this all seems reasonable, there still seems to be a problem for this reading: as we already saw in Aristotle, structural complexity within something continuous seems possible only where there is an aspect shared by all the features of something. This is problematic at first sight, as then all the features of What-Is would have to share the feature of 'What-Is'. However, this argument cannot be exploited, because it would make Parmenides' argument cyclical and introduce further problems regarding predication. On the one hand, we would be *presupposing* that these features all share the fact that they are What-Is, which is what the Goddess aims to show by the end of **B8 DK**. In other words, we would be assuming what we are to demonstrate. On the other, saying that *each* of these features is What-Is would imply that What-Is identifies with each of them. But this would generate problems regarding Parmenides' use of the verb to be, and would problematically make 'What-Is' a part or an aspect of itself. Furthermore, this reading does not take

into account the necessary relation among all of the features of What-Is, which is what ultimately defines what What-Is is. However, things would change if there were one aspect shared by all the signs enumerated in the Goddess' deduction, even under different respects. I believe this is the case, and the feature I single out is 'similarity'. Let us see why and how.

In **B8 DK**, Parmenides employs several times the term 'all' (*pan*), which, interchangeably with *ta panta* in the *Doxa* as well as in other Early Greek philosophers, serves to designate the cosmos. But, for Parmenides *pan* and *ta panta* mean different things. Noticing this difference already makes us understand that Parmenides is innovating in language and expanding the meaning of 'all' (*pan*) to something that in philosophy does not indicate the cosmos or all things in it (*ta panta*). Specifically, it indicates all What-Is, an unprecedented entity that differs both from the gods of the pantheon and from the phenomena.[721] That Parmenides is struggling to redefine the meaning of the term can be appreciated from the fact that 'all' always appears with further qualifications that specify its meaning. In particular, we saw that *pan* is often qualified by ὁμός, which then *qua* feature of What-Is serves to specify its essence. Although ὁμός can imply identity rather than similarity, it can also

[721] For a similar view about of the application of *pan*, see Coxon 2009, 204.

indicate a similarity between numerically different entities that is strong enough to allow that different entities are grouped together as 'one'.[722] Furthermore, together 'all' and 'similar' provide the clues to understand in what sense all of What-Is is one complex and structured entity. Accordingly, we obtain quantity (**l.24** *pan empleon estin eontos*),[723] quality (**l.22** *pan estin homoion*), time (**l.5** *homou pan*), and space (**l.25** *xyneches pan*).[724] As **B8 DK** makes clear, 'continuity' can fall under similarity because, according to Parmenides, it is possible only if there is enough similarity within the internal structure of What-Is. Given that even at the end of the final deduction of all the features of What-Is, Parmenides again refers to ὁμός, it seems that similarity can include within a single word many aspects of What-Is. Thus, it could be particularly important for determining Parmenides' **PWR**. It is important to note that, since the different respects in which What-Is is ὁμός have been deduced, Parmenides does not emphasise the different aspects of similarity, as he did before. The use of ὁμόν at **l.47** does not point to any specific aspect of

[722] E.g., Homer, *Il.* 13.354–6, where a family or a kind (*gōnos*) is considered ὁμός on the basis of sharing the same father, but each member is not identical to the other, *Il.* 5.778, cf. *In Ap.* 114. See also Hesiod, *Op.* 144 where *ouden homoion* is used to underline that the Bronze race is *in no way similar* to the Silver race.

[723] Here Parmenides does not use the term ὁμός, but the gist of the argument clearly indicates that this is how it should be read (i.e., there is no area of What-Is that is more What-Is than another, or there is not more concentration of What-Is here than there).

[724] While in these lines 'continuous' is used spatially, previously at **l.6** it was used to support the argument regarding What-Is' being ungenerated and therefore 'all alike' in time.

similarity (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, temporal), but to all of them at once. Equally, ὁμῶς at **l.49** includes within itself reference to all nuances of similarity, to emphasise the importance What-Is' completeness, which is conveyed through its being stretched within its limits. The only exception to this may be 'equally balanced' (*isopalēs*), which may refer to quantitative or qualitative similarity.[725] However, rather than providing an additional aspect of similarity, this term seems to specify the *relation of similarity between* the aspects of What-Is in order to accentuate its sense of completeness, especially with reference to its three-dimensional bulk (*onkōi*): all of the aspects of What-Is are in the same relation to one another just as all of What-Is is similar, so that all are equally essential to it.[726]

In conclusion, if we consider the contexts in which ὁμός is introduced, we discover that each of its meanings can represent one of the signs of What-

[725] The adjective ἰσοπαλής has been translated in many ways as it is not obvious what it could mean within the context of the fragment. Tarán 1965, 144–6 rejected that it indicates 'equal distance', which is a possibility, provided that it is introduced in the lines where Parmenides talks of What-Is in terms of a sphere. For the adjective usually means that something is 'equal in strength' (cf. Herodotus, 1.824, 5.49.8). As a result, Tarán 1965 concludes that it must mean something such as 'equal in strength', an conclusion he shares with Fränkel 1960, 191. However, on the basis of its use in Plato, *Phaed.* 108e4–109a6, he emphasises its connection to being immovable and unchanging, while also suggesting that this result is possible because 'when a thing is uniform in every direction no contrary terms can be applied to it' (144) on the basis of how Plato uses ἰσοπαλής in *Tim.* 63d12–63a1.

[726] For this view on ἰσοπαλής one may compare how e.g., in Hippocrates, *Aer.*, 12 climate is considered an equal (*ison*) mixture of the elements, which in other terms means that all of them have the same strength within the mixture because they are quantitatively the same.

Is: 'ungenerated' and 'indestructible' stand for something that is always temporally similar; 'whole', 'of a single kind' for qualitative and numerical similarity; 'untrembling' refers to the spatial (and qualitative) dimension; while 'accomplished' points to the use of ὁμός as in the last lines of **B8 DK**, that is, all its meanings together. Thus, in this sense it is likely that What-Is can be constituted of many aspects of the same essence, while conceptually they all boil down to a single essence which relies on 'similarity' and 'continuity' to be 'one'. There is no need to appeal to either an Hesiodic or Orphic explanation that deploys on the act of 'swallowing', which is not evidenced in Parmenides' poem anyway. Rather, it is far more convincing that throughout the poem Parmenides has built on the necessity embedded in the Goddess' scrutiny, deploying its resulting conceptual continuity and similarity between the signs of What-Is from a spatial point of view as well.

5.7.2 Epic Bonds, Limits and the Structure of What-Is

Pellikaan-Engel's work on the relation between Parmenides and Hesiod has devoted some attention to **B8 DK** and its similarities with Hesiod's

representation of the Tartarus.[727] However, as Morgan has rightly emphasised,[728] although scholars were able to detect thematic or linguistic reprises of Hesiod's characterisation of the Tartarus, including references to events that take place there (e.g., the Titanomachy),[729] they have not used this material to get a better grasp of Parmenides' philosophy. In this section, I will focus not only on the theme of bonds, but more generally on the context in which Parmenides appeals to them to expand on the kind of entity What-Is may be. This account will reinforce the view I presented earlier regarding What-Is as a complex and yet single entity. Furthermore, it will allow me to deploy the parallelism with living beings to expand further on Parmenides' model of **PWR**. Finally, it may also tell us something regarding Parmenides' didactive aim towards the reader.

Scholars have emphasised the importance of Hesiod's Tartarus for Parmenides' poem, because it is in the context of Tartarus that Hesiod uses the language of bonds to express different aspects of necessity and constraint as a cosmic power.[730] The reason why Hesiod resorts to bonds and their necessary constraint in this part of the *Theogony* is that Zeus needs to restrain those

[727] Pellikaan-Engel 1974.
[728] Morgan 2022.
[729] E.g., Mourelatos 2008, 39, Koning 2010, 211–13, Scully 2015, 95, Fränkel 1960.
[730] Morgan 2022, 231.

powers that threaten the cosmic order he has established, e.g., the Titans, who are none other than pre-Olympian gods. The only way of stopping these divinities is to imprison and bind them.[731] Hesiod's use of bonds and limits as an instrument of punishment serves literary and cosmological purposes, as by imprisoning certain agents of the story, Hesiod can control his narrative elucidation of the unravelling of the cosmos. Furthermore, at the same time, bonds express the role of Necessity within the cosmos.[732] Scholars agree that the *topos* of the Titans being bound in Tartarus as a punishment constitutes a successful image that many authors have reprised in their works.[733] Dolin in particular emphasised that the similarities between the imprisonment of Atlas and Prometheus in the Tartarus and Parmenides' **B8 DK** are so striking that What-Is may actually be compared to Atlas or Prometheus.[734] I think Dolin's suggestion is on point, but we may remember that Titans such as Atlas or Prometheus are not the only figures who suffer imprisonment or reside in the

[731] E.g., Homer, *Il*. 13.706, 22.5, *In Ap*. 129. On this, see especially Faraone 1991, 167.
[732] See Faraone 1991, Clay Strauss 2021, Morgan 2022, 224–31.
[733] See Hardie 2000, 29 shows for example how Pindar in his first Hymn looked back to Atlas' and Prometheus' imprisonment when describing the island of Delos, and such a description serves to convey a sense of compulsion, power and necessity, just as it did in Hesiod, though the context is very much different.
[734] See Dolin 1962, 97, cf. also Morgan 2022, who agrees with Dolin's suggestion, cf. Mourelatos 2008, 27: 'In contexts of mythology one might think of the captivity of the Titans, Atlas, Prometheus, or Typhoeus as the appropriate paradigm'.

Tartarus in the *Theogony*: the so-called 'monsters', especially Typhoeus and the Hundred-Handers, are or have been imprisoned in Tartarus as well.

The Hundred-Handers were originally imprisoned in painful bonds (δυσηλεγέος ὑπὸ δεσμοῦ) by Ouranos in the depth of Gaia during the rule of Chronos.[735] While this is not the same as Tartarus, at this stage of Hesiod's *Theogony* Tartarus had not yet been distinguished from Gaia.[736] They are freed by Zeus; then, as a sign of gratitude they become the guards for the Titans, and as such reside in Tartarus.[737] Typhoeus instead represents the last offspring of Gaia and Tartarus, who is cast into Tartarus together with the Titans after Zeus defeated him.

So, even if Dolin's intuition is right, we may want to push the matter further to ask whether, given those echoes, Parmenides may have in mind creatures other than the Titans (e.g., the Hundred-Handers, Typhoeus) when he presents What-Is. Parmenides is an independent enough thinker to reprise Epic motifs and themes in original ways. I will start with a discussion of what Hesiod means by 'monster' (πέλωρον), which also takes account of the

[735] Hesiod, *Th*. 154–8.
[736] On the deep connections between Tartarus and Gaia, see West 1966, and Strauss Clay 2003, 15.
[737] Hesiod, *Th.* 655–63, 734–5. It is debated when Zeus exactly frees them, but there seems to be some consensus (see Strauss Clay 2003, 18 n. 16, Smith 1988, 55) that they were freed during the Titanomachy (*Th*. 501–6, 617–86).

Homeric poems and hymns to establish whether theoretically relevant similarities with Parmenides' What-Is emerge.[738]

The term πέλωρον is an archaism found mainly in Homer and Hesiod which will be later substituted by τέρας, as Aristotle himself testifies.[739] Monsters in Hesiod are entities that acquire their 'monstrosity' from their progenitor Gaia πελώρια. They are generated at an early stage of Hesiod's cosmos, and because of this, they transcend the fundamental distinction between gods and mortals that structures Hesiod's cosmos.[740] As a result, they are something other than both kinds.[741] Their 'otherness' is evident in their external shape, which does not respect the anthropomorphism of the Olympian gods: monsters differ from gods according to certain features that Hesiod tries to capture in the etymology of their names.[742] For example, the Cyclops are quasi-identical (ἄλλα θεοῖς ἐναλίγκιοι ἦσαν) to the gods except for the fact that they have only one eye in their forehead, and this is what the

[738] For a more detailed analysis of 'monsters' in Early Greek literature, including Homer, see Zanon 2016.
[739] Aristotle, *Rhet*. 1406a7, see also Zanon 2016, 75.
[740] See Stoddard 2004, cf. Strauss Clay 2003.
[741] Strauss Clay 2003, 159.
[742] On Hesiod's use of etymology and names to characterise the essence of something, see especially Vergados 2021, Vergados 2020, but already Sulzberger 1926. See Leclerc 1993, 263–66 for an account of how in Early Greek literary production conferring a name to something equated to something sacred that can express and ever materialise the salient features of something. For the same aspects specifically in Hesiod's works, see Philippson 1936, 9–10, West 1966, 209, Strauss Clay 2003, 160–1.

etymology of their name refers to.[743] However, in some cases, the use of etymology as a source for their name fails, as in the case of the Hundred-Handers. Their essence is too complex and even contradictory to employ etymology and its powers to design an appropriate name.[744] As a result, they are said to be unnameable (οὐκ ὀνομαστοί).[745] In a society such as Archaic Greece, where names determine something's identity and ground its knowability,[746] not being able to name something bears heavy consequences for human beings.[747] Thus, when knowledge of something's name is impossible, the result is a difficulty to understand not only what something is essentially, but also how to categorise it according to traditional cosmic subdivisions (e.g., the one between gods and mortals, sky and earth).[748] Thus, Hesiodic monsters are not formidable only because of the way they appear, but also because they are something human beings cannot make sense of: they

[743] Hesiod, *Th*. 139 –53.
[744] Vergados 2021, 70, see Hesiod, *Th.* 270–336, cf. Homer *Il*. 401–5.
[745] Hesiod, *Th.* 148.
[746] Salvadore 1987.
[747] For example, in *In Dem.* Hades is never called with his proper names by human beings, who prefer *poludektē* (l.9), *anax poludegmōn* (l.17), whereas the other gods use his name unproblematically (l.79, 347, 395).
[748] When monsters are immortal or mortal, they do not fit in either the kind of man nor in the kind of gods; wherever they live, they are scattered in the Tartarus but also at the outer limits of the Earth, and always figure as something that is scary because somehow out of place. Furthermore, it is their being in a place, or outside the order established at different stages of the Hesiodic cosmos that makes them a threat to such an order (as in the case of the Hundred-Handers during Chronos' rule, or Typhoeus to the rule of Zeus).

are feared because they are unknown and possibly unknowable. This observation offers us a way to further understand why monsters could be even more of a threat to Zeus' cosmic order than the Titans, and why a monster such as Typhoeus is Zeus' ultimate opponent. While the Titans are feared according to the recognised powers they express, by transcending the godly dimension, monsters are even more feared, as it is more difficult to evaluate and recognise their power. For example, Typhoeus[749] is a jumble of features that his name fails to capture, and that the gods themselves do not understand.[750] However, each of his features is clear enough to indicate in some way that his powers endanger the present order of the cosmos: they suggest lawlessness and chaos,[751] which is why some scholars have defined him the perfect 'anti-Zeus',[752] or '*acosmia* incarnate'.[753] The fact that the features and signs of something monstruous and unnameable can convey its essence may be the reason why the Scholia on the *Theogony* consider the *sēma* as indistinguishable from πέλωρον. [754] Although the indistinguishability between the two may be hard to grasp for us, it was unproblematic for Homer

[749] Hesiod, *Th.* 836–8.
[750] This is suggested by Hesiod, *Th.* 830–5, where we are told that the sounds that Typhoeus emits are at not understandable even for the gods.
[751] Hesiod, *Th.* 823–35, see Strauss Clay 2020, 315.
[752] Blaise 1992, 362.
[753] Strauss Clay 2003, 26.
[754] *Schol. Th. Vet.* 845 l.1: <ἀπὸ τοῖο πελώρου:> ἀπὸ τοιούτου σημείου. PX

and the early scholiasts. For example, in the *Iliad*, the message that the gods send to Calcas by turning a serpent into stone are δεινὰ πέλωρα,[755] which the scholiast considers μέγιστα σημεῖα: [756] 'monster' indicates something portentous that is to be *indicated*, rather than conveyed through mortal language, especially if it leads mortals to establish arbitrary names.[757] As we saw previously, divine figures such as Circe and the gods themselves communicate through providing signs.[758] However, their this modality of communication makes this form of language superior to the mortal one—the verb σημαίνω can indicate authority in the speaker as well as their superior point of view.[759]

Now that we have a clearer understanding of what a 'monster' is and why the essence of monsters cannot be captured by a name, but only by indicating their features, we can advance a few further considerations regarding Parmenides' What-Is. Considering Parmenides' appeal to the

[755] Homer, *Il*. 2.321–2.
[756] Scholia Minora (or *Scholia Didymi* = D) *ad. Loc.* Notice that σημεῖον is virtually the same as σῆμα, but it is used in prose.
[757] Cf. also *In Ap.* 401, where a dolphin that is a πέλωρ μέγα τε δεινόν that manifests Apollo, or Homer, *Od*. 15.161, where we also find used the word τέρας in its common meaning of σῆμα (e.g., Homer, *Il*. 5.742). On the use of τέρας as sign sent by the gods as a message, see Baglioni 2017, 13–6.
[758] E.g., Heraclitus, B93 DK, Herodotus 8.37.2, Theognis 805–10.
[759] E.g., Herodotus, 7.192.1, 219.1, 1.5.3. On σημαίνω and signs as the prerogative of a divine language, see in particular Nagy 1990**b**, 62–4.

Tartarus and its connection to the Titans and monsters, the language of bonds, and the problem regarding the essence of What-Is, it seems to me that Parmenides is using several intertexts to present What-Is as similar to a Hesiodic 'monster'. This reading is attractive for a series of reasons. For example, it can accommodate the literal attribution of a spherical shape to What-Is (σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκῳ **l.43**), as well as the idea that What-Is is something living and divine.[760]Although in Parmenides' conception of reality, there is only one entity of this kind, which makes it μουνογενής, it compares well with Hesiod's monsters, who need not be anthropomorphic to be living and divine, in contrast to the gods. Thus, this reading can accommodate divinity as a feature of What-Is, without conflicting with Parmenides' overall traditional use of actual gods (i.e., Goddess, or Necessity).[761]

Parmenides' appeal to intertexts that recall Hesiod's monsters may be part of a compositional strategy. On the one hand, Parmenides' use of deductions offers an argumentative and consistent account of What-Is.

[760] That What-Is may be a living divine being is agreed by Coxon 2008, Evans 2021, 35, Long 1996, Sedley 1999, Tor 2017, 307–8.

[761] Bryan 2020 recently rejected the idea that What-Is is divine or a divinity by insisting on how well characterised divine agents are in Parmenides' poem. According to her, it is hard to accept that What-Is is divine. While I am not sure I fully agree with her conclusion, I surely agree that there is a difference in the kind of divinity that is conferred on What-Is, and it is something rather difficult to grasp, which is very consistent with the idea that What-Is is similar to a Hesiodic 'monster'.

However, while being accurate and spelling out the essence of What-Is and the relation between its signs, it risks appearing difficult for a listener to follow. Thus, these Hesiodic echoes may aim to offer a more readily understandable point of comparison for What-Is. For it too is something 'monstruous', in the sense of 'portentous', that cannot be characterised by resorting to ordinary language and naming, and whose essence appears contradictory and difficult to fit under a single entity.

Hesiod himself had reached similar conclusions for his monsters. However, he still appeals to mortal language and accepts the negative upshot of his attempt. Nevertheless, even when Hesiod tries to convey Typhoeus' essence by indicating its features through signs, he does not need to argue for them. For he is not required to convince the reader through arguments and necessity that those signs identify Typhoeus. Because of this, Hesiod's use of signs is a way less informative than Homer's, where we saw that signs were employed together with sense perception to show and convince someone's of something's essence and identity (e.g., the case of Penelope and Odysseus). So, more in continuity with Homer than Hesiod, Parmenides neither simply enumerates the signs of What-Is nor treats them as arbitrary. For he offers an alternative methodology to Homer's that is fit for the kind of entity that What-Is is. Parmenides rejects proofs that come from ordinary sense perception to

appeal to proofs grounded in the Goddess' revelation. The *kouros* is invited to deduce the signs and show in what way they can coexist in a single entity, making use of a scrutiny which, through *logos*, can deduce the signs as a continuous chain of arguments that shows the relation between all the various signs. Thus, through this method Parmenides can explain how these many features not only can, but must, result in a spatially continuous and all alike entity that is complete and thus 'one'.

The appeal to bonds leads to relevant considerations regarding the role of necessity. From the perspective of the deduction, bonds act as an expression of the binding power between the step-by-step deductions of the signs of What-Is. They keep together all of What-Is and grant that it is accomplished under all of its respects. But at the same time, as we know, in Epic, bonds also serve to restrain something which is perceived as a threat. When it comes to understanding in what sense What-Is may be perceived as a threat, one could say that such an entity is an obstacle to the erroneous beliefs that men have established for themselves. The fact that What-Is is necessarily bound makes it impossible for mortals to free themselves from the beliefs they have set for themselves. However, if What-Is were freed from its bounds, then all men would be able to know reality as it is, instead of having to travel like the *kouros*. One can wonder, then, whether Parmenides would want What-Is to be free

and accessible to every man, but, in line with the structure of the poem, which hinges on a revelation, it is safe to say that Parmenides believes that this is the way things are by necessity: not all men can access the truth, but only those who are chosen by the gods. This account reveals an elitist view concerning who can grasp reality that is quite common in Epic poems, where the poet is the spokesman of the gods, as well as in Early Greek philosophy. Furthermore, it is consistent not only with Parmenides' considerations regarding mortals, but it shares relevant parallelisms with the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*,[762] from which Parmenides may have drawn.

The hymn narrates from a cosmological perspective how Apollo joins the other gods in Olympus and how he receives a temple in Delos. What is interesting is that Apollo is initially looked upon with suspicion and even fear, both by the gods in Olympus and by Delos (the Greek island, here personified), who does not want Apollo to come in contact with mortals. Both the gods and Delos fear Apollo because he is a potential threat to the order that Zeus established. He is introduced as a menacing being, since the poet emphasises Apollo's excellent archery and the gods' trembling at his sight.[763] Delos has similar preoccupations:

[762] On the *Hymn to Apollo*, see Strauss Clay 1989, 17–91, Chappell 2011, 59–81.
[763] *In Ap.* 1–5.

> But I am apprehensive about one thing I have heard (*tina phasin*), Leto, I won't conceal it from you: they say Apollo will be excessively overbearing (*atasthalos*), and lord it (*prytaneuō*) greatly over immortals and mortals across the grain-giving land.[764] (*In Ap.* 66–9, tr. West modified)

Apollo's power as a deity unknown to both immortals and mortals makes him something to be feared, similar to the other deities and monsters imprisoned in Tartarus. For nothing precludes the possibility that he will be their ally, until Zeus offers him ambrosia, or until in Delos he slays the serpent mother of Typhoeus in Delos.[765]

It is owing to these events that the immortals and mortals (represented by Delos) recognise him as part of their family, and ultimately an ally of order. Furthermore, as Apollo's mother swears, Delos' acceptance of Apollo on her soil will grant prosperity to Delos, which is famed for its poverty.[766] Apollo's appearance in the world of mortals will grant good things not only to Delos, but also to human beings. However, the prosperity he will make available to mankind is of a different nature. For by prophesying 'Zeus' unerring will to human beings', [767] Apollo will provide them with the highest form of

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[764] ἀλλὰ τόδε τρομέω Λητοῖ ἔπος, οὐδέ σε κεύσω·
λίην γάρ τινά φασιν ἀτάσθαλον Ἀπόλλωνα
ἔσσεσθαι, μέγα δὲ πρυτανευσέμεν ἀθανάτοισι
καὶ θνητοῖσι βροτοῖσιν ἐπὶ ζείδωρον ἄρουραν.

[765] *In Ap.* 300–5, for a comment on the passage, see Strauss Clay 1989, 63–73.

[766] *In Ap.* 51–60.

[767] *In Ap.* 132: χρήσω δ' ἀνθρώποισι Διὸς νημερτέα βουλήν.

knowledge. Indeed, as Strauss Clay has noted, Apollo's words are stronger than it may appear, because Apollo is not simply referring to his abilities as prophet or counsellor.[768] Rather, as the rest of the hymn illustrates, Apollo is the spokesperson for Zeus' necessary *logos* that rules over both mortals and immortals. In this sense, Apollo himself becomes the source of divine knowledge, and as such his function is almost indistinguishable from Zeus'. However, Apollo's knowledge will not be available to all men, but he decides to communicate it to specific people: his priests, who are thereby messengers of his θέμιστες.[769] Apollo's association with Right (*themis*) as a type of necessity is made explicit not only by the fact that Apollo says that his purpose is to 'declare right' (*themisteuein*), but also by the fact that he has a specific bond with Right, who nurses him.[770]

As this brief overview of Apollo's figure in the *Hymn to Apollo* shows, there are some similarities with Parmenides' treatment of What-Is. For like Apollo, What-Is stands for genuine knowledge of what is necessary and divine. Furthermore, just as Delos (i.e., the mortal world) may fear Apollo for overruling Zeus's order on all things, mortals too may fear What-Is for the

[768] Strauss Clay 1989, 44.
[769] *In Ap.* 393–96.
[770] *In Ap.* 94, for Apollo's association with Right, see e.g., Aeschylus, *Eum.* 2–4, Euripides, *Eph. T.* 1259.

same reason. However, as the case of Apollo illustrates, the establishment of Apollo in Delos only makes mortal existence better, because he provides humans with divine knowledge. Furthermore, Apollo's role perfectly harmonises with that established by the necessary will of Zeus, just as What-Is' role is perfectly subject to that of different forms of necessity. Nevertheless, the knowledge that Apollo makes available is precluded to the majority of people, just as in the case of What-Is.

5.7.3 A Cumulative Reading of What-Is: is it an 'all', a 'whole' or neither?

This chapter's discussion has aimed to illustrate what sort of entity What-Is appears to be in Parmenides' thought. Owing to the overview of the arguments found in **B8 DK,** we were able to see that What-Is is a complex entity that Parmenides conceives as a unity. The Goddess' speech is a deduction that relies on conceptual continuity[771] and necessary inferences. However, at the same time, it is a divine revelation, which in principle could

[771] The view that **B8 DK** presents a continuous deduction where each sign of What-Is is obtained through the previous the steps can be found already in Owen 1960, 93, Lloyd 1979, 70.

convince even those who cannot follow the logic behind each step of the deduction.[772] In line with both revelatory practices and logical deductions, the essence of What-Is becomes more evident as the Goddess progressively deduces and accumulates one after the other the signs of What-Is, until it is fully recognisable and tangible. The continuous progression across the deductions is guaranteed owing to the introduction of 'continuity', which ultimately can be possible only where there is enough 'similarity' to constitute 'unity'. In a way, given that the Goddess' relies on progressive additions of signs, which are mentioned several times within each deduction, the essence of What-Is is reached in a cumulative way. This accumulation is possible because of Parmenides' use of 'continuity' in conjunction with 'similarity'. For, by implying 'continuity',[773] and thus being 'one', 'similarity' serves to show that collectively all of the signs of What-Is can be considered cases of being 'similar' in different respects (e.g., time, place, quality, and quantity). Furthermore, since having these signs necessarily leads the *kouros* to deduce that there can only be one entity similar all throughout, which has such

[772] We saw in **5.7.2** that this strategy could also deploy Hesiodic echoes of 'monsters' as prodigious entities which can present apparently contradictory features in their essence.
[773] Previously we saw that Parmenides considers continuity to imply similarity and *vice versa*.

features and thus spreads throughout all the available space, What-Is must also be 'accomplished'.

Parmenides' view of the **PWR** can be clarified if we contextualise the role of the Goddess within the traditional polarity between immortals and mortals, which overlaps with immortal language and mortal language. But though the method of enquiry helps us to understand how What-Is is both 'one' and complex, it may still be made of parts, where it not for the core role of signs. Nevertheless, Parmenides denies the possibility that What-Is has parts, which suggests that he may have a view of how this might be possible.[774] I have argued that Parmenides solves this problem by reinforcing the connection between divine language and signs conceived as divine aspects of something, in opposition to mortal 'names'. After discussing the case of the two Hesiodic Strifes, we saw how names draw distinctions between different entities and make them discrete and divided one from the other, while signs ultimately individuate one entity, even if they are many. This happens because signs establish a connection with what they indicate that immediately points to that entity *as a whole*, if the faculties of the individual are in the appropriate

[774] See **c. Fate**.

state.[775] As in Penelope's case, this is true of signs sent by some divinity, because signs reveal features that as they are presented to the knower *only now* are *recognised* or understood as identifying a certain entity. In Parmenides' case this role of the signs is philosophically better grounded as the *kouros*' process of understanding is guided step by step through inferences that manifest What-Is in its entirety: signs are constitutive of the path that guides to What-Is, just as the Scylla or the Sirens are for Odysseus. Thus, they work as epistemological challenges that can be overcome only by making a judgement through the appropriate use of *logos*. By revealing What-Is in this way, signs allow the knower to grasp how each conceptually connects and leads to all of What-Is. In other words, signs *qua* signs are epistemological means to access the identity of something, whose goal (i.e., leading to grasp What-Is' identity completely) terminates their usefulness to the knower.

Furthermore, many signs can indicate a single entity because they are different ways of looking at something without implying the notion of part.

Parmenides' use of signs rests on a development of Homer's use, combined with Parmenides' criticism of the mortal inadequacy of language

[775] This was one of the implications of my reading of **B7 DK**, where the Goddess' order to consider the appropriate object of thought for thinking What-Is serves to direct the *kouros*' to use *noos* so that he can grasp the divine signs she will introduce in **B8 DK**.

and Hesiod's use of names to convey something's essence. On the one hand, in notable instances such as the identification of Odysseus by Penelope, or in Circe's speech, Homer's signs can reveal something's essence (be it the right choice regarding a path, or the identity of something) by directly indicating each of something's aspects. However, the problem with this use of signs is that they illustrate realities that often pertain to everyday experiences, or, in any case, experiences that involve the ordinary world of mortals. Furthermore, they appear arbitrary, as it is unclear why one should consider them able to capture something's identifying features.[776] Thus, signs that are so embedded in ordinary experiences cannot be deployed to learn the essence of something so alien to mortal experience and hard to categorise as What-Is. This is why the signs of What-Is are not something that is accessible to mortals except in the specific circumstance of a divine revelation: being 'ungenerated' or 'whole' in the phenomena at best are a *verisimilar* representations of what they really are.[777] Nonetheless, especially in the case of Odysseus' proof of identity, Homer's signs work analogously to those that Parmenides presents, as they serve to prove Odysseus' identity: Penelope puts Odysseus to tests which

[776] On signs risking to be arbitrary in Homer, see Foley 1997.

[777] On the possibility of recognising the signs of What-Is in the phenomena, see Mourelatos 2008, while for this use of verisimilar, see Johansen 2016, who uses this term to express the relationship between the two parts of Parmenides' poem.

show signs, and only their accumulation finally convinces Penelope that the man that stands before her *is* Odysseus.

Parmenides' conception of What-Is as a sphere is helpful as well, because it directly illustrates how apparently different aspects of something can coexist unproblematically and even overlap in an entity that is so extraordinary (or monstrous) as to be similar all throughout itself. As to the understanding of the sphere, it makes no difference which perspective one adopts in looking at it: as long as it can be thought and seen as a sphere, each of the points of its surface exhibits the same features and the whole of the sphere's essence, contrary to other solids. If we apply these considerations to What-Is, even if one does not take literally that What-Is is shaped like a sphere, the following considerations are valuable. Since What-Is consists of signs, Parmenides would be telling us that, independently from which sign we begin our deduction of What-Is' essence, all of the other signs will necessarily follow.[778] For at least conceptually speaking they all co-imply one other: they are continuous and similar not only as we saw previously, but also in the sense that they equally contribute to expressing the essence of What-Is.[779] No sign is

[778] Cf. B5 DK.

[779] Cf. Mourelatos 2008, 127 who considers that each of the characterisations of the sphere that Parmenides offers can be a good definition of a sphere. If we take Mourelatos' observation a step further, we could say that each definition can be considered equal inasmuch as it always

more important than another, but they are all irrevocable, as only their accumulation can provide us the complete essence of What-Is.

In conclusion, Parmenides' use of signs, combined with his use of continuity and similarity, ultimately rules out that he is considering What-Is as something that is made of parts. Rather, it is something that can be conveyed by signs, which show aspects of something without the need to posit them as parts. The advantage of signs is that each sign alone stands for the whole of What-Is, but since they are not parts, they can accumulate and conceptually overlap without necessarily generating contradiction. Thanks to the Goddess' method of necessary inferences, each sign of What-Is is necessarily in continuity with the others, which necessarily constitute its essence, and this makes them ultimately conceivable as something one and complex. Furthermore, the Goddess' method makes its signs not at all arbitrary, but literally depend on Necessity. While in the case of ordinary objects there is no way to be certain that certain signs indicate univocally X rather than Y, in the *Alētheia*, this is precisely what happens: signs are aspects that offer specific ways of thinking What-Is as that entity that, by definition,

captures the essence of a sphere as a whole, with the only difference of approaching it from a different point of view. Nonetheless, since these characterisations define a sphere, as in mathematical theorems, one can deduce the other definitions of the sphere starting from another one unproblematically.

collectively consists of those signs in that specific relation to one another. Nonetheless, this does not mean that Parmenides never makes use of the concept of parts; the *Doxa* employs names and ordinary sense perception to conceive of the phenomena. Furthermore, when the *kouros* has not yet been exposed to the deductions of the Goddess, he may consider the signs of What-Is as 'parts', but that is because he still has not completely received the revelation of the Goddess. However, these parts are not 'objective', because they do not characterise What-Is, but rather they are 'subjective' inasmuch as the *kouros* cannot yet think What-Is correctly by relying on the divine language of signs. Furthermore, the error on the *kouros*' part in resorting to 'parts' to initially conceive of What-Is is not necessarily due to his ignorance, because he is presented as a knowledgeable individual when he is greeted by the Goddess.[780] Rather, the point is that mortals rely on faculties that are inferior to those of the gods. Thus, they are condemned to use names and mortal language to express their thoughts.[781] Indeed, only once mortals have been not

[780] Even if one considers the Goddess' words to be ironic, the fact that the *kouros* has reached the Goddess while relying to some extent on his faculties proves that he is more advanced towards the path 'that is' than other mortals.

[781] After expressing the essence of What-Is, the Goddess proceeds to illustrate the two material principles that will offer a second-best grasp of reality to the *kouros*, once he has come back to the world of phenomena. This not only suggests that the *kouros* cannot reside with the Goddess, but also that even this grasp of What-Is will not be available once he has returned with the other mortals. Probably the grasp that he has in **B8 DK** is available to him only because the Goddess has acted on the mixture of his constitution, so to make it fiery to the

only exposed to the Goddess' divine speech, but also have her methodology can they *noein*. For this enables them to indicate and deploy signs to express real things by the correct names granted by the Goddess and necessity.[782]

When we try to answer whether What-Is may be considered a 'whole', an 'all' or something else, we are necessarily relying on the Platonic and Aristotelian understanding of these terms. Generally, under the latter term both Plato and Aristotle include those entities where the sum of their constituents is equal to the resulting thing. For example, 'all' the drops of water that make up 'all' of the water are ultimately the same thing as 'all' of the water. Furthermore, the way each drop figures within the mass of water does not even make any difference for the essence of the water. If this is so, What-Is does not seem to be just an 'all', contrary to what Aristotle may have thought. While all the signs of What-Is are similar to one another and can be considered different aspects of similarity, they are all structurally and definitionally necessary to constitute What-Is. Nonetheless, if we take the Platonic formulation of an 'all', which consists in what is equal to the sum of its parts,[783] we can see why What-Is may be considered an 'all'. For given that,

highest extent, and thus most appropriate to grasp what is divine. On the connection between fire and the divine dimension, see Tor 2020, and **B16 DK**.

[782] E.g., Theognis 805–10, see Nagy 1983 for the association between 'signs' and *noein.*

[783] Plato, *Theaet*. 204b2–205a10.

for Plato, a 'whole' is 'more' than the sum of its parts,[784] there is nothing more to What-Is than the sum of its aspects: it is by accumulating the aspects of What-Is that we can identify exactly what it is. However, it is also true that only by the end of the Goddess' deduction are we able to see that all of the aspects of What-Is consist in different senses of being similar. This is different from being a simple sum of signs, so that one could think What-Is *qua* 'whole' inasmuch as it is more than the sum of its signs. Still, this outcome is not completely consistent with Parmenides' understanding of similarity, which also seems to consider each aspect of What-Is as a different sense of 'similar', so that, in the end, What-Is is a sum of all the senses of 'similar'. In other terms, the signs do not add anything different to the essence of What-Is, but only magnify its internal similarity by including all of its senses.

Another feature that is particularly important in Aristotle's conception of 'whole' is the order or the relation within the parts that make it, which Plato may have anticipated when he discussed the way some Forms participate in some but not other Forms in the *Sophist*.[785] For especially in Aristotle's case a 'whole' requires that its parts are ordered in a certain way that is essential to

[784] Plato, *Theaet.* 205a10–206e12. On Plato's conception of 'whole' as more than the sum of its part in the *Theaetetus*, see Centrone 2002, and Marmodoro 2021.
[785] Plato, *Soph.* 252e-253b, 262b9-d, cf. *Pol.* 277dff.

it. One must then wonder whether and to what extent Parmenides considers order to play a role in his conception of What-Is. Parmenides' appeal to the notion of order in his discussion of What-Is through the idea that each sign has the same relation to What-Is as a point of the surface of the sphere to its centre. Although it would be possible only *per absurdum* to think that there is something that consists exactly of the same aspects, but in a different relation to one another, Parmenides nonetheless indicates the specific relations between the aspects for What-Is to obtain. However, Parmenides' conception of order and the resulting relations between aspects can equally be used to argue that there is no proper order at hand. Reprising Parmenides' sphere, there is nothing specific in a given point of the surface *a* when I compare it with another one called *b*. Thus, there would be no difference in the essence of the sphere if I exchanged *a* with *b*, which ultimately may lead us to conclude that Parmenides' use of order collapses on itself. One may consider his model unsatisfying because it builds a relation of invariance between the aspects of What-Is that may be considered uninformative and amount to no order or structure. However, it is undeniable that this still represents an attempt to express the idea that What-Is has a certain structure in itself.

In conclusion, I do not think it is possible to consider What-Is either completely an 'all', or a 'whole', according to the Platonic and Aristotelian

definitions. However, as we saw, Parmenides is clearly making his way towards conceiving What-Is as a 'whole' in the sense of subsequent developments. Perhaps, the best way to characterise its modality of existence would be by appealing again to the Hesiodic conception of 'monster'. For being 'monstrous' directly expresses how What-Is is an extraordinary entity that is difficult to safely place in one kind rather than another. Thus, Parmenides' What-Is appears to be an entity which, whether living or not, nevertheless belongs to a dimension of 'otherness', as it is situated in-between being a 'whole' and an 'all', just as Hesiod's monsters are situated between gods and mortals.

CHAPTER SIX: Conclusions

This thesis has argued that, in his poem, Parmenides presents mereological considerations. Furthermore, I have argued that Parmenides' Mereology is profoundly influenced by his literary context. In other terms, the reading proposed here, avoids retroprojecting onto Parmenides anachronistic conceptions concerning his mereological views in the *Alētheia* and the *Doxa*. Furthermore, it consistently fulfils conceptual and philosophical *desiderata* by assessing Parmenides' concepts in the context of the Epic literary form of the poem.

I have proposed a new methodology for developing an account of Parmenides' mereology with specific attention to What-Is. On the one hand, I have employed mereology as a branch of contemporary metaphysics to inform my analysis. On the other, I have argued for the *philosophical* consideration of authors that are usually analysed together with Parmenides' poem mainly for rhetorical and compositional purposes, such as Homer and Hesiod. Furthermore, I have suggested that, adding to this list the earliest Hippocratic texts, as well as the Homeric hymns, produces fruitful advancements in the understanding of Parmenidean philosophy as a whole.

Prior to this study, mereological concepts have been applied to Plato's metaphysics to get a better understanding of his views of the problematic relation between parts and wholes, which, in brief, I have referred to as **PWR**. However, little has been said about Early Greek mereology: scholars have either dismissed Early Greek conceptions of **PWR** or focussed on Plato's mereology without considering how Plato's mereology is shaped by his predecessors' conceptions. Scholars have overlooked the fact that, most

notably in the *Sophist*, Plato himself refers to his predecessors' **PWR**. Furthermore, that Early Greek philosophers were concerned with a problem that overlaps with the **PWR**, that is, the problem of how plurality arises from a single principle and *vice versa*, is widely attested.

Since Parmenides' philosophy profoundly influenced later philosophy, I have focussed on Parmenides' mereology to investigate it *per se* and how it could have shaped successive **PWRs**. As resulted from **Chapter 2**, not only Plato, but also Aristotle considered Parmenides to be conscious of the necessity of resolving the problem of parts and wholes. According to our reassessment of the Aristotelian testimony, Parmenides appears to have conceived of two distinct **PWRs**: a **PWR** for What-Is, and a **PWR** that accounts for change in the phenomena. Given that our evidence for the **PWR** deployed in the context of the *Doxa* is limited and has a restricted impact on post-Parmenidean thinkers' views of the **PWR**, especially in comparison with **PWR** of the *Alētheia*, this thesis has concentrated on an account of the **PWR** for What-Is.

An analysis of Parmenides' **PWR** for What-Is extended the conclusions obtained from the study of Aristotle's testimonia, according to which Parmenides is not a Strong Numerical Monist. Rather, the Aristotelian evidence suggests that Parmenides has a nuanced understanding of what it means to be 'one'. Specifically, Parmenides is presented by Aristotle as a specific kind of Essential Monist, that is, a thinker who believes that plurality in What-Is is possible inasmuch as the features of What-Is have all the same meaning. Thus, these features all stand for the same essence. This conclusion is problematic and unsatisfactory for Aristotle. However, it allows us to

hypothesise that Parmenides conceived of What-Is as a complex and structured entity, at least to some extent.

In order to investigate whether and how this possibility could be maintained, starting from Parmenides' fragments, **Chapter 3** reconstructed Parmenides' methodology for determining something's identity, arguing that the role the Goddess' plays within the poem is crucial for Parmenides' **PWR**.

First, through a discussion of **B1 DK**, I have shown that the Goddess is a divine agent who prepares the *kouros* to progressively grasp the essence of What-Is. In her role as facilitator of knowledge, the Goddess echoes other Epic divine female agents (e.g., Circes, the Muses). However, the analysis of **B7 DK** concluded that Parmenides distances himself from Epic epistemological views. Although Parmenides' knowledge of What-Is relies on 'signs', like Homer's, Parmenides objects to the idea that that 'signs' obtained through ordinary sense perception can lead us to identify the essence of What-Is. For an epistemology that relies on 'signs' obtained from ordinary sense perception will not be appropriate to What-Is.

First, in **B7 DK** the Goddess maintains that the enquiry of What-Is requires an appropriate resulting form of thought (*noēma*), which is attainable only through a divine cognitive state (i.e., *noein* rather than *phronein*). Second, an appropriate cognitive grasp of What-Is is not attainable through a mortal form of thought, but rather only through the help of *logos*. For as we learn from **B8 DK** the signs of What-Is do not pertain to ordinary mortal experience. Accordingly, the Goddess maintains that, in order to grasp What-Is, it is necessary to deploy a methodology that leads the *kouros* to draw the appropriate judgements about What-Is' essence.

Once the results of the analysis of **B7 DK** applied to **B8 DK**, it became possible to present an innovative understanding of Parmenides' **PWR** in the *Alētheia*. For, thanks to the Goddess' methodology, the unitary and yet complex structure of What-Is can be obtained through a continuous step by step deduction of its signs, which traditionally belong to what is divine, and, which ordinary experience cannot conceptualise. The fact that the Goddess' methodology is conveyed through a revelation suggests that, as in other Early Greek authors (e.g., Hesiod), the signs belong to a language that is divine. Thus, thanks to the Goddess' methodology, the deduction of 'signs' establishes a necessary conceptual continuity between the aspects of What-Is. But such a continuity obtains on the grounds that, within the deduction, each sign implies 'similarity' under a certain respect (e.g., quality, time, space). Through this strategy Parmenides formulates a **PWR** that accounts for What-Is' complexity and unity appealing to necessity rather than to unsatisfactory Epic explanations for reality (e.g., fagocitation).

The fact that Parmenides in the *Alētheia* avoids the use of 'names' and exclusively appeals to signs is crucial to avoid the discontinuity of What-Is. For if each of the features of What-Is were a name, each of them would have an existence independent and separate from What-Is, which is precisely what Parmenides seeks to avoid. As the comparison with Hesiod illustrated, signs allow for plurality to coexist within a single essence in a way that at first appears monstrous and unexplainable. However, the Goddess' methodology makes the deduction of such a single complex essence explainable by necessity. Thus, while names generate parts by individuating the identity of something, signs do not. Rather, they provide different aspects or points of view on some one thing. Thus, it is only through their accumulation that signs provide a

complete and necessary characterisation of What-Is. Furthermore, given that in **B8 DK** each sign necessarily leads to another one that is essential to What-Is, even if the *kouros* initially gets access to a single sign, necessity will lead him to all the others. Thus, What-Is will be accessible in its entirety, and what the *kouros* accesses first is only a matter of perspective.

As a result, **Chapter 5** concluded that Parmenides' **PWR** makes What-Is an entity that is more than an 'all', and still not yet a 'whole'. On the one hand, What-Is requires exactly the features that follow by necessity. Accordingly, Parmenides' **PWR** would rely on Composition as Identity, which would make What-Is an 'all'. However, it is also true that each feature of What-Is must stay in a specific relation to the others. This would make What-Is a structured entity, something like a Platonic or Aristotelian 'whole'. Nevertheless, given that by the end of **B8 DK** What-Is's internal 'similarity' can be considered as similarity *tout court*, we could call into question the hypothesis that What-Is is provided with enough internal differentiation to be a structured 'whole'.

The ultimate picture of Parmenides' **PWR** that emerges is that of a thinker deeply committed to the explanation of how genuine reality (i.e., What-Is) can be one and yet complex. Thus, Parmenides' What-Is is not a totally undifferentiated entity. Although What-Is may not be univocally considered a whole, it nonetheless constitutes a crucial step in that direction. Furthermore, Parmenides was aware of the theoretical difficulties of employing the same **PWR** for the phenomena. Accordingly, as Aristotle's testimony suggested, the *Doxa* develops a **PWR** that relies on what Aristotle calls 'composition' (*synthesis*). With this term Aristotle indicates a combination of the basic principles of the phenomena that does not result in something

essentially one, but rather in something that can trick the senses and be considered as if it were one. As a result, in the *Doxa*, Parmenides develops a **PWR** where each compound seems to be nothing but the sum of Light and Night, combined according to a certain proportion. Furthermore, the fact that mortals attribute names to each of these compounds does not make these compounds something other than their constituents. For it is mortals who arbitrarily decide through names that this is the case. In other terms, names do not reflect an actual state of affairs, but only an agreed convention.

In conclusion, Parmenides' mereological views constitute a breakthrough for both later Early Greek philosophers, and for Plato. Additionally, this study of Parmenides' mereology offers new insights for both contemporary philosophers, and for scholars of Early Greek philosophy and Plato, potentially leading to fresh perspectives and wider applications.

APPENDIX: Early Greek Mereological Terminology

Given that in the previous chapters I have shown that Plato's predecessors already had an understanding of the **PWR**, in this appendix I aim to discuss the use and development of some mereological terminology used by Early Greek thinkers. This appendix analyses the evolution and usage of different words relevant to the discussion of **PWR** in Early Greek philosophy. The terms are investigated primarily by looking at when they are first attested, in what context they appear, and how their usage changes. The analysis emphasises philosophical considerations relevant to the **PWR**, pointing out how some simple everyday terms became technical and relevant for Ancient Philosophy. Taking into account the Greek tragedians Aeschylus and Sophocles, and the texts of Ancient Medicine, in addition to Homer, Hesiod, and Aristotle will make it easier to see continuity and change in the application of the terms.

Although terms that we would expect to figure in mereological conceptions such as 'part' (*meros*/*moira*), 'whole' (*holon*), and 'all' (*pan*) are frequent, their occurrences neither grant that Early Greek authors and philosophers use them in relation to **PWR**, nor, if they do so, that this occurs in the same way. It is recognised that Ancient Greek went through many transformations, as any other language with such a lengthy lifespan. Because of this, there are no reasons why one should assume that the same word, when used by Homer and Plato, actually means the same thing. For instance, Homer or Hesiod make more abstract entities into concrete objects or agents: emotions such as fear are not referred to *qua* emotions, but rather *qua* personalised

divinities (e.g., particular and concrete individuals).[786] This to some extent happens because the definite article was not yet consistently used to denote abstract qualities (e.g., beauty).[787] Furthermore, on the one hand, Early Greek thinkers may have used the same terms to argue for very different views, where the development of a shared technical terminology among philosophers has not yet taken place. For example, the term *holon* started to mean 'universe' rather than just 'whole', only later on, and in *philosophical* Greek rather than in everyday Greek, and a similar meaning shift interested 'part' (*meros*). On the other, the use of explicitly mereological terminology does not always come into play when a **PWR** is discussed. For example, concepts such as 'part' may be implied by appealing to other terms. Indeed, given that 'part' is quite an abstract concept, Early Greek philosophers preferred more immediate though vague terms to express the idea of being a constituent of something or having something as a constituent. For example, they used the paraphrase 'being in' (*einai en* or *eneinai*), infinitive plus dative.[788] Mereological observations were made also by appealing to the human body, where the concept of 'part' is conveyed by the more precise 'limbs' (*melē* or *guia*).[789] Thus, though symptomatic of an implicit understanding of the **PWR**, 'parts', 'all' and 'whole' should not be considered the only relevant terms for Early Greek mereology. Hence, 'part', 'whole' and 'all' are not the only terms worth

[786] See Snell 1953, 234ff.

[787] Snell 1953, 227–44 points out how linguistical tools such as the article, and their introduction led to a more refined and ultimately philosophical or scientific way of looking at and questioning reality.

[788] E.g. Zeno, B21.20 DK, Diogenes of Apollonia A31 DK, Anaxagoras, B6.2 DK. See also the use in Aeschylus, *Sisyph.* Fr. 229, and Sophocles, *Electr.* 1243–4), and in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* (e.g. Hippocrates, *Nat. Homer* 1.5, 2.13).

[789] Empedocles, B27.15 DK.

considering when studying the **PWR**. On the basis of our discussion of Parmenides' mereology, we may analyse how the following terms develop a mereological significance:

- 'all' (*pas*) and 'whole' (*holos*)
- 'one' (*hen*)
- 'mixing' (*mignumi*) and 'blending' (*kerannumi*)
- 'order' (*kosmos*)
- 'part' (*meros*)

1. 'All' (*pas*) and 'whole' (*holos*)

From grammatical and semantic perspectives there is not much difference between πᾶς and ὅλος, and that is why both are usually taken to be interchangeable in use.[790] Both terms are employed to denote a group of things that are 'one' because they are considered an indivisible thing either **i)** by falling under the same type of thing or **ii)** by sharing one or more specific characteristics or states. For instance, 'man' and 'cat' can be considered 'one', and therefore the same thing, because they both are 'animals'. Furthermore, if we say that '*every* object in the room is still', in this case 'stillness' is the crucial feature under consideration that enables us to say that '*all* in the room is still'. Notably, while the former emphasises the plurality of objects that are still, the

[790] For example, compare πᾶς in Homer, *Il.* 11.65, Hesiod, *Op.* 511, Euripides, *Bacc.* 1131,1135, Herodotus 1.214, Xenophon, *An.* 3.1.20 to ὅλος in Homer, *Od.* 17.343, 24.118, Pindar, *O.* 3.19, Xenophon, *An.* 4,2,4, Sophocles, *Aj.* 1105.

latter emphasises that the objects can be considered as some one thing inasmuch as they are all still.

Before ὅλος, πᾶς is attested in the sense of 'all'.[791] The former became more typically used than the latter term only in Classical Greek.[792] The earliest occurrences of both terms are found in Homer.[793] Here, ὅλος means 'all' or 'whole' not in the sense of 'every' but in the more concrete sense of 'intact': for example, when a loaf of bread has not yet been cut into slices Homer uses 'a whole bread'. The substantive derived from πᾶς (i.e., *pan*), which usually denotes 'the universe' or 'the whole cosmos' (*to pan* or *ta panta*),[794] behaves in a similar way, while *to holon* in the sense of 'universe' becomes more common by the time Plato and Aristotle wrote.[795]

As Chantraine noted, there is a slight difference in meaning between πᾶς and ὅλος, which is reflected even in the derivate substantives.[796] According to Chantraine, the semantic field of πᾶς is more extended than that of ὅλος, because it retains the idea that *many* things fall under a certain category. *Pan* can be translated not only with 'all', but also with 'each', which preserves the idea of multiple objects, as the derived substantives both singular (*to pan*) and plural (*ta panta*) mean 'all things'. Often[797] both *to pan* and

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[791] Wallach 1967, 23–4.

[792] This observation is valid for compounds with *pan-* and *holon-* as prefix; the former are older while the latter more recent (Chantraine 1999, 794), see also the comments by Schwyzer 1990, 437, and Frisk 1960–1972, 381.

[793] Homer, *Od.* 17, 343 and 24, 118.

[794] See e.g., Aeschylus, *Supp.* 594.

[795] Early Greek philosophers rarely use ὅλος and its compounds (e.g., Parmenides, **B8.38 DK**, Democritus, B124 DK).

[796] Chantraine 1999,859–60: '[*pas*] "tout, chacun", au pl. "tous" avec un champ sémantique plus étendu que *holon* qui exprime la totalité mais non la multiplicité'.

[797] Depending on the context and the topics discussed *to pan* and *ta panta* can refer to different things, such as truth and true things (e.g., Hesiod, *Theog*. 687, *pasan tēn alētheian*) and good things (e.g., Xenophon, *An*. 3.1.20, *ta agatha panta*).

ta panta refer to 'the universe' on the basis that the universe actually indicates 'all things that exist'.[798] Indeed, the universe may coincide with the *sum* of 'all things' that are.[799] However, when the plural *ta panta* or the singular *to pan* are used, nothing excludes the possibility that the many things are in a way 'one'. For instance, although a pile of apples or *all* of water is *one* thing, *each* apple, as well as each portion of water, is still distinguishable. Both *that* apple and *that* portion of water are part of the *sum* of many apples in the pile, and of all water respectively. This basic consideration, especially in Early Greek thought, was not trivial. In fact, distinguishing the many composing objects that make up a single or unitary entity is not always possible. Thus, the term *pan* does not univocally stand for a unity or a plurality of things, because, depending on the context, both the parts or the resulting totality can be meant.

Contrarily to *pan*, *holon* is rarely used in the plural in philosophical texts.[800] It expresses a totality where the things or parts that constitute it seem no longer distinguishable, and perhaps something *more* than the sum of the parts. In other words, the consideration about the pile of apples is impossible.

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[798] The idea that 'all things' are addressed can also be emphasised by using *sympas*, that is *pas* plus the intensive prefix *syn-*. See e.g., Heraclitus, B10 DK, Philolaus, A16 DK, Anaxagoras B4.39 DK. Another typical term used to refer to 'all things' is *hapas*, e.g. Anaxagoras B12 DK, Philolaus, B20 DK and notably Sophocles, *Aj.* 646ff, who otherwise does not even use *pas* in its cosmological value. The Sophoclean passage is interesting because it is the only one referring to the cosmos using a word synonymous with *pan* (e.g., Sophocles, *Trach.* 94ff.). Sophocles' relation to cosmology and to philosophy in general has been the focus of little study but, see Arp 2006.

[799] See e.g., Anaxagoras, A48 DK. From other fragments e.g., B12 DK we learn of the cosmic role the *nous* has, so when in the fragment Anaxagoras talks of the *nous* as ordering all things (*ta sympanta*), 'all things' must indicate all things that exist within the cosmos.

[800] The plural *holoi* when used is equivalent to *pantes*, 'everyone', 'everybody' (e.g. Sophocles, *Aj.* 1105). An exception to this use is Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 26. 1024a2–10, where the plural *holoi* is used technically to denote all the entities that behave according to Aristotle's conceptions of *holon* and *pan*. Other occurrences of *holon* in the plural are more cryptic, e.g., Archytas, B1 DK, Democritus B5 DK.

However, given that each portion of water is qualitatively indistinguishable from another, we could say that water may be a *holon*. Thus, it seems that *holon* denotes a 'stronger' sense of unity than *pan*. Nevertheless, it is impossible to be more precise when it comes to understanding in what sense the parts are 'indistinguishable' from the whole. For it is up to each thinker to determine the possible ways in which the parts become one thing, and whether each part loses its particular identity in the process. 'Being indistinguishable' does not necessarily imply that one or more of the parts of the whole are absent from the whole, or worse, that they have been destroyed. For, we could argue that the parts of a certain whole are just no longer 'in focus', because, even if the parts are still present, their individual essence does not correspond to that of the resulting compound. In other words, the resulting entity is more than the sum of its parts (i.e., something *essentially* different from the sum of the parts). Furthermore, given that 'whole' implies not lacking anything, if the whole lacked any of its constituents it would not exist as *that* whole (i.e. it would be a different entity). As a result of this, we can understand why the kind of unity ὅλος indicates differs from Composition as Identity.

In *Metaphysics* Δ, Aristotle compiles and discusses the notions of 'all' and 'whole'. According to Aristotle, a 'whole' is something from which none of the *necessary* (i.e. essential) parts is absent.[801] Interestingly, Aristotle preserves the original meaning of *holon* as 'intact' found in Homer, which suggests that Aristotle's own conception of 'whole' develops from a general and widespread understanding of the term. Furthermore, similarly to what we found in Parmenides, a 'whole' *qua* 'intact' is also associated with being

[801] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 26. 1023b26.

'complete' (*teleion*).[802] Thus, according to Aristotle, something can be 'whole' in two ways: **1)** either when each thing is *one single* thing (i.e. it cannot be divided into parts) or/and **2)** when the constituents of something can be *treated as* a single *one* thing (i.e. *as if it were not* divisible into parts at all).[803] Although similar, **1)** and **2)** express two different conceptions of 'whole', though they equally emphasise the association with the notion of unity and indivisibility, as Aristotle says that 'wholeness (*holotētos*) is a 'sort of' unity (*henotētos tinos*)'.[804]

Interestingly, Aristotle's discussion of *holon* refers to general characterisations that could be ascribed to *pan* as well, but for the emphasis on completeness. Especially at a time when in non-philosophical Ancient Greek *holon* was becoming more used in addition to *pan* and with the same meaning, the fact that Aristotle did not discuss *pan* separately is significative. Nonetheless, Aristotle maintains that there is a difference between the two terms.

Aristotle's conception of wholes is original and makes the best of Plato's mereological conceptions. However, a brief analysis of it shows how Aristotle develops notions that are essential to Parmenides' What-Is, which constitutes a breakthrough for ancient mereology. For example, Aristotle mentions continuity (*suneches*) and 'being limited' (*peperasmenon*) [805] as necessary though *insufficient* features to obtain a whole. For only *some* of the

[802] Ross 1924, 340. Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 20. 1021b11–5.
[803] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 26. 1023b28–29.
[804] Aristotle, *Metaph*. Δ 26. 1023b36.
[805] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 18. 1022a4–14. 'Limit' (*peras*) is that which delimits each thing and makes it knowable. Limits play a double role in that they physically and conceptually distinguish each one thing from another.

things that are 'continuous' and 'limited' can be wholes.[806] For example, twigs tied and made into one thing by a band, or diverse pieces of wood made one by being glued together,[807] and liquids (e.g. water) are continuous according to different degrees.[808] However, none of them is an Aristotelian 'whole': only primary substances (*ousiai*) are,[809] on the basis that their 'forms' (*eidē*) are *essentially* 'one',[810] while continuous things such as twigs tied by a band can only be considered *as if* they were *one* thing. Aristotle's conception of *holon* and its difference from *pan* is further clarified by the following passage:

> Things where the position (*thesis*) does not make any difference are called (*legetai*) 'all' (*pan*), whereas those where the position makes a difference are called 'whole' (*holon*). Those that admit both that the position (*thesis*) is relevant or not are both 'wholes' (*hola*) and 'alls' (*panta*). Such are the things whose nature (*physis*) remains the same with respect to change, but the physical appearance (*morphē*) does not, like in the case of wax or of a mantle; these are both 'wholes' and 'alls', because they have both [*scil.* the characteristics that make one thing a 'whole' and an 'all']. Water and liquids, and numbers are instead only said 'all', while we do not say 'the whole number' and ' the whole water' unless metaphorically. (Aristotle, *Metaph*. Δ 6. 1024a6–8b)[811]

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[806] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 6. 1016b12–5.
[807] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 6. 1015b35–7.
[808] Aristotle, *Phys.* 1 2. 185b8–9.
[809] See Aristotle, *Cat.* 2a13–3b10-21, where Aristotle maintains that a substance is either an individual (primary substance, *tode ti*) or the species (secondary substances). In the *Metaphysics*, this distinction is not perpetrated: only the *tode ti* is a proper substance, see e.g. Aristotle, *Metaph*. Δ 8. 1017b10–25. See e.g., Kohl 2008, Schofield 1972, De Rijk 2002a, 358–433, De Rijk 2002b, 244–83.
[810] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 6. 1016a33–b11.
[811] ὅσων μὲν μὴ ποιεῖ ἡ θέσις διαφοράν, πᾶν λέγεται, ὅσων δὲ ποιεῖ, ὅλον. ὅσα δὲ ἄμφω ἐνδέχεται, καὶ ὅλα καὶ πάντα· ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα ὅσων ἡ μὲν φύσις ἡ αὐτὴ μένει τῇ μεταθέσει,

The passage is complex, and makes apparent how the distinction between 'all' and 'whole' is not always so easy to draw, even for Aristotle himself. Things such as wax or a mantle can be both 'all' and 'whole', because the different arrangements of their parts (i.e., their structure) affects their essence only under some respects. For example, while shaping wax in a certain form creates a stick, it does not change its being essentially wax. On the contrary, a mantle stops being a mantle when it is coiled in the shape of a turban, thus becoming essentially a turban. For, according to Aristotle, whether the arrangement of the parts (i.e., their position (*thesis*)) determines the essence of something offers a further way to differentiate an 'all' from a 'whole'.

In conclusion, independently from Aristotle's specific mereological beliefs, the concepts that figure in Aristotle's discussion of πᾶς and ὅλος in *Metaphysics* Δ are the development of some Early Greek mereological features that played a crucial role already in Parmenides' **PWR**.

2. 'One' (*hen*)

The discussion of 'all' and 'whole' has touched upon the importance of 'unity' in Ancient Mereology. Interestingly, 'the One' was a further term used to refer to the universe, which is a single entity[812] whose parts are well-arranged

ἡ δὲ μορφὴ οὔ, οἷον κηρὸς καὶ ἱμάτιον· καὶ γὰρ ὅλον καὶ πᾶν λέγεται· ἔχει γὰρ ἄμφω. ὕδωρ δὲ καὶ ὅσα ὑγρὰ καὶ ἀριθμὸς πᾶν μὲν λέγεται, ὅλος δ' ἀριθμὸς καὶ ὅλον ὕδωρ οὐ λέγεται, ἂν μὴ μεταφορᾷ.

[812] E.g. Empedocles B17.1 DK, Melissus B7 DK where the universe is referred to as 'the one (*hen*)', Anaxagoras, B8 DK, Philolaus, B17 DK.

according to the function they have within the cosmos.[813] Although many things can be said 'one', 'unity' is a fundamental feature of the universe in Early Greek philosophical and non-philosophical conceptions of reality.[814] All the things that exist within the universe are related to each other at least by the idea that they are all part of it. Therefore, when considered together, they contribute to produce *one* entity which includes all of its beings (i.e., the universe).[815] None of the ancient sources explicitly states what kind of unity the cosmos represents. But the lack of an explicit characterisation of what it means to be one does not prevent us from advancing some ideas on the basis of the extant fragments.

Once again, Aristotle represents a fundamental source, as he explicitly distinguishes and collects different senses of being 'one'. His account of 'one' helps us to grasp what possible conceptions of 'unity' Early Greek philosophers had envisaged, and employed in their **PWR**. In his discussion of Early Greek principles of reality, Aristotle claims that Early Greek philosophers (with the exception of Parmenides) only grasped 'material' unity, [816] to which Aristotle opposes his sense of 'formal' unity (i.e.,

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[813] Wright 2008, 413–5.

[814] Aristotle, *Phys.* 3 10. 207a7–14. E.g. Aeschylus, *Agam*. 636–51, fr. 70 Nauk: 'Zeus is all things (*ta* panta) and beyond all of them', where *ta panta* stands for the universe (Long 1999). On this, see Seaford 2012, 225–239, in particular 238, Deforge 1986. Rösler 1970, 50–1 emphasises how the **PWR** is less of an urgent matter to explain than in Early Greek philosophers, because 'der Frage nach der Grundsubstanz der Welt und der Entstehung der Vielfalt des Sichtbaren aus diesem Grundstoff, läßt sich eine Auswirkung auf die Tragödie nur in *einem ganz äußerlichen Rahmen vorstellen*' (my emphasis).

[815] The multiplicity or singularity of *a* universe, though linked to the plurality of universes does not call into question that each *kosmos* is treated as a unity. The belief that already Anaximander posited multiple *kosmoi* in the sense of many universes or worlds is not supported by textual evidence: *kosmos* did not yet mean universe, but rather 'order'. On the existence of multiple universes in antiquity, see Gregory 2011, Cornford 1933, with respect to Anaximander, see McKiharan 2001, Finkelberg 1994, Kahn 1960.

[816] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Z 16. 1040b5–15.

essential).[817] While the former occurs merely because the material components of something are of the same kind or simply continuous, as in the case of Aristotelian 'alls', the latter represents a necessary feature for Aristotelian 'wholes'.[818] As a result, material unity (i.e., the material cause) alone is not enough to *explain* change and thus how wholes arise out of the combination of several constituents. However, even if Early Greek philosophers did not formulate the kind of unity typical of Aristotle's 'wholes', as we saw when discussing the *Doxa*'s **PWR**, this does not mean that Early Greek philosophers were unable to develop quite nuanced mereological accounts of the phenomena employing some of the meanings of 'one'.

Among the meanings of 'one' that Aristotle discusses we find:[819] **I)** 'unity by contact', **II)** 'unity by composition', **III)** 'artificial unity', and **IV)** 'organic unity'. These kinds of unity are not mutually exclusive aside from 'artificial' and 'organic unity', as the latter defines Aristotelian substances.[820] In fact, 'organic unities' can have some parts joined by contact or composition just as 'artificial unities'. However, it is impossible for 'artificial unities' to be 'organic' ones, because 'contact' and 'composition' are performed differently in artifacts and in actual organic substances. Notwithstanding all the different kinds of unities, the basic and the most relevant opposition for a mereological discussion is that between 'artificial unity' and 'organic unity'. For it belongs to substances, which Aristotle considers 'wholes'.[821]

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[817] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 6. 1016b9–11.
[818] For a more detailed discussion on the matter, see Bogaard 1979.
[819] E.g. Aristotle, *Metaph.* I 1. 1052a15–25, *Phys*. 1 1. 185b7–9, 5 3. 227a10–17.
[820] The polarity and mutual opposition between what is natural and what is artificial is discussed in Pohlenz 1953, von Staden 2007. On Aristotle, see Kelsey 2015, Halper 2009, 97–8.
[821] For a discussion on 'one' in *Metaph.* Δ 6. See Kirwan 1993, 133–40.

I) and **II**) are particular types within a broader conception of 'continuity',[822] and indicate that the easier it is to separate the components, the looser the notion of 'unity' will be. **I)** 'Unity by contact' (*aphē*) simply occurs when things touch each other. This is a weaker kind of 'unity' and 'continuity', because there is no reason why the parts could *not* be separated. For example, according to Aristotle, there is no reason why I should not be able to separate two sticks that touch each other. **II)** 'Composition' (*synthesis*) is exemplified by heaps. Composition requires contact and implies that the result of composition is an 'all', that is, a sum of parts. Furthermore, as the example of a heap illustrates the parts of a heap can be subtracted anytime without affecting the essence of the heap. Given that composition is a form of contact, there is no necessity holding all the parts together.[823] **III)** 'Artificial (*technē*) unity' is usually exemplified by artifacts. In this case, the unity of the parts is reached by means of composition. This kind of unity is different from that of natural or organic compounds. For, while artifacts such as a pair of shoes cannot be created if the craftsman is absent (e.g., external efficient cause), natural compounds are what they are because as they grow their essence actualises without requiring any external efficient cause. **IV)** 'Organic (*symphysē*, *pephykē* or *sympephugē*) unity' coincides with what Aristotle considers 'whole'. It is called 'organic', because the parts of a substance 'grow together' (*symphyō*) in a certain way without any external agent being involved.[824] Furthermore, from the characteristics of **IV)** it follows that 'wholes' are *indivisible* into their parts, because otherwise the necessary arrangement

[822] Aristotle, *Metaph.* I 1. 1052a19–22.
[823] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Z 17. 1041b11–1042a2, H 6. 1045a6–10.
[824] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ 4. 1014b24–26.

and function of the parts could not be maintained. By contrast, what is 'one' according to continuity[825] (i.e., **I)**, **II)**, and **III)**) cannot be 'wholes' because, either they **1)** are divisible, or **2)** they lack the order of the parts from which the function follows, or **3)** need an external agent to become one.

Although the fact that Aristotle concludes that only **IV)** is the appropriate kind of unity for 'wholes' may suggest that Aristotle ascribes only **I)**, **II)** and **III)** to his predecessors, Early Greek philosophers connect the notion of *living* to 'unity', too.[826] Fox instance, the universe can be considered an organic unity. One example of this can be Thales,[827] although it is more clearly presented by Anaximander and Heraclitus.[828] Furthermore, we can also mention the idea of a 'world-egg' found in religious and medical traditions.[829]

In conclusion, although Aristotle wants to exclude that his predecessors conceived of 'organic unity', our evidence suggests that there is no reason to believe that this was not the case. Accordingly, it is possible that Early Greek uses of 'one' imply at least all four possible kinds of relation between parts and compounds.

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[825] Continuous unities are sometimes tricky, for liquids (continuous unities) do not seem physically divisible, but it is possible to think of droplets (i.e. parts of water), so that in a way water is not necessarily *one* thing.

[826] Guthrie 1962, 142.

[827] Aristotle, *De An.* 1 5. 411a7, Guthrie 1962, 64, KRS 1983, 95–99.

[828] Anaximander, A10 DK describes the universe as if he were talking about a tree (i.e., a biological compound). See Kahn 1960, 51, Baldry 1932, 30. For a more cautious reading and generally against such view, see KRS 1983, 131ff. Heraclitus, B30 DK, where the cosmos is an 'ever-living fire' (πῦρ ἀείζωον).

[829] Baldry 1932, KRS 1983, 26–33.

3. 'Mixing' (*mignumi*) and 'Blending' (*kerannumi*)

All kinds of unity are the *result* of different processes of combination of parts. Combination or mixture is in fact an intuitive way to explain of *how* unity arises from many constituents[830] in both philosophical and non-philosophical Greek. Especially in philosophy, combination was employed to illustrate how the first principles (*archai*) originate the universe and everything within it. Thus, combination plays a crucial role in mereological conceptions of the cosmos. Analogously to the case of 'unity', each Early Greek philosopher devised specific ways of using 'combination' to explain how unity is reached and of what kind it is. Nonetheless, it is possible to isolate two kinds of combination employed by Early Greek philosophers, as well as authors such as Homer and Hesiod.[831]

The two processes are 'mixing' (μείγνυμι) and 'blending' (κεράννυμι).[832] which are sometimes indicated by other less frequent and yet relevant verbs like φύρω and κυκάω, which have pejorative connotation, meaning to mix something disorderly, without proportion, or badly'.[833] Initially, φύρω was neutral in meaning (i.e., neither positive, nor negative sense), and was used for the act of combining together solids and liquids.[834] In the fifth century BCE, φύρω acquires a pejorative value, in the sense that it is

[830] Montanari 1979, 11.
[831] Many synonyms are available, such as *synodos, systasis, systēma, synthesis, sygkrisis, syndesmos* etc. What is peculiar is that the idea of being kept together and in a certain sense combined or mixed is often expressed by the preverb *syn-*.
[832] Schwabe 1980, 13.
[833] In English I could not find good renderings of the verb, but in German it translates perfectly with 'vermengen'.
[834] Because of this it can also mean 'dampen' (Homer, *Il.*, 24.162f.).

used to specify and emphasise the idea that the parts, once they have been combined, are no longer distinguishable.[835] It is also used in the sense of mingling with a bad company of people.[836] Aeschylus uses it in the myth of Prometheus to describe the activities of man, which before the gift of the arts acts confusedly, or chaotically, without actually knowing the purpose of what they were doing.[837] Pre-philosophic usages in Hesiod also make the case for a cosmological use of the verb.[838] This function should prompt us to analyse attentively the passages where this verb occurs, either in the Hesiodic corpus, or in Early Greek thought in order to shed light on the **PWR**.[839]

Κυκάω means 'stirring' and refers to mixing liquids, or to cheese-making.[840] Similarly to κεράννυμι, its usage is quite specialised. However, while κεράννυμι usually has a positive connotation, already in Homer κυκάω has rather a negative one. What is relevant is that, in Homer, it is usually found in contexts where negative inner dispositions or states are discussed (e.g., being in panic).[841] Generally, Early Greek philosophers and tragedians (e.g., Aeschylus) use it sparingly.[842] Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Aeschylus employed it in a cosmological context to describe Zeus' power to rearrange the universe chaotically, or in a bad way, depending on his will.[843] Plato too uses it, again sparingly, but in a similar way and in the same

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[835] See e.g., Plato, *Phaed.* 101e, *Phil.* 15e, in connection with discussions about the Forms.
[836] E.g. Hippocrates, *De vict.* 2.40, *De Fist.* 10, Plato, *Theaet.* 147c, *Tim.* 73e.
[837] Aeschylus, *Prom.* 447–450.
[838] Hesiod, *Op.* 60–62, *Theog.* 571. Also see the next section.
[839] Already Schwabe 1980, 41–2 suggests, although fleetingly, that these passages surely are to connect with the Early Greek enquiry into the **PWR**.
[840] Homer, *Il.* 5.903, 11.638.
[841] Homer, *Il.* 18.228, similarly also Archilocus, fr. 67a 1 Diehl, and Solon, fr. 1, 61 Diehl.
[842] Notably Heraclitus B125 DK, whose interpretation, also because of this verb is debated.
[843] Aeschylus, *Prom.* 992–994, cf. fr. 492a Mette. Cf. Aristophanes, *Plut.* 1107–1109. See Schwabe 1980, 50–1.

cosmological context. By employing the verb he refers to an extremely dynamic mixture, which is prone to change its structure continually, thereby approximating chaos.[844]

Up to Aristotle, μίξις and κρᾶσις at the same time represent **i)** the actual mixing process, **ii)** the result of the mixture, **iii)** the abstract idea of the process of mixing, and **iv)** the way the mixture takes place.[845] Μίξις and κρᾶσις are the *nomina actionis* deriving respectively from the verbs μείγνυμι and κεράννυμι. As such, they stress the *process* of combination rather than the actual result, which only later is indicated by the substantive μεῖγμα.[846] The process of mixture is usually opposed to separation, which is expressed by many terms,[847] and is complementary to it. However, originally (e.g., in Homer) μείγνυμι and κεράννυμι are unrelated from a semantical point of view. Thus, they cannot be used to convey the same process of combination until Pindar's time, when μείγνυμι and κεράννυμι start to be used interchangeably.[848]

The verb μείγνυμι occurs numerous times[849] and has a wide variety of meanings already in Homer: not only is it used to generally mean 'to mix', but also to mean 'fight', 'mix into battle',[850] and to express the idea of 'mingling in

[844] E.g., Plato, *Tim.* 66a6, 68a6.
[845] Schwabe 1980, 20.
[846] The first occurrence of the term is in Aristotle, (e.g., *Phys* 1 4. 187a23, *Metaph.* Λ 1. 1069b22).
[847] The most common ones, among Early Greek philosophers and the Hippocratic Corpus, are *analysis* and *diakrisis*, which are usually used to describe the action of separating the physical components from a mixture. That these terms express a process and an action is clear from the ending in *-is*, which is typical of *nomina actionis*.
[848] Montanari 1979, 13, similarly Schwabe 1980, 39–40.
[849] According to Montanari 1979, 50 they are more than 90.
[850] Homer, *Il.* 4.456, 5.505.

love'. [851] The last two aspects are relevant, because the combination of constituents is usually represented either as a struggle among the components themselves or as the result of sexual intercourse. Furthermore, for example, Empedocles refers to 'love' as the power involved in mereological combination of parts, while he employs the fighting aspect to indicate mereological separation. Interestingly, this language is still at play in Plato.[852]

The most frequent meaning of μείγνυμι is 'mixing'. It is usually used to express a combination, reciprocal compenetration, and contact of components *without* particular order, and therefore chaotic.[853] For example, it is used to refer to the mixture of many winds[854] or of the sea and storm,[855] or of soldiers in the battlefield.[856] It is noteworthy that all these processes of mixing are natural *and* artificial. Nevertheless, it neither indicates clearly how the process of mixture happens, nor the features of its result, which makes its application broad and thus useful for philosophers.

Κεράννυμι, from which the *nomen actionis* κρᾶσις derives, also refers to the process of mixing things together, but primarily of liquids.[857] For example, it is employed to refer to the blending of wine with water during symposia.[858] Due to its connection to wine blending and religious practices, κεράννυμι naturally adds a positive connotation to the idea of mixing.

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[851] Homer, *Il.* 2. 232, 14. 295, 24. 130–31 with the formula (*en*) *philotēti*, 7. 161 and 165 with the formular expression *philotēti migemenai, Od.* 8.271, 19. 266, *In Merc.* 4. See Montanari 1979, 149–51.

[852] E.g. Plato, *Phaed.* 102eff.

[853] Homer, *Il.* 14.60, *Od.* 11.537, 22.221.

[854] Homer, *Od.* 5.317.

[855] Homer, *Il.* 13.797.

[856] Homer, *Il.* 4.456.

[857] Homer, *Od.* 9. 297, 5.93, respectively said of milk and nectar.

[858] E.g. Aeschylus, fr. 55 Nauck.

Interestingly, contrary to 'mixing', 'blending' is not so much connected with a natural process of mixture, but with an artificial one. This association may be due to the fact that wine has to be blended according to specific numeric proportions. Especially after Homer, κεράννυμι is also used to indicate the melting of metals, or when discussing the mixing of pigments in order to make colours.[859] The latter use seems to be attested for the first time within the context of Empedocles' **PWR**, where he uses it as a synonym of 'mixing with harmony' (*harmoniei meixante*).[860] This Empedoclean example suggests that not only κεράννυμι, but also μείγνυμι, indicate positive processes. Thus, it should not be surprising that μείγνυμι becomes synonymous with κεράννυμι to imply numerical proportion and harmonious mixture.[861] Furthermore, possibly owing to Alcmaeon of Croton (end of the sixth century BCE), in Ancient Medicine and physiological discussions, the term κρᾶσις[862] denotes the balanced blending of the humours, elements, and constituents in the human body.[863]

In conclusion, if initially κεράννυμι and μείγνυμι verbs were used to indicate simple and everyday actions, they progressively came to express specific processes of mixture between constituents. Thus, they become relevant terminology for expressing the **PWR**. For even if these verbs and derived terms applied to the universe or to the human constitution, they

[859] Homer, *Od.* 4.615.
[860] B1 to B5 DK. Other examples are Plato, *Crat.* 424e, *St.* 277c, *Resp.* 501b.
[861] Aristotle, *GC* 1 10.
[862] The majority of the interpreters agree that the term κρᾶσις was actually used by Alcmaeon, only Montanari 1979, 191–4, and Ebner 1969, 50 state the contrary. Montanari argues that *isonomia* is synonymous with κρᾶσις. Thus, Alcmaeon would not need *krasis*. Even if one agrees with Montanari, this does not affect my argument.
[863] B4 DK.

nonetheless indicate a process of combination of many constituents out of which arises a unity, or of one constituents out of which many things arise. Importantly, especially in the case of κεράννυμι, such a combinatory process requires a certain measure, order, and therefore particular arrangement and proportion between the parts of the resulting compound. Thus, already suggesting an underdeveloped notion of 'structure'.

4. 'Order' (*kosmos*)

While discussing the notions 'all' and 'whole', we mentioned the relevance of the position (*thesis*) and arrangements of the parts within the 'whole'. The notion of arrangement is of primary importance in Early Greek thought in general, not only in Aristotle. Crucially, reference to the arrangement of parts figures not only in connection with 'wholes', but with 'alls', too. *Thesis* in the sense of 'position of something within an arrangement of parts' is attested already in Pindar, though this use does not become frequent until Plato's time.[864]

In Ancient Greek the idea of 'arranging' and 'ordering' is crucial, and inherently positive, and it is conveyed by different terms, such as κόσμος, διάκοσμος, τάξις, and ἁρμονία. In Aristotle, the arrangement of the parts is crucial to his mereological views. However, as was argued above, the notion of 'arrangement', that is, a type of structure, plays a role in Parmenides' mereology as well. We could say that it has an implicitly mereological nuance

[864] Pindar, *O.* 3.8, Kranz 1958, 11. Cf. also Plato, *Resp.* 333b, *Leg*. 668e.

already in Homer. As Diller points out, when Hera perfumes her body, and wears her finest robes,[865] Homer's usage of κόσμος refers to Hera as a single and indivisible entity, whose parts are arranged according to specific spatial, temporal and physical relations between her constituents.[866] In Hesiod, a concept of 'arrangement' comparable to the one found in Homer is employed with reference to universe and everything in it. For the poem can ultimately be considered an account of how the universe attains its arrangement and structure,[867] owing to Zeus' providing each god with a share or part of the universe.[868] Although Hesiod employs *eu diatassein*, a compound verb of τάσσω (from which also τάξις derives) that means 'to order', 'to arrange', this verb can be considered synonymous with κόσμος.[869] Progressively, the association between universe and 'order' (κόσμος) became so ingrained in Early Greek culture that κόσμος became synonymous with universe, called

[865] Homer, *Il.* 14. 162–6.

[866] Diller 1956, 48–9.

[867] *Kosmos* as 'universe' may be attested for the first time in Heraclitus B30 DK, according to Kahn 1960, 225–27. Against such identification, see Finkelberg 1998, who ascribes such a switch in meaning to Plato; his arguments are problematic as Horky 2019, 29ff. explains in detail. Also cf. Kranz 1938, 430, who believes that κόσμος as 'universe' was an early conquest of the earlies Greek philosophers. Vlastos (1955, n. 19, 346) defends the early use of κόσμος to mean 'universe' on the basis that κόσμος is the only word that gives as a result an ordered universe. For 'other words like *to pan*, *to holon* in fact 'would not formally distinguish world(s) from *archē* or, if they did, would only convey the *idea of indefinite totalities instead of structured world-systems*' (my emphasis). However, Vlastos' ideas are problematic, as there are other ways of conveying structure and complexity that avoid using κόσμος. See also Kerschensteiner 1962, 97–115.

[868] Hesiod, *Theog.* 74, cf. 112.

[869] See Kahn 1960, 222. Τάσσω in Early Greek philosophy implies a slightly more precise idea of ordering, i.e. that of ordering things by arranging them *in line* one after another. See Kerschensteiner 1962, 10ff. on κόσμος as ordering or arranging one thing close to another, and its connection with *taxis.* In Aeschylus, *Eum*. 396, *taxis* stands for an order that has been established once and for all, so that the places each thing occupies cannot be changed.

either *to pan* or *to holon*.[870] As a result, we could say that the universe is intuitively considered a structured single entity, independently from its being identical to the sums of its parts (i.e., Composition as Identity). But the mereological aspect of κόσμος is suggested even by its use in ethics and politics. For while it indicates the correctness of behaviour[871] or political order,[872] it requires that the citizens stand in a harmonious relation to one another:[873] social order is in fact nothing but 'balance' (*isonomia*) of the different parts of a city (i.e. citizens, rulers, assemblies, courts),[874] thus attributing to the notion of 'arrangement' and 'order' a core role in Early Greek mereology.

[870] See Horky 2019. The process of identification between *to holon* or *to pan* and κόσμος was gradual. As Kahn 1960, 220 points out, at the beginning of the fourth century, κόσμος was not commonly used in this sense, see e.g. Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.1.11. Furthermore, depending on the author, κόσμος sometimes seems to indicate a particular region of the universe, rather than all of it. For example, Philolaus A44 DK is ascribed a tripartition of the universe, where κόσμος stands for the Sun, the Moon and other planets, while *holumpos* stands for the fixed stars and *Ouranos* for the sublunar region. Independently of the genuineness of the report for Philolaus, according to Kerschensteiner 1962, 49, this is a view that antedates Aristotle. The term *ouranos* also occurs in Epicharmus ([Epicharmus] fr. 254). Fr. 254 is considered spurious, but there is no definitive proof of it (Favi 2020, 140). Although it is difficult to trace down what he actually made of the term *ouranos*, as the evidence is scanty, it seems to be something different from the totality of the universe (see [Epicharmus] fr. 284 = Enn., *Var.* 52–53, 46 Vahlen = fr. 38* FPL, cf. Epicharmus fr. 214, 230).

[871] Already in Homer (*Il.* 2. 214, 8. 759) *kata kosmon* not only indicates the 'ordered' (*scil.* good, correct) execution of an action or deed, which is something *external*, but the *inner* good ordering (*scil.*, psychological equilibrium). See Kerschensteiner 1962, 18, Diller 1956, 55. Cf. Solon 1, 11.

[872] E.g., Thucydides 8.48.4, Kranz 1958, 8, 30–2, Kerschensteiner 1962, 15.

[873] Cf. Diller 1956, 53.

[874] See Vernant 1962, 124.

5. 'Part' (*meros*)

It is usually thought that 'being part of' or 'being a constituent of' is expressed by the term μέρος alone. However, in Early Greek philosophy such a relation is conveyed with the aid of other terms. For example, before μέρος, which does not appear in Homer or Hesiod,[875] the term μοῖρα stood for 'part'.[876] As Chantraine notes, the semantic field of μόρος is quite diversified and at this stage its exact meaning depends heavily on the context.[877] Nevertheless, it is deeply connected with the Fate (*Moira*), the divinity who establishes the fate of men by giving to each of them their fair 'share' or 'part' (i.e. the fate they deserve).[878] Other terms that can be used instead of 'part' is μέλος, that is, limb, which appears in combination with κρᾶσις,[879] though this term is often translated with 'body'.[880]

Another term worthy of mention is 'element' (*stoicheion*), which in physics and cosmology denotes the *parts* or even the principle(s) constituting all things. In general, 'element' simply denotes the parts or component that constitute a body. In the Hippocratic Corpus, μέρος is the most frequent term, whereas στοιχεῖον figures only once, and it is used to denote the basic methods the doctor has to cure the patient.[881] Interestingly, the etymology is

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[875] Exception be made for a passage in the *HH* 339, where the word μέρος appears thanks to textual reconstruction.

[876] Interestingly, μοῖρα plus prepositions such as κατα, can be translated with 'in order', see *Il.* 16.367. This suggests that, when they are established by the divinity or are related to it in some way, parts cannot be disposed randomly.

[877] Chantraine 1999, 679.

[878] Chantraine 1999, 679.

[879] **B16 DK**.

[880] Tarán 1965, 169–70.

[881] Hippocrates, *De Mul.* 230.71 Littré.

apparently far from meaning 'element', because it is connected with terms such as 'order', specifically 'alignment'.[882] However, its closeness to the notion of 'part' becomes noticeable if we understand it as 'part of a row' (Reihenglied).[883] The term στοιχεῖον is surely Pre-Platonic, but Aeschylus, who is temporally close to many Early Greek philosophers and proves to be highly receptive of philosophical ideas[884], never uses it. Even though the word στοιχεῖον does not occur in the Aeschylean corpus, Crowley argued that some Early Greek philosophers may have used it.[885] Some scholars have suggested a possible Atomistic or Pythagorean[886] origin of the term,[887] while others use it to indicate Empedocles' four elements, rather than *rhizomata*.[888] Nevertheless, it is with Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy that στοιχεῖον becomes more important for mereological views.

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[882] De Simone 2020, 4, seems not to see any clear connection between the etymology and στοιχεῖον as 'element'. For a detailed account of the meaning and etymology of the word see Burkert 1959, in particular 180ff.

[883] Lumpe 1962, 286, see already Diels 1899. For στοιχεῖον as 'Reihenglied', see Vollgraff 1949, 91–2.

[884] See Rösler 1970, who discusses the similarities not only with Pythagorean thought but also with Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and Heraclitus. On the relation with Parmenides see also Kouremenos 1993.

[885] Crowley 2005.

[886] Burnet 1930, 228 n. 1; the ground for this view lies in Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 10.2, 8, for he says that the Pythagoreans were the first to use this term to talk about the universe. But Sextus' evidence is in general problematic. See Burkert 1959, 177.

[887] Vollgraff 1949, 106ff, Furley 1987, 151, but cf. already Diels 1899, 14.

[888] Sedley 2007, 32 n. 7: according to Sedley there is no proof that 'roots' or 'rootings' was a technical term. The Empedoclean tendency to use multiple terms to express the same concept (in this case that of 'basic principle of all things') should dissuade from adopting 'roots' carelessly. Therefore, given the pre-platonic origin of στοιχεῖον as 'element', στοιχεῖον is a better candidate. Sedley also suggests that this use of στοιχεῖον does not conflict with Eudemus fr. 31 Wehrli.

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