Parmenides' conception of being (Pythagoreanism).

Geoff Scott Bowe
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PARMENIDES' CONCEPTION OF BEING

by

Geoff S. Bowe

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of Philosophy
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1994
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the fragments of Parmenides' poem "On Nature". I attempt to determine the referent of "what is" or Being in the extant fragments, and to resolve a dispute between thinkers who consider Parmenides to be a materialist and those who hold that he is an idealist. My position is that Parmenides Being is an abstract unitary totality which represents the κόσμος when thought about correctly. The only way to correctly understand Being is to think unitarily, and to deny the validity of material characterisations of Being. Being cannot be thought of as an aggregate of corporeal beings, nor can it be thought of as generated in the Pythagorean manner. It is my belief that Parmenides must be seen against the backdrop of Pythagoreanism, and not Milesian philosophy. Once we understand this important historical fact, some of the imagery employed by Parmenides becomes clearer, as does his project as a metaphysician.

In the course of the thesis I offer a review of significant literature on the subject, discuss Parmenides' historical placement, and then offer a consistent interpretation of the extant fragments of all three parts of his poem.
DEDICATION

To John Scott, with profound admiration of his intellect, insight and wit.
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INTRODUCTION

My concern here is with Parmenides' conception of Being. I have, in a sense, deliberately chosen the playfully ambiguous word "conception" in this title, for this essay deals with two primary issues, which are inextricably linked. How did Parmenides' concept of Being come to be, how was it born? What was Parmenides' concept of Being? How did he conceive of it? It is my position that Parmenides is engaged in a logical reductio ad unum of sorts, that he shows through a series of logical and figurative attempts, that Being is a primary unitary totality, which is consistent with his having a Pythagorean background, and which, in contradistinction to this Pythagorean background, is not properly understood as a generated world of manifold experience and changing entities. To be clear, what Is has a referent, but it is not a physical entity, if we understand a physical entity to be something which is subject to generation, change and corruptibility. Now throughout this thesis I have used the terms physical, material and corporeal almost interchangeably because my conviction is that Parmenides would have done the same. Further, the Oxford English Dictionary gives some justification for my usage of these terms:

physical (a) 1. of matter, material (physical force opp. to moral); of or according to the laws of nature (physical explanations of miracles; a physical impossibility); belonging to physics; bodily...
Being must be understood independently of physical characteristics if it is to be correctly understood. This is not to say, necessarily that "what is", which represents the \( \kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \) does not contain physical things. Rather Parmenides says that you can't think of it this way (as an aggregate of corporeal entities) if you are to understand it correctly. What Is is an abstract entity. It is abstracted from the world of manifold appearances, and is the totality of Being which can only be understood by grasping Being in terms of its unitary totality. Parmenides' logic takes him to a point of logically necessary unity, the understanding of which, must be devoid of spaciality, extension, and all that characterises a world as an aggregate of physical entities. My conviction is that Parmenides, along with the other Eleatics, was confident enough in his logic, that he was prepared to deny all else in support of it.

In denying a dualistic cosmology like that put forth by the Pythagoreans, Parmenides is suggesting that accounts of a physical world, which is subject to multiplicity, generation and change, do not adequately comprehend the totality of Being in the way that his more abstract conception of Being does. I suggest that Parmenides denies the Pythagorean cosmology, since the latter attempts to account for the world in terms of coming to be, whereas Parmenides is convinced the only way to understand the \( \kappa\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \) is as an eternal totality. Metaphysically, then, Being is something other than the mundane understanding of the physical world (a transcendant perspective of \( \phi\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \), hence \textit{meta} physical). Epistemologically, Being must be understood differently, and Parmenides goes to great
lengths to show that this is the case. In the Proem, he ascends from duality to unity to explain Being, and clearly this ascent is both metaphysical and epistemological. Once he has ascended to a divine realm of understanding, he explains, in the Way of Truth, the ontological nature of Being, in accordance with this different way of understanding it. Finally, in the Way of Opinion, Parmenides descends both metaphysically and epistemologically to the common way of understanding of the physical world. This way is false because it attempts to understand Being as an aggregate in terms of coming to be, as the Pythagoreans and even the Milesians (particularly Anaximander and Anaximenes) did. Parmenides wants to say that the only way to truly understand Being is to grasp it in its totality. This must be done conceptually, since sense experience will not reveal Being as the whole that it is. Being itself, however, is not a mere concept. It is the existent totality of the κόσμος understood immediately (e.g. in an unmediated way) as a unitary and unchanging whole.

All of this, which can rightly be called my understanding of Parmenides' philosophy can only be given content by a thorough examination of the text, and the arguments for and against the position I take on the various issues. Many of the opposing views can be refuted by a single stroke, in that their entire interpretation of Parmenides rests on a single assumption. Hence I do not attempt to consider every opposing view at every point since in many cases the argument against them in one place suffices for other positions where the issue is the same.
It should be stated at the outset that my intention is to produce a *philosophical* exegesis, since considerations of Parmenides' cultural and religious influences would inevitably lead into a variety of issues that cannot be dealt with in a thesis of this length. My personal feeling (be it valid or not) is that the view which many scholars of Presocratic philosophy have not taken Parmenides seriously as a philosopher. Either they have not given him a sympathetic reading, or they fail to attempt to understand Parmenides' logic and its implications for the significance of his deductions. I can offer no other reason than this personal report of my exposure to the literature, to account for the myriad of contradictions and faulty arguments (as they appear to me) which appear in the existing literature. Some of the contradictions, are, to be fair, the result of an over-emphasis on philology, as is the suggestion of Loenen. Once philologists are certain that their reading of the text is authoritative, they place more emphasis on their reading than the context of this reading. The result is an attempt to mold their reading into a context even when it is incommensurate with logic, or context, or common sense. I have attempted, as far as my powers of reason allow, to show in the course of this essay why I think the aforementioned arguments are inconsistent.

On the positive side, I attempt to resolve the controversy surrounding the correct understanding of Parmenides' conception of Being, by putting forth what I consider to be a coherent exegesis of the extant fragments. In so doing I attempt to go beyond a mere
reading or reporting of the fragments to a serious consideration of their meaning, such that my interpretation at least takes seriously what intelligence Parmenides is attempting to convey.

WHY A TOTALITY

I once believed Parmenides to be speaking of a non-spatial transcendant entity which was divorced from the realm of space and time. This, I have come to conclude is an untenable position, since it overlooks the fact that Parmenides lays out two ways of understanding Being, a true one and a false one. Since the false way is clearly an understanding of the κόσμος (although a false way) we must concede that the true way must also have as its referent the very same κόσμος. The true way and the false way are both attempts to understand the same referent, and thus to have a different referent for the true way and the false way makes no sense. What is particularly odd, however, is that once one takes as a starting point my earlier position, it is very easy to read both original texts and modern commentaries through a particular set of spectacles which allows one to reconcile what is Being said with this earlier position. This, as far as I can see, is due to the ambiguity of the original fragments and hence I should like to endeavour to explain in general terms, why I understand Being as a totality, since it becomes necessary to be cognizant of this starting point in understanding the course of my arguments in the thesis that follows.

As I have just noted, the first thing that must be realised is
that the referent of the way of truth and the way of seeming must be one and the same. Hence since the way of seeming describes the κόσμος, so too must the way of truth. Hence both will attempt to explain the totality of existent things. What is significantly different about the two accounts is that the way of opinion or seeming emphasizes duality, whereas the way of truth emphasizes unity. What I mean is this. In the way of truth, when ignorant mortals are described, they are described as two-headed, and backward-turning. In the way of seeming these mortals describe the κόσμος as emerging from two forms (night and light) into a multiplicity. Mortals incorrectly believe that their account is a true understanding of what is. Parmenides, who claims to have transcended this opinion, and to have received a revelation of the truth, speaks of going beyond the two gates of night and day, with a unified soul, where he is told that there is only one true thought, namely that it is. We note that what is is full and complete, ungenerated and unchanging, incorruptible and indivisible, all of which point to the notion that Being, understood from this transcendant perspective, is a unitary totality, "full of what is", which stands in direct opposition to the common notions of what is, namely a multiplicitous aggregate of generated, changing, corruptible entities. Hence we must conclude at the beginning, that Parmenides is describing a perspectival alteration, whereby his epistemological revelation results in a new ontology regarding what is. With this as our starting point, I shall endeavour to explain my understanding of Parmenides
philosophy in the chapters which follow.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I offer, then, the following outline of the Chapters of this thesis, with the hope that it may aid the reader in seeing the steps taken to establish my position.

CH 1: SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

I begin in the first chapter with a precis of the positions of the most relevant modern commentators, in an attempt to get clear on what the options are. In general, there is no one theory which I endorse as completely authoritative; I do however, make eclectic use of all of the commentators, in the hopes of presenting the most logically consistent exegesis of which I am capable. My use of the secondary literature throughout the thesis has two dimensions. I use it either to add credence to or punctuate my own ideas, or in the case of contrary positions, to show why I hold these opinions to be wanting.

CH 2: PYTHAGOREANISM

In the second chapter, I attempt to explain the Pythagorean ideas which I believe to be central to understanding Parmenides' own point of departure. I first attempt to consider the extent of influence which other schools had on Parmenides, and which school should rightly be considered Parmenides' predecessor. I attempt to place Parmenides in the Italian tradition which is diametrically
opposed, in emphasis and concern, to a materialist tradition. Secondly I attempt to reconstruct in a simplified form, the basics of Pythagorean number cosmogony, in order to show that Parmenides would have been no stranger to an abstract concept of unity. This exegesis serves a second purpose, in that it gives us some clue as to the central position which Parmenides is reacting to. Finally, there is a discussion of Aristotle's interpretations of Parmenides and the Pythagoreans.

CH 3: HORSES

Chapter 3 attempts to explain Parmenides' proem in a way which is consistent with both Parmenides' Pythagorean roots and Platonic legacy. In this chapter I attempt to show how the proem can be read allegorically as a thought-journey from one level of understanding, (the physical), to a second level of understanding, (the metaphysical), the realm of the unitary totality which is beyond opposition. What has oft been ignored by previous commentators, is that Parmenides goes beyond the gates of night and day, beyond the realm of the most basic human conception of opposition. This type of basic opposition would have been thought of as representative of all of the oppositions of the physical world which give rise to the primary and secondary qualities of the world of manifold and changing sense experience. In fact, the physical world is accounted for in terms of opposition in all cosmogonies from Hesiod to the Milesians to Pythagoras. I argue that the traversal of these "gates" represents a movement into a different realm of thought about reality, a different way of conceiving the abstract totality
of the universe. In this light, it makes sense to argue that Parmenides abstract totality is different than the physical ἀρχή of the Milesians.

CH 4: LOGIC

Chapter 4 has two parts, the first of which examines Parmenides' logic with an eye to distinguishing the epistemological and ontological aspects of his thought. It is my contention that epistemology and ontology are for the most part fused in Parmenides, but that the salient features of both of these investigations can be ferreted out by close attention to the text. This is important, since some scholars have attempted to cast Parmenides' investigation as an epistemological quest only, which, I argue cannot be the case. I attempt in this first part to show why.

In the second part of this chapter I attempt to give some content to the idea that Parmenides goes beyond a realm of knowledge which is based on opposition to a realm where things are understood noetically in terms of unity. This is done in consultation with the phenomenological account of Parmenides' logic offered by Prier in his very valuable Archaic Logic. What comes out of Prier's investigations is the idea that Parmenides moves beyond not only an understanding of the world in terms of material opposition so vital to the Pythagoreans and later Milesians, but that his logic makes a parallel transcendence. Parmenides goes beyond a world of logical opposition to a realm of noetic unity,
which is symbolised by a totality which is not amenable to predication and must be rendered in the abstract. I have attempted to show the consistency of this phenomenological interpretation with the other opinions I offer regarding Parmenides, and take it to be a significant way of viewing his poem.

**CH 5: PARMENIDES' DESCRIPTIONS OF BEING**

Chapter Five has two main parts, the first of which examines what I call the "negative predicates" of Being. I attempt to assess them minimalistically for their meaning and context, and attempt to show that to draw the conclusion that Parmenides' Being is a physical entity, is, in light of these "negative predicates" logically inconsistent with Parmenides' contentions about Being. In the second part, I attempt to show how Parmenides uses physical images to depict abstract ideas, hoping to prepare for a less literal reading of his depiction of Being as a sphere. I also attempt to show how his conception of Being could be regarded as an abstract totality, and what that would mean. The chapter concludes with a brief commentary on the logical problems of considering Parmenides' Being to be a physical sphere in any literal sense.

**CH 6: THE LOGICAL AND THE DIVINE**

Chapter Six attempts a commentary on what precisely can be said about what Being is. I consider Parmenides' Being as an abstract totality in two ways. First I consider Being from the logical side, where it emerges as an ontological-epistemological unity. Second, I consider Parmenides' Being from the religious
side, where I attempt to establish Parmenides, at least tenuously, within the Greek tradition that holds ultimate reality to be divine.

CH 7: THE WAY OF SEEMING

Chapter Seven discusses Parmenides use and understanding of the notion of mortal opinion in the Way of Truth and the Proem, with the intent of shedding light on his rationale for producing the false cosmology of the Way of Seeming. It is my opinion that this is the only way in which we can offer a consistent reading of Parmenides that sees the three parts of his poem as interdependent and as contributing to a single coherent purpose. Having discussed opinion in the first two parts of the poem, I attempt to see how it functions in the Way of Seeming, and a further attempt is made to reconcile the Way of Seeming with the Proem and the Way of Truth, in such a way that it renders my interpretation of Parmenides as reacting to the Pythagoreans as coherent. I offer the suggestion that the Way of Seeming is a sort of re-entry into the material realm of thought and "existence" from the transcendence of Parmenides to the truth of a unitary totality.

I should like to point out that this thesis is best understood not as a series of steps towards a final conclusion, but rather, it is best taken for what it is, which is a series of considerations regarding aspects of the poem. The odd thing about the entire project seems to be that there is no conclusive passage or set of
passages which settle the debate as to whether Parmenides was materialist or idealist. The fact that there are so many different and fundamentally opposed positions speaks to this point. When taken as a whole, however, the fragmented arguments (fragmented because they discuss fragments) which I put forth stand as consistent body of work which indicates that we must start taking Parmenides more seriously as a truly profound and original thinker, who in many ways offers serious and relevant commentaries on the nature of metaphysics and human existence. Further, an emended understanding of his thought may serve to change our understanding of subsequent Greek thought in significant ways.
CHAPTER ONE - SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

It is useful, before embarking on our own exegesis of Parmenides' fragments, to consider some of the positions of eminent scholars of the field.

ZELLER

Dr. Edouard Zeller, a German professor at the University of Berlin, published a revised version of his *History of Greek Philosophy*, in 1876, which was published in English in 1881. His is a worthy compendium in three volumes.

Zeller believes that Parmenides is waxing eloquent upon a fundamental unitary corporeal substratum of Being. He sees Parmenides as improving upon the philosophical outlook of Xenophanes who maintained the unity of the world yet allowed within this unity, plurality and multiplicity.3

Zeller says that since thought is not separate from Being, since, "...there is nothing outside Being, and all thought is thought of Being."‘ Says Zeller,

Being is, in a word, therefore, all that really exists as Unity, without becoming or passing away, without change of place or form; a whole, throughout and undivided, homogeneous, on all sides equally balanced, and in all points equally perfect."
Zeller sees the comparison of Being to a sphere as a comparison (as others have failed to do), and not necessarily an indication of Being's corporeality. He maintains that Parmenides "never formed the idea of a Being uncontained in space," since he describes it as limited, homogeneous and indivisible. 'He claims that Parmenides' depiction of Being can be taken as metaphorical,

...only if we could find any indication that Parmenides conceived of Being as incorporeal, and if, in other parts of his philosophic discussion he made use of a figurative mode of expression; but neither is [this] anywhere the case.'

Since Zeller does not deal with the Proem, one can only wonder if he considered Parmenides description of the goddess' revelation a historical meeting. At any rate Zeller maintains that Being is the material substratum of the world which has been abstracted from he world of multiplicity and sense-experience.

GOMPERZ

Theodore Gomperz was an extremely learned professor at the University of Vienna, who published a German edition of his *Griechische Denker* in 1896. This was subsequently published in English in 1901. Gomperz sees Parmenides as founding his thought on "the pantheism of Xenophanes," and determining its lines in
accordance with his Pythagorean roots. The greatest impression on Parmenides, however, claims Gomperz, was made by Heraclitus. Gomperz sees Parmenides as reacting against the Ionian belief in the stability of the material world, and the Heraclitean belief that things are and are not at the same time. In general, however, Gomperz sees Parmenides as reacting against common opinion and faith in sense experience. In anticipating a Platonic metaphysics of incorporeal grounding, however, Parmenides fell short of reaching this height:

A moment ago we were soaring beyond the aerial stars, and now the confines of reality are closing in on us again. Parmenides too, it would appear, essayed on a flight on the wings of Icarus above the region of experience into the ethereal domain of pure Being. But his strength betrayed him halfway; he sank and fell to the familiar plains of corporeal existence. The truth is, his theory of Being prepared the way for the kindred conceptions of later ontologists without being identical with those theories. It was still of the earth earthy; it brings us to the forecourt, but not to the fane of metaphysics.'

He considers Parmenides to be an acute and abstract thinker, who could not remain abstract, and thus posited, as the true reality, a spatial Being," which is devoid of motion or any
sensibly quality." He describes Being as "...nothing but a bare uniform homogeneous mass, a lump of matter without any form or contour..." which due to the Greek love for form and beauty, was transposed, via the principle of finitude, "...and the formless became beautiful in the shape of that 'well-rounded ball' with which we have already made acquaintance."11

Gomperz identifies a number of inconsistencies which he sees in the logic of Parmenides thought, which seem only to be problematic if we consider Parmenides to be a materialist. It surprises me that Gomperz did not attempt to solve these problems by considering that Parmenides' conception of Being was incorporeal. We are instead left with the following conclusion:

The doctrine of Parmenides supplied dogmatic materialism with some of its most powerful weapons, but the master himself was never a consistent materialist... The material Being of Parmenides was incontestable a spiritual Being as well. It is universal matter and universal spirit as well, but the matter is sterile because capable of no expansion, and the spirit powerless because capable of no action.

Gomperz offers no explanation of his insistence on materialism, but his conviction seems to stem from the belief that Parmenides simile which resembles Being to the mass of a sphere is an identification of Being with a sphere, although this is nowhere
directly stated.

BURNET

John Burnet, whose *Early Greek Philosophy* has long been a standard work on presocratic philosophy, holds a position which is inimical to my own. Burnet was one of the premier scholars of his age, as is well attested in a *Memoir* by England's Lord Charnwood*. Writing at the end of the last century, Burnet held that,

> What is, is a finite, spherical motionless corporeal plenum, and there is nothing beyond it. The appearances of multiplicity and motion, empty space and time, are illusions.

Burnet sees Parmenides' thought as bringing philosophy to a crisis: philosophy must either cease to be corporeal, or it must cease to be monistic. Claiming that Parmenides cannot cease to be corporealist, he asserts that Parmenides is, in fact the founder of material monism, and as such divorces the senses from reason.* Burnet's main two reasons for maintaining the corporeality of Parmenides' Being seem to be as follows:*  

1) that Parmenides spoke of what is as a sphere, from which he concludes that Being must be extended.  
2) that Aristotle maintains in *De Caelo*, that Parmenides and Melissus knew no other reality than the sensible. Burnet takes this opinion very seriously, and in fact mentions it thrice in *Early Greek Philosophy*.
Burnet's general position on Parmenides is that the Eleatic was a former Pythagorean, who later refutes this position. Following the traditional divisions of the poem into Proem, Way of Truth and Way of Seeming, Burnet sees 1) the proem as "an allegorical description of his conversion from some form of error to what he held to be the truth."", 2) the Way of Truth as the logical explication of what is, and 3) the Way of Seeming as a restatement of that which is patently false, presented as a form of purging recantation of his former views. Burnet says much which is valuable and is always insightful, but I disagree with the main thrust of his position, for reasons which will out in the course of my exegesis.

CORNFORD

Francis M. Cornford, well known translator of Plato's Republic and Parmenides, as well as his From Religion to Philosophy and its antidote Principium Sapientiae, was a member of a group of British scholars known as the Cambridge Ritualists, along with Jane E. Harrison (Themis) and Sir James Frazier (The Golden Bough). His position is that Parmenides was a disgruntled Pythagorean who criticizes Pythagoreanism for not taking the One seriously enough. In fact, it is Cornford's primary contention, that both the Pythagoreans and the Milesians were susceptible to the same criticism, namely that a true unity could never give rise to multiplicity:
His logical mind rebelled against the assumption which it shared with the other systems of the sixth century. They had all described the emergence of a manifold world out of an original unity, and also recognized within the world an opposition of contraries derived from some primitive pair...To Parmenides it seemed irrational and inconceivable that from an original One Being should come first two and then many."

Cornford suggests that this is the point of Parmenides' arguments regarding the impossibility of coming to be and passing away, as well as the impossibility of dividing the one. Cornford also sees the one as in some sense physical; in fact he refers to it as a physical abstraction." He also refers to the δρόμος of the Milesians as abstractions, by which he means the substance which is the true reality of things conceptually abstracted from the world of manifold appearances. In my opinion, the same thing can be said of Parmenides, who abstracted from a λόγος explained in terms of multiplicity to one understood in terms of unity, a conceptual grasping of the whole.

To contrast Cornford with Burnet, while the former shows that Parmenides' arguments do in fact refute the assumptions of the Milesians as well as the Pythagoreans, he takes very seriously the important distinction between Ionian and Italian schools, a point which Burnet seems to ignore: the Ionians are concerned with the
primary stuff of the universe, the Italians with its limit. How
telling that Anaximander made the ὀμάληφσις the nature or substance
of all things, whereas:

...in the Pythagorean view the nature of things lies
in the opposite principle of number, the units composing
and bounding sensible bodies.  

JAEGER

Werner Jaeger, who was a professor at Harvard University in
the 1940's, delivered a set of Gifford Lectures at St. Andrews in
1936, published as The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers, in
which he puts forth his views on what he calls "Parmenides' Mystery
of Being."

Jaeger sees Parmenides as having something akin to a religious
experience, wherein the religious significance is identified as the
profundity of the truth to which he attained." According to
Jaeger, Parmenides models his poem on Hesiod's Theogony,
attempting to use the religious mode of expression to espouse his
philosophical ideas.

What he has done is to take over the religious form
of expression and transpose it to the sphere of
philosophy, so that in truth a whole new intellectual
world takes shape."

He claims that Parmenides basic idea is that the Ionian
conceptions of a material ὄρχη "falls short of the requirements which a strict conception of Being involves." The things which the Ionians held to be ὄρχη are not adequate to ground generation and corruption. Consequently, it is Jaeger's contention that the cosmogony of the Way of Seeming is presented to show that the world of appearance is not real, and why this is the case."

Jaeger also claims that Parmenides' description of Being amounts to a denial of the qualities of the sense world. Parmenides' use of the sphere to describe Being is a materialistic comparison of the nature of Being which is the essence of unity. Concludes Jaeger: "His Existent is not to be approached by later conceptions such as that of matter." Hence Jaeger sees Parmenides' conception of Being as an attempt at a Being which is not amenable to the categories of sense experience, or physicality, and which is, I argue later an abstraction.

VERDENIUS

W.J. Verdenius produced a PhD thesis on Parmenides in 1942, later published as a monograph which embodies his main views. He was first a doctoral student and then a professor at Utrecht University. Loenen, oddly enough refers to his work as "penetrating"", but Verdenius position is hardly pellucid in exposition or conclusions. Like Jaeger, Verdenius sees a religious element to Parmenides's thought in so far as human and divine initiative can be seen to coincide in a rational purpose, namely
the discovery of truth. Parmenides is, for Verdenius, distinctive among his contemporaries and predecessors for having a logical plan and for dealing with abstract concepts such as Being, non-Being, etc."

Verdenius believes that Parmenides is reacting against the dualistic cosmologies of his predecessors, though not to any one group in particular." Verdenius seems to think that Being is a "substance which makes everything a Being, this substance is the essence of reality to such a degree that its opposite, Not-Being at once becomes a nothing." He also seems to want to say that 'that which is' the sum total of things, and that Being extends to everything."

Verdenius denies both idealism (Being as an abstraction) as well as materialism (Being as a plenum) and concludes somewhat inconclusively: "It is existential being in the widest sense of the word." In general, Verdenius holds that there is an identification of knowing and Being which necessitates that all which is known is, and that all which is can be known. In this sense, he seems to tend to a sort of predicational monism of the sort that Curd advocates (see below). Although he is nowhere clear, he claims that what what is refers to is obvious", that it is full of reality, yet denies a materialistic interpretation of Parmenides and does not give a satisfactory alternative.

KIRK & RAVEN

G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven were, at the time of the publication
of their joint effort, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, in 1957, Lecturers in Classics at the University of Cambridge. This critical history includes texts and a critical history of early Greek philosophy, which has since been revised and issued as Kirk Raven and Schofield.

Kirk and Raven maintain that Parmenides makes reference to Anaximenes and possibly Heraclitus in the extant fragments\(^1\), but consider his outlook to be, in all likelihood, Pythagorean. They support this idea by mentioning his geographic proximity to the center of Pythagorean thought at Croton\(^2\), and also cite perceived Pythagorean elements as part of Parmenides' "Way of Seeming"\(^3\).

Kirk and Raven believe that Parmenides starts from a first principle "it is", in a manner similar to the *cogito* of Descartes, from which,

> Parmenides proceeds, by the sole use of reason unaided by the senses, to deduce all that can be known about Being, and he ends by denying any truthful validity to the senses or any reality to what they appear to perceive.\(^3\)

They assert that Burnet's position is an oversimplification on two counts, both in claiming that "what is" is a corporeal plenum, and in maintaining that philosophy, at the crossroads of Parmenidean thought must either cease to be corporeal or cease to be monistic. Say Kirk and Raven,
On the contrary, the chief difficulty about Parmenides is that, while the incorporeal was unknown and no vocabulary therefore existed to describe it, he was, nonetheless, as were the Pythagoreans in the choice of their first principles, feeling his way towards it."

They state unequivocally, that had Parmenides been asked if his Being were corporeal, his answer would have been "a hesitant negative.""

Kirk and Raven maintain that the Way of Truth deals with the objects of reason, those consistent with the notion of limit as detailed in the left column of the Pythagorean table of opposites", and that the way of seeming deals with objects of sense. While they do in fact seem to say that Being is a sphere devoid of any sensible qualities, I attempt to show in the course of my arguments regarding this aspect of Parmenides' thought, that their argument is either inconsistent, or must be taken as indicative of the level of abstraction to which Parmenides has attained".

OWENS

Father Joseph Owens is perhaps the most respected Canadian scholar of Ancient Greek Philosophy. He is Emeritus at the University of Toronto, the founder of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, and published his A History of Ancient Western
Philosophy, under the auspices of the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto.

Owens maintains that "what is" refers to the κόσμος:

What is, to the ordinary hearer of Parmenides' verses, could hardly be understood as anything else than the world of sense experience, the world that includes one's self and all other men and visible and tangible things, the world that preceding thinkers from Thales on had studied and described."

Owens maintains that, although Parmenides makes "drastic interpretations" about the κόσμος, the world of sense experience is at least his starting point. "He believes that Being is "an indivisible whole, something entirely unique,"" which is manifest as an identification of Being, light and knowledge in their essential natures. These he contrasts with not-Being, ignorance and earth, the last of which Owens identifies as the second of the two forms which ought not to have been named in the Way of Seeming." Being is light (φῶς), and therefore physical. Says Owens, "Since Parmenides had no notion of any kind of reality above the sensible, this could only mean that Being and knowledge were a physical reality, a natural form, light." Owens claims that Parmenides introduces the metaphysical problem of what it means to be, while remaining a physical philosopher."
Dr. J.H.M.M. Loenen, a professor of philosophy at the University of Leiden produced his reinterpretation of Eleatic philosophy in 1959, under the title Parmenides, Melissus, Gorgias. Loenen believes that what is refers to what "truly is". In other words Being is the one thing which can properly be said to belong to the highest metaphysical sense of Being:

Eleatic philosophy as a whole is not an ontology in the traditional sense of the word (the study of being as the common factor of all things) but the metaphysics of absolute reality. It is no monism but a dualism which differs from later dualistic systems in that all causal relation between true being and the phenomenal world is lacking.  

Loenen considers it absurd to conclude that the subject of what is is the physical world, since the only outcome of this is to deny motion, death, and change. The only meaning that motionless, incorruptibility and the other negative predicates of Being can have is of "Being" in a different sense than that which applies to reality in the common sense or the physical world:

The ἐπίτωμος is the fundamental datum on the basis of which the impossibility of coming into being and passing
away is ultimately affirmed...My conclusion is this:
coming into being and passing away of the subject "is"
(whatever this may be) is ruled out, because it is."

In other words, Parmenides is asserting the necessity of Being
over and above contingent beings, those subject to generation and
corruption." There is in Loenen's interpretation, a dualism
between the necessary existent Being, which is necessary both in
logic and metaphysically, but which nonetheless is causally
separate from the physical world.

TARAN

Princeton scholar Leonardo Taran published his Parmenides in
1965. This work is a text with translation and critical essays, and
upon first reading, Taran appears, to borrow a phrase from Plato,
as a sober man among drunkards.

Taran argues that the question of idealism or materialism is
not a legitimate one to put to Parmenides:

It will not do to argue that for Parmenides thought
is immanent in Being or he could not conceive any kind of
existence except that of a sensible body, for the whole
burden of his argument is that what exists can have no
other characteristic than its existence."
Taran maintains that the "characteristics of Being" which Parmenides relates are in fact, negative predicates which are an attempt to strip Being, not only of its corporeality, but of any predication whatsoever. According to Taran, Parmenides' main concern is to assert that Being qua Being has no characteristic other than existence. Says Taran, "Parmenides conception of Being, precisely because it asserts that Being can have no characteristic except existence, is the first attempt at the abstract." He also asserts that Parmenides conception of Being is independent of either Xenophanes of the Pythagoreans." Taran's concern in short, seems largely to be with what Parmenides' words mean, and he preserves the integrity of the meaning of the extant fragments in putting forth his interpretation.

ROBINSON

T.M. Robinson is a professor at the University of Toronto and current president of the Society of Ancient Greek Philosophy. He has written several very insightful articles on Parmenides, so I have chosen to include the ideas contained in two of them in this summary.

Robinson believes that the referent of "what is" is all which is real. He sees Parmenides' most important contribution to the history of philosophy to be his establishment of the connection between knowledge and the real:

[Parmenides] argued for the epistemologically
unimpeachable view that there is a necessary/appropriate nexus between knowledge or ascertainment and the real, and in doing so, laid the foundations for the entire future science of epistemology."

With regard to ontology, "what is" seems to be the totality of Being understood as uniquely real, devoid of "degrees of reality" and non-reality:

For the real, Parmenides says, has nothing "alongside of it"; the real being the entirety of what is, the non-real is inconceivable - whether as the object of knowledge or in any other way. Degrees of reality are out of the question; as he puts it... "the real must be utterly (πάνω) such or not at all."

Robinson goes on to say that the real as a totality is beyond temporality, such that none of the things which go to describe temporal entities can apply to it:

He has...sensed that the notion of a temporal mode of existence cannot be meaningfully ascribed to the totality of the real; at best (and very darkly) such a totality can be described as existing in a state of "presentness"... without beginning or end, given the assumption that the concepts of past and future introduce, illicitly, the non-real into the real."
Robinson argues, then, that Parmenides is discussing the totality of Being taken as a totality, which is the correct way of understanding that which mortals think they understand, but do not.

CURD

Patricia Kenig Curd is a professor at Purdue University, who recently published two articles on Parmenides, one on the Way of Truth, ("Parmenidean Monism," 1991) and the other on the Doxa ("Deception and Belief in Parmenides' Doxa," 1992). Since I deal with some of the issues she raises in a subsequent chapter of this thesis, I have chosen to include her in this summary even though she has not published a monograph on the topic.

Curd's position is somewhat different than the others I have mentioned, in that she asserts that Parmenides is advocating what she calls a predicational monism. At the beginning of her article "Parmenidean Monism," Curd distinguishes between three types of monism:

1) Material monism: that there is a single underlying stuff of which the universe is composed. The Milesian ὁ ὕππξα are representative of this type of monism.

2) Numerical monism: that there is only one thing in the universe. This is the position, (as Curd notes) which is traditionally attributed to Parmenides.

3) Predicational monism: "that each thing can only be one thing."
This is the position which Curd believes Parmenides to hold on several grounds. First, she does not believe that Parmenides reconciles Being with the world of multiplicity". Second she believes that Parmenides' investigations are primarily methodological, that the Eleatic is primarily concerned with what can be said about something which is.

Curd's main position, then, seems to be that Parmenides holds to a predicational monism which is meant to challenge the philosophical theories of his predecessors by setting down criteria for asserting that a given something is. For Curd, Parmenides primary concern is "what can be truly said to be and why?"
CHAPTER 11 - PYTHAGOREANISM

This chapter has three primary functions. It first attempts to examine the extent to which philosophers such as the Milesians, Xenophanes and Heraclitus should be understood as influences on the thought of Parmenides, and to show that the best candidates for a philosophical predecessor of Parmenides are the Pythagoreans. Second, it attempts to produce a simplified version of one significant aspect of Pythagorean number cosmogony, as a basis for showing later how Parmenides was influenced by this cosmogony and reacted against it. Third, it consider Aristotle's criticism of the Pythagoreans and the Eleatics, with an eye to determining the extent of its accuracy and usefulness for an understanding of Parmenides' philosophy.

PART 1: PARMENIDES' PREDECESSORS

Not a few attempts have been made to understand Parmenides in terms of his philosophical predecessors. It has been stated by almost all commentators that Parmenides is reacting to previous philosophical schools. Attempts have been made to see Parmenides in the light of the Milesians, Heraclitus and Xenophanes. Each of these views have some support. Aristotle (and in fact an entire ancient tradition) considers Xenophanes to be the founder of the Eleatic school and the teacher of Parmenides. There are within the body of Parmenides' work certain elements that are reminiscent of
Milesian cosmology, and several fragments could refer to Heraclitus. These connections are tenuous at best, however, and I suggest that the only responsible path to take in dealing with Parmenides in light of his predecessors is to understand him in terms of the school for which there is coherent testimonial evidence, namely the Pythagoreans.

To those who consider Parmenides to be reacting to the Milesian tradition, we must ask the question whether or not Parmenides was even aware of the Milesian doctrines. One might suggest that to assume that Parmenides is offering a specific rejection of their cosmologies presupposes too much. There certainly was no adequate system publishing or distributing texts, which would seem to be a prerequisite for a sophisticated rejection of Milesian ideas. Parmenides' geographical position would also have to be taken as a severe impediment to a thorough knowledge of Milesian cosmology, but this geography supports Pythagorean associations. In other words, we do not know that Parmenides had adequate knowledge of the Milesians to form a sophisticated series of allusory objections to them, or to follow in Milesian philosophical footsteps.

The Pythagoreans again are much better candidates as objects of Parmenides' rebuttal. One must also consider that the normal lineage of Greek philosophy posits two schools, one Ionian, one Italian. To conflate this distinction and see Parmenides as embellishing on the philosophy of the Milesians, or even as reacting against them is to fail to recognize their primarily
different concerns. The very organisation of Diogenes' *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* reveals this two school distinction. In the first books are outlines the Ionian School, beginning with the Seven Sages and the Milesians, working through to Anaxagoras of Athens and Socrates and Plato. In Book VIII we find discussions of Pythagoras and the Eleatics. Now this organisation is by no means authoritative, but it does speak to the larger conception of Greek philosophy at hand, the recognized distinction of two schools of philosophy at work which culminate in the work of Plato and Aristotle. The precise and telling distinction between the Ionian school, of which the Milesians were a part, and the Italian school, to which Parmenides belongs, is best stated by F.M. Cornford:

From first to last, the fundamental distinction between the two main traditions, Ionian and Italian, is that whereas the Ionian sought the nature of things in some kind of matter, the Italian laid stress on the principle of limit or form.41

Cornford also makes the following very cogent point, which I have taken the liberty of quoting here:

A system of the Italian type, seeking the reality of things in form rather than matter, will not take for its starting point an unlimited and indiscriminate mass like that 'Boundless' which Anaximander called 'divine', but
which is the ancestor of the 'all things together' of Anaxagoras."

Cornford's point of course is that the Italian school is not concerned with answering the question "what is?" in terms of matter. Rather their interest is in what limits what is, what is the nature and origin of the forms which matter takes. If we fail to realise this fundamental difference in the outlooks and projects of these two schools, we will fail to have an adequate understanding of Parmenides.

Regarding Parmenides' involvement with Xenophanes, we have the following testimony from Diogenes Laertius:

Parthenides a native of Elea, son of Pyres, was a pupil of Xenophanes... Parmenides, however, though he was instructed by Xenophanes, was no follower of his. According to Sotion he also associated with Ameinias the Pythagorean... This Ameinias he was more inclined to follow, and on his death he built a shrine to him, being himself of illustrious birth and possessed of great wealth; moreover, it was Ameinias and not Xenophanes who led him to adopt the peaceful life of a student."

Here we have an indication of Parmenides' background and the origin of his ideas. He may have been familiar with Xenophanes, but his philosophical interest began with the Pythagoreans. Further, as
we see that he "was no follower" of Xenophanes, those who maintain that Parmenides is following in his footsteps are misguided. That Parmenides may react against Xenophanes is still a possibility, and I can only put forth the following argument against this. If Parmenides is reacting against more than one person or school, it would make sense that he mention who he is reacting against. If certain parts of his poem argue first against one thinker and then another, this would produce a confusion of issues and objections. Parmenides' poem is too specific in its objective to be a reaction to several schools. His main thrust must be against a particular position. If he is reacting in any general sense at all, it is against the common view of οἱ ἰπατοὶ. His concern with "what is" and its apparent unity, however, seem to be directed against a particular doctrine, and the textual evidence suggests Pythagoreanism as the best candidate. We have in fact, further testimonía from Strabo, who also refers to both Zeno and Parmenides as Pythagoreans."

Those that argue that Heraclitus is the great opponent of Parmenides are perhaps correct on an intuitive ground, namely that Heraclitus' solution of the "problem of the one and the many" is to assert the primacy of opposites, whereas Parmenides asserts the primacy of unity."

There is also an aesthetic appeal on this ground, which is further enhanced by the survival of significant amounts of texts of both thinkers. Further, there is their temporal proximity to one another. Unfortunately, textual references are scanty and inconclusive at best. Some thinkers see the last phrase
of KR 345 as a definite reference to Heraclitus:

παντῶν δὲ παλιντρόπος ἐστι κελάθος

...and that of all things the path is backward turning

It seems irresponsible to connect this small piece of text with Heraclitus, although some commentators have attempted to substitute παλιντρόπος for παλιντόνος in Heraclitus fragment KR 212:

παλιντόνος ἀρμοσθῇ ὡκωσερ τὸξου καὶ λὺρης

...there is a back-stretched harmony, as in the bow and the lyre.

This, to my mind, (while παλιντρόπος could be substituted for παλιντόνος without changing the meaning of the fragment) fails to respect the integrity of the text, for which the authoritative reading is παλιντόνος. It may be indicative, as Kirk and Raven suggest of the tenuous nature of a Heraclitus connection." The "double-headed" and "backward-turning" references can be more adequately interpreted in the light of Parmenides' rejection of opposites (Being and not Being) and his mention of false roads, than in terms of Heraclitean philosophy, which again presupposes too much in terms of the availability of texts. How much of
Heraclitus Parmenides was familiar with is unknown, and a full access to Heraclitean texts (if there were any to begin with) would be necessary to make such a precise allusion. Again, considering that both philosophers flourished in the 69th Olympiad (504-500 B.C.) the time constraints of Parmenides even getting a copy of such a text, if there was one, seems doubtful at best. There would be a better chance of Parmenides knowing of the Milesians, since some time had elapsed between their flourits and his.

There is, it must be noted, a risk of producing circular arguments in putting forth the Pythagoreans as Parmenides' primary predecessors. If we say that they were his predecessors because certain elements of his poem are Pythagorean, we are left to wonder whether or not this conclusion is based upon the assumption that Parmenides was involved and familiar with the Pythagoreans. Once we consider the historical testimonia however, that Parmenides was introduced to the philosophical life by a Pythagorean, this objection of circularity may fall away, since we have some ground for our suspicion that Parmenides is reacting to their doctrines. This last point can best be seen as a whole, however, and it is perhaps only upon completion of this essay that the justness of the contention that Parmenides was a "disgruntled Pythagorean" (as Cornford puts it) can be seen. At any rate, since there is much that is apocryphal in the tradition of ancient commentary, we can assert with some cautious optimism that even if Parmenides was reacting to other schools, his objections would be the same, namely that no account of a generated multiplicity can adequately express
the totality of Being. In other words, even if Parmenides is reacting to both the Milesians and the Pythagoreans, our examination of him will not be flawed by seeing as his main project the defense of the unity of Being.

We are, it should be duly noted, taking the most conservative and cautious view possible. We are disallowing spurious and sketchy "evidence" regarding other predecessors and taking as Parmenides primary predecessor the school for which we have significant textual evidence. Further, it is largely undisputed by the large majority of modern commentators that Parmenides is working under Pythagorean influence. It is my contention that Pythagorean influence can be seen significantly throughout the three parts of Parmenides' poem. We are right in so interpreting it, for the reasons I have been discussing regarding the rejection of other influences as primary, and for the positive indications of a Pythagorean association on the part of Parmenides.

PART 2: PYTHAGOREAN NUMBER COSMOGONY

An understanding of Pythagoreanism, then, before embarking upon an examination of Parmenides is useful for several reasons. First, it allows us to see that the school which preceded Parmenides, the central doctrines with which Parmenides was familiar, was working toward an abstract theory of unity from which the world of multiplicity was generated. This eradicates charges of anachronism in attributing an abstract theory of Being to
Parmenides. Second, we can understand much of Parmenides refusal to allow "the positing of two forms," in the "Way of Seeming" once we get a grasp of Pythagorean cosmogony. Third, we can understand Parmenides' adamant defense of the unity of "what is," in the light of these two previous considerations. Hence I shall endeavour to explain a central cosmological and mathematical doctrine of the earliest Pythagorean school, in the hope that it will enlighten our reading of Parmenides. It is the contention of Cornford, on whose exegesis of Pythagorean cosmogony I rely, that:

[Parmenides'] logical mind rebelled against the assumption which [Pythagoreanism] shared with other systems of the sixth century. They had all described the emergence of a manifold world out of an original unity, and also recognized within the world an opposition of contraries derived from some primitive pair... To Parmenides it seemed irrational and inconceivable that from an original One being should come first two then many."

It is this deriving of a world of multiplicity in Parmenides that I shall endeavour to explain in order that we may understand Parmenides reaction to it.

It was universally agreed among the ancients that Pythagoras himself authored the doctrine that numbers are the real nature of things," and this in fact is how the Italian stress on limit or
form manifests itself in terms of Pythagoreanism. What we find the Pythagoreans maintaining is that there is a primary unity, the One, which is both odd and even, and which gives rise to the world of opposition. This evolution of multiplicity follows the evolution of numerical values or numbers in general. Says Cornford, "And the unit [τὸ ἕν] consists of both [primary opposites], for it is both even and odd; and from the unit proceeds numbers." There is then, a divine one which is the ultimate source of reality which lies beyond the material world of multiplicity. Numbers are the vehicle for the generation of the material world. How this was conceived can be accounted for in what follows. It seems as though a point, correspondent to the number "1", could be added to itself to form the number "2". This is no great feat in itself, but when we consider that points have "position", the significance of adding these numbers becomes apparent. For when the 1 is added to the 2 which it gave rise to out of itself, it produces a three. The 2 is representative of a line, and the 3 is representative of a plane. If we add yet another unit, we see that we have entered into the realm of the geometrical solid. That which is represented by 4, is the gateway to the material world. It explains how a series of points combine to make a corporeal entity, namely the geometrical
solid which gives rise to the material entity. Of course, it will be understood that this is a logical as opposed to a temporal progression." This account is perhaps at best an over simplification, but in essence it is correct. One would be remiss if they failed to mention that Plato's *Timaeus* seems to use similar notions in deriving regular solids from the χύρα or receptacle." This last point is in itself instructive, for it shows both the continuity and preservation of Pythagorean thought with the person who treats of Parmenides in a separate dialogue. More importantly however, is the notion that the χύρα or receptacle is the reservoir for these solids, and the notion of unformed matter as a substratum is as yet undeveloped. This notion is an Aristotelian one. Hence those who claim that Parmenides' Being is "unformed matter", the substratum of the world of multiple material things posit a significant anachronism; such a notion is not even present in Plato. At any rate a summary of the Pythagorean position is useful, after which I should like to consider some Aristotelian reaction to it. Cornford supplies a succinct explanation:

... all numbers fall under the One, since 2 is a single 2 and 3 is one particular thing and ten is a single compendium of number. Moved by these considerations Pythagoras declared that the Monad is the first principle of things, by participation in which each several thing is called one. This principle is conceived in its self-identity as a Monad, but when added to
itself, in respect of its otherness (καθ’ ἄτηρητητα), it creates the infinite dyad.

For not only does the corporeal world come out of this numerical generation, but so also do ideas such as limited (1) and unlimited (2), good and bad."

PART 3: ARISTOTLE’S REACTION

Cornford indicates the difficulty with the Pythagorean number cosmogony as such:

The first Pythagoreans thus appear unaware that their cosmogony really consists of two chapters: the first mathematical terminating in the geometrical solid, and the second physical beginning with the first sensible body."

How this change occurs is as mysterious as the connection between mind and body by the pineal gland as put forth by Descartes. At any rate, Aristotle too puts his finger on this problem in a discussion of the Pythagoreans at Metaphysics §989b29ff:

The Pythagoreans treat of principles and elements stranger than those of the physical philosophers (the
reason is that they got the principles from non-sensible things, for the objects of mathematics, except those of astronomy, are of the class of things without movement); yet their discussions and investigations are all about nature; for they generate the heavens, with regard to their parts and attributes and functions they observe the phenomena, and use up the causes and principles explaining these, which implies that they agree with the others, the physical philosophers, that the real is just that which is perceptible and contained by the so-called heavens. But the causes and the principles which they mention are, as we said [§989b31-3] sufficient to act as steps even up to the higher realms of reality, and are more suited to these than to theories about nature. They do not tell us at all, however, how there can be movement if limit and unlimited and odd and even are the only things assumed, or how without movement and change there can be generation and destruction, or the bodies that move through the heavens can do what they do."

Aristotle claims that Parmenides' difficulty with the Pythagorean system was that it was unable to account for precisely this efficient cause of generation from numerical principles. This I shall argue in later chapters is not without merit and is consistent with what Parmenides in fact says, particularly in the "Way of Seeming". The Stagirite accuses the Eleatics of not
understanding the notion of logical predication, and of their theories being in want of a substratum." This, of course is based on the idea that the Eleatics were dealing with a material reality, which in other places he denies. Burnet takes Aristotle seriously regarding the claim that Parmenides is dealing with nothing but a sensible reality." He suggests that Aristotle is making such a claim at De Caelo §298b1, but he only cites half of the pertinent text. What Aristotle says in toto is the following:

But however excellent their [Parmenides' and Melissus'] theories may otherwise be, they cannot be held to speak as students of nature. There may be things not subject to generation or any kind of movement, but if so they belong to a higher inquiry than the study of nature. They however, had no idea of any form of being other than the substance of things perceived (ὤν τῶν αἰωνιῶν οὐσίων) and when they saw what no one previously had seen, that there could be no knowledge or wisdom without some unchanging entities, they naturally transferred what was true of them to things perceived.

Implicit of course in this discussion of Aristotle is the notion that Parmenides is asserting a positive cosmogony (as opposed to ontology)" about the nature of the material world. It is my contention, however that he is not, and once we see that this is the case, Aristotle's contention falls apart. Nonetheless, in
answer to Burnet's contention that Aristotle is here making a claim that Parmenides was in fact a materialist, we must consider the text more carefully. Aristotle is claiming, first and foremost that the Eleatics are studying something "higher than nature" (which can only be metaphysics). Hence they are studying something beyond the realm of sensibles (αἱ ἀκοόηται). He does not say that this οὐκόνα is corporeal or incorporeal, although he does suggest that it is incorporeal by saying that the Eleatics transfer their notions about "unchanging entities" to sensible things. Why would there be a need to "transfer" from these "entities" to the sensible world if it was "of the same nature"? The weak link, of course, in Aristotle's account is that he supposes that Parmenides is asserting a positive cosmogony of the material world. Once we see that Aristotle is suggesting that he also discusses "something higher" than the study of nature, namely an unchanging entity, we are faced with the crux of the matter. Burnet's contention is that "what is" for Parmenides is an corporeal plenum. However Aristotle is in fact maintaining that Parmenides studies something higher as well as the sensible world to which he attaches the characteristics of these unchanging entities under investigation. Burnet conflates the distinction, and sees both the sensible world, and "something higher" as one and the same thing.

We must, however, discuss Aristotle's contention that Parmenides is discussing the sensible world. One can only suggest that Aristotle took Parmenides Being to mean, not an entity which Parmenides suggests is beyond the world of the physical, but
rather, all which is. This seems to lend credence to the notion which I wish to defend, that Parmenides is discussing, ontologically, the nature of Being as a totality. As it is an eternal totality, it cannot be explained in terms of cosmogony (the coming to be of Being). Being can only be grasped conceptually, as a unitary whole, and not accounted for as an aggregate of entities, or originating at some point ex nihilo. This would explain the Stagirite's complaint that the Eleatic theory understood neither predication nor substance. Aristotle, it should be noted, cannot always be trusted to give proper historical accounts of those he criticizes (as discussed by Cherniss in Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy), and he often anachronises the context of his predecessors problems to suit his own needs. Says Taran:

What is immediately patent is that Aristotle expounds and criticizes all previous thinkers as if they faced the same problems as Aristotle did. It is however, Aristotle's conviction not only that his own system is the ultimate truth, but that all previous thinkers, working under the constraint of necessity, made imperfect attempts to express his own system.\(^8^0\)

Taran's criticism may be a little harsh, (he is working under the intoxication of Cherniss) but he does go on to show how Aristotle misrepresents the Eleatic view on three separate occasions, and that this makes the Stagirite an unreliable
witness." This may in fact be a circular argument on Taran's part, since much of his conclusion is based on his own conviction that Parmenides was denying the sensible world. However, if even we moderate Taran's view, we still have good cause for distrusting Aristotle, since he seems to want to state in one and the same breath that Parmenides is discussing metaphysical entities yet knows only the sensible, that he is not discussing the natural world, yet he makes assertions about it which need correcting. In the final analysis, however, we can say that Aristotle does in fact contribute to our discussion of Parmenides in a positive way. He shows us that there is something metaphysical in Parmenides account of Being, and he also shows us that Parmenides has a problem with the paucity of efficient causality in the Pythagorean account. If we can take these two points as legitimate, then our excursus into Aristotle has been extremely profitable.
CHAPTER III - HORSES

What I propose to do in this chapter is to offer an interpretation of the poem which can act as an overture and directional grounding to the rest of our interpretations of his thought. I offer an allegorical reading of Parmenides' poem which I attempt to justify here in terms of historical and philological considerations. The full weight of my argument, sadly cannot be seen in this chapter, but rather only becomes apparent in the light of other consideration, espoused in my chapter on Logic and The Way of Seeing. My position here is consistent with my thesis as a whole, however, and is itself a coherent position, which is consistent with other main interpretations of the poem which I will outline in what follows.

Almost everyone agrees that Parmenides' "poem" is not intended to be understood literally, as an actual physical journey or a historical account of physical events. Rather, the general contention among scholars is that the so called "poem" is a figurative attempt to convey one or more things:

1) an expression of a correction of error in Parmenides' views and how he came upon the realisation of the falsity of his views."

2) an attempt to convey the importance, divine nature and
significant difference of his philosophical discoveries, by representing his knowledge as attained in a divine realm, and placing the words of the revelation in the mouth of a goddess. 83

3) an attempt to use imagery present in Homeric, Hesiodic or Orphic literature after the traditional manner of a man seeking truth. 84 The general consensus among those who hold this position is that the proem functions largely as an artistic introduction.

4) an allegorical attempt to describe the mental process undergone to reach truth. 85

My position is akin to the last, but can actually be seen as a fusion of all four positions; indeed the position which I shall put forth is consistent with all of them. I am, in fact attempting to take the more conservative philosophical view which has several advantages. First, my position offers a coherent interpretation of the "proem" which is consistent with my position that Parmenides is working against the backdrop of Pythagoreanism. (cf. Ch.2) Second it is consistent with the view which I outline in more detail later (cf. Ch.6) that Parmenides thought is more profound than the language with which he was equipped. Finally, the position which I will outline is consistent with my larger thesis, that Parmenides is suggesting that Being can only be understood as a unitary totality, that cannot be accounted for in cosmogony, or by taking an inventory of the manifold entities in the world and then adding
them together to understand Being.

Parmenides opens his philosophical discourse with the story of a journey. This in itself is significant, in that it alerts us immediately to the fact that the story we are about to hear will be foreign to us, it will be something new. We will also be aware that there will be limitations in the account of this journey. We expect that Parmenides will be limited by language, that his rendering of this novel experience will fall short of the truth which he has witnessed. With this in mind we should endeavour, with a thoughtful and sympathetic ear, to determine the nature of this journey, for as Parmenides maintains, the path taken must be the correct one. Hence if we fail to understand the path, we will fail in understanding where it took him."

The mares that carry me kept conveying me as far as ever my spirit reached, once they had taken and set me on the goddess' way of much discourse, which carries through every stage straight onwards a man of understanding."

This much does Parmenides tell us at the outset of his proem, in which he describes a supernatural journey to some sort of divine realm. I should like to indicate several important elements of this journey at this early stage. Parmenides has entered upon the goddess' way of much discourse. This clearly indicates that he is embarking upon a royal road, a divine road. And he is being transported by mares.
There is an unusual tension here in the specific structure of the phrase: "conveying me as far as ever my spirit reached". If the mares are transporting Parmenides, and they are separate from him, why do they take him as far as his spirit reached? Or is it the fact that Parmenides and the mares are inseparable, or uniquely joined, such that when the mares travel they are limited by the distance his spirit can reach?

The word here translated as spirit in the passage above is θ'υμος. Kirk and Raven translate it as heart,24 and Wheelwright translates θ'υμος as desire." I think spirit may be a little misleading here, since it has complex resonances of physiological potentiality and conquest. I think that heart and desire have, in our philosophical language at least, pejorative passionate overtones. An option which I think has not been adequately explored, but which is in fact alluded to by Coxon,25 is to translate θ'υμος as soul, for reasons which will out in light of some evidence which I propose to present.

In the introduction to The Fragments of Parmenides,26 Coxon submits that there may indeed be a link between the Pythagorean image of the soul as a chariot guided by οινος, an image we see employed by Plato in the Phaedrus:

Of the nature of the soul...let me speak briefly, and in a figure. And let the figure be composite - a pair of winged horses and a charioteer. Now the winged horses and the charioteers of the gods are all of them noble and
of noble descent, but those of other races are mixed; the human charioteer drives his in a pair; and one of them is noble and of noble breed, and the other is ignoble and of ignoble breed; and the driving of them, of necessity gives a great deal of trouble to him."

Now I have already attempted to justify my reasons for reading Parmenides as a philosopher working against the backdrop of Pythagoreanism. (Ch.2) We find here in the Platonic corpus an account of the soul which is Pythagorean, and we find it intact and in detail. And in Plato's account we see the soul (although the Greek word has now become ὑπων) depicted as a charioteer guiding two steeds, one noble and one ignoble. I submit that Parmenides also makes use of this "soul-chariot image" in his account of the journey which he took, and that this is of great significance. We must be careful here not to fall into anachronism, and attribute a "one-to-one" allegorical correspondence between the account of the ὑπων in the Phaedrus, and that of the journey of the Θύμος in the fragments of Parmenides. Cornford goes so far as to say, (though perhaps merely poetically) that, "Parmenides thought has travelled beyond the region of seeming to what Plato in the Phaedrus calls the Plain of Truth, visited by the soul-chariots before incarnation.""

I do not wish to suggest that Plato and Parmenides are talking in the same context, or even about the same thing. I do wish, however, to cautiously put forth that Parmenides is, with the
limitations of his language, looking for an image to represent his "logical" journey, and that he finds this Pythagorean image useful for these purposes. It is the case that Sextus Empiricus attempts an extended allegory on these grounds, which Pellikaan-Engel dismisses on the grounds that it is anachronistic, since Sextus Empiricus relies on Platonic imagery in the *Phaedrus* to explicate Parmenides." Once we recognize, however, that the soul-image in the *Phaedrus* is Pythagorean, this anachronism falls away. At any rate, most modern commentators agree that Parmenides is describing a realisation of the falsity of his previous views and is attempting to express in some form of allegory, that he no longer holds these views. My interpretation is consistent with these and merely attempts to flesh out the salient features of the allegory.

To return to my interpretation, we can see that the elements of Parmenides' soul took him as far as humanly possible. There is opposition in the soul which is overcome, as Parmenides has taken the Way of the goddess, the noble and divine route, the route to which the dominance of the noble steed leads. What Parmenides is describing, though hindered by the limitations of Archaic language, is a struggle of the mind to be rational, to take the rational path as far as it will carry him. Note that we are told that he has been carried along the divine way, the way of the goddess, which Plato tells us is the way guided by noble steeds. Parmenides is telling us that he has reached, of his own efforts, the limitations of human reason, and that beyond this path of logic, and at the end of this journey, beyond the gates of night and day, "the heart of
well-rounded truth" was revealed to him.

The idea that Parmenides went beyond the gates of night and day is in itself significant, a point to which I shall return to later (Ch's. 5 and 9). For now I merely wish to indicate that these gates seem to represent for Parmenides the gateway to his conception of the world without the opposition that produces generation and corruption. Jaeger seems to support this view when he says:

So Parmenides accordingly makes the whole world of appearance issue from the primal light of opposition of light and night as the two co-ordinate forces holding the balance [of the physical world] between them."

Jaeger's point is that, in the Proem, Parmenides goes beyond light and night, the grounding of the false accounts of the physical world, and that in the Way of Seeming, Parmenides returns to a discussion of the common understanding of the world of appearances, beginning with its origin in night and light, the two improper forms." What this indicates to me, on one level, is that there is a fusion of epistemology and ontology at work here that can be explained in the following manner. Parmenides describes (ontologically) the journey of his soul from one realm, that which ends at this cosmogonical understanding of the physical world (night and day) to a divine realm, which lies beyond it. With this change in ontological status (from a physical plain to a metaphysical one), comes a shift in epistemology, or the way in
which we must understand things in this new realm. This explains Parmenides' emphasis on understanding things in one specific unitary way, and his shunning of a dualistic way of thinking, which he attributes to two-headed mortals.

The interpretation of Parmenides proem as an account of him struggling with his own thought has some support. Verdenius, in his Parmenides, says the following:

On the one hand [the steeds] are envoys from the realm of light, on the other hand, they personify the element of light in Parmenides' mind, his own power of thinking.97

If we follow this line of thought, we can see that justice allows Parmenides to pass from the limitations of human knowledge into the realm of the divine:

The keys which allow to open first one gate and then the other, retributive justice (Ἀίκη) holds; whom the maidens blandished with soft words and persuaded cunningly to thrust the locked bar for them in a moment from the gates...98

When Parmenides gains entrance after coaxing open the doors which hide the truth, the goddess greets him with these words:
Welcome, O youth, arriving at our dwelling as the consort of immortal charioteers and mares which carry you; no ill fate (μοῖρα) sent you forth to travel on this way, which is far removed indeed from the step of men, but right and justice. You must be informed of everything."

There is a sense in which Δίκη and Μοῖρα are related in Greek mythology that I think is particularly relevant here. For Justice is that divinity which assures that the limits set by Fate are not overstepped. As Cornford points out in From Religion to Philosophy, Moira, or fate derives from the concept of apportionment, or what it is meet for one to have dominion over. In the history of Greek thought, certain things are known by the gods which do not belong to the realm of mortal knowledge. Now the goddess reassures Parmenides that it is indeed meet and just that he shall learn all things, for he has taken the path not taken by other mortals. In other words, he will not be punished for overstepping the limits of mortal knowledge. We must also pay particular attention to the fact that Parmenides is here referred to as the "consort of immortal charioteers and immortal mares," the type of mares, not of the souls of men, but of the gods. Parmenides is conveyed by divine maidens to the Gates of Night and Day, where "Justice controls the double bolts". The gates of justice are coaxed open, and beyond lies the realm of the goddess who reveals the truth about Being to Parmenides. Parmenides took a path to the realm of the goddess, and it took some coaxing of the justness of the gatekeeper to allow him
to enter this realm. Justice, that which governs the necessity of his noble reasoning, must let him pass, and he "must be told everything".

When we remember that it is Justice who reconciles the opposition of mortal knowledge with divine knowledge, by reassuring Parmenides, and we consider that Justice is that divinity who reconciles opposites in the cosmogony of Anaximander, the parallels which I am drawing here are given added credence. The key to understanding all of this, to my mind, is to understand that Parmenides' equestrian imagery is used to convey a conceptual route which he took, and with which he attained true knowledge of the unitary totality which is Being. It is further important to note that this interpretation of steeds as soul sheds further light on other comments made by the goddess in distinguishing the good from the bad route.

When we see the goddess warning Parmenides not to think that not Being is (DK 7), we find an interesting statement: "Let reason be your judge when you consider this much disputed question. The heart when left to itself misses the road." 101

Now, there is much mention of roads or ὀδοί throughout Parmenides poem, and it is a subject to which we will return later. What I should like to point out here, however, is something which can be seen as supporting evidence for the suggestion that the Κήνος in Fragment One are indeed the noble and ignoble (rational and irrational) elements of the soul. We are told that reason must be the judge or guide when considering that not-Being is. If reason
does not rule the ὑμος, the ὑμος "misses the road". In other words if the charioteer lets the soul run free, e.g. does not control the course being run, the right road of enquiry will be missed. Again it is important to note that I do not want to press the analogy too stiffly into place. I think it is prudent, however, to be aware of the way in which Parmenides expresses himself, again taking into account the limitations of language, and to be consistently conscious that in his struggle to put words to conceptual experiences, he tends to fall back on visual and analogical imagery. More of this will be remarked upon later. (Ch.6)

For now we must turn to the very helpful Fragment 6. Here Parmenides says that those with no understanding assert that Being and not-Being are the same. He considers such an approach to be that which:

...mortals with no understanding stray two-headed, for perplexity in their own breasts directs their minds astray and they are born on deaf and blind alike in bewilderment, people without judgement, by whom this has been accepted as both being and not being the same and not the same, and for all of whom their journey turns backwards again.\textsuperscript{137}

We must again take note of the imagery being used here. Parmenides speaks of "perplexity in their own breasts", (στηθεσιν),
indicating in metaphorical terms the emotions, or in this allegorical line of reasoning the "ignoble Ἰππος". Those who fail to control this ignoble Ἰππος, are on a journey which is παλιντρόπος, or "backward-turning". This is interesting, because it fits nicely with what Plato says about controlling the steeds of the soul, that the soul which is not ruled by reason will fall to earth, or turn backwards. We note also that those who take this route are "two-headed," which also concurs with our contention that Parmenides has, at the back of his mind, the Pythagorean notion of the two horses out of control and hence returning to the world of illusion.

Now, Kranz and others make a connection between παλιντρόπος as used in this fragment, and the statement about a hidden harmony expressed in DK 51 of Heraclitus:

People do not understand how that which is at variance with itself agrees with itself. There is a harmony in the bending-back (παλιντρόπος), as in the cases of the bow and the lyre.

It has further been suggested that the expression "two-headed" is also a reference to Heraclitus' famous passage regarding two headed mortals, and put together, these two pieces of evidence may seem convincing. We must however, be extremely cautious, and take note of several factors. Parmenides makes no mention of
Heraclitus by name, and while the view he is opposing could very well be Heraclitean, it could also simply represent the view of the common man. The latter interpretation, as I think, more consistent with the whole of his work, since it stands as a polemic against opinion. Further, we have no knowledge as to whether Parmenides read or knew Heraclitus' work, and further, we do not know if there was actually a book to read (cf. Chapter II). Such considerations are important, since implicit in the assumption that these words are meant to allude to Heraclitus is the notion that Parmenides had an actual text to work with. Any address to accounts of Heraclitus' ideas would lack the necessary exactitude required for such a subtle allusion to be successful. Further, if Parmenides expected his references to be appreciated, we may need to presuppose a wide circulation of Heraclitean writings; otherwise his point would be missed. Hence a reliance on similarities of specific words seems in this case highly speculative without any knowledge of the circulation of Heraclitean texts. What we can assert with more certainty, however, is that Parmenides was familiar with Pythagorean teachings; consequently the Eleatic's exposure to this sort of soul-imagery is more prudent to adopt in any case.

Again, it must be emphasized that I do not intend that Parmenides is working with complex representational or iconic images here. I merely wish to assert that a symptom of the pre-logical, pre-psychological era in which he wrote necessitated the rendering of his thought in terms which are imprecise and which
call upon images which come to us as unclear, and, if we are unconscious of the philosophical backdrop against which Parmenides can be securely placed, as unintelligible. Parmenides did not have the language necessary to adequately report upon the profundity and novelty of his investigations. Guthrie, in a footnote, says the following:

K. von Fritz has made the point that a study of the history of Greek philosophical and scientific terms offers a unique opportunity for an inquiry into the connexions between philosophical and pre-philosophical thought. This is because the Greeks developed their philosophical terminology entirely within their own language, not from foreign sources like ourselves. Their terms are therefore either words directly taken over from common speech or adaptations of such words.185

My suggestion is that Parmenides used pythagorean imagery in the absence of technical terms, just as Aristotle used ἀληθή (wood) for matter in his Physics and Metaphysics.186 Implicit then, in Parmenides' employment of this Pythagorean equestrian imagery, is the idea that the journey which Parmenides took was a journey of the mind. We have here the fragile attempts of a man to explain his own thought processes, to describe his attempts to achieve divine Truth.
CHAPTER IV - LOGIC

It is useful at this point to give some consideration to the logic of Parmenides if we are to understand the thought path that leads him to his revelation about the true nature of Being. This chapter then, looks at the implicit logic of the proem, and the explicit logic of the way of truth, concentrating specifically on the three ways of thinking about Being. I shall also posit that Parmenides makes a clear shift in his discussion, from the epistemological to the ontological sphere. Implicit in this whole discussion is the opposition of positive and negative, of rational and irrational, and the search for an understanding of the \( \kappa\omicron\sigma\mu\omicron\sigma \) which denies the validity ground of these hypostatized terms. It is my belief that Parmenides moves beyond this realm of opposition to a realm of unity where this opposition no longer applies, and that it is in this epistemological realm that we must conceive of Being as a totality. This chapter, then, has two parts. The first examines Parmenides' logic within the rubric of epistemology, and the second in phenomenological terms. The conclusions to be drawn from the set of arguments put forth are as follows:

1) while Parmenides' logic is a fusion of epistemology and ontology, the ontological aspects of it can be isolated.

2) Parmenides' logic is a logic of unity, and represents an attempt to distinguish this unity from an understanding of the \( \kappa\omicron\sigma\mu\omicron\sigma \) in terms of multiplicity.
3) in light of considerations in Chapter 2, we can suggest that Parmenides is discussing unity as the correct way to understand the totality of Being, as opposed deriving multiplicity from unity, as the Pythagoreans did.

**PART I - EPISTEMOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY**

In her article "Parmenidean Monism," Patricia Curd asserts that Parmenides is opting for a predicational monism, whereby Parmenides is attempting to set criteria for what can be said to be. Says Curd, "Parmenides' concern was as much methodological as metaphysical: what, he asks, is the right way to answer certain metaphysical questions?" Curd, however, seems to be skirting the issue. She claims that no progress has been made in defining what Parmenides means by Being, and then suggests that it might be more desirable to examine the methodological aspects of Parmenides' thoughts. However, the result of her dismissal of the question "what is Being?" is that she dismisses the possibility that Being has any referent at all. She abandons Parmenides' metaphysics and attempts to convert his philosophy to a purely epistemological predicational monism. She claims that if we are to attribute to Parmenides a numerical monism, then there is no way to reconcile Being with the world of multiplicity. I suggest, however, that the true outcome of Parmenides' investigations is that he produces two ways of comprehending Being:

1) A false way, which is to understand Being as a generated
aggregate of beings.

2) a true way, which is to grasp Being conceptually as a totality.

Parmenides is reacting to the problematic cosmogony of the Pythagoreans. The point of difference between myself and Curd on this point seems to be that Curd does not consider the Pythagoreans as a primary influence on Parmenides, instead citing the Milesians, Xenophanes and Heraclitus. I have attempted to show that this is an indiscriminate grouping of philosophers, which does not take seriously the significant difference in focus between the Ionian and Italian schools; further there is no evidence that Parmenides was influenced by any of these philosophers, with the possible exception of Xenophanes. What we can note about Xenophanes, however, is that he does attempt in his own way to divorce the divine primary Being from the understanding of ὁ θεός when he characterises it as "not at all like mortals in body or in mind." My conviction, contra Curd, is that Parmenides is suggesting that the mundane understanding of the world as a generated aggregate is incommensurate with Parmenides' understanding of the world as a unitary totality. This is precisely his point in separating the two ways of Truth (unity) and Opinion (multiplicity). I will attempt to show in what follows that there is a clear shift from epistemology (what Curd calls methodology) to ontology (that which Curd denies exists in Parmenides).

I do agree with part of Curd's position, namely that the "roads of enquiry" seem to represent the paths or ways of thinking which one may undertake in the quest for ultimate truth. The
goddess is telling Parmenides how he may and may not think if he wants truth. This is quite clear upon attentive examination of the fragments:

Come now and I will tell you...about those ways of enquiry which are alone conceivable. 112

From this way (οӧου) of enquiry I keep you first of all, but secondly from that on which mortals with no understanding stray two-headed, for perplexity in their own breasts directs their mind astray... 113

For this principle shall never be vanquished, so as to allow things to be that are not, but do keep your thought from this way of enquiry. 114

In each of these fragments the goddess is clearly telling Parmenides about the way in which he must think if he is obtain truth. She is clearly making epistemological, as opposed to ontological claims. Even when she begins to describe Being, she prefaces this with the idea that knowledge of Being is a result of a correct way:

Only one story of the way is still left: that a thing is. On this way there are many signs... 115
The description of Being or what is which follows is still couched in terms of a way of thinking as opposed to a direct ontological exposition. When showing that Being is ungenerated and incorruptible, the goddess says:

I shall not let you say or conceive, 'from not-Being' for it cannot be said or conceived that anything is not..."114

and later:

Nor will the strength of conviction ever impel anything to come to be alongside it from not-being."117

Here again we see that the goddess mixes ontology with epistemology. What is required is a correct way of thinking or conceiving, not thinking or allowing persuasion to lead one's investigations a particular way, but thinking in a way which will reveal truth. This blending of epistemology and ontology, we note is abandoned altogether at about 8-23, where the account of the goddess becomes wholly ontological, and references to ways of thinking cease. The difference between epistemological advice and ontological claims is clearly seen as the goddess continues her discourse. At one point(116) she is discussing what road is legitimate (epistemology), at the next (117) she is explaining the logic which indicates the incorruptibility of Being (epistemology
and ontology), and at the next (♦) she is describing Being (ontology):

♥ Now it has been decided, as was necessary, to leave the one way unconceived and nameless, since it is not a real way, and for the other to be a way and authentic.

♦ And how could what becomes have being, how come into being, seeing that, if it came to be, it is not, if at some time it is going to be? Thus becoming has been extinguished and perishing is unheard of.

♦ Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike and not any more in degree in some respect, which might keep it from uniting, or any inferior, but it is all full of what is (πάντα ἐστιν). ¹¹⁸

Clearly then, there is a shift from epistemology to ontology in the goddess's account which is gradual; indeed it may reflect a lack of clarity about such a distinction in Parmenides' own mind, owing to the early date of his philosophical investigations. That this shift does indeed take place, however, indicates that Parmenides is attempting to convey the importance of right thinking with regard to discovering truth. My suggestion is that Parmenides completes his epistemological discussion at ♥, punctuates it with the logic of non-becoming (♦) and then, having finished with his epistemological discussions, moves on to ontology, to describing
what he conceives of as Being.

The notion of epistemological preludes to ontology is of course, a theme which plays an important role in the thought of Plato, and again in the introspective "flight of the alone to the alone" of Plotinus. It is perhaps noteworthy that in Plato's Parmenides, we find Parmenides remonstrating the young Socrates for his methods of investigation:

Yes Socrates, said Parmenides; that is because you are still young; the time will come, if I am not mistaken, when philosophy will have a firmer grasp on you, and then you will not despise even the meanest things; at your age you are to much disposed to regard the opinions of men.\(^{119}\)

Indeed we see a similar admonition directed towards Socrates by the mystical Diotima:

There are the lesser mysteries of love, into which even you, Socrates, may enter; to the greater and more hidden ones which are the crown of these, and to which, if you pursue them in a right spirit, they will lead, I know not whether you will be able to attain.\(^{118}\)

It is Diotima, who holds the key to the gates of mysteries of
love, of the great Ἐρως of the universe; it is this mystical, divine woman who prescribes a right θύμος for the journey to unity, an erotic yet disciplined embracing of the principle of Being. This Diotima, we have seen before; she has, like Zeus, had many bedfellows and appeared in many guises. There are rumours that at one time she resided in a land similar to Elea, yet somewhat far removed. And it was here that she spoke the mighty words:

Welcome, O youth, arriving at our dwelling as consort of immortal charioteers and mares which carry you; no ill fate sent you forth to travel on this way, which is far removed from the step of men, but right and justice.

Socrates, the younger, common servant, was issued upon the right path by Diotima, a route which Parmenides had taken so long ago with the help of the goddess, indicating an interesting theme of feminine help in attaining true knowledge and wisdom.

There are many allegorical components of Parmenides account of the correct way and incorrect way of enquiry which may stand as buttresses to my claims that the θύμος of the proem is indeed an appeal to the Pythagorean myth of soul as chariot. Some of these I have already remarked upon in Chapter II, but it is useful to note that all through this discussion of the ways of enquiry, the way is a way of thought, and thinking in a certain way leads one away from
the true path. In §5 (Coxon) "mortals with no understanding stray two-headed", "with perplexity in their breasts," and "their journey turns backwards again."

The association of the way of enquiry with the image of a physical road is strong, and one would not themselves be straying two headed by pointing out that the perplexity in the breast adds further credence to the idea that Parmenides is attempting to describe those who take the wrong way as having ignoble steeds as souls. It needs no embellishment, surely that the breast is used metaphorically to mean the heart or soul, and consequently we may justly assert that taking the wrong way is the result of having the wrong psychical attitude or approach to truth. I must again note that I do not here intend to Platonise Parmenides in remarking that the soul has these characteristics, or in remarking that the idea that advice regarding correct thinking comes from a woman. I merely point these things out as common themes which can be identified as streams that run through the entirety of Greek thought, from Homer forward. It is useful to note such similarities in so far as we can make such assertions about Parmenides, based partially at least on their consistency with patently Greek idioms and preconceptions.

What is useful at this juncture, then, is an examination of the logic which lies behind the goddess account of these three roads, for it allows us to see something of the way Parmenides went about attaining truth, and it further provides some notions which
may act as a polemic against those who would maintain as Owens and Burnet would, that Being is a sort of undifferentiated corporeal sphere.

There are three ways of enquiry which the goddess mentions\(^\text{13}\), and these are as follows:

1) that it is and cannot not be. This is the way of truth.
2) that it is not. This is an utterly illogical claim, for it suggests that we can adequately think of that which is not, which, says Parmenides' goddess, is impossible
3) that it both is and is not. This is a positing of as hypostatized non-Being that stands in relation to Being and thus allows for the interaction of opposites to create the multiplicity of sensible things which make up the world of phenomena.

The goddess affirms 1) on the grounds of 2), since, if we cannot think of what is not we must think of what is. She further uses 2) to deny 3). For if we cannot think of what is not, then the conjunction of is and is not is false, since one of the terms in this conjunction is false. For if there is no way to think of not-Being, then it cannot exist. If not-Being cannot exist, then there is only Being. If only Being, and never not-Being, then to suggest that the world of phenomena is caused by the interaction of the two is illegitimate, since one of the two, not-Being, is not. Hence Parmenides is claiming that Being cannot be thought of as not existing (2) and is not generated at some point in time. Further,
Being cannot be the multiplicitous product of opposites (3). Being can only be understood as a totality. All that is is, and exists as a complete, necessary unitary totality.

There is then, only one true thought regarding Being, namely that it is. If this is the only true thought, then to say that Being is physical is clearly false, following Parmenides' own logic. One cannot predicate anything of Being except that it is. Thus I would suggest that the only interpretation of τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα νοεῖν ἢ ὕπονομα τε καὶ εἰναι must be consistent with the non-predicability of Being: "For it is the same thing to think and to be", or "thinking and being are the same". Perhaps the most correct interpretation is that of Heidel, who translates: "Thinking and thinking that which is are the same."

Since the only true thought is that "It is," then only when "It is", or "Being" is being thought, is thought true. Thus thinking and Being are identical, in so far as Being corresponds with thinking. To quote E.D. Phillips:

"If everything, that is, thinks, and he only one thing that is is, in fact, the One Being, then that Being can think of nothing but itself... (and later)...if [Parmenides] could always think perfectly, he would think only as the one Being thinking of itself..."  

I do not intend to maintain that Being is thought itself, as Vlastos does but rather an abstraction and an object of thought. It is Being taken as a unitary whole. In other words,
given that we are discussing the way of Truth, we can say that ψωτίν means true thinking. For ψωτίν, as it is here used, can rightly be interpreted as that which is truly recognized and indubitable, a process of substituting a false belief for a true one, having been illumined with the true nature of something.  

True thinking, the thought "Being", (ζιωνα) are the same. The words of Hermann Frankel are worth quoting here:

For the archaic period, word and thought, speech and its subject are one, and this is true in a special sense for Parmenides.

Now it may be argued that Being does in fact have predicates, in that it is unmoveable, indivisible, finite, etc. These characteristics, however, tell us what Being is not. For if Being is all that is and is self identical, these characteristics merely refer to what cannot be predicated of Being. Being is not moveable, not destructible, not divisible. These are all, as Taran suggests, negative predicates, and therefore not truly predicates at all. Parmenides has hypostatized Being and is working from the outer edges of his concept, taking what we might think Being to be and denying it. If nothing but Being can be thought of Being, how can we think of it generated like other physical entities? The moment we conceive of Being as a normal physical entity, or as an aggregate thereof, we leave true thought behind and enter a mode of thinking based on opposites. If we affirm generative physicality, we deny non-physicality, but there is not even this opposition of
true and false possibility - once one reaches true thought about Being, thinking in terms of opposition falls away, and we think only in terms of the unitary abstract whole. Any thinking about Being based on even the possibility of opposites is a false path of thinking "born of habit or custom". Notice that this is not true of abstract Being. For "IS" is the only true thought. It is not an affirmation of Being as opposed to non-Being, but is merely identical with the totality that is Being. For we think that some things are physical and some conceptual. We can deny the sensible and the physical; Parmenides has assuredly denied the former, if not the latter. But it is impossible to deny the conceptual, for in so far as one is thinking the thought "thinking is not", thought is going on. The denial of thought is its own affirmation. No such ground exists for physicality or sensibility. Thus to affirm the generative physicality of Being is contrary to Parmenides' own edict, that the only true thought is that "It Is". To quote Burnet, "If you take the One seriously, you must deny everything else."110 And here by "One" is indicated this totality. I think plenum here (as burnet in fact would have it) is misleading, since it seems to indicate an understanding of the world as full of physical entities, as opposed to grasping it in its essential unity.

Owens would maintain that what is, is the world of sense, tangibility and multiplicity, but clearly, this is the world of the way of seeming, and cannot correspond to what is.111 In the words of Taran,
Parmenides' being, precisely because it asserts that Being can have no other characteristic except existence, is the first attempt at the abstract.\footnote{13}

This abstraction must be from the world understood as a generated aggregate to a world conceived as a unitary totality.

\textit{PART II - UNITY AND DUALITY}

There is a small fragment of Parmenides' thought that exists apart from the general context of the rest of the poem, and it is the following:

"Boys on the right, girls on the left."

I do not intend to draw any far reaching implications from this fragment; indeed giving much weight to it at all would be unwise. It can, however, perhaps provide an overture to our investigation of Parmenides logic. There is clearly, if we are to be consistent with the Greek mind-set, an opposition here, between the male and the female. I think it wise, if unpopular to say of Parmenides, that were he to construct a table of opposites based on this opposition, it might look something like this\footnote{13}:

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Boys & Girls \\
Right & Left \\
Good & Bad \\
\end{tabular}
The Greek tradition of misogyny is of course well known, and I do not propose to remark upon it here. I merely introduce the notion that Parmenides is working with fundamental and associative oppositions, and that these oppositions play a large role in his logical thinking. I think it necessary to bear this in mind, because I hope to show that Parmenides goes beyond this opposition to a position that denies the validity of such an opposition. In other words, Parmenides denies the validity of any explanation of the world that relies on opposites, and consequently asserts that the only true thought is a unitary thought, namely that it is. This is quite clear from the deceitful ordering of the Goddess' words in the section of Parmenides' poem traditionally referred to as the δόξα, where the goddess can be seen to be explaining the source of many false doctrines regarding the cosmos and its existence. More of this will be said below in the chapter on Δόξα, but I mention it here as a backdrop against which to posit my own position on logical elements in the proem and the Ἀλήθεια. What the goddess says in the Way of Seeming, exactly, is the following:

From this point learn human beliefs, hearing the deceptive composition of my verse. For they resolved to name two Forms, [one of which they should not have named]**, wherein men have gone astray, and they chose
opposites in body and assigned them marks separate from one another...\textsuperscript{115}

What is being said here by the goddess is that humans erred in their account of the cosmos by positing two forms, and by separating things into classes of opposites. This interpretation, it will be readily apprehended, is consistent with Parmenides' previous statement in the way of truth, where it is claimed that there is a way upon which:

\textellipsis\textsuperscript{116}

...mortals with no understanding stray two-headed, for perplexity in their own breasts directs their mind astray...\textsuperscript{114}

I have already interpreted this passage allegorically, and I think that behind the allegory is the logic with which Parmenides is working, which consists primarily of the idea that a logic of opposition, the opposition of positive and negative, or rational and irrational, is deceptive, and that only a conception beyond this will present he truth. In other words the whole allegorical and logical structure with which Parmenides is working points to the idea that in order to make sense of this world we must find a conceptual understanding of the world as a whole, and cannot rely on an account of the world that is based on epistemological and sensible opposites. When one begins to think seriously about the intent and nature of the proem, this becomes pellucidly obvious.
Parmenides takes a path, by means of his own thought processes, to a point beyond the gates of night and day, beyond the most fundamental of oppositions of primitive logic, magic, cosmology, and metaphor.

Prier, in his very insightful book, *Archaic Logic*, sums this whole question up nicely with the following comment:

In the realm of human Δόξα, with its deceptive ordering, mortals make a total dichotomy of opposites that is unwarranted. They do not see an underlying unity or third term – i.e. Being...¹³³

Some elucidation is perhaps warranted here, so I propose a closer look at Prier's treatment of the logic of Parmenides. Prier believes that there are two senses of knowledge for Parmenides corresponding to the inside and the outside of the realm of the goddess.¹³⁴ Outside the realm of the goddess, there is the realm of ordinary sense perception, whereas, within the realm of the goddess there is a purely noetic realm. The gates of night and day are what separate the sensory world from this world of noetic knowledge. Hence on the one side of the gates of night and day, are "the phenomena of mortals in which mortals cannot see unity,"¹³⁹ and on the other side is a realm of pure perspectival unity. Prier notes the similarity of Parmenides' poem and the Theogony of Hesiod in this regard:
The logical other is produced in both Hesiod and Parmenides by the same image - chaos, chasm, a gaping. It is in opposition to the world of ὄς, just as chaos is in opposition to everything in the Theogony.¹⁴⁰

When Parmenides crosses these gates, he enters a realm of noetic knowledge of "what is," which cannot be adequately understood on the side of the gates which is amenable to sense perception.

The upshot of all this is that one has to assert that if Prier's contention holds, one has to assert that the dyadic logic of the path to the goddess is lost once Parmenides crosses the threshold of noetic knowledge. Hence Parmenides has taken a road which, by his own logic leads him to a realm that cannot be understood in terms of opposites, but which can only be understood by the thought "it is". The significance of all of this can be seen in a few elements of the poem as a whole:

1) Parmenides travels as far as his Θύμος will carry him. His logic only gets him so far.
2) Parmenides goes "beyond the gates of night and day, which we can interpret as representative of the most fundamental opposition.
3) Parmenides is then warned about the "double-headed reasoning" of οἱ ὑπότοι, where the world is understood in terms of opposition. This I suggest is a world of opposites, as is confirmed by:
4) In the "Way of Seeming," Parmenides is told of a false view, that there are two forms posited instead of one. The Way of
seeming, in fact, reads almost like a descent from the realm of truth into this dyadic representation of the material world.

5) The very fact that Parmenides is given the Way of Truth as well as the Way of Seeming, the latter of which he is told is unfruitful, suggests that these oppositions to truth are being understood from a third position, which is beyond them, since it is capable of understanding both them and truth.

6) Parmenides, while in the realm of the goddess, is told that there is an identity of thinking and Being, which seems to suggest that, since the only true thought is "Ὂτι", the true way is a way of the mind concentrating on this thought alone, which is what Prier means by a noetic realm of knowing, a knowing without predication, or characterisation, or mediation.

Prier then, can be seen to give a phenomenological account of Parmenides whereby the Eleatic transcends the sensible world and finds beyond it an understanding of the world in terms of a unitary totality. This is consistent, one will note, with what has been said about Parmenides' difficulties with the Pythagorean cosmogony which produced multiplicity from unity. That Parmenides refuted the Pythagoreans because of the incommensurability of the notion of a primary unity with the material world of multiplicity, is agreed upon by most contemporary scholars. Hence we are justified in seeing in Parmenides an attempt to return to unity and a further attempt to set this unitary way of truth in opposition to a world of duplicity and consequent multiplicity. Says Prier on the
phenomenological aspect of this task:

I am convinced that when Δικη... opens the gates for Parmenides, she is in fact allowing him to pass into a region where he will learn an underlying Truth that unites and makes one the apparent oppositions of the simply perceived world. This unity is in fact what this very region symbolizes for Parmenides."

It is significant the Prior mentions Δικη here, since Δικη can be taken as the one who reconciles opposition. We harken briefly back to the cosmology of Anaximander, where,

...it is [the ἁνεκροσις] into which [all things] return when they perish, by θεμις, giving Δικη to one another and making reparation for their injustice...

One might suggest that Parmenides is suggesting a symbolic destruction of opposition in his proem, whereby the world opposition falls away once Δικη has performed her function. We note that Parmenides is talking about a sense of limit, whereas Anaximander is talking about the unlimited as that into which things fall away. Hence we may be able to assert that the latter is asserting a corruption of material opposition into the unlimited, which is paralleled in a profound way by this world of material opposition falls away into a logical realm of limit, the unitary
totality, or that which is. At any rate, we may answer to those who would assert that Parmenides is following in the Milesian materialist footsteps, that this is the correct relation of Parmenides to his predecessors. Says Prier,

The goddess herself initiates the oppositional nature of the logical archetype which combines and unites the oppositions themselves - it is this underlying, unifying nature that Parmenides is told he is to comprehend...“

We must consider that Parmenides is attempting to explain the knowledge which he gains beyond a realm of opposition, and that this knowledge by its very nature, is something other than that which is commonly understood by a dyadic logic. Since we are considering the very valid phenomenological account of Prier, who stands in the Heideggerian tradition, one would do well to consider the words of Heidegger in this regard:

If the power of the intellect in the field of inquiry into the nothing and into Being is thus shattered, then the destiny of the reign of "logic" is thereby decided. The idea of "logic" itself disintegrates in the turbulence of a more original questioning."“

I would suggest that Parmenides is eradicating the legitimacy
of the opposition of Being and not-Being, and is, in fact giving
metaphysics its first account of this "more original questioning."
For he is attempting to describe something which is unity and only
unity, that which is devoid of the traditional opposites upon which
our thinking about the material world is based. Interestingly
enough, Heidegger makes the following claim in the same essay:

Ancient metaphysics conceives the nothing in the
sense of nonbeing, that is, "unformed matter," matter
which cannot take form as an in-formed being that would
offer an outward appearance or aspect (eidos)."

The idea that matter was the substratum of form is an
Aristotelian one, however, as Taran argues, and I state elsewhere
in this essay. For a dyadic opposition, the opposition which is the
mortal understanding of the origin of the material world, matter
and form (Being and non-Being) are necessary. In the realm of true
reality, as Parmenides keeps telling us, there is only BEING!! If
there is only Being, then there can be no "non-Being" or unformed
matter. If there can be no unformed matter, then we cannot accept
the idea that Parmenides' conceived of Being as a "big ball of
stuff." Plotinus, as I argue in the concluding chapter of this
thesis, shows us that the eternity of matter and form won't work.
My suggestion is that Parmenides is suggesting something along the
same lines, though obviously without the same intent or
sophistication. He is working towards a unifying principle of all,
which is Being, which must be completely opposed to any sort of
generation whatsoever, because even if we allow the anachronism of
an Aristotelian matter-form dichotomy, Parmenides would be
asserting, not unformed matter, but formed matter (a sphere) as his
unifying principle. Hence we have one of two options. Either do
away with the idea of unformed or even spherical matter as
Parmenides' Being, or do away with the idea of its "un-formedness". 
However Parmenides text will not allow us to do the latter, since
he claims it is limited. If it is limited, it must have form. Our
only option is to do away with this anachronistic matter-form
dichotomy and accept that Parmenides has gone beyond the
dualistically conceived origin of the material world both in his
line of questioning and in his account.

We have instead of this dichotomy a logical, or symbolic
expression of Being in the abstract, which is to take Cornford's
argument to its logical conclusion. Being is a unitary totality,
eternally full of what is. Prior puts his finger on this point
nicely:

[Cornford] argues that Parmenides by this sphere is
denying the void as a nothing "that would interrupt the
continuity of Being and make it a plurality". Parmenides
wishes to avoid "any variation of density such as might
destroy its equilibrium and cause it to break into
opposites preying on one another". Although Cornford's
exegesis is perhaps a bit too physical in description,
there can be little doubt that he too sees the form of Being as graphic and geometrical. It lies between thought - a strongly objective phenomenon - and objective visual "reality". It is, in other words, Parmenides' greatest phenomenological creation. Εστί or Existence is for him symbolic."

And by symbolize here we can only understand the conceptual grasping of the world as a totality which is not available to mere sense perception. In other words the entirety of Being is not instantaneously amenable to sense perception in the way that it is available to thought. You cannot see the κόσμος all at once, but you can conceive of it as a totality.

If we accept that Parmenides is working against the backdrop of Pythagorean cosmogony, it seems to me that a viable conclusion to make is that Parmenides refuses to allow unity to generate the world of multiplicity. There can be no evolution from the One to the Two, etc., as the Pythagoreans would have explained the material world. If there is unity, you can only know and assert that it is in terms of unity, and to try and place unity in terms of multiplicity is to understand unity only imperfectly, from the side of multiplicity. Cornford says the following:

[Parmenides] held to the notion of one substantial Being with all the consequences deduced by his logic. If its unity and its being are taken seriously, it cannot become two and then many; no manifold world can proceed
out of the one. Therefore plurality, becoming, change, motion, are in some sense unreal.¹⁴

Hence again, perhaps we can see the importance of Parmenides' description of the journey of the "proem." As the understanding of Being as a totality is fundamentally different from an understanding of the world as generated aggregate, it must be understood in ontologically different terms as well. Epistemology and ontology hence go hand in hand, and the one cannot be divorced from the other. So too, it is important to note that when one considers that Parmenides' journey is a journey not of the body, but of journey of the mind, the suggestion is that the mind is transcending physical duality (symbolically represented in ontological fashion) to a different ontological-epistemological realm where the ἄδημος is correctly understood.
CHAPTER V - PARMENIDES' DESCRIPTIONS OF BEING

In this chapter I address what I wish to call the negative predicates of Being with regard to two important components of Parmenides' account. The first of these considerations is that Parmenides is speaking not of one physical thing among others, as some scholars would maintain, since this involves several logical difficulties. Second, it is important to note that, in the absence of physicality, Parmenides must be speaking of something which is beyond the physical, that transcends normal conceptions of physical entities. What is evident upon examination of the implications of the predicates of Being, is that Parmenides is engaged in a profound struggle to escape the limits of the language of the physical. He is in fact using physical concepts and limits with which to describe his concept of the unitary totality that simply is. In the end however, the conclusions which must be drawn from the usage of these physical concepts is that whatever Being is, it cannot be a normal physical entity, such as a sphere.

This chapter then, has two main parts. In the first, I examine the "negative predicates" of Being, and attempt to comment on their meaning and significance. In the second, I examine what I take to be Parmenides' use of physical images to represent his abstract conception of the totality of Being, with emphasis on his use of the image of a sphere.

It should be noted at the outset that my argument takes Parmenides' Being to be a totality. This becomes quite clear when
Parmenides attempts to assert its characteristics. Now Curd argues that Parmenides is merely positing principles for asserting that something is real or is to be counted among existents, to which I can only offer the following considerations. Much of what Curd says implies that the way of enquiry is more epistemological than it is meet to assert. In Chapter 4, I have attempted to show that while there is a conflation of epistemology and ontology in the fragments that deal with the ways of enquiry, there is a discernible separation of the two roughly at 8:23. To say that Parmenides is positing not an entity, but rather the grounding principles of entities is to continue the conflation of epistemology and ontology and to fail to recognise the point where the former falls out and the latter begins in earnest. Hence we are right in affirming that Parmenides is describing something with existential status. We are not right, however, in asserting that Parmenides' Being is a physical entity, in any normal understanding of this terminology.

PART I - THE NEGATIVE PREDICATES OF BEING

There are several characteristics of Being which can be safely taken as negative predicates. Jaeger notes that it is significant that the properties of Being are obtained by negating certain properties of the sense world:

The Existent is unbecome and imperishable, whole,
single unshakable, temporally without limits, and complete. These predicates show clearly the direction in which Parmenides' thought tends: he is headed away from the world of becoming and towards an absolute Being that is something else altogether; and he considers it his own special achievement to have lifted Being out of the realm of immediate sense-experience."

These negative predicates are, furthermore, derived from a logical thinking process, whereby non-Being is denied. All of the characteristics of Being hinge on the denial of non-Being, and thus are achieved by a conceptual process. This, I assume, is undeniable. The characteristics of Being are as follows:

1) It is un-created and imperishable. Given that there is nothing from which it can be created, and nothing outside of it to put an end to it, there can be no time at which Being was generated, and nothing which may corrupt it.

How could what is (ἔοι) thereafter perish? and how could it come into being (ἀφ' ἔννοια)? For if it came into being, it is not, nor if it is going to be in the future. So coming into being (γενόμενος) is extinguished and perishing unimaginable).

Being then, exists completely, and eternally. Says Parmenides,
"Thus it must either completely be or be not." The further justification of the incorruptibility of Being (taking incorruptible to mean incapable of any form of change) hangs together on the frame of three other "characteristics:

2) immoveable - where would it move? ("Abiding in the same place it rests by itself, and so abides firm where it is.") Further, we are told that the motion of Being is restricted by necessity, whose limit "keeps it back on every side, because it is not lawful that what is should be unlimited." Hence from this we can determine that Being is a finite totality, and not an infinite universe. It is a κόσμος. Further, we note that it is:

3) entire - how would it grow, and into what would it grow?

4) exclusive - there is nothing but Being, since the concept of what is not is illegitimate. And given that nothing can come from Being, since it is unchangeable, and nothing can come from what is not, we conclude that Being is all there is.

Further,

5) Being is homogenous and continuous, and thus indivisible," so there can be no differentiation from Being, since it is everywhere the same:

Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike; nor is
there more here and less there, which would prevent it from cleaving together, but it is full of what is. So it is all continuous; for what is clings close to what is. ¹³５

Those who argue for the physicality of Being can perhaps find strength for their arguments in the fact that Parmenides discusses place on several occasions in the fragments quoted above. However, we must note that Parmenides is consistently denying spatial attributes to Being. He is saying that it is not more here, and less there (like the condensation and rarefaction of Anaximenes’ air) nor can it be divided or separated off, (perhaps like the ἁμνῆμος of Anaximander). Parmenides is saying that these are the sorts of things we must deny of Being if we are to speak the truth. In other words the reason Parmenides denies these functions or potencies (for lack of a better word) of Being is because he is denying that duality and generation apply to Being. It is important to note that this is consistent with our Pythagorean interpretation of Parmenides, where the Eleatic can be seen to deny the ability of the One to produce two and three and eventually the physical world. Indeed Cornford maintains that the homogeneity and indivisibility of the One precisely represents its inability to produce the manifold world of experience.¹³⁶ The fact that Being must remain "in one place" seems again to indicate that it is a whole which cannot expand or move. There simply is the totality of what Is.

If we accept that Being is a normal physical entity, we are
left with the problem of its indivisibility. For things which are
divisible must be both physical and finite. We know that Being
is finite, for Parmenides has told us so, but we do not know that
it is physical, for he has not told us so.
If Parmenides believes that an physical finite entity is divisible,
yet denies that Being is divisible, then we must assume that Being
is not a finite physical entity. We know that being is finite,
therefore we must assume that it is not physical. The reason
Parmenides gives for the indivisibility of being is its its
homogeneity. This seems to suggest that there is nothing other than
Being which is capable of dividing Being. Divisibility can,
however, surely be identified as a conceptual process, in so far as
it is not necessary to actually divide a physical object in order
to prove its indivisibility.

The homogeneity factor does not, in and of itself make Being
indivisible, unless we take Parmenides to be thinking of a
totality. For even if we take Being as homogenous and physical,
there is no reason not to conceive of its division (as noted
above). But if we think of Being as an abstraction, its identity
with itself, its homogeneity (viz. "what is clings close to what
is"), prevents its corruptibility. There is only one true thought,
and thus Being is an abstract totality, referring to a physical
aggregate. Being is indivisible by nature of its simplicity and
invariance. For there is no finite physical thing that is not
divisible. This may, in fact go far in explaining the apparent
confusion of Aristotle, in so far as he maintains that Parmenides
confuses continuous and indivisible.\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{a} If something is continuous, it must be divisible. If it were indivisible, it would be "a point or mere arithmetic unit".\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{b} However, Aristotle's observation is based on the assumption that Parmenides' Being is a physical entity. One might be wise to consider that Parmenides is actually speaking of continuity and indivisibility in time, as both Zeller\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{d} and Loenen suggest. Says Loenen:

...in the archaic period [\textit{κυβέρνεσσ} (continuous)] still occurred almost exclusively in [terms of time] and that in any case it could not yet indicate a continuous space or quantity as such.\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{a}

This seems to me to be a viable way of explaining the spatial problems of dealing with continuity, but I would suggest that even if \textit{κυβέρνεσσ} did mean spatial continuity, which seems at least probable from the context ("it is neither more here or less there"), this can be explained in terms of Parmenides use of spatial images to convey abstract thought. Parmenides might simply be struggling to say that Being is whole complete and true in its unity, and cannot be more or less true or real.

Burnet maintains, in an extremely cogent observation\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{b} that the implications of Parmenides' findings are such that philosophy must cease to be monistic, or cease to be material. However, Burnet and many others conclude that Being had to be, for Parmenides a
physical entity, since he knew no other kind of reality to posit. Burnet claims, for example, that the absence of the words ἀιτία and ἀεὶ betrav the fact that to say Parmenides was an abstract thinker is anachronistic. This seems to me a rash statement when we consider Parmenides' connection with the Pythagoreans, a fact which Burnet admits. It cannot be denied that the Pythagoreans held to an abstract, incorporeal theory of number, the ground of all reality, and that number was not considered physical by the Pythagoreans.  

Says Aristotle:

> When [the Pythagoreans] construct physical bodies out of number...they appear to be talking about some other universe and other bodies, not those that we perceive.

What is anachronistic, in fact, is the position that many scholars seem to take, namely that Being is matter which is undifferentiated, or devoid of phenomena. As Taran quite correctly points out, the notion that matter is a substrate of phenomena does not even occur in Plato, but has to wait until Aristotle to be posited! Taran further states that, in fact, this notion of matter as a substrate of phenomena is an attempt to answer the problem of identity and difference which Parmenides comes upon!

Others have said that a conceptual sphere, like a Pythagorean entity, as Plato pointed out, is divisible, but there is no need to assume that Being is in any way a sphere, conceptual or otherwise. This becomes evident upon consideration of the way in which
Parmenides appears to use physical images to convey abstract thought.

PART II - PHYSICAL IMAGES AND ABSTRACT THOUGHT

Many of those who claim that Parmenides was dealing with a material conception of "what is" do so on the basis of the language he uses, which is, on any interpretation, the language of materialism. Several thinkers argue, as I have noted, that the absence of words such as σομάτων καὶ ἀσομάτων, is a clear indication that Parmenides is not speaking of anything but the strictly material. This is to my mind misguided, for it calls into question the possibility of philosophical progress at a very basic level.

When Islamic thinkers such as Al Farabi and Avicenna rendered the works of Plato and Aristotle into Arabic, for example, it became necessary to push language to its limits, hence affecting the way in which the Greeks were understood, and requiring the invention, in some cases, of philosophical terms to represent concepts not accommodated by the Arabic language. Consequently new words came about gradually and as a result of much linguistic evolution. In the absence of terminology, in may cases, metaphors and similes are employed. One notes that in Innu, the word for television is something like "talking box", but this does not in any way justify the conclusion that the Innu lack knowledge of television, or that they have never seen television. It merely
means that translators of English into Innu appealed to concepts already existent in the Innu language in order to express new technology or ideas. The point of this brief digression is that both the Arabs and the Innu were capable of understanding the concepts which their language inadequately represented. In other words, it is easy to think of a concept existing in need of a word, and this makes more sense than to declare that in the absence of precise technical terminology, that certain types of philosophical thought are not going on. It is true that technical language is the sign of highly developed branches of investigation, but to rule out at least originative investigations on the basis of the lack of technical language is, it seems, a grave error. Thus to say that Parmenides did not create new words for his new thoughts may be the case, but I prefer to envision this paucity as a result of his temporal position in the history of philosophical language, as opposed to seeing the history of language as resistant to certain types of thought.

Having said this, I think there is clear evidence, on a number of occasions, that Parmenides is attempting to convey non-physical concepts using physical imagery. I think that the way in which he does this is to call upon readily available, if not commonplace, allegories and images, pressing them to convey the profundity of his thought for which no adequate terms existed.

The first such image which Parmenides employs has already been remarked upon at some length", and this is of course the Pythagorean image of the soul as chariot. I do not think that
Parmenides had any real psychological terminology, and hence I think that it may have been quite natural for him to appeal to a myth or figure, with which, quite plausibly, he was already familiar. I do not intend that this was a conscious decision on Parmenides' part, nor do I think it necessary to push the allegory too closely to make it work. Indeed it would be unwise, given our fragmentary knowledge of his life and times, to attempt, as many scholars, from Sextus on have done, a sophisticated allegorical interpretation with a one to one correspondence of terms. I do think, however, that it would be quite natural for Parmenides to appeal to this myth both at the beginning of his poem, when he attempts to describe his psychic journey, and later to help him describe the incorrect journeys of others, about which I have remarked above. This is the first example I wish to discuss, of an attempt to express something non-physical in physical terms, and it follows allegorical and symbolic lines.

Another attempt at the abstract occurs at the very important small fragment, "Gaze steadfastly at those things which, though far off, are present to the mind (νόε)."^165

Having told us what Being is not, Parmenides warns us to look at his conception of Being conceptually: "Look steadfastly at things which, though far off are present to the mind;" This statement is insightful in two ways, one contextual, and one linguistic. Contextually, it indicates that Parmenides is telling
us that what he is thinking of is present to the mind. He does not say that that which is far off is present to the senses, but present to the mind. He is reminding us that his argument is an abstract argument. Secondly, he uses the words *look* (λέγοντες) and *far off*, which, although they speak of a sensory act and a spatial determinate respectively, are clearly intended metaphorically to express the notion of abstract thought. This type of "seeing" persists in the language of philosophy to the present day. We “see” the truth of a proposition, or visualise a solution to a complex problem.

The significance of this for our larger project of ascertaining precisely how Parmenides conceived of Being is perhaps best "seen" in the "light" of two considerations of what I mean by *how* in the following sentence. "How did Parmenides conceive of Being?" In the first sense, if we take *how* to mean *what did he think of being? what did he think being was?*, we can answer that he thought of it as something attainable by perfected human thought, as is indicated by the necessity of gazing steadfastly with the mind’s eye. I do not think that it can be seriously maintained that Being as a plenum of undifferentiated corporeality could be detected lurking in the distance, but I refute this notion here on the basis of its sheer absurdity, simply because it seems to me that it is the only possible interpretation that would be inimical to my own position. How did Parmenides conceive of Being? As a unitary totality. In a second sense, if we take "How did Parmenides conceive of Being?" to mean, *in what manner or way did he attain to
his knowledge of being? the fragment we are presently discussing again reveals the answer. Concentrated mental effort on those elusive ideas which are far off yet "present", that are perhaps deeply imbedded in the logic that governs the way we think, reveals the truth about Being. All of this is, one will note, entirely consistent with seeing Parmenides' journey as a journey of the mind to the discovery of logical or necessary truth about this unitary totality, as is described in my interpretation of the significance of the Proem.

Perhaps the most significant use of physical imagery to depict abstract thought comes with Parmenides' use of the idea of a sphere to depict Being:

But motionless within the limits of mighty bonds, it is without beginning or end, since coming into being and perishing have been driven far away, cast out by true belief. Abiding the same in the same place it rests by itself, and so abides firm where it is; for strong Necessity holds it firm within the bonds of the limit that keeps it back on every side, because it is not lawful that what is should be unlimited; for it is not in need - if it were, it would need all.

But since there is a furthest limit, it is bounded on every side, like the bulk of a well-rounded sphere, from the centre equally balanced in every direction; for it needs must not be somewhat more here or somewhat less
there. For neither is there that which is not, which might stop it from meeting its like, nor can what is be more here and less there than what is, since it is all inviolate; for being equal to itself on every side, it rests uniformly within its limits.\(^{76}\)

Pythagorean doctrines, of which Parmenides had some knowledge, maintain that self-identity and homogeneity imply indivisibility\(^{77}\). We thus have recourse to both of these considerations in interpreting his references to a sphere. It has been asserted by many that Parmenides, in saying that Being is like (\(\epsilon ναλιγκιον\)) a sphere, is saying that it is a sphere\(^{77}\). If Being is a sphere, they conclude, then it must be a physical entity, since a sphere is a physical entity.\(^{77}\)

Burnet, for example, maintains that "what is" is what we call body, that which is corporeal: "It is certainly regarded [by Parmenides] as spatially extended; for it is quite seriously spoken of as a sphere."\(^{77}\) The latter part of this sentence is, to my mind, what is wanting. "What Is" is not referred to as a sphere, but rather, is likened to a sphere. Burnet claims that "what is" is the world conceived as a corporeal indivisible plenum which is finite, since there is no empty space into which it can move. "... Hence too it is spherical. It is equally real in every direction, and the sphere is the only form that meets this condition."\(^{77}\) Burnet's position, however, seems to entail a difficulty, which I think presupposes an unfair simplicity on the part of Parmenides.
Since what is is finite, yet there is no empty space, what lies beyond the finitude of "what is"? Burnet seems to argue as if Parmenides simply did not think of such a problem. I find it difficult to believe that a philosopher who deals so specifically with notions of limit and finitude would not have thought of the problem that such an argument would entail. To say that it is a physical entity seems to pose the following difficulties:

1) Being is not generated or corruptible, as normal physical entities are.
2) Being is all that is, therefore its limits have to do with the definitive limits of the totality of existence, not with spatial limits in the ordinary physical sense. We must also consider that since Being is eternal its limits may be negative definitive limits in terms of time.

Surely, however, physicality is but one characteristic of a sphere. There are also mathematical and conceptual characteristics that a sphere must have in order to actually be a sphere". To say that Being is physical because it is like a sphere is akin to saying that I swim like a fish and therefore must have fins! Fortunately, Parmenides tells us unequivocally and precisely what resembles Being to a sphere:

- "from the centre equally balanced in every direction"
- "it needs not be somewhat more here or somewhat less there"
- "for being equal to itself on every side, it rests uniformly within its limits."

An abstraction may be equally balanced, self-identical, and
rest within its limits." In fact this describes precisely what Being must be if it is to be a self-identical abstract unitary totality. There cannot be more or less Being if Being is to be self-identical, and whatever way you look at Being, it is Being, and there is no other way to look at it. One is reminded of Parmenides' previous statement, "It is all one to me where I begin, for I shall come back there again in time."

We must recall that at the outset of the "Way of Truth" Parmenides speaks of "the heart of well-rounded truth". Is truth then physical because it is well rounded? Kirk and Raven suggest the following, which I suggest is equally applicable to Parmenides resemblance of Being to a sphere:

Truth is described as well-rounded because, presumably, wherever you pick up the chain of reasoning, you can follow it round in a circle, passing through each of its links in turn, back to your starting point.

I do not wish here to suggest that Parmenides is attempting a coherence theory of truth. Surely such a contention would be anachronistic. What we can say is that correct thought about Being has no identifiable series of logical steps. Once one thinks of Being correctly, one is thinking the one true thought, which is of
the κόσμος as an abstract totality, and Being and thought are somehow fused." The goddess reveals her mystical Truth in a blinding flash, "τὸ γὰρ ὑπὸ νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ ἐίναι!!" You are only truly thinking when you are thinking of Being in its totality, not as a fragmented aggregate.

Being rests uniformly within its limits, and it is Being's self-identity, simplicity, homogeneity and uniqueness which demands this." When we remember the Pythagorean usage of homogeneity to indicate indivisibility, this makes more sense. Cornford goes so far as to say that Parmenides has more respect for the unity of the "One" and this is the reason why he left the Pythagoreans and wrote the Πέρι Φύσεως."

The question, however, what do we mean by abstraction? Cornford sees "abstract" to mean abstracted from the manifold world, a concept of one substantial Being even if it is water or air; this in itself abstracts from sense experience of multiplicity to something underlying - it abstracts substance from the material world." Says Gomperz of Parmenides' Being, "It is a kind of residue or deposit of the spontaneous disintegration of the doctrine of primary matter."" Jaeger notes that:

Stenzel has characterised the thought of Ionian natural philosophy as a process of stripping the world of form; one might say of Parmenides that his thought does not stop at this level, but proceeds to strip reality of its character as a world by removing every feature that goes to make it a world at all."
All three of these scholars seem to want to suggest that Parmenides is abstracting from the physical world and is tending towards a non-physical entity. We must however, recall the best statement that Aristotle has ever made regarding Parmenides, that "Parmenides seems to fasten on that which is one in definition..." Hence we can agree with the others only if we qualify their statements. It is fine to say that Parmenides abstracts from the physical world only if we realise that this is an abstraction in definition. In other words the abstraction which Parmenides suggests is an abstraction in thought to the notion of a unitary totality, the wholly real, that which is and is accessible by thought, not by the senses. It is the πόσις understood in its totality, as a totality. This is the type of abstraction to which I refer when I claim that Parmenides' Being is an abstract entity; it is the understanding of the πόσις as a unitary whole, abstracted from an understanding of the πόσις as a multiplicity.

We have been told that "άναγκη holds it firm within the bonds of the limit that keeps it back on every side". Being cannot help but be identical with itself - this is its limit, for if it were in need "it would need all." If Being can only be itself, then its limit, ἴς πεῖρας, are the logical limits of its own self-identity. If "what Is" were a physical Being, there would have to be physical forces that limit being existing apart from Being, which is, by Parmenides' own logic, absurd. There is however, a logic intrinsic to concepts, which makes "what is" true. If we
remember that Δίκη, sister to Άνδρόκη, accepted Parmenides' logical path to revelation in the Proem, that justice was coaxcd to reveal truth, we can recognize that Parmenides assumes a logical necessity in the realm of Being as well, in so far as it held within "the bonds of mighty περατα". As Robinson says,

Parmenides has chosen to express his philosophy in terms of a revelation, in which even the nature of knowledge and the real are characterized as being what they are thanks to some form of divine fiat.\(^9\)

To take being as a physical sphere is not only a misconception of simile, but it further offends Parmenides' statement that all that is is Being. That which makes a sphere a sphere is not its physicality, but the fact that it is equally extended from the centre, and rests within the limits of its three-dimensional circularity. If we imagine our sphere was a soap-bubble, and that the soap-bubble changed to an oblong shape, it would have exceeded the limits of its sphericity, and would no longer be what it is. Since being cannot escape its own necessity of identity it, like the sphere cannot be Being unless it remains balanced, bounded on every side, and homogenous. Parmenides is again using physical imagery to convey an acutely abstract thought.\(^1\) We may further say that if we predicate of Being its sphericity, we are being inconsistent with the fundamental claim that the only true thought is "It is". For to say "what Is" is physical is true, is to
contradict the most fundamental edict of Parmenides, namely that
the only true thought is that "it Is". You can make no other
positive claims about it, nor give it any predicates. You can only
conceive of it as the totality that it is. Hence we are left with
an abstract conception of a totality, whose fundamental or
essential characteristic is its existence. All is full of what is,
and not of the elements of generation or differentiation. Change or
differentiation cannot impede the unitary existence of the
totality.

If we accept that "what Is" is colourless, we run into further
difficulty in calling it a sphere. If we say that what is is a
finite, physical object, we must say that it has a surface. Does
this surface have colour? Evidently not, for Parmenides denies
this"'. What then? Is it made of glass, and therefore transparent?
Or perhaps air or ether? This is absurd. To return to the notion
expressed in Chapters 3 and 5, Parmenides goes beyond opposition,
and hence since Parmenides denies opposition in the realm of being,
he must deny colour, which is indicative of opposition."
CHAPTER VI - THE LOGICAL AND THE DIVINE

What I intend to do in this chapter is to summarize my position thus far, and, in the spirit of John Locke, to "clear away a little of the dust" regarding the matter. This chapter then, has three parts. The first is a summary of my position thus far. The second is an attempt to approach what Parmenides' Being is from the logical side. The third attempts to examine to what extent we can attribute any religious significance to Parmenides conception of Being.

PART I - RECAPITULATION

I have said at the beginning of this essay that the question of Parmenides' conception of being is a twofold question. It is a question not only (and perhaps not primarily) about what being is, but also about how Parmenides came upon this conception. Hence we cannot err if we recapitulate our position thus far, before we attempt to say what Being is. Indeed Parmenides himself tells us of the importance of taking the correct road; thus a summary of our own road is in order.

I have attempted to show that Parmenides primary predecessors were the Pythagoreans, and that he is reacting in some sense to their cosmogony, one which produces the material world from an abstract unity. Parmenides attempts to go (conceptually) beyond that which grounds the mundane understanding of the material world, the primary opposition of light and night or night and day, to a
noetic realm where the unitary totality of the real can be intuited on its own plain. He indicates the difference of this type of thinking by describing his mental process as a voyage, where the soul is symbolically represented as a chariot, an employment of a Pythagorean myth. He indicates the importance of his discovery by placing it in the mouth of a goddess who instructs Parmenides about the necessity of taking the correct path to truth. Parmenides denies the path taken by ordinary men, a path which involves a conflation of ideas, in short a dualism which grounds their conception of the material world. He first discusses the necessary epistemological framework in which an understanding of true being must be born, and then proceeds to describe what being is. In the course of describing Being he calls upon physical images to deny the physical. His "negative predicates of Being" are an attempt to deny that Being is to be understood as a physical entity or an aggregate thereof, since they deny those characteristics of physical entities which go to make them physical. Parmenides has, through a particular thought process, attempted a perspectival transcendence of the physical world, and shows the difficulty but ardent necessity of thinking in a different matter about the totality of Being. He goes so far as to identify the self identity of Being with the self identity of thought in his attempts to explain what he means by Being.
PART II - THE LOGICAL

But what precisely is Being? A first intuitive response to this question is to say that Parmenides was not concerned with what Being is, that this is not really Parmenides' concern. Burnet suggests:

[Parmenides is] chiefly interested to prove that it is; but it is not quite obvious at first sight what it is precisely that is. He simply says what is is.\[94\]

Moreover, Taran says:

Parmenides' point of departure and the rigor with which he applies the principle of the excluded middle to conclude that what exists can have no characteristic except being show not only that he is not interested in the question what may the existent be, but he actually denies the validity of such a question, for to say "Being is X," would be tantamount to admitting the reality of difference, which difference from Being could be for Parmenides only non-Being and non-Being is for him inconceivable.\[95\]

Indeed this is the sort of logical assumption that I have been
working with all along. To use the is as a copula in connection with Being is to ignore what can be taken as Parmenides most important edict, namely that the only true thought is that It is. To say "it is round" or "it is green" or "it is a conceptual sphere", is, in Parmenides philosophy simply not true. He has excluded the possibility of allowing such statements to be true by asserting that there is only one true thought. That true thought is of Being as a totality.

Once we realise, however, that there is, as we have pointed out, a point in Parmenides' fragments where he stops telling us how to conceive of Being, and starts describing it, we cannot let the matter rest here. I suggest then, that we may be able to engage in a discussion about Being, without breaking the rule, just as Parmenides has done in describing Being negatively. For we must accept that the Truth (capital "T"), which seems to be the understanding of Being as a unitary totality, and a parallel identity of thought with Being, can hold, while we discuss what we believe to be the truth (lower case "t") about this relation. In a sense we are entering into a meta-philosophical discussion about the nature of Truth. Our account differs from Parmenides' negative account in that we shall attempt to say what Being is, in some positive sense. To be accurate, I think Parmenides has already attempted this by making a positive comparison of Being with a sphere. I have attempted to show that this simile is meant to express balance and self-identity within limits.

I think I have given sufficient argument to show that
Parmenides cannot have conceived of Being as a material entity. Besides the fact that there are too many logical absurdities which result from such an assumption, Parmenides seems to be attempting at every turn to describe a path which has not been taken by many men, one which denies the dualism which he transcends. The world of dualism which must be the world of materialism, is the path of understanding which makes ignorant mortals miss the road and which is described as false in the way of seeming. Thus Owens' argument that what is is the physical world, since that is what the ordinary man would have understood by "what is", must be qualified by stating that Parmenides is not speaking of Being in the way that mortals conceive of it."" Owens himself admits that,

Parmenides is warned not to let any customary way of thinking or ordinary experience or the unseeing eye and reverberating ear or tongue force him along this [false] way."

Further, to say that Being is a corporeal entity is to place it in this world of becoming, since the duality involved in things physical is the sign and primary constituent of the world of becoming. Clearly Parmenides places Being outside of this realm. Kirk and Raven testify that:

...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.\textsuperscript{14}

As Loenen suggests, the idea of Parmenides, that you cannot speak of what is not suggests that if you want to know the truth about Being, you cannot speak about that which is not Being, namely a Κόσμος which is made up of generated and corruptible parts. For this does not adequately comprehend Being in its totality. Loenen's suggestion is that there is a parallel between true thought and true existence. True knowledge can only be of what truly is.\textsuperscript{15} Loenen regards Being, then as a "logico-ontological unity", in sum the idea of Being as a totality. This idea is necessary, and hence immutable and lacking necessary characteristics. Being then, because it is Being conceived of as a totality, stands in relation to the world of appearance (the physical world) as a necessary Being does to contingent Beings.\textsuperscript{20} Says Loenen:

The peculiar feature of Parmenides' view of thought is...[that] he is apparently convinced that θέσις expresses itself exclusively in the idea of being, and not in other ideas. Otherwise he could not say that without τὸ ἐνν, one will not find θέσις.\textsuperscript{21}

It should be noted, however, that Loenen's contention is that Parmenides makes no distinction between the epistemological and the ontological. (This is why I suggest that there are two different
realms of thought, one represented by the realm of the goddess, which Parmenides' "travels" to, and the other by the world from which Parmenides "travelled", the commonly understood physical world). Hence Being has ontological status, and is not merely a concept, but it is not to be found in the physical world. It is in a sense transcendent, but this transcendence is a logical transcendence combined with ontological transcendence, since the logical and the ontological investigations of Parmenides, are not separate investigations, but in a strange sense one and the same activity.

In understanding what Being is, then, our starting point must be that Parmenides conception of Being is a conception of an abstract unitary totality. It is a conception of something abstracted from material experience, the idea of unity yet utterly different from any ordinary material entity. We can say that his conception of it is beyond the physical world, yet somehow abstracted from a coherent understanding of the principle of its incorruptible unity. And as I have already suggested, this conception can be intuitively summarized by the fragment τὸ γὰρ ἄρτο νοεῖν ἐστὶν τὸ καὶ εἶναι. Being is the same as thought which is identical with itself. Father Owens says the following:

...that which is and its being are identical...

[Parmenides] has to imply, of course, a subject that is, but he seems careful to speak in a manner that does not commit him to any distinction whatever between that
subject and its being. 

One is tempted to say at this point that Being is a concept which is identical with itself, but this has the difficulty of obscuring the fact that Being has as its referent something other than a mere concept. What we must say is that when the mind thinks "unitarily", then it thinks of Being. Being is unity. Suggests Cornford:

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

But what exactly is this unitary entity? It is not spatial, nor material, nor physical. Hence the question: Can unity exist independently of a unitary physical entity? My suggestion is that Parmenides is attempting to posit precisely that True unity must be non-physical, lest it be subject to the corruptibility which is a dominant characteristic of physical things. True unity suffers no change. The object to which Parmenides' thought corresponds, when he thinks of Being, is Unity, a unitary totality abstracted from physical manifestations of unity. This is not to suggest that Parmenides thinks that unitary entities participate in a "Form Unity," for this is the domain of Plato. Parmenides' unity is not
meant to ground or explain the common understanding of the physical world; in fact all indications are that it is meant to transcend this understanding. What I mean is this. Parmenides' conception of Being is incommensurate with the thought of mortals which he outlines in the Way of Opinion. Parmenides may be attempting to inform the common people, but he rejects what he understands to be the common understanding of the physical world. Hence his understanding transcends and is irreconcilable with, the latter. We can explain Parmenides' conception of this abstract unitary totality, then, by nature of its abstraction. In the poem he travels from a world of dualism (where there is only the appearance of unity) to a realm where unity exists truly and can only be understood in terms of a unitary logic. There is no predication, no difference, in this realm of understanding, and the correspondent thinking about this realm is itself unitary. There is only one true thought, which is the thought of unity's self-identity and totality. There is, then, a fusion of thought and the object of thought which culminates in a most profound unity, the identity of thought and the object of thought. As for what this object of thought is, the most complete answer we can give is that Parmenides himself did not quite know. It is evident that he was aware that this unitary totality was true Being, that it stood apart from, and was utterly different from the common understanding of the physical world. Parmenides, however, nowhere gives us a text that tries to suggest anything more than what we have just discussed. It becomes necessary then, to step outside of his text, for a moment, to see
if the general context of his work in the history of Greek thought can help us.

**PART III - THE DIVINE**

But what is it? It might be useful, at this point, in attempting to decide precisely what Parmenides meant by Being, to at least consider some points of contact between Parmenides and Greek philosophy for which there exists no specific textual reference in the extant fragments. This I feel is worthwhile, in so far as this entire essay hopes to help locate Parmenides within the history of Greek philosophy as a whole. It is interesting to note that ultimate reality, that which is really true or can be affirmed, is in a sense divine for all of the Greek thinkers from Thales to Plotinus. If this is the case, should Parmenides be exempt from this traditional mode of Greek thought? Cornford states that,

[There is no] ground for rejecting the testimony that the principle of Unity, in some form, was regarded as divine. We should expect moreover, something analogous to the One God of Xenophanes, the One Being of Parmenides, the Sphere of Empedocles.25

This is of course, with the absence of any direct reference to Being as divine, a weak argument, but perhaps some...
reveal some truffle of thought or other.\textsuperscript{204} It has been noted by Aristotle that Xenophanes was Parmenides' teacher, a fact which to this point I have stayed away from, because I have been examining Parmenides largely from the inside out. However, if there is any point of contact between Xenophanes and Parmenides, it surely lies in these words of Xenophanes:

He abides always in the selfsame place, not moving at all; it is not appropriate to his nature to be in different places at different times.\textsuperscript{207}

There is a faint resemblance of these words of Xenophanes to the notion of Parmenides that what is is "now altogether, one, indivisible,"\textsuperscript{204}

One is tempted at this point to begin to consider that Parmenides too conceives of Being as divine in some sense. Clearly Xenophanes is giving us the first attempt at a non-anthropomorphic conception of God, as is evident in Xenophanes DK 23:

"God is one, supreme among gods and men, not at all like mortals in body or mind."

There is however, the notion of the divinity of the whole realm into which Parmenides enters, and the nagging question of the divinity of ultimate reality which is a cornerstone of Greek
philosophical thought. If we are to assert that Parmenides Being is in fact divine, in a Xenophanian tradition, we are left with the problem of physicality, since Xenophanes says not that god has no body, but that he is different from man in body, and mind. This may or may not present a problem, if we choose to interpret Parmenides as struggling with the same idea. Parmenides is clearly attempting to describe something which is utterly unlike the experiences of men. This is clear both from his description of what is, and, in fact is stated from the outset to be central to his position, "...no ill fate sent you forth to travel on this way, which is far removed indeed from the step of men..." 29

Is Parmenides too attempting to describe a non-anthropomorphic divine entity? This is an odd question, which to my mind can neither be affirmed nor denied, since it requires much more investigation, extending far beyond the scope of this essay. I do wish, however, to point out that it is necessary to be aware of the resonances of Parmenides' teacher, Xenophanes, regardless of how far Parmenides strays from the latter's thought. If Parmenides were following closely in Xenophanes' footsteps, does this require, that his Being be physical? I think that this is not necessarily the case, since it would be the next logical step, one seen in the progression from Thales to Anaximander, to get beyond the physical, as far as possible, in order to refine the ideas of one's predecessors, as Anaximander's ἄμαξ ρη is the logical successor to
Thales' water; though surely not incorporeal, it is a step beyond mere mundane corporeality. By the same token it might be worth considering that Parmenides Being is a sequel to the notion of Xenophanes, of a divine Being that is utterly unlike the commonplace conceptions of mortals.

What is extremely odd, and hence noteworthy, is how Melissus seems to want to follow up Parmenides' concept of Being. We find him speaking in familiar terms of something called "the One" as imperishable and ungenerated, and about which the following assertions are made: "As it cannot perish, so it cannot become larger, nor undergo change, nor suffer pain or grief."²¹⁰

Now, many of the characteristics of the one of Melissus are strikingly similar to the τὸ ἕω of Parmenides, with of course, the exception that Melissus' one is infinite. Taran however, maintains, There is no reason to think that Melissus' Being is different from that of Parmenides... The fact that Melissus asserted that Being is ὀμέλημα does not mean that his notion of Being is different from Parmenides for the latter did not assert that Being has a limit. Parmenides did not face this problem and it may be due to criticism directed against his comparison of Being with a sphere that Melissus asserted that Being is ὀμέλημα.²¹¹

What is particularly odd, however, is the mention of the absence of grief or pain with reference to the One. The One seems,
for Melissus at least, to be alive, for the possibility of feeling
grief or pain which Melissus obviously feels it necessary to deny,
requires that the One be living. (e.g. how could something non-
living feel pain? consequently why would it be necessary to deny
the ability of pain or grief to an inanimate object?) In
consideration of the perfection of the One, we are led to the
conclusion, in keeping with our guideline that perfection implies
divinity, that the One is divine. Given that Melissus follows in
the same tradition as Parmenides, we are left to wonder how far
this account of perfection falls from the Parmenidean (or perhaps
Xenophanian) tree which bore this fruit. I point this out here
merely to indicate that it is worthy of further discussion and
consideration. On the whole it does not alter my main conclusions
about Parmenides, but it is important that I mention these
considerations because of the significant slant which it gives the
whole investigation. For at the bare minimum, assigning the weakest
possible import to these considerations, we are left with a
consideration of Parmenides' thought that is tinctured with the
idea of the relationship that exists between perfection, the
utterly other than mortal, and the divine.

What then is Being? It is an abstract unitary totality,
ultimate reality, which can be grasped in its abstract wholeness if
thought about in the correct manner. It does not give rise to the
world of multiplicity, it is logically and necessarily divorced
from normal conceptions of the physical world, and in fact is
logically divorced from anything but itself." It is a product of
Parmenides' attempt to get beyond the world of multiplicity, and to deny that multiplicity can be conceived of as issuing forth from true unity. It is a product of a certain type of reductive thinking, a logical reduction which strips away everything but the concept of unity in totality. Being is a unitary totality, which has the status of something divine and utterly other than the world of common experience. It represents the incoherence of this world, and man's inability, in some sense to find a grounding for this world. It is indicative of the futility of a search for the opposition, that which so many have claimed will make sense of our material existence. Being is a logical, abstract unitary totality.
CHAPTER VII - THE WAY OF SEEMING

This chapter has two main functions. First it offers an examination of Parmenides' treatment of mortal opinion in the first two sections of his poem with an eye to offering a consistent interpretation of this topic in the Way of Seeming. Second it attempts an interpretation of the Way of Seeming that allows one to consider the three sections of the poem as consistent and integral parts of the same project.

The existence of the section of Parmenides' poem known as the way of seeming is at best a puzzling phenomenon. Why, after telling us what is true, does Parmenides bother with telling us what is not true? What precisely, is the function of the Way of Seeming, and what is its relation to the rest of his poem? There are several "opinions" on the matter:\[1\]:

1) that The Way of Seeming is simply utterly false.\[2\] "This unfortunately doesn't shed much light on the existence of the section, why Parmenides wrote it, and what its function is.

2) that it is a "best possible account" of the world of appearance.\[3\] "This seems to me to be a rather difficult stance to take. Why would the goddess, who apparently knows all, and is to bequeath unto Parmenides, in very strong language knowledge of Truth, give a half-hearted or "best possible" account of illusion?

3) that it depicts the minimal error that infects all mortal
attempts to explain the sensible kosmos. This seems to have some validity, if we consider that Parmenides does seem to identify a critical error, namely the positing of two forms instead of one in the false cosmology. The question remains, however, why this logical flaw is placed in the form of a false cosmology? Jaeger offers the following solution, which corresponds to my own views about the conflation of epistemology and ontology in Parmenides' thought:

Parmenides does not yet distinguish the subject and the object of knowledge as sharply as we do. The only way he has of representing the origin of appearance is by describing the world of appearance.  

4) That the Way of Seeming is a supplement to the way of Truth, giving an account of the world as perceived by humans. Simplicius, for example, believed that the shift from the Aletheia to the Doxa represented an epistemological/ontological shift from the intelligible to the sensible world. In other words the Doxa represents not an account of reality, but an analysis of human experience in terms of elements which are themselves given in experience. This explanation also seems to have merit; however, if Jaeger is right in his assessment of the confusion of subject and object, this fourth interpretation maybe too sophisticated for Parmenides. It speaks of him as almost a phenomenologist of the Husserlian school. A better alternative along the same lines might
be Reinhardt's, as outlined by Verdenius:

He [Reinhardt] connects [the Way of Truth and the Way of Seeming] by assuming that the doctrine of true knowledge elaborated in the first part led Parmenides to the addition of a criticism of empirical knowledge.\(^{22}\)

5) An attempt to offer an account of human experience that is consistent with the position of the Way of Truth.\(^{22}\) The difficulty with this position, however, seems to be that, given Parmenides' criticisms of mortals in The Way of Truth, all we can conclude about human experience is that it is usually false!

6) A recantation of Parmenides' previous Pythagorean beliefs and a polemic against Pythagorean Cosmology.\(^{22}\) This is a position which I advocate, and for which I shall argue, since I think it can be shown to be consistent with the position I put forth regarding Parmenides in the other parts of this thesis.

   Curd discusses the problem of the existence of the Way of Seeming nicely: "...if, as many have supposed, the Doxa is wholly deceptive, why should Parmenides have included it at all?"\(^{22}\) Curd correctly indicates that the answer to this question is answered (although perhaps unsatisfactorily) by Parmenides at B8.61: "so that no thought of mortals shall outstrip you." Curd indicates the difficulty of the ambiguity of this explanation of the goddess:
But the varieties of mortal error are limitless. Why should hearing this particular account allow us to evaluate and reject all possible erroneous mortal beliefs?  

Curd may be right in suggesting that this account may not refute all mortal beliefs, but common sense seems to suggest to us that the mortal beliefs Parmenides is most concerned to refute are those he has depicted as mortal in the Way of Truth. This is in fact, good philosophical exposition on Parmenides' part. He has indicated to us in is work what he means by mortal belief (how he uses the terminology) in the Way of Truth, so why should we be expected to think of anything more than this in the way of Seeming? Hence if the Way of Seeming is discussing mortal error, so that we may be cognizant of the steps mortals take towards a false conception of the universe, we should use Parmenides' account of mortal belief in the way of Truth in order to understand his rationale for the way of seeming.

That this even needs to be spelled out seems to me a matter of some incredulity; however, it seems that again and again in the literature, the relationship of the Doxa to the rest of the poem has been depicted as problematic, despite that fact that Parmenides has given us a Way of Truth, how to understand Being correctly, in combination with a Way of Seeming, how to understand Being incorrectly. We note that the first part is instructive, and that the latter is descriptive. Parmenides is not giving the way of
Seeming as an authoritative command of epistemological rules, as the Way of Truth is presented; Rather, he is describing how mortals proceed on a false WAY to explain what is. Their conception of Being is false. In my opinion, the failure of scholars to seriously consider these implications leads to their puzzlement on the relationship of the two parts of the poem to each other, and the relationship of the Doxa to the whole. At any rate, it might be useful to indulge in a brief examination of Parmenides discussion of mortal opinion in the first two sections of his poem before offering an interpretation of the Doxa.

**TRUTH AND OPINION**

Parmenides mentions opinion in the Proem, the Way of Truth, and the Way of Seeming. Therefore an examination of opinion in the first two parts may help us to offer a consistent interpretation of opinion in the latter section of his poem.

The first mention of opinion in the extant fragments of Parmenides comes in Fragment One, where the goddess tells him that he will learn all things, "...both the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth and the opinions of mortals which lack true belief."

This phrase is important for this sort of investigation, since it immediately tells us that Parmenides is establishing an opposition between truth and opinion. More significantly, it places truth in the realm of the eternal, and opinion in the realm of mortals. Mortals, as mortals, do not have true belief about things.
It might be worth mentioning that sense of ὁμῶς which Cornford speaks on in *From Religion to Philosophy*, which deals with property rights and apportionment, in other words, with each getting his "just deserts". When we consider that Justice controls the gates which must be unlocked before Parmenides attains to truth, and that the goddess reassures Parmenides that he will not be punished for reaching this other realm of knowledge, the general impression is that Parmenides has somehow transgressed what is considered the equitable arrangement of the epistemological universe. Mortals deal with opinion, divinities with truth. The implication that knowledge and truth is divine, and not to be found among common men, should not be missed here. This explains, perhaps why Parmenides must journey to a different epistemological realm to obtain truth.

The goddess continues to speak of the pitfalls of opinion, which is implied in the following lines:

...do not let custom, born of everyday experience, tempt your eyes to be aimless, your ear and tongue to be echoes. Let reason be your judge when you consider this much disputed question. The heart when left to itself misses the road.”

There are several aspects of the fragment which may shed some light on Parmenides opinion of opinion. It is clear that "custom, born of everyday experience," is meant to indicate the epistemological position of common opinions about the world. Since
Parmenides is told not to be swayed by custom, we can conclude that, as truth will be revealed to him, the road of everyday opinion is not to be trusted. Further, we see a reference to the heart left to itself missing the road, which concurs with our allegorical interpretation of soul-as-chariot. If not governed by reason, but left to flail about wildly in the realm of opinion, the \( \thetaυμος \) will not obtain true knowledge, or find the correct rational road to Being.

We see a parallel to DK 6 in DK 6, where again references are made to the incompetence of those who follow common opinion. In DK 7 are the word, "...tempt your eyes to be aimless, your ear and tongue to be echoes."

In DK 6 we see a similar comment, "...so befuddled and helpless as to resemble the deaf and blind."

These references are of course to those who cannot "see" or "hear" truth. They are mortals (\( \circi\ \betaρωτοι \)), "who wander ignorantly, with divided minds and scattered thoughts."

Again, these are people who follow the common opinions of men, as opposed to divine truth. Much has been written in support of the argument that Parmenides is here criticizes the Heracliteans, but this largely relies on the usage of the word \( παλαντροπος \), which I have previously attempted to identify with disorderly steeds in the soul-as-chariot allegory. All this aside, we note here again the opposition between truth and opinion; the former is divine, the
latter is the realm of ignorant mortals who speak but say little, perceive but "see" little, being deceived by experience, and often led to a way of thinking based on irreconcilable opposition:

There are crowds of them, without discernment, maintaining that to be and not to be are the same, and that everything is in a state of movement and counter-movement.\textsuperscript{335}

It is perhaps here that we can see the seeds of Zeno's motion paradoxes. We must however be careful, here as elsewhere, not to confuse the epistemological with the ontological. Zeno's point is clearly to point out a logical difficulty with our way of thinking. As Parmenides is the father of this Eleatic monism, we must, in examining his rejection of the opinions of mortals regarding movement and counter-movement, see that Parmenides is dealing with the logical, not the existential problem of motion. For it would be calling Parmenides and Zeno both fools to say that they thought there was no motion. The statement of Parmenides here, like Zeno's motion paradoxes, must be seen as attempts to show that while motion occurs in the world of sense-experience, there is no logical or rational way of accounting for it in the logic of the common man. One might think of Hume's critique of causality as an example of the type of philosophical problem Parmenides is here addressing. Just as Hume is not denying causality, the Eleatics are not denying motion and change; rather, they are saying that habit or custom
cannot reveal by themselves the truth about them. Consequently, an account of the world which involves movement and counter-movement is not to be trusted, since it entails an opposition, which, as I hope to show below, is invalid for Parmenides. We must find instead a logical ground for our epistemology that does not entail opposition, that which is born of the world of sense-experience in the world of opinion. This becomes explicit, perhaps, at 8:16, when Parmenides sets up the following opposition:

Surely by now we agree that it is necessary to reject the unthinkable unsayable path as untrue, and to affirm the alternative as the path of reality and truth."

It is important to note that at this point, Parmenides is dealing with epistemology, what can and cannot be said or thought about Being. He is not yet making any ontological claims. One might say that he is entering into a sort of Spinozistic emendation of the imagination, introducing us to the right way of thinking about Being. And this right way of thinking is opposed to the realm of opinion, born of habit, custom or everyday experience. For Parmenides consistently alerts us to the uncommonness of his thought.

Before we move to a consideration of the section of his poem known as the Ἀόξα, it might be useful to summarize Parmenides' treatment of opinion in these the first two parts of his poem:
a) opinion is mundane or common
b) it is opposed to truth, which is a path taken by few
c) it is "double-headed", something which characterises mortal thought, and which is opposed to the divine
d) it is deceptive
e) opinion has to do with the senses, with custom, and habit

Tom Robinson seems to have put his finger on Parmenides' characterization of mortal beliefs in the following lines:

Mortals, in using the cosmological language they do, have as the common referent of such language the real as a whole (it has of course no parts); their mistake is to think that they actually ascertain the real, when in fact all they possess are misleading, though not wholly misleading - "opinions" that in some way unbeknownst to most of them point to the real."
"RE-ENTRY" IN THE DOXA

When we come to consider the Δοξα, we find these elements at the outset, as the goddess introduces her discourse on opinion, "Learn next about the opinions of men, as you listen to the deceptive ordering of my words."\textsuperscript{29}

Here we see the notion of deception loosely connected with the opinions of men. The goddess continues:

For men have established the habit of naming two thought-forms; therein they have erred, because one of the forms ought not to be named.\textsuperscript{29}

This passage is interesting for a number of reasons. First it attempts to give an explicit reason for the mistakes which men make. They name two thought-forms as opposed to correctly naming one. Men are "double-headed" in their thinking, and consequently their path is always πολιντρόπος. Further, we note another element of opinion in this fragment, namely that of habit or custom. Parmenides says that men have established the habit of naming two thought-forms, which is a wrong move. When we see later in the history of Greek philosophy the opposition of νόμος and φύσις, it is interesting that we find Parmenides asserting here the idea of establishing a habit, or forming a convention. Convention is
tritionally among Greek philosophers inimical to what is natural and true, and I would suggest that this is the sort of idea that Parmenides is working with here. Following this line of thought, what we see is a challenge to the epistemological status quo, an attempt to supplant it with a more unitary way of thinking, opposed to the "two-headedness" of the common man. I think it useful, regardless of how one chooses to interpret the house of Night in the Proem, to reiterate that this house lies beyond the gates of Night and Day, beyond opposition, beyond a realm where there are two "thought-forms". Parmenides, with noble/divine steeds under rational control, gets beyond the realm of epistemological duality and enters into a realm where he understands the totality which cannot be correctly understood in terms of a logic of opposites. You can only say "it is". Opinion for Parmenides constitutes not only an unreflective way of thinking, but an invalid way of thinking which humans have employed from the beginning of logical discourse.

There is certainly a perceived connection between everyday experience and what we say and think about such experience, and this is the logic of the common man. When we note that habit, for Parmenides is born of experience, and that habit is the establishing of a logic of opposition, we see in Parmenides without doubt, an attempt to get beyond this logic, to enter the realm of the unitary, the whole, and the abstract.

On the one hand there is fire in the upper sky,
gentle rarefied, and everywhere identical with itself; on
the other hand there lies opposed to it utter darkness,
dense and heavy.\textsuperscript{211}

and further:

When all things have been named light and night
(according to the distinction that is supposed to exist
between them) then everything must be full of light and
obscure darkness at the same time...\textsuperscript{212}

In both of these fragments of the false cosmogony of the \textit{Δοξα},
we see an opposition between light and night, an opposition which
we have been told is false, errant, and deceptive. This, I think,
adds credence to the idea that when Parmenides goes beyond the
gates of light and night in the Proem, he is leaving this realm of
opinion.

What cannot be ignored, to my mind, is the relationship of all
of the above passages to Parmenides' Proem. In the Proem Parmenides
goes beyond Night and Day, to a unitary realm, and this is, we are
led to believe the path which Parmenides took and is attempting to
place in as logical context in the Way of Truth. If we picture
Parmenides' "ascent" to unity as described in the Proem as gradual
transcending of multiplicity, what we have here in the Doxa, is a
"re-entry", of sorts, the unfolding of all that was transcended in
the Proem and in the Way of Truth. Parmenides reaches the highest
height and then shows how mortal error restricts the ascent or
draws one down into a world of falsehood and multiplicity.
Verdenius, in a pertinent section, cites Reizler's view:

Parmenides is said to have rejected sense perception
because it represents phenomenal contraries as the
ultimate nature of reality. Philosphic insight, however,
is able to see through this dualism, i.e. to trace the
contraries back to their original identity... The
doctrine of Truth is able to transcend dualism by
penetrating to the common foundation 'Being'; the
doctrine of seeming shows the world of opposites as it
appears to him who stops at sense perception."

We have already given reasons for interpreting Parmenides
along Pythagorean lines. We have seen how Parmenides attempts to
transcend the cosmogonic dualism of Pythagoreanism and approach a
true understanding of Being as an eternal unity, as opposed to a
generated multiplicity as the Pythagoreans have described it. When
Parmenides gives an account of error, then, we should expect, for
a consistent interpretation of his poem, that he address the issue
of the error of Pythagoreanism here. And Parmenides is arguing that
two forms, light and night are posited (which correspond to a
Pythagorean table of opposites to limited and unlimited
respectively). This in a sense is the error which leads to the
false cosmology of the way of seeming.
What all of this suggests to us then, is that Parmenides is reacting, in some sense, to what he perceived as a fundamental error in the thought of the Pythagoreans, and that his project was to reject this cosmology, and to discuss what true Being must be, and in what way it must be conceived. Says Jaeger:

He expounds a whole cosmogony, always with the intention of showing that the world whose origin he depicts is not a real world, but merely an apparent one, and why this is so."

And further,

[Parmenides] has no intention that his doctrine of the Existent should explain the natural world of multiplicity and motion; but in his remarkable doctrine of the world of appearance he endeavours to explain the errors of those men who have put duality in the place of the One as the primal substance, and motion in place of that which persists unchanged."

I might add, as a final rejoinder to those who hold that Parmenides' Being is a physical entity, in the normal understanding of this terminology, that to do so would put Being, what is, in the world of Seeming, which is false, and thus all of Being would be false for Parmenides. Since this false world seems to a patent
representative of typical material cosmology, to place his Being in the realm of material things is to subject the One to duality, multiplicity, change, corruption, and falsehood, all of which Parmenides denies of Being in the Way of Truth. Parmenides Being cannot be a material entity, for he has told us that it is not such a thing.
NOTES

1. Throughout this essay I refer to Parmenides understanding of what is, or the unitary totality of the ἄφωμος as "Being". "Being" is capitalized to indicate its totality and the importance which Parmenides attaches to this abstract concept.

2. The opposition referred to by John Burnet in his Early Greek Philosophy. See Chapter 1.


4. ibid., pg. 587.

5. ibid., pg. 587.

6. ibid., pg. 589.

7. ibid., pg. 589.


9. ibid., pg. 170.

10. ibid., pg. 172.

11. ibid., pg. 176.

12. ibid., pp. 177-8.


15. ibid. 180.

16. ibid. 178

17. ibid. 171-2.


20. ibid. 23
21. ibid. 23.

23. ibid. pg. 97.
24. ibid., pg. 102.
25. ibid., pg. 104.
26. ibid., pg 107.

28. Verdenius, pg. 14,1..
29. ibid, pg. 26.
30. ibid., pg. 43
31. ibid., pg. 42.
32. ibid., pg. 43.
33. ibid., pg. 42.

35. ibid., pg. 265.
36. ibid., pg. 277.
37. ibid., pg. 266.
38. ibid., pg. 270.
39. ibid.

40. See Chapter II.
41. See Chapter VII.

43. *ibid.*, pg. 62.
44. *ibid.*, pg. 63.
46. *ibid.*, pg. 71.
47. *ibid.* pp. 73-4.
48. *ibid.* Loonen, pg. 4.
49. *ibid.*, pg. 5.
51. *ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
52. *ibid.* pg. 19.
54. *ibid.*, pg. 194.
55. *ibid.*, pg. 201.
58. Robinson, Totality, pg. 58.
60. Curd, "Parmenidean Monism", pg. 255.
62. *ibid.*, pg. 5.
64. Strabo, DK 28A12.
65. Cornford, (*Plato and Parmenides*, pg. 28) makes this point.


68. Cornford, pg. 2.

69. ibid., pg. 5.

70. Cornford, pg. 7.

71. Cornford, pg. 17.

72. Plato, Timaeus, §55-57.

73. Cornford, pg. 16.

74. Cornford, Plato & Parmenides, pg. 5.

75. Cornford, Plato & Parmenides, pg. 16.

76. Aristotle, Metaphysics, 989b29-990a12.

77. Aristotle, Physics, I, Ch's 2-3. cf. Taran, Parmenides, pg. 282, and Cherniss, Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy, pp. 75-6. It should be noted, however, that Robinson believes that, "Parmenides was in fact already operating with a theory of knowledge and an elementary prepositional logic that are of abiding philosophical interest." Robinson, T.M., "Parmenides on Ascertainment of the Real," pg. 623.

78. Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy, pg 178.

79. I use the word cosmogony here to differentiate it from cosmology. By cosmogony I mean an account of the coming to be of the κόσμος, and by cosmology, I mean something more akin ontology, a λόγος or account of the κόσμος.

80. Taran, Parmenides, pg. 278.

81. ibid., pp. 278ff.

82. e.g. Burnet believes that the "proem" is "...an allegorical description of [Parmenides'] conversion from some form of Error to what he held to be the truth." Early Greek Philosophy, pp. 170-71.

83. e.g. Jaeger, who sees the function of the goddess as "a purely theological figure introduced to emphasize the importance of true being." Jaeger, pg. 107.

84. e.g. Pellikaan-Engel, Hesiod and Parmenides. Also, Kirk and Raven, who treat the proem as an allegory describing Parmenides' escape from error to enlightenment. The allegory itself is they
say, "most likely" borrowed from oracle and mystery literature. Jaeger (pg. 98) sees Parmenides as a sort of "second Odysseus."

85.e.g. Verdenius, who states that the mares of Parmenides, "...are not a mere means of transport but at the same time symbolize Parmenides' striving after knowledge. They are the cosmical aspects of his own will." Parmenides, pg. 11.

86.KR §345.
88.KR §342.
89.Wheelwright, The Presocratics, pg. 95.
91.ibid.
92.Plato, Phaedrus, §246ff.
95.Jaeger, pg. 104.
96.ibid.
97. Verdenius. pg. 12.
98.Coxon, §I, 13-17
100.Cornford, From Religion to Philosophy, §4-6.
101.Wheelwright, §2.
102.DK §6.
103.Wheelwright, pg. 79.
105.Guthrie, HGP Vol.2, pg. 17, n.3.

108. *ibid.*, pp. 244-5.

109. *ibid.*, pg. 255.

110. *ibid.*, pg. 245.

111. DK 23

112. Coxon, Fragment 3.

113. Coxon, Fragment 5.

114. Coxon, Fragment 7.

115. Coxon, Fragment 8.


117. *ibid.*


119. Parmenides 130.

120. Symposium 209-10.

121. The similarity, it must be stressed, is in terms of directing one along a correct path.

122. Coxon, §1.24-28

123. Coxon §3.


   The trick is to mentally insert *νοεῖν* a second time, a legitimate translation which looks like this: τὸ θαράν ἄντο νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ νοείν ἐστὶν - "For to think and to think Being are the same". The implication of this is that the only true thought is Being, or "it is". Thus the only time we are thinking a true thought is when we think of Being. (My note)


126. Vlastos' opinions as discussed in Guthrie are interesting but well refuted by the latter. (Guthrie pp. 42 ff.)

127. Copleston agrees (pg. 49.)

129. Guthrie's translation and quotation of this piece of wisdom from Frankel are found in: Guthrie, pg 13. note 3.

130. Taran, pg. 194.

131. Burnet, pg. 179.

132. Owens, pg. 67.

133. Taran, pg. 194

134. Considering, of course, the Pythagorean "Table of Opposites", Cornford, Plato and Parmenides, pg. 6.

135. {Coxon 8:50-6} (**) my translation

136. Coxon §5

137. Prier, pg. 111.


139. *ibid.*

140. *ibid.*, pg. 101.

141. The argument is Prier's, pg. 108.

142. *ibid.*


144. *ibid.* Prier, pg. 106.

145. Heidegger, Martin, Basic Writings, pg. 107

146. Heidegger, Martin, Basic Writings pg. 109

147. *ibid.*, prier, pg. 110.

148. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides, pg. 28.

149. Jaeger, pg. 106.

150. *ibid.*

151. KR 347.

152. *ibid.*

154. This at least is the contention of Cornford, but we may be able to reinterpret this fragment a little later on. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, pg. 4.

155. KR 348.


157. For you cannot divide infinity. Nor can you divide that which is non-physical, excepting the case of a geometrical solid, which I do not think is what Parmenides had in mind. Thus the necessary conditions for divisibility are physical + finite.

158. I am here employing the term aggregate to differentiate it from a unitary totality in the following manner. An aggregate, as I understand it refers to "all of the individual things in the οὐκοῦμας added up to make a whole. However, Parmenides seems to want to say that you have to grasp Being as an indivisible whole, a totality; hence thinking of it as an aggregate would be closer to thinking after the way of mortals in the Way of Opinion. Since being is indivisible and has no parts when conceived of correctly, it cannot be thought of as an aggregate.


160. Cornford, pg. 41.


162. Loenen, pp. 67-8; in a footnote on this point Loenen notes that LSJ say οὐσίας is infrequently used for space, and that it is never used for space in Homer.


164. Guthrie maintains that Parmenides does not belong to the Ionian tradition, but rather to the Pythagorean tradition. He further divorces Parmenides:

...[Parmenides] argues with devastating precision that once one has said that something is, one is debarred from saying that it was or will be, of attributing to it an origin or a dissolution in time, or any alteration or motion whatsoever. But this was just what the Milesians had done. They supposed that the world had not always existed in its present cosmic state. They derived it from one substance, which they asserted to have changed or moved in various ways - becoming hotter or colder, drier or wetter, rarer or denser, in order to produce the present world order." (Guthrie, pg. 15)

165. Metaphysics 990a 12
166. Plato, it will be remembered, uses the χρύση or receptacle as that which grounds secondary qualities. cf. Robinson, "Parmenides on Ascertainment of the Real," pp 628 ff.

167. Taran, pg. 197.

168. Chapter 3.

169. KR 349.

170. KR 350-51

171. Cornford pg. 41

172. I.e. Copleston, Burnet


175. Burnet, pg. 181.

176. Cornford wants to say that "What is", is sphere filled with being. (Cornford, pp. 43-44) This is problematic, however, since this position has two nominal referents, the sphere and the being. Parmenides' logic does not allow this.

177. Mourelatos, pg 126. ff.

178. Owens, pg 65.

179. KR 343.


181. This is not to deny that there is a set of steps taken to achieve truth. It seems as though once truth is attained however, the logic is like a Wittgensteinian ladder which falls away.

182. KR 344.

183. Cornford, *Plato & Parmenides*, pg. 44.

184. As I have stated, I agree with Cornford as to Parmenides' status as a Pythagorean, and I think that elements of Pythagoreanism do exist in the poem.

185. Cornford, pg. 29.

186. Gomperz, pg. 171.

188. Aristotle, Metaphysics, §986 b18ff.

189. Taran pg. 151, 158, 160.


191. Says Jaeger, "When Parmenides asserts that the existent is equidistant on all sides like a sphere (an obviously Pythagoreanizing comparison) this is, so to speak, its one last vestige of world form which he has not succeeded in removing; and even in this passage he makes it plain that he is dealing merely with a comparison. His existent is not to be approached by later conceptions such as that of matter." pp. 106-7.

192. Cornford pg 43 ff.

193. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides, pg. 44.


196. Owens, pg. 62.

197. Owens, pg. 63.

198. Kirk and Raven, pg. 270.

199. Loenen. pg. 33. So too, Jaeger, pp. 102-3.

200. Loenen, pp. 43-4.

201. Loenen, pg. 44.


204. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides, pp. 34-5.

205. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides, pg. 5. Aristotle, it is noted also seems to treat of the ultimate principle as divine. De Caelo, §279a3

206. Cornford notes himself, however, that there is no identification on Parmenides' part of his Being with God, and that Parmenides being has no motion, inferring that it has no life. (ibid., pg. 43) and Jaeger concurs, (pg. 107).

207. DK 26

208. Coxon §8:5-6.
209.KR 342.26ff..

210.DK 7 (my italics)

211.Taran, pg. 200. Taran's idea about Parmenides' Being being unlimited seems to indicate that Being is not physically limited, but is rather limited by its own self-identity. Being cannot have a physical limit, since it is not physical.

212.Hence when Robinson claims that, "[Being] must have as its referent a state of affairs that can be (in some sense) pointed to in the way that physical objects can be ostensively defined by being pointed to," he comes close to missing the fact that being must be altogether different both epistemologically and ontologically than ordinary physical entities. Robinson, "Ascertainment," pg. 629.

213.This summary was gratefully culled from the essay by Pat Curd, "Deception and belief in Parmenides' Doxa," Apeiron, 1992 pp. 109-33.


216.Taran, Parmenides.


220.Verdenius, pg. 46.

221.Curd, "Deception and Belief in Parmenides' Doxa".

222.Cornford, Burnet, EGP, pg.184.

223.ibid., pg. 112.

224.ibid., pg. 112.

225.DK 7.

226.DK 6.

227.DK 8:16ff.

229. DK 8:50ff.

230. Ibid.

231. DK 8: 58ff

232. DK 9

233. Verdenius, pg. 47. Verdenius, however, disagrees with this position. He feels that since Parmenides did not comprehend the knowing subject, he "is not likely to have undertaken the examination of ideas with regard to their origin truth and interrelation (pg.46) We must consider, however, that logic, epistemology and ontology are precisely the focus of Parmenides' investigations.

234. Jaeger, pg. 104. Jaeger adds, however, that there is no direct or one to one correspondence to the Pythagorean cosmogony, but admits that there are some significant similarities. I do not wish to suggest that Parmenides is refuting Pythagoreanism on a point by point basis; I do wish to assert that he is rejecting their fundamental error of deriving a duality from Unity. Whatever else comes as a consequence of this would be to Parmenides equally absurd, and hence it seems irrelevant how he expounds upon this duality. There is the possibility that he wanted to make the false cosmology sound "more reasonable" than the Pythagorean one, showing that from their starting point, more reasonable conclusions may be drawn, yet these too must be false, since the starting point is false. Further, one might consider that Parmenides saw as the main starting point of the Pythagoreans a duality which is assumed in the cosmolgies; hence his Way of Seeming may be meant to refute those as well. As Verdenius suggests, "No doubt the substance of [the Way of Seeming] is of Parmenides' own making, yet its character is such that he could think that it included the essence of current beliefs." (pg. 57)

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