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BRILL

PARMENIDES' SYSTEM:

THE LOGICAL ORIGINS OF HIS MONISM

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ABSTRACT
This paper aims to demonstrate that it is Parmenides' criteria for philosophy in conjunction with his understanding of the available logical operators and their holistic connection that lead to what we can call a logical monism—only the one Being can be conceived and hence known. Being the first to explicate criteria for philosophy, Parmenides will be shown to establish not only consistency as a criterion for philosophy, but also what I call rational admissibility, i.e., giving an account of some x that is based on rational analysis and can thus withstand rational scrutiny. As for logical operators, Parmenides employs a basic operator for connection, identity, and one for separation, negation. His negation operator, expressing an extreme negation that negates the argument completely, corresponds to his identity operator, expressing identification with no exception. But not only are these two basic operators tailored to each other, also Parmenides' basic notion of Being is such that it fits these operators as well as his criteria for philosophy. Accordingly, a kind of holism, a systematic character, underlies Parmenides' philosophy such that that any changes in one concept would necessitate changes in the others. Given the restrictions of Parmenides' criteria for philosophy and the logical operators available to him, what can be a possible object of philosophical investigation is nothing but something absolutely simple, the one Being as the logical content of a thought.

"Although these opinions [of the Eleatics that what is must of necessity be one and unmovable] appear to follow logically, yet to believe them seems next door to madness when one considers the facts."

Aristotle, Generation and Corruption 325 a17-19 (tr. H. Joachim)

1. Introduction

Every new field of inquiry, every new enterprise needs its specific rules. Some generations before Parmenides, people in ancient Greece set up this novel enterprise that became known as philosophy. But it is Parmenides who is the first to attempt to establish clear rules for it and hence to try to transform it into an enquiry with a certain discipline. The enterprise Parmenides and his predecessors were concerned with might be roughly characterised as attending to reality in such a way that we endeavour to *under-*

stand what there truly is and attempt to give an account of it. Accordingly, the rules for this enterprise will have to be criteria for conceptualizing what there is, for a certain kind of knowledge.[1] The basic rules Parmenides establishes are what I will call rational admissibility and consistency below.

Within Parmenides' philosophy, it is not only these criteria that restrict what can be a possible object of philosophical investigation, but also the available logical operators.[2] While the understanding of his basic notions is dependent on the logical operators, we will see that their understanding in turn is tailored to each other—what we might call a kind of holism, a systematic character, underlies Parmenides' philosophy. Logical consistency among the elements of his philosophy is thus crucial.

Parmenides' criteria for philosophy in conjunction with his understanding of the logical operators available and their holistic connection lead to a logical monism[3]—only the one Being can be conceived and hence known. So what I want to show in this paper is that the monism "next door to madness," as Aristotle calls it, is not an arbitrary starting position or premise. Rather, it is the consistent result—it follows indeed "logically"—if Parmen-

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[1] This kind of knowledge will be explicitly distinguished from practical and producing

[2] Very roughly for the aim of this paper we might understand by a logical operator a logical tool which is applied to some argument to yield some output which is related to the original argument in a systematic way. This includes connectives, quantifiers, modal operators, etc. However, I will concentrate on connectives (although questions of quantification and modality will factor into this investigation, they cannot be given the attention they would actually deserve). We will see below that connectives will have to be understood slightly differently from our modern connectives, capturing general operators of separation and connection. There will be several places in this examination where we find logical functions that seem to be similar to ones we use in modern logic but that will have to be understood in a somewhat different way in order to grasp Parmenides' logical operators.

[3] That Parmenides' successors outside the Eleatic school assumed pluralism without bothering to argue for it does not demonstrate, *pace* Curd 1998, that Parmenides was after all a pluralist. For while the philosophers after Plato explicitly discussed Parmenides' philosophy. Nor did they explicitly argue for all their deviations from Parmenides, of which there are many. The silence of Parmenides' immediate successors on the point of monism/pluralism in Parmenides (they were, however, explicit about their own pluralism) can thus not be seen as indicating any form of special agreement between them and Parmenides on this point. And Plato in his explicit discussion of Parmenides in the *Sophist* demonstrates how Parmenides' operators and criteria leading to monism have to be developed further. Accordingly, Plato's *Sophist* will be helpful for understanding the thrust of Parmenides' philosophy and thus used on several occasions. For possible hermeneutical problems with using Plato for understanding Parmenides cf. Palmer 1999, 8-16. However, I think that with respect to the points relevant for this paper, Plato did indeed understand Parmenides in a philosophically adequate way and developed his way of reasoning further.

ides' criteria for philosophy and his basic logical operators are taken seriously. For then all other positions have to be excluded. "Considering the facts," in the sense of looking at the sensible world, is not a criterion for reliable knowledge—indeed, the sensible world provides us with information that does not seem to square with the basic requirements of consistency as understood by Parmenides—and hence for Parmenides would not be a reason to refute a philosophical position.

I will start this paper by demonstrating that Parmenides does indeed establish criteria for rational investigation. This will be followed by examining his basic concepts, starting with a discussion of his notion of Being, before inquiring into his logical operators, negation and identity. These basic notions shall be shown to be tailored to each other in such a way as to ensure that Parmenides' own philosophy is actually able to meet the criteria for reliable knowledge. We will see that his philosophy is working with this minimal set of concepts (one operand, Being, and two operators, plus the two criteria for knowledge) as only such a minimal set seems to fulfil the requirement of consistency.

Certain features of my interpretation of Parmenides have points of similarity to what is often called the 'logical tradition' of interpreting Parmenides.[4] Furthermore, I do not claim the actual *result* for Parmenides' position to be new. What I do think is new in my interpretation, however, and what makes Parmenides' position more intelligible, is my reconstruction of the *reasoning* leading to these results: that it is the connection of Parmenides' logical operators with his specific interpretation of the criteria he establishes for rational enquiry which lead to his version of monism as a logical consequence. Accordingly, my understanding of the exact reasons for regarding Parmenides as the founding father of what we might call a logically inspired metaphysics differ distinctly from what can be found in the literature.

2. Criteria for Rational Investigation

Without already anticipating any specific interpretation of Parmenides' ontology, we can say very roughly that a major aim of Parmenides' poem is to establish reliable knowledge and not simply another opinion.[5] But in order

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[4] Which can be found prominently in G. E. L. Owen's work, cf. Owen 1975.

[5] Though Parmenides does not explicitly employ any noun meaning "knowledge," fragment 1, lines 28-29, tell us that we will learn the truth, the result of which is presumably knowledge, and fragment 2 elucidates what is unknowable and what can be known, as we will see below. Cf. also Kahn 1969, 704 and Lesher 1994, 33.

to do this, it has to be determined how reliable knowledge can be differentiated from mere belief. Thus criteria for knowledge are needed, criteria that are adequate for the kind of knowledge the enterprise 'philosophy' is interested in. The two criteria we find in Parmenides' poem for differentiating opinion from knowledge are rational admissibility and consistency. Let us start by investigating the first criterion.

By 'rational admissibility' I understand roughly giving an account of some x that is based on rational analysis and can thus withstand rational scrutiny. As a consequence, we should get a conceptualization of x in such a way that it is in principle understandable for every other rational being and comparable to other objects of investigation. This way, x can be seen as standing in a clearly identifiable relation to us, who can come to know it, and to other possible knowable things. And it makes us independent of any authority, chance or individual experience with respect to this kind of knowledge. This is exactly what Parmenides introduces in fragment 7, or so I want to demonstrate in the following. After stating that non-Being cannot be investigated, the goddess who has received Parmenides and is prepared to tell him everything, the well-rounded truth (fr. 1, 30), invites him:

"[...] κρῖναι δὲ λόγωι πολύδηριν ἔλεγχον ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα."
"κρῖναι with λόγος the much-contending ἔλεγχος spoken by me" (fr. 7, line 5-6).[6]

A quick examination of κρίνειν, λόγος, and ἔλεγχος will help us to see how far this fragment establishes rational admissibility as a criterion for philosophy. Parmenides is asked not just to believe but rather to examine what the goddess has said, and, through his writing, the same is requested from us. The goddess asks us to κρίνειν, to distinguish, to examine or interpret, to judge; let us use the last translation for the time being until we understand the passage better. While fragment 6 tells us that the mortals, who are choosing the way of Being and non-Being, are ἄκριτα, we shall use our ability to κρίνειν. This judging is to be done with λόγος[7] and directed towards the goddess' ἔλεγχος. As λόγος and ἔλεγχος affect how we have to understand κρίνειν, λόγος saying how we judge and ἔλεγχος being what we judge, considering which translations of these two terms are adequate will help us to understand κρίνειν better.

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6 All fragments are numbered according to Diels und Kranz 1951, DK 28.
7 This κρίνειν with λόγος seems to be the contrast to the mere naming of the mortals in fragment 19, line 3.

The masculine ἔλεγχος can be understood in a general sense, meaning 'investigation' or 'testing' or 'proof.'[8] Accordingly, Diels/Kranz translate ἔλεγχος as "Prüfung," Coxon as "test," and Untersteiner as "prova." But many of the scholars take ἔλεγχος more specifically as meaning 'refutation.' That is how Barnes, Kirk/Raven/Schofield (hereafter cited as KRS), Liddell and Scott, Mansfeld, Conche, and Cordero translate it. Lesher 1984, 10 objects that 'refutation,' for which ἔλεγχος is prominently used in Plato and Aristotle, is actually a later meaning, as he claims is 'proof.' However, time-wise it is not a big gap from Herodotus's *History*, which might count as presenting the first occurrence of the verb ἐλέγχω to mean refute (II, 115, cf. Lesher 1984, 7), to Parmenides' poem; and given Parmenides' explicit challenge of the conventional beliefs, his poem might indeed be the very first occurrence, influencing the philosophers to come. This is also what Liddell and Scott seem to indicate when putting Parmenides as the earliest entrance for the meaning of refutation.

A straightforward way to figure out whether the goddess presents an investigation, a test, a proof or a refutation is by clarifying what the ἔλεγχος of the goddess refers to. It seems to be aimed at the μὴ ἐόντα mentioned at the beginning of the fragment, since they constitute the path from which Parmenides should hold back his thinking, as explained in the sentences immediately preceding our passage.[9] However, the line there—"For never will this be forced that non-Being is" (fr. 7, line 1)—is actually only an assertion. So if the goddess does indeed provide a refutation, a test or an investigation that can be judged with λόγος, this line has to be an assertion of an argument that was given already before.

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8 For the development of the Greek word ἔλεγχος from its early meaning of shame and disgrace in the neuter form to the meaning of test in the masculine form in the early fifth century cf. Lesher 1984, especially 2-9.

9 Lesher 1984, 16-17, by contrast, assumes the ἔλεγχος of the poem to refer to each of the ways of thinking mentioned by Parmenides, and accordingly thinks that ἔλεγχος is not a refutation but rather an examination that is testing each of the ways for their capacity to lead us to truth and knowledge about τὸ ἐόν. While in principle this is a perfectly plausible interpretation, I think the reading given here connects the occurrence of the term ἔλεγχος better with its immediate context, in which ἔλεγχος is connected to the μὴ ἐόντα of the second path, while the path of Being will be taken up for further examination in fragment 8. Lesher sees his understanding of ἔλεγχος confirmed by Parmenides' use of κρίνειν here in fragment 7, which, he thinks, refers to the judgment that concludes a process of examination or testing, for "if any proof has already been delivered, why is there any need to judge it further?" (Lesher 1984, 17). However, it is the person received by the goddess who is here asked to judge and has not yet judged what the goddess has said so far about non-Being.

refutation of the assumption of non-Being at the end of fragment 2 in connection with fragment 3:10

ἡ δ' ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς χρεών ἐστι μὴ εἶναι,

τὴν δή τοι φράζω παναπευθέα ἔμμεν ἀταρπόν·

οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἐόν (οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν)

οὔτε φράσαις.

τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι.

The other [way of enquiry], that [it] is not and that it is necessary that [it] is not.

This I will show you to be an altogether unknowable trail;

for you could neither know non-Being – that cannot be done –

nor could you say anything about it. (fr. 2, lines 5-8)

For what is for thinking and for being is the same. (fr. 3)[11]

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10 Diels and many subsequent scholars understand fragment 3 as immediately succeeding fragment 2. The aorist ῥηθέντα in fragment 7, line 6, makes it clear that the ἔλεγχος has already be given before, as was observed by Verdenius 1942, 64 and taken up by Tarán 1965, 81.

11 Mourelatos 1970, argues in his preface against making fragment 3 a starting point or basis of any interpretation of Parmenides because of its "irremediable syntactic ambiguity." While I certainly agree that the fragment is ambiguous, as the numerous translations and interpretations of it show, it seems to be a necessary step in the argument sketched in the main text, and thus basic, even if its exact sense has to be derived from the context of the argument in which it is employed. So I have tried to choose as a first translation one that aims to avoid any strong assumptions, and will clarify its meaning further in the course of the paper. No matter how we translate νοεῖν in fragment 2 and 3, every translation will have to deal with the problem that νοῆσαι in line 2 and νοεῖν in fragment 3 do not seem to mean exactly the same thing, since the first allows νοεῖν to apply to the path of non-Being while the second restricts νοεῖν in some sense to Being. v. Fritz 1943 and 1945 argues that νοεῖν in Homer means a kind of mental perception which penetrates deeper into the nature of things, while being in touch with ultimate reality. Mourelatos 1970, 68-70, sees the latter idea, rather than the discursive function, as crucial in Parmenides, and hence wants to understand νοεῖν as knowing rather than thinking, while Lesher 1994, 27, understands νοεῖν in Parmenides as thinking. It seems clear that different scholars have chosen different translations depending on the aspect of νοεῖν they want to stress, since there is no single English word corresponding exactly to the meaning of νοεῖν in Parmenides. I have chosen to translate νοεῖν initially as 'to think' since 'to know' implies the truth or correctness of what is known, while the goddess does not want to allow Parmenides to νοεῖν that something can come from non-being in fragment 8, line 8 (and the nous of the mortals can be quite confused, as we are told in fragment 6, line 6). However, she wants to show him what real νοεῖν is, namely νοεῖν which is only concerned with Being, so that thinking or conceiving non-Being can be seen as οὐδὲ

If we take these lines together as a conclusion which is re-confirmed in the first line of fragment 7, then the reasoning is that non-Being cannot be known or thought of since everything that can be conceived is; so necessarily I always conceive Being. This refutation of non-Being rests on three premises:

(1) What is for thinking and for being is the same (which for the time being we can understand as "that which is, Being, is the same as that which can be thought").

(2) Being and non-Being are contradictory.

(3) A principle of non-contradiction holds.[12]

(Conclusion) Non-Being cannot be thought.

What we get here is not only an investigation of, or argument against, non-Being; but properly speaking a refutation: it is shown why the assumption of non-Being cannot hold. And the refutation excludes non-Being as a possible object of investigation not because it is not, but because it cannot be thought. While in a loose sense something might count as unthinkable because it is unlawful, has never been heard of, etc., in the strict sense something is unthinkable if it cannot be conceived consistently, if it is inconsistent, Being cannot be inconsistent. According to this strict interpretation, which we will see confirmed later on, Being, as the contradictory opposite of non-Being, is what can be consistent, it is not inconsistent; and since it would be non-Being if it were inconsistent, Being cannot be thought.

Trying to judge this refutation of the goddess, we also get a fuller understanding of what she could mean by κρίνειν. For in order to κρίνειν the refutation we have just seen, we have to (1) distinguish the premises used, (2) interpret and re-enact her conclusion in our mind (we have to figure out how the premises are supposed to form the supposed conclusion), and (3) judge her conclusion qua examining its truth (we are checking whether the conclusion does indeed derive from the premises). That is what we can understand by κρίνειν, distinguish, interpret, and examine as part of a well-founded judgment; all these possible meanings of κρίνειν seem to be evoked by Parmenides. So we are checking, verifying, proving her

νοητόν (fr. 8, line 8); and (if we set aside concerns about discursiveness and the difference between processes and states) this seems to be what in English is captured by the word 'knowing' and its cognates. Thus Parmenides can introduce the negative route as one of two ways to νοεῖν (fr. 2, line 2), meaning by this that we might initially think we can list or posit two ways in principle, but then claim that non-Being cannot be γιγνώσκειν (fr. 2, line 7), since the second way is after all not really thinkable, it is not knowable.

12 I will say more about the specific version of the principle of non-contradiction employed here later on.

ἔλεγχος—this is what a rationally demonstrable statement should allow us to do.

As for λόγος, which is used in the dative in this passage, we have to clarify three points: what does λόγος mean here, how are we to translate the dative, and how are κρῖναι and λόγῳ connected? All translators understand the notoriously polysemous term λόγος here as referring to our reason in one way or other (rather than, for instance, to our talking, the content of our talking, calculation, etc.). And considering what we are meant to judge with it, a refutation, this seems to be the fitting translation. As the contrast between judging with λόγος in fragment 7, line 5, and the senses in lines 4-5 makes clear, in the context of Parmenides' philosophy reason will not include any sense experience.

The dative can indicate either that it is a certain faculty[13] with which we judge or a certain way (*dativus modi*) or means (*dativus instrumentalis*) of judgment.[14] But no matter whether we take λόγος as meaning a faculty or rather as a way or means, this κρίνειν is thus a rational investigation, based on reason, with the help of which we differentiate and thus proceed to a well-grounded judgment.

Such a judgment is possible because using our λόγος allows us in principle to be independent of any chance, of anything merely accidental in our judging: we are independent of others in so far as our λόγος allows us to test whether something somebody has said can rationally hold, rather than just believing it. Thus, we are independent of any individual experience others, or indeed we ourselves, might happen to have. And such a judgment includes, as the goddess points out in fragment 7, not to be forced by habit (ἔθος, line 3), but only by the laws of our reasoning.

Furthermore, we do not have to rely on any authority, but only on a capability given to every rational being. We should agree or disagree with a theory or statement not because of an authority on which we base our theory or fail to base it, but rather because we prove with our own reason what is stated. Relying on mere authority is excluded as a criterion for Parmenides to judge the ἔλεγχος of the goddess, and for us, accordingly, to judge the claims of his poem. We are invited, by contrast, to prove his philosophy

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13 However, if we take it as a faculty (a faculty of knowledge that is), we cannot understand it as the 'place' where thinking is situated, but only as a potentiality for thinking, as we will see below.

14 Barnes takes λόγῳ to mean "by argument," Cordero understands it as "selon le raisonnement;" Liddell and Scott as "by reflection." KRS translate it as "by reason;" Diels/Kranz as "mit dem Denken;" Mansfeld uses "in rationaler Weise," thus stressing that λόγῳ is a certain way how to κρίνειν rather than a certain faculty with which we do it. Conche's "par la raison" also seems to take reason as a means.

with the help of our rational capability which should lead to a result that can be intersubjectively understandable (independent of any special contacts we might chance to have with the gods or other authorities).[15] And obviously Parmenides thinks that this standard will also lead us to prefer his philosophy to others on offer. Rational admissibility is thus established as a criterion for what can count as reliable knowledge, for philosophy.

It might be objected that Parmenides also relies on an external authority, since it is a goddess who presents his theory. However, it is the goddess herself who asks us not just to believe but rather to judge her words. What makes clear the image of the goddess in fact does is to stress the importance of his subject: In contrast to Xenophanes' denial of the possibility of human knowledge,[16] she announces a secure, if very small, realm where human knowledge can be shown to be indeed possible. And it is assumed that in principle other human beings are capable of using their reason in the same way, even if at the moment they are still ὄκριτα φῦλα, confused crowds (fr. 6, line 7). For the goddess asks Parmenides explicitly to keep what he has heard from her (cf. fr. 2, line 1), which we can see his poem doing—it is kept such that it is preserved for other humans.

And again we 'other humans' are meant to use our λόγος. For this is what enables us to judge ourselves in such a way that based on our own judgment we can come to understand a thing or a state of affairs the same way as somebody else does, provided they are also using their reason. Intersubjective agreement—based not on some arbitrary consent we have reached, but on our ability to judge something by reason—should thus be a consequence of rational admissibility.

The criterion captured by the term 'rational admissibility' thus includes three aspects: (1) The standard for judgment is reason: it is by using our own λόγος that we can test in how far and why a statement holds true. (2) Reason trumps any other authority. (3) Reason is a standard that can be generalized; people share the same λόγος so that a thorough examination of a claim by you and by me should lead to the same result.

Let us now turn to the second criterion, consistency, by which I roughly want to understand satisfying the law of non-contradiction. It will be most helpful to take the law of non-contradiction in the following as a feature of

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15 Given that Parmenides' poem assumes at least the presence of the goddess, the person received by the goddess and his escort, Parmenides does not seem to argue against multiple subjects, but solely that there is only one proper object of knowledge. As we will see in the unfolding of Parmenides' monism below, he does allow for beliefs concerning a plurality of things and people, but this plurality is not what we have proper knowledge of.

16 Cf., e.g., DK 21 B 34 and 36, and also Kahn 1969, 706.

actual and possible things (a thing cannot be A and not-A, leaving it open for the time being what category of expression "A" refers to) as well as a law of how we can think—not, however, as based on psychological but on logical grounds. Accordingly, while we can violate this law in speech (and can claim A and not-A), it cannot be *violated* in real thinking (for then we are not thinking any longer) nor in being.[17] We already saw in fragments 2 and 3 that non-Being is excluded from the realm of rational investigation since its integration would lead to inconsistencies. Avoiding inconsistencies is also the criterion according to which the characterization of Being in fragment 8 is carried out. So lines 6-49 of fragment 8 show that no determination of Being leading to a contradiction can be true, and that thus the opposite determination has to be true. For instance, Parmenides claims that Being cannot come into being as it would have to come into being either out of what already is or out of what is not.[18] Since both avenues lead into a contradiction (the contradiction that Being is not), we have to conclude the opposite assumption, that Being cannot come into being. Consistency understood as avoiding any contradiction is thus used by Parmenides as a crucial criterion to investigate Being. And it is a criterion we are also meant to use when judging his reasoning.

Although Parmenides' poem is the first place where consistency and thus a form of the principle of non-contradiction is methodologically employed,[19] Parmenides seems to be surprisingly well aware of this principle. But we have not yet clarified how exactly he understands it. From Plato and Aristotle we are acquainted with various different versions of the principle,[20] hence, we need to investigate precisely which form of the principle Parmenides employs. This investigation requires spelling out Parmenides' understanding of logical operators, which will be part of the examination of his basic concepts below.

Another question this criterion raises is the question on which conceptual level we talk about consistency. Nowadays, we normally understand it as a syntactic feature of a set of sentences such that this set is consistent if we cannot derive a pair of statements p and not-p from it. To understand Parmenides, however, it seems preferable to use a sense of consistency that is

[17] Compare also Aristotle who understands the law of non-contradiction sometimes as claiming 'not (Being and non-Being),' e.g., in *Metaphysics* 1005b19 ff and 1061b34 ff, and sometimes as 'not (p and not-p),' e.g., in *De Interpretatione* 21b17 ff.

[18] We will see below that Parmenides also accepted a principle of excluded middle.

[19] Cf. Kahn 1969, 707. While it is clear that Parmenides subscribes to this criterion, he does not state it explicitly, as we find Plato and Aristotle doing.

[20] Cf. Plato's *Republic* 436a-437e and *Sophist* 230b7 ff., and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Book Γ, chapters 3-8.

not as technical as this understanding and that allows for semantic determination. There are at least three different possibilities for such an understanding of consistency:

(1) Either we require the specific content of a concept (our account of something) to be consistent, i.e., its definition, and *propria*, etc., are coherent. (2) Or the usage of concepts has to be consistent, i.e., we have to avoid any uncontrolled changes. This includes avoiding using our concepts in a way that is not consistent with its definition,[21] as well as not applying it in a wrong way, for instance, not applying it in a realm in which it is not applicable. (3) Or a *system* of concepts has to be consistent, i.e., they fit together such that no implication of one concept is inconsistent with the implications of the others. This last one is a rather strong notion of consistency as it entails that the concepts of such a system are not independent of each other; if one were to change one concept, the others would normally be affected as well in order for the system to remain consistent.

Parmenides' philosophy as expressed in the ἀλήθεια part seems to attempt to satisfy all three understandings of consistency: when he determines Being as the object of his enquiry in fragment 8, he has to strive to ensure that his specific concept of it, its content, is consistent, i.e., that different characterizations of it, which are held to be conjointly true, do not lead to a contradiction. All σήματα of Being have to be consistent with each other so that all can hold jointly of Being. This meaning of consistency seems to be at play also in fragments 2 and 3 when the route "that it is not" is excluded from inquiry as leading to inconsistencies (cf. above). As a necessary condition to grant that Parmenides is successful in this investigation he also has to ensure that he is not using "Being" first in one sense and then in another one. Using our concepts in a consistent way (thus being constant in mapping our terms onto adequate objects in accordance with the same concept, avoiding any change of reference) is also necessary for a consistent system of concepts. And as we will see that Parmenides' determination of Being cannot be understood without the understanding of his other basic concepts, the most important notion of consistency we are dealing with here is the consistency of the systematic connection of the basic concepts of Parmenides' body of knowledge. This seems to be indicated also by Parmenides' description of truth as well-rounded (εὐκυκλέος) in fragment 1, line 29—a systematic connection of concepts can at least metaphorically be seen as

[21] So I am not worried so much about linguistic consistency here in the sense that I always use the term 'pullover' rather than 'sweater' when referring to a certain garment, but rather that we always keep the determination of our referent constant (i.e., in this case, a garment for the upper part of the body that is drawn over the head).

well-rounded in the sense that there is a direct connection between all elements, so that we can start from every concept and get the shape of the whole out of it. Such a systematic connection implies that the meaning of each fundamental concept is only fully determined and kept stable with respect to the other concepts, and any possible change of one concept would necessitate changes of the other concepts.[22]

So while it is essential for knowledge to be consistent and rationally admissible, opinion does not satisfy either criterion for Parmenides. Fragment 6, lines 4-9, shows those who believe to lack knowledge, and belief to be inconsistent: the belief of the double-headed mortals claims Being and non-Being to be the same and not the same. In fragment 8, lines 39-41, we see the mortals simply positing different kinds of changes, and in 53-54 merely naming basic principles: "they decided to name two forms,[23] of which it is not allowed to name only one[24]—that's where they have gone astray." They *decide* to *name* and *posit* principles and facts[25]—since their beliefs can be proven wrong solely by rational scrutiny,[26] the mortals obviously did not, as

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22 For εὔκυκλος cf. also fragment 5, with respect to which Reinhardt 1916, 60, remarks in his chapter on archaic composition that coming back to the starting point is not a "Zeichen der Kunstlosigkeit" but rather testifies to a "Bewußtsein der Systemzusammenhänge." This systematic character of Parmenides' philosophy will be developed below in some detail. Mourelatos 1970, 3, counted that the particle 'γάρ,' indicating logical dependence between independent sentences, appears 32 times in the poem so that "One has the feeling that relations of logical dependence are at times overstressed." Whether or not *over-stressed*, it seems clear that Parmenides wanted to emphasis the intimate logical connections of his basic thoughts; cf. also Mansfeld 1964, chapter II.

23 For a different reading of this clause cf. Woodbury 1986, 2-4, and Mourelatos 1970, 228.

24 This line has been interpreted in a couple of different ways. But I think there are three main possibilities to read it. If we see it as a prohibition established by the mortals, it reads "it is not allowed to name only one," i.e., since there are two basic principles, it is a mistake to name only one. If, on the other hand, it is the goddess' own commentary on the mortals' decision to employ two basic principles, it could either be understood as "it is not allowed to name even one," i.e., both are wrong principles and accordingly even naming one of them is false. Or the goddess comments that "only it is not allowed to name one," in the sense that only one of the two principles is wrong (darkness or non-Being, while Being, on this reading, is normally equated with light). For different readings cf. also Mourelatos 1970, 80 ff.

25 Similarly, fragment 9, lines 1-3, can be read as claiming night and day as a *result of naming*, cf. Woodbury 1986, 8.

26 At least the goddess does not refer to any empirical state of the matter to prove them wrong, but rather shows by mere rational inquiry that their assumptions cannot hold.

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the goddess did, bother to give an account that is based on rational analysis; hence their account is not rationally admissible.[27]

That the two criteria Parmenides establishes for rational investigation help us to distinguish true knowledge from mere opinion can be seen from at least two points: If I do not hold myself to the principle of consistency I myself might contradict what I say (only in being consistent can I be sure that I am going on with the same argument and I am not undermining what I have said so far, cf. also Plato's *Sophist* 241e). And if what I say cannot be checked by reason and is hence not intersubjectively provable, the opposite claim of somebody else might contradict me without this dispute being resolvable. In both cases I am not dealing with true knowledge. If these two criteria just seem to be a matter of course for us, something on which every theory has to be based anyway, this does not mean that they are less valuable. Rather, the fact that we might take them as unspectacular basic criteria for sciences today shows that by establishing them as criteria for rational investigation[28] Parmenides raised philosophy to a new level: It is only now that philosophy becomes really self-reflecting by reflecting on its own methods, and on the basis of this reflection establishes a scientific logic/metaphysics whose logical prescriptions entail rules for knowledge also applicable for other sciences.[29]

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27 The explicit reason for introducing the δόξα part of the poem with its cosmology is named in fragment 8, lines 60-61, as ensuring that no explanation of the world given by other mortals will ever outdo the listener, making sure that the seductive force of mortal belief will not overcome the persuasiveness of the truth, and indicating the relative strength of this cosmology. Given the (at least in part) rather sophisticated cosmological account we are shown, it cannot be the account of the average mortal men; nor is it one of Parmenides' predecessors. Rather, this cosmology seems to be shown as the most probable, πάντα ἐοικότα, explanation of the sensible world that could be developed given the mindset of the mortals who always name a plurality, cf. also Graham 2006, 169-182. While this cosmology seems to be meant as a paradigm of inquiring the sensible world, getting as close to the truth as such an inquiry can, it nevertheless cannot satisfy the criteria for reliable knowledge; thus, *a fortiori*, the other cosmologies cannot satisfy it either, and Parmenides does not have to worry about them.

28 Naturally, their concrete interpretation was modified later on; cf. also Kahn 1969, 720.

29 For the purposes of this paper I am not making a strict distinction between science and philosophy. Mathematics might be the one science where explicit considerations about consistency might have played a role prior to what we find here. But we do not have any textual evidence for reflections on it from the time before Parmenides.

3. Parmenides' Philosophy as Attempting to Meet these Criteria

On its own, the two criteria Parmenides establishes for knowledge do not imply any monism—as is obvious from the fact that we do employ them for a lot of sciences that are in no way monistic. However, the specific interpretation they are given in Parmenides' poem in accord with his basic concepts and operators lead directly to his logical monism. In order to understand how Parmenides' philosophy is meant to satisfy these criteria for rational investigation, we have to examine its basic notions and their systematic connection. Determining the basic concepts of Parmenides will require us to look not only at the basic notions he introduces explicitly, but also at the notions he has to presuppose without explicitly determining them (namely, negation and identity).[30] But let us start with the main notion Parmenides introduces explicitly, with Being.[31]

3.1. Parmenides' Notion of Being

'Being' seems to be the clearest basic concept Parmenides introduces, at least if we look at fragment 8. However, even this claim is problematic. In contrast to later programmatic philosophical accounts, Parmenides' poem does not start with sketching the object of investigation, with an account of the 'content' of the doctrine of the goddess. Rather, we are told at the beginning that we (more precisely: the person welcomed by the goddess) will hear the truth as well as the opinions of the mortals and learn about their respective reliability (fr. 1, 28-32). We are not told what the truth is actually about.[32] And when the goddess finishes her account of the way of truth in

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30 They differ from the characterizations of Being mentioned in fragment 8 in that the σήματα of fragment 8 can be seen as implications of Parmenides' notion of Being and so could ultimately be derived from it (even though they are used in the poem to make Being better understandable for us). By contrast, we will see that ἐόν, οὐκ, and ταὐτόν are mutually tailored to each other. These three are the main basic notions on the connection of which all further essential determinations are based.

31 I will translate ἐόν as 'Being' rather than, as is often done in English, as 'what is,' using a capital B to indicate that it is Parmenides' object of inquiry rather than a participle in the construction of my sentences (and when I use 'Being' I normally mean the participle rather than the gerund). While 'Being' sounds somewhat artificial in English, I think that this artificiality is indeed helpful to avoid interpreting Parmenides' object of investigation straightforwardly, without a careful investigation, as ordinary perceptible things in the world. We will see that Being is not used as a predicate (so that we could say 'x is Being'), but only as reference to a notion or object of investigation.

32 We will see below that and why within Parmenides' philosophy there is no difference between the truth and what the truth is about. I think it would be too quick to justify this with reference to a notion of truth as a highest degree of being without giving any further explana-

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fragment 8, 50-51, she simply calls it her "trustworthy account and thought concerning truth." So this is a peculiarity we should keep in mind when trying to determine Parmenides' notion of Being.

As the next step[33] we are given two paths of investigation, two ὁδοί:

εἰ δ' ἄγ' ἐγὼν ἐρέω, κόμισαι δὲ σὺ μῦθον ἀκούσας,
αἵπερ ὁδοὶ μοῦναι διζήσιός εἰσι νοῆσαι·
ἡ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι,
πειθοῦς ἐστι κέλευθος (ἀληθείῃ γὰρ ὀπηδεῖ),
ἡ δ' ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς χρεών ἐστι μὴ εἶναι,
τὴν δή τοι φράζω παναπευθέα ἔμμεν ἀταρπόν·

Come now, and I will tell you (and you must carry my account away with you when you have heard it)

the only ways of enquiry that are to be thought.
That [it] is and that [it] is impossible[34] that [it] is not,
this is the path of persuasion (for it follows truth).
The other, that [it] is not and that it is necessary that [it] is not.
That I will show you to be an altogether unknowable trail (fr. 2, lines 1-6)

These lines show that what is discussed here is not an object such as, for instance, the four elements. Rather, he presents a particular path or way of investigation according to which we assume the object of inquiry to be such that it cannot not be. So Parmenides' inquiry is closely related to epistemo-

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tion (just stating this notion of truth, as, e.g., Hölscher 1986 seems to do when on 75 he claims: "'wahr' und 'seiend' sind in der alten Sprache vertauschbare Begriffe"). Mourelatos 1970, 63 points out that for Homer ἀλήθεια "is truth reported—in contrast with lies, evasion, distortion, or misrepresentation;" while in the archaic period we also get a quasi adverbial notion of truth, as "a mode or degree of being of things." So we see that there is no one fixed notion of truth explaining this peculiarity, and Parmenides himself might be part of how this alleged archaic notion of truth, in contrast to the Homeric one, came to prevail. Cf. also Szaif 1996 for a discussion of the Greek idiom ἀληθὲς λέγειν, 'to say true things,' where it is not quite clear whether the point of reference are words or objects.

33 This is not meant to claim a particular order of the fragments. However, the different paths of investigation have to turn up early in the poem, whether or not we assume any particular fragment to be fitted in between the first and the second one (as, e.g., Mansfeld 1995 does with fr. 5).

34 A modal translation of the οὐκ ἔστι here is suggested by the fact that the statement in question is part of a μέν clause that is answered by the explicitly modal χρεών claim in line 5 as its δέ clause. This is also how most translations render οὐκ ἔστι here. And we will see in the course of the investigation of Parmenides' notion of Being that this modal interpretation is indeed fitting.

logical and methodological considerations, to considerations about what can be conceived and in which way it can be conceived.[35]

Furthermore, as fragments 2 and 3 together constitute the first argument for Parmenides' philosophy, we will see that they provide us with some guidance for what can be understood by Parmenides' main notion. So let us look at the logical steps employed by the argument in these fragments:

1. There are only two ways of investigation that can be thought.
2. The one is that [it] is, and that it is impossible that [it] is not.
3. The other that [it] is not and that it is necessary that [it] is not.
4. The latter is an altogether unknowable path.
5. For you could neither know non-Being nor could you say anything about it (fr. 2).
6. For what [it] is to be thought is the same as what [it] is to be (fr. 3).[36]

In order to understand Parmenides' notion of Being we have to understand the first central clause, step 2. The first claim of this step, "that/how (it) is" (ὅπως ἔστιν), is rather minimal, and even more so in Greek, where we do not have any subject, but of course also do not necessarily need a subject. So the first question is whether ἔστι here might actually be used like a name rather than like a minimal sentence. However, since it is preceded by ὅπως, it seems to be clear that we are dealing with a claim and hence with a min-

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[35] These lines from fragment 2 also show that Parmenides is not investigating the meaning specific to the participle ἐόν. Here it is ἔστι, "(it) is" that is inquired, and in fragment 3 we get the infinitive εἶναι. Parmenides uses various forms of εἶναι in different fragments also as mere tools of expression (e.g., he uses εἶναι as a copula in fragment 8, line 3, "For ἐόν is (ἔστιν) uncreated and incorruptible," where ἔστι is simply a tool for investigating ἐόν). However, there are at least two passages that speak in favour of understanding εἶναι, ἔστι and ἐόν as referring to the same object of investigation: fragment 8 introduces ἐόν as that which is inquired on the way "that it is" (ὡς ἔστιν). Accordingly, investigating ἐόν and the way "that it is" (ὅπως ἔστιν) seem to be the same investigation. And the variation of fragment 3 (τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι) in fragment 8, 34 (ταὐτὸν δ' ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὕνεκεν ἔστι νόημα) show that the finite and infinite verb forms of εἶναι are used to refer to the same thing; cf. also fragment 6 and Tarán 1965, 37.

[36] In the actual translation of fragment 3, which was given when discussing rational admissibility above, I rendered νοεῖν and εἶναι as dative infinitives. Hölscher and Tarán understand this construction with ἔστι and the dative infinitive as equivalent to a passive construction and translate accordingly: "Denn dasselbe kann gedacht werden und sein," and "for the same thing can be thought and can exist." As I agree with them that it is ultimately the relation between what can be conceived and what can be that is the topic of fragment 3, I am also rendering it as a passive here, where I am only concerned with the logical structure. For the possibility to render an active infinitive in a passive way in pre-classical time cf. also Dalfen 1994, 200–201.

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imal statement, and not with a mere name (or term of reference). This still leaves the question open (a) what we should understand by the 'it,' which, while not explicitly there in Greek, obviously has to be understood as part of ἔστι (otherwise it would not be a minimal sentence) and which we have to substitute in English; and (b) how we should understand the ἔστι itself.

(a) The 'it' can be understood either as being determined in content (i.e., it has a determined referent) such that it refers to a certain object of investigation, or by its function giving thus a formal account of possible objects. The first possibility includes thinking of the 'it' either as one particular object, or as all objects of a certain kind, or as the whole of what there is, τὸ πᾶν.[37] And these could be understood to be objects of a variety of kinds: sensible, intelligible, logical, etc. The second possibility, determining the 'it' by its function, would mean that 'it' specifies what it is to be some possible x, for instance, what it is to be the nature or essence of a thing, as Mourelatos is interpreting it, or what it is to be an object of enquiry, as KRS are understanding it. So either the 'it' refers to an object of enquiry, particular or general, or to the function a certain kind of 'object' fulfils. Finally, we are left with the possibility that the ἔστι is construed like an impersonal claim so that it only has an impersonal subject.[38]

What we can say so far is that, as we saw above, the goddess does not distinguish between truth and what the truth is about; hence it seems to be unlikely that 'it' refers to some particular sensible things, as we can clearly distinguish between them and a state of affairs holding true of them. In order to decide between the remaining possibilities, we have to look at Parmenides' understanding of ἔστι first.

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[37] The title of the work, Περὶ φύσεως, might seem to suggest that the object of the investigation is φύσις, 'nature.' However, this was a generic title used for philosophical works of this time, not given by Parmenides himself; cf. also Hölscher 1986, 68.

[38] So Tarán 1965, 33 ff., and Fränkel 1946, 169. Kahn 1969, however, claims against Fränkel and Tarán that "ἔστι is almost never construed impersonally in its primary or first-order occurrences, where it figures as the only verb in the sentence," 709–710. Owen 1975 thinks that the subject is originally withheld until its attributes are deduced for it. I will not go through the big scholarly debate here on the object of Parmenides' inquiry for reasons of space as well as because all these suggestions are underdetermined as long as we have not clarified what Parmenides understands by ἔστι. So, for instance, Kahn's 1969 suggestion to understand the object of inquiry as whatever is and can be known seems to be a straightforward suggestion, immediately derivable from fragments 2 and 3. However, he then specifies that his veridical reading of ἔστι means that whatever can be known is what must be actually the case, it must be "a definite fact" (cf. 712) and he seems to refer to the world of empirical facts, which we will see cannot work. Furthermore, this understanding seduces Kahn into employing a correspondence theory of truth, 714, which presupposes the notion of a relation, a notion not consistently thinkable, as we will see, within the Parmenidean framework.

(b) In principle ἔστι can be understood either as syntactically complete or incomplete, the former can be used to express an existential (x exists) or veridical (x is the case) sense, the latter for a predicative (x is F)[39] or identifying one (x is the same as y). With the possible exception of the last alternative, all have found their support in the secondary literature on Parmenides. Of course, these four different alternatives are also spelt out differently, so the existential sense of ἔστι can be understood as stating that something is 'real' which can mean quite different things: that something is a member of the empirical realm, or that it is a consistent object of thought, etc. And these alternatives need not be mutually exclusive, so, for instance, to understand ἔστι here as predicative as well as existential,[40] and Palmer and others think that the existential and predicative senses are actually fused in the Greek verb εἶναι.[41] Finally, settling for an interpretation here does not mean that all occurrences of εἶναι will have to be interpreted in the same way; so, for instance, when in fragment 6, line 1, we read "for it is, that it is" it might make good sense to understand the first 'is' as veridical, claiming that something is the case, and the second one as existential. In order to be able to make a decision which interpretation to choose, we should first think about possible guidelines that can help us to decide between these alternatives, before we will use these guides to go through the four main options, predicative, identifying, existential, and veridical. Note, that I am not claiming that Parmenides would have conceived of the possible understandings of ἔστι like this. But they have come up in the work of the many various contributors in the literature, and hence exploring these four options and drawing upon them seems to be one promising way to get a grasp of what Parmenides might have understood by ἔστι.

What we have labelled step 5 above provides us with what can be used as a guide for figuring out how to understand ἔστι: "For neither can you know (γνοίης) non-Being nor say anything about it." We have spelled out the premises on which this step rests when discussing rational admissibility as one of Parmenides' criteria for philosophy. While we are not yet in a position to decide how exactly to understand the negation and the modality[42]

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39 I do not make a distinction here between a copulative and a predicative use of ἔστι.

40 Since what makes something real—that is how KRS understand the existential reading—is that it has some predicates true of it, 246.

41 Palmer 2009, 95-97; cf. also Brown 1994, 212-236, and Furth 1968, 112 f.

42 For an argument why the modality here should not simply be understood as epexegetic, but rather as introducing something new, cf. Palmer 2009, 98-99. There is lots of talk about modality in Parmenides' poem in different ways: with the help of referring to goddesses (as, e.g., to Dike in fr. 1 and 8,13-14), the metaphor of limits and bonds (e.g., fr. 8,31), the employment

involved in this claim, it is nevertheless a first rough guide for how to understand Being with Parmenides—something cannot be known or conceived if it is not (cf. also fragment 8, line 34).

The contrary complement to step 5, at least as far as the modality is concerned, we seem to get at the beginning of fragment 6: "It is necessary[43] to say and to think that Being is." So while it is impossible to think and speak of non-Being, it is necessary to say and think that Being is.[44] This seems to be a direct inference from the thought that there is only Being and non-Being as possible candidates of what can be conceived, as sketched in fragment 2. Since no thought concerning non-Being is possible, it is necessary that our thoughts are related to Being. Knowing that Being is connected with necessity seems like a good guide; however, there are several possibilities how to understand this connection—prima facie the necessity applies to saying and thinking that Being is. However, fragment 8, lines 11 and 26-27, demonstrate that there is also a necessity to the way Being is characterized. And finally we have to keep in mind the possibility that Parmenides wants to claim the necessity that Being is.

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of the words χρή and ἀνάγκη and variants of them (e.g., fr. 2,5 and 8,11 and 8,30), and finally in fragment 2,3 with the help of the potential sense of εἶναι as 'it is possible.' One might wonder whether the different expressions refer to different grades or kinds of necessity and possibility, but I cannot see such distinctions systematically drawn in the poem.

43 For understanding χρή as necessity cf. also Palmer 2009, especially 98-100. Mourelatos 1970, 277-278 reminds us that normally χρή does not express necessity in the sense of inevitability, but rather in the sense of being right or due; accordingly, he thinks that "the modality governing the Parmenidean ontology and epistemology is a blend of necessity and persuasion," 278. However, when Parmenides brings together necessity and persuasion explicitly, as he does in fragment 2, line 4, we do not get a blend of the two. Instead we learn that persuasion attends (ὀπηδεῖ) to truth—truth being that it necessarily is—which is not a weakening of necessity, but only expressing that truth should also be persuasive (even if the account of the mortals might sound seductive at first, cf. fragment 8,61, and the mortals, double-headed as they are, might not understand immediately the persuasive force of the truth). Furthermore, if we were to understand χρή as being right, we would have to ask "right according to which standard or rule"? It cannot be right according to what is seen as right in the world of the mortals, since this is exactly what Parmenides wants to distance his philosophy from. But if it is right according to what the goddess puts forward, then right has nothing to do with a certain etiquette, custom or habit; rather, right is what follows the criteria employed by her, rational admissibility and consistency. We see in fragment 8 that what is put forward by her as 'right' is such that if you assumed it not to be true, it would be inconsistent. What cannot be otherwise without being inconsistent, however, is right in the sense of being necessary. So Mourelatos's point does not undermine our understanding of χρή as necessity.

44 Fragment 2,7-8 and fragment 6,1 are not strictly speaking contrary complements since in fragment 2 we are only dealing with the impossibility of thinking and speaking about μή ἐόν, while in fragment 6 we are concerned with the necessity of thinking and speaking that ἐόν is.

With these guides in mind, i.e., knowing that every valid interpretation of ἔστι has to account for the impossibility claim connected with Non-Being and (at least one version of) the necessity claim connected with Being, let us now go through the different possibilities of understanding ἔστι. We will start with predicative interpretations, go on to identifying ones, and then finish off with existential and finally veridical interpretations of ἔστι.

Prima facie it seems that we can rule out straightforwardly that in fragment 2 ἔστι can have a predicative sense, being something-or-other, being F. For there is no F complementing ἔστι to make for a full predicate 'is F.' So ἔστι does not seem to be used in a predicative sense.[45] Nevertheless, Mourelatos 1970 claims to understand ἔστι in exactly this sense—he is probably the most pronounced and prominent representative of such a predicative reading. According to him, Parmenides' ἔστι should be understood as what he calls 'speculative predication,' as a predication which specifies what it is to be the nature or essence of a thing.[46] This understanding seems to fit the necessity connected with the characterization of Being. And we should not be surprised about not finding a complement to ἔστι, according to Mourelatos, since fragment 2 only gives us the general structure '-is-' of any speculative predication. So far so good. This reading becomes trickier once the participle ἐόν enters the stage of Parmenides, as it does in fragment 6, line 1, since there we seem to have the subject Parmenides will be concerned with, but still no complement to make ἔστι (or ἔμμεναι as in fragment 6) a full predicate. Mourelatos's claim, that ἐόν "collects the values that [...] go on the right-hand side, the predicate position" (74) rather than referring to a subject, is at least not the straightforward way to read the first occurrences of ἐόν in 6,1 and 8,3. And how does it fit with what we

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[45] Kahn claims that there is a predicative usage of ἔστι where the complement is provided by the context; however, the context here does not supply any complement. Furth 1986 seems to create such a context by introducing a possible interlocutor of Parmenides, Betathon, who supplies the subjects and predicates in statements like 'Lions are fierce.' Charming as Furth's little dialogues are, we cannot find any such propositions providing complements in the Parmenidean poem.

[46] Mourelatos 1970, 55 understands ἔστι as a copula with "both the subject and the predicate-complement left blank." Since he thinks that what Parmenides is concerned with are predications answering the "what is it" question, ἔστι functions grammatically as a copula but logically as indicating identity; this is what Mourelatos calls 'speculative predication,' cf. 57-58. It seems likely to me that 'is' as meaning the essence or nature of something is actually a meaning that got only fully accentuated and developed in Greek with Socrates and Plato. If we look at the classical introduction of the τί ἔστι question in the Platonic dialogues, 'what is x' is normally not understood by the interlocutors as a request to tell Socrates the essence that can be expressed as a definition. Rather, they take it as the request to say something about x that holds true, normally giving an example, etc.

took as a guide, step 5 of fragment 2 and 3, "For neither can you know non-Being nor say anything about it"? Why should something that does not have the structure of speculative predication be unknowable or unspeakable? Mourelatos's answer to this question is that speculative predication is a predication of an individual so that we get the structure 'individual thing -is- essential predicate.' And if we negate an individual, what we get is total indeterminacy, hence something that cannot be conceived (cf. 75-79).

However, there seem to be three problems with this account of Mourelatos: First, that we are dealing with "things-in-our-world" qua individuals as the "likely candidates" for the subject position is introduced on 79 without any argument. However, given the metaphysical inventory we find on the way of truth, which seems to be lacking individual things from our world, some argument supporting this claim would indeed be needed. Secondly, if we negate this whole speculative predicate structure, then the negation should also negate this whole structure, rather than merely the subject. Mourelatos seems to account for this by claiming that the things on the right hand side of this structure will also have the categorial rank of individuals; however, he does not explain why we should think this, and his examples, like non-Ithaca, seem to be examples of a simple negation of the subject.[47] Finally, as we will see below, Parmenides is not treating the negation of 'is' as something totally indeterminate, but rather as the polar opposite of Being.

Similar to the problem we encountered with understanding 'is' as predicating, understanding it as identifying[48] seems to come with the difficulty that in fragment 2 there is nothing to identify the possible 'it' with. In the light of Mourelatos's suggestion we might assume, however, that ἔστι is used in an identifying way—obviously not identifying some specific x with

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[47] Mourelatos might reply to this objection by pointing out that in his interpretation only one subject could possess a specific predicate. But what would be the predicate specific for Ithaca (such that non-Ithaca could count as a negation of the whole predicative structure)? Obviously, it cannot be the predicate 'being an island' as this is a predicate essential to all islands. But it seems it cannot be the specific longitude or latitude where Ithaca is situated either, as this would be a spatial determination that can in principle be given for all kinds of physical things, and the specific longitude or latitude of Ithaca would also hold of the stuff on the island. If we used the predicate 'being the homeland of Odysseus,' why would this be more essential for it than 'being the homeland of Telemachus'? So it is not clear to me how the idea of essential predicates, each specific for one individual subject only rather than for a certain kind or genus, can work for Mourelatos here.

[48] I want to leave the possibility open in the beginning that identity could be understood in a broader sense than we normally do today when we restrict identity to self-identity. So identity could also extend to a notion of sameness, as we find it for instance in Plato's *Sophist* 254e ff. where τὸ ταὐτόν seems to cover self-identity as well as sameness.

some specific y here but rather giving the basic structure of identification '–is identical with–.' And Mourelatos himself thinks that ἔστι understood as essential predication is actually situated somewhere between predication and identification. However, it is not clear why, following fragment 6, line 1, only something that has the structure of '–is identical with–' should be such that we can and must conceive it and speak about it, and why something that does not have this structure should not be knowable. Things look different if ἔστι is understood not as the basic structure of identification or sameness in general but only of self-identity. For it does seem to be plausible that nothing can be thought of or even pointed out that is not identical with itself, and that it thus is necessary to talk about what is identical with itself. However, we will see below that self-identity is a characteristic that is captured by ταὐτόν in Parmenides' poem. Accordingly, ἔστι understood as identity would either just be a different name for the same thing—not quite in line with Parmenides' paucity of expression—or capture more than self-identity.

Let us see whether understanding ἔστι as existential fares any better. According to step 5, Parmenides would then argue that we cannot conceive and indicated what does not exist. Now this can mean very different things: something could, for instance, be non-existent in the sense that it does not exist as an entity in the empirical world, i.e., in the realm of sensory experience, or it could be non-existent as not being a body and thus not being in time and space.[49] However, there are lots of things that do not exist in this sense, but nevertheless can be talked and thought about in the fullest sense (i.e., not only posited as a name), as, for instance, mathematical entities, solely intelligible or logical objects. So why should Parmenides assert that something that is a non-Being *qua* not being an empirical or bodily object cannot be thought of or indicated?[50] It seems it would need an additional argument to prove why we cannot refer to such entities, which we do not find in the fragments. Parmenides' argument appears strongest (not lacking additional assumptions) if we understand him as claiming that we cannot refer to something non-existent in the most basic sense, namely that it cannot exist even logically. For something that cannot exist even logically is

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[49] We normally assume bodies to be also perceptible, and hence members of the empirical realm. However, as the atoms of the ancient atomists show, being bodily and being perceptible need not coincide.

[50] The well-known Greek way of expressing falsity (at least before Plato), namely by saying that to utter something that is false is saying what is not, non-Being, still leaves us with this puzzle, since we would not claim every statement about something non-empirical or non-bodily, e.g., statements about numbers, to be wrong. Cf. also Kahn 1973.

something that does not possess sufficient logical structure even to be referred to as x, something that is hence impossible to be thought of, and, accordingly, cannot be indicated or seriously talked about (let alone be realized in an empirical realm),[51] since we cannot determine consistently what 'it' is.[52]

So if we understand 'is' as existential, we should take the existential sense at first with as little determination as possible, i.e., as existing at least in a logically consistent way (since whatever is a body or another entity in an empirical realm or some intelligible entity, etc. also has to be logically consistent)—for that reason it can be thought of or conceived. The fact that Parmenides insists on conceivability as a criterion for what is (cf. step 5) supports the thought that ἔστι *qua* existence has to be understood as entailing logical consistency. It explains why non-Being is not simply what happens not to be the case, but what is actually impossible to be thought or known.

Now what about the final possibility for interpreting ἔστι, the veridical interpretation? Step 2—that (it) is, and that (it) is not (the case) that (it) is not—shows that if we understand ἔστι here as veridical, we cannot understand it as claiming that some empirical state of affairs is the case. For we are not given any empirical state of affairs here; the empirical state of affairs we get are part of the second part of the poem, where empirical phenomena are explained and discussed. The possibility left for a veridical understanding of ἔστι is that something is the case in a logical sense: some-

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[51] By what exists in the empirical realm I want to understand what we can encounter in the physical world as individual things with our senses. In this sense, e.g., the square root of 2 is not a member of the empirical realm. For while we might encounter lots of things that, given a certain measurement unit, we might claim to possess the size of square root of 2, the square root itself is not something we might stumble over in the empirical world. Nevertheless, we can refer to it since it has a certain logical structure and can thus be seen as a member of a logical realm, whether this logical realm is created merely by abstraction or not. It does not seem necessary for this interpretation that Parmenides would or could make an explicit distinction between the empirical and non-empirical or logical realm. Rather I want to show that from the way Parmenides' argues, what we would call objects of the empirical realm are not what Parmenides' object of knowledge seems to refer to.

[52] Self-identity might after all be one necessary condition for determining what something is. We have to be cautious, however, for what we count as logically impossible need not be the very same thing that Parmenides counts as logically impossible given the different developments of logic. So KRS, 246, claim that Parmenides (1) understands non-existence as being nothing at all, (2) so that for him to exist is in effect to be something or other. While I would agree with KRS in (1), and while (2) is obviously a valid conclusion for us, it might not be so for Parmenides. He might rather claim that what exists as something or other is not Being and hence does not actually exist; so the opposite of 'nothing at all' might not be 'at least one' for Parmenides; cf. also the section on negation below.

thing holds true in the logical realm, i.e., it is (at least) consistent.[53] This understanding fits the one we got by understanding ἔστι as expressing logical existentiality since within the realm of logic, existing and holding true cannot be distinguished.[54] However, so far Being had to be *at least* also a logical object,[55] while now it seems it cannot be *anything but* a logical object.[56] Being a logical object in this sense also explains why in fragment 1

[53] I cannot go into the discussion here whether consistency can indeed be enough for truth in a logical realm and the problems of completeness connected with this claim. One might object to this intimate connection between consistency and truth in a logical realm by pointing out that if we have two very basic claims, (1) $(\exists x)(\exists y)\ x \neq y$ and (2) $\neg (\exists x)(\exists y)\ x \neq y$, both are consistent in first order logic so there can be models in which (1) is true, and others in which (2) is true. But there cannot be a model in which both are true since (1) is true, and (2) is the negation of (1); and logic alone cannot give us criteria to decide between (1) and (2). However, Parmenides' logic is so restricted that (1) would never be a consistent alternative, as we will see below. And given the additional characterizations we get from his signs in fragment 8, logical consistency might indeed be enough for truth within the Parmenidean philosophy. Scholars such as Cassirer, Hilbert, and Natorp assumed that logical truth can be boiled down to consistency (e.g., Hilbert thought that the consistency of a system yields the existence of a model, i.e., an interpretation in which it is true, and that a complete axiomatisation is possible which would determine which of a plurality of models holds), even if Gödel later showed that their suggestion does not work. What is important for the investigation here, however, is that, even if proved wrong by Gödel, it might seem like a plausible thought to consider consistency not only as a necessary but also as a sufficient condition for logical truth.

[54] It might be objected that even within the realm of logic we can distinguish between, say, the notion of an implication relation between two statements p and q and the proposition that an implication relation is true if p and q are true; hence, between (logical) existence on the one hand and holding true on the other. However, if we claim the implication to exist logically, we do not claim it to exist in the way I might claim my turtle Kasimir to exist, about whom there are many statements possible that might be true (e.g., that it is three months old, that it has purple spots on its shell, etc.), but that can be clearly distinguished from the claim of its (empirical) existence. What we claim, however, if we claim the implication relation to exist, is not that there is some entity of which certain claims might or might not hold. Rather we claim the existence of a certain truth function between two statements p and q which is false if p is true and q is false, and true in all other cases. That is what we call implication. Accordingly, there is no real difference between what holds true of this function and its existence.

[55] By a logical object or thing I understand very roughly something that is determined by logical thinking and thus conforms to logical demands (e.g., it is logically consistent, and it possesses at least sufficient logical structure to be identified and referred to as the very thing it is). It can be realized also in some realm apart from the logical one (and can in this respect also be called a possible object), but it need not (and so could also exist only as the content of a thought). This last characteristic, that it can but need not be realized in some realm apart from the logical one, is what distinguishes it from an object of logic, which is necessarily an object of logical thinking only, and thus a narrower notion. For the distinction between logical object and object of logic see also Maimon 1797.

[56] Note that this veridical understanding of ἔστι differs significantly from Kahn's 1969 according to which it asserts facts in our world; and Mourelatos's criticism of Kahn 1969

Parmenides can have the goddess only promise to tell the truth, not what the truth is about, and why in fragment 8 she finishes her account of "the way that it is" by calling it her account and thought concerning truth. We see that our interpretation of ἔστι as what can exist in a logically consistent way gives an explanation of this peculiarity; and it satisfies step (5) by giving an explanation why only Being is conceivable and its opposite is impossible to conceive.

That the object of investigation is indeed a logical, not an empirical thing is also supported by the fact that perception does not play any role for the knowledge "that (it) is"; and we judge what the goddess has said with our λόγος, not with our αἴσθησις.[57] Furthermore, this interpretation seems to fit Parmenides' claim concerning modality. For the necessity claimed for Being and the impossibility for non-Being shows that Parmenides does not consider his object of investigation as something that is the way it is only contingently, something that could as well be otherwise. And from the lack of any references to empirical things on the way of Truth and from what has been shown already, it is clear that Parmenides cannot talk about physical necessity and impossibility here. This fits an understanding of Being as that which can be consistently conceived. For if only Being can be consistently conceived, then it is necessary that we think and speak of it and say that it is (in the sense that it is consistent); and it is impossible to think and speak of non-Being, as it cannot be consistently conceived.

Whether we call this understanding of Being as "what can consistently be conceived" veridical in the sense specified, or existential, or even logical (not excluding the notion of self-identity) is in the end only a terminological question. It is an understanding of ἔστι that in any way implies a functional interpretation of the 'it'—'it' is not some specific thing or τὸ πᾶν that can

does not pertain to this understanding. But the understanding here is also not the same as the one Mourelatos suggests as an alternative, namely that it stands for something "really is" in examples like physical objects really are clouds of electrons, Mourelatos 1969, 743-744. On 737 Mourelatos points out that Kahn's interpretation raises the question why Parmenides and his audience should have found negations of this understanding of ἔστι as "it is not the case that . . ." objectionable. With the interpretation given here, by contrast, it is quite clear why an objection would be in place, because a negation of ἔστι implies inconsistency.

[57] Cf. also Barnes 1979, 170: "we are to judge his [Parmenides'] 'refutation' of Road (C) [i.e., the way of opinion] by 'argument' and not by appealing to experience." Furthermore, in the first part of the poem perception only occurs negatively, as the aimless eye, deaf hearing, etc. (cf. fragment 6, line 7, and fragment 7, lines 4–5); and the mortals are deaf and blind, not because they do indeed have troubles with their sense organs, but, as the continuation of fragment 6 shows, because they cannot judge, and thus take Being and Non-Being to be the same and not the same.

be the subject of the ἔστι, but rather whatever can be thought of consistently, what can be known.[58]

But what is it that according to Parmenides can indeed be so conceived? In order to determine whether night and light, cats and chickens might after all also be part of what can be conceived (or whether Being is completely restricted to what only belongs to the logical realm), we have to look at Parmenides' positive account of the 'referent' of thought, of ἐόν, with the σήματα of Being in fragment 8; so let us look at these now.[59]

One question the account of ἐόν in fragment 8 raises immediately is why the characteristics given are called σήματα, signs. It seems that σήματα have a vaguer status than a property predicated of ἐόν would have; and we will see below why the σήματα can indeed not be understood as normal predicates applying to Being.

At the beginning of fragment 8 we are given a quick summary of the σήματα of Being, before the deductive arguments for them start. The problem with the initial summary of the σήματα of Being is not only variations in the sources with respect to crucial notions, but also that it is not quite clear how far the summary actually extends. There is general agreement that it includes the determinations in lines 3 to 4. ἐόν is:

(1) Not generated (ἀγένητον) and imperishable (ἀνώλεθρόν).

(2) Whole and the only thing of its kind (οὖλον μουνογενές),[60] which is taken up in the second deduction by a specific version of being οὖλον, namely being not διαιρετόν.

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58 While the result is similar to Owen's 1975 understanding of the subject of ἔστι as "simply what can be talked or thought about," 55-61, I reach this result for different reasons.

59 It is not necessary that the reader could indeed already understand Being at the beginning of the poem, with fragment 2, in the very way she is meant to understand it after having gone through fragment 8. So there is the possibility that for purposes of presentation what can be understood at the beginning and at the end as the object of investigation might be different. This does, however, not mean that Parmenides would switch subject during the investigation, only that it might be the case that he cannot start off with the full account of Being, since he has to show us step by step how and why certain notions of Being cannot hold (the fact that I am talking about Being in the singular is thus not a claim that it must be obvious from the start that Parmenides is a monist, but only a literal translation of his ἐόν). Fragment 5 seems to speak against this possibility, since it claims that it does not matter for him where he starts as he will come back to it. However, this still leaves the possibility open that he could start from different points of his philosophical system, but once he has chosen one starting point, he does not have to presuppose his basic notions in full, but can have them emerge from the investigation. And indeed we do not see him start out with the assumption of a monistic Being; rather, we are shown in fragment 8 why, given his criteria, there can only be one Being.

60 This is the reading of Simplicius and others; it is singly of one kind (μοῦνον μουνο-γενές) according to Pseudo-Plutarch, or being one/the whole limb (οὐλομελές) according to Proclus. Mansfeld 1995 follows the last reading and translates "aus einem Glied"; this reading is also to be found in Burnet 1930 and Untersteiner 1958. The latter two argue against the reading οὖλον μουνογενές on the basis that this would have to mean 'only-begotten' as in Plato's Timaeus 31b. However, Tarán 1965, 92 shows convincingly that it can also be understood as unique or single or the only thing of its kind. Tarán understands line 34-41, which are normally taken as a summary of the way of truth, as a demonstration of this σήμα. Cf. McKirahan 2008, 221 for interpreting μουνογενές as unique rather than uniform.

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(3) Unshaken (ἀτρεμές), which is taken up by ἀκίνητον in the third deduction.

(4) Not to be completed (ἠδ' ἀτέλεστον).[61]

Many scholars see this as the complete summary of the σήματα of Being and take the following two lines already as part of the deduction of the first σήμα, that Being is not generated and imperishable.[62] Alternatively, line 5 and parts of line 6 introduce the following further σήματα:[63]

(5) It never was, nor will be since it is now altogether (οὐδέ ποτ' ἦν οὐδ' ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν).

(6) One (ἕν).

(7) Continuous (συνεχές).

As there is not enough space to go through the different deductions in any detail, I will only given an overview of the main premises and conclusions of the deductions in fragment 8 in order to understand how these characteristics are meant to be connected.

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61 This is the reading according to Simplicius, for the translation cf. Patin 1899, 538-539 (however, I do not think that this translation requires it to be a "Kampfwort gegen Heraclit"); it is perfect (ἠδὲ τέλειον) according to Owen's emendation; not imperfect (οὐδ' ἀτέλεστον) according to Brandis' emendation; not generated (ἠδ' ἀγένητον) according to Plutarch, Clement, Proclus and others, and complete (ἠδὲ τελεστόν) according to Covotti's emendation (cf. Tarán, 93, for an argument why this Greek variant should be translated as complete rather than limited). I would agree with most editors that "not generated (ἠδ' ἀγένητον)" seems an unlikely σήμα in a dense summary which already mentioned 'uncreated' at the very beginning. As for all the other readings, whichever one chooses, the basic idea is always that Being has to be something that is not lacking anything so that it could be perfected or completed; this is also how this σήμα is argued for in lines 26-33.

62 So, for instance, KRS, Hölscher 1986 and Tarán 1965.

63 Coxon 1986, 196-197.

Aims of demonstration[64]	In-between steps	Premises
(I) Not generated (line 6) → no temporal differences		(1) Non-Being is not conceivable (2) No sufficient reason (3) There can be nothing besides Being (4) Being cannot not be
(II) οὖλον qua not divisible (line 22) → no spatial differences		(5) Being is ὁμοῖον (consequence: it is συνεχές)
(III) ἀκίνητον (line 26)		Not generated = (1)
(IV) As the same resting in the same (line 29)	It is not lacking anything	(4)
(V) Not without Being can there be understanding (= Being as condition for understanding, line 35)[65]	(3)	οὖλον = (II) and ἀκίνητον = (III)
(VI) Complete (τετελεσμένον) (line 42)	It is the same with itself = (IV), and ὁμοῖον = (5), and	(6) there is a furthest limit[66]

We see that there is a certain circular structure in Parmenides' reasoning, something we can understand as a first formulation of a systematic philoso-

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[64] The aims of demonstrations are not necessarily the same as the σήματα mentioned in the initial summary, since some of these σήματα turn out to be consequences of others in the course of the deductions.

[65] We seem to have a weaker claim here than in fragment 3.

[66] Completeness (τετελεσμένον) covers two different features in Parmenides, that relate to two connotations of the Greek word τέλος, perfection and limit: first that Being is uniform, i.e., there are no differences, like being either bigger or smaller (lines 44-45) or more or less (line 48) in any respect, which would prevent it from being perfect; second that it has a limit. The reason for this second point seems to be that it is only determinable whether something is indeed uniform throughout in case this something is fully determined, which, within the Parmenidean context, requires the thing to be finite.

phy, where one claim rests as much on all the other claims as they rest on it. So premise (3), "there can be nothing besides Being," is on the one hand a premise for (III) being ἀκίνητον—it is a premise for (I), which in turn is taken as a premise for being ἀκίνητον in (III)—while ἀκίνητον is on the other hand used as a premise for (3) in (V). We see that with the basic σήματα of Being, one cannot be thought without the other.

If we wanted to unfold them from one point, we might say that Parmenides' referent for what can logically be thought neither allows for any internal differences (it is ὁμοῖον and everything we can conclude from that, συνεχές, indivisible, etc.) nor for any external one (it is single/whole),[67] there is no plurality and no change. From this we can also derive the impossibility of any temporal or spatial differences. So ἐόν is one—this is the only σήμα mentioned in the summary at the beginning that is not reasoned for in one of the deductions, since it can be understood as the result of the arguments of the other σήματα of Being, which demonstrate the impossibility of any differences. Thus the unity of Being is in no way compromised by any complexity or relation, as the unity of a plurality would. Rather, Being is absolutely simple. For any difference would introduce non-Being (x is different to and hence not y), and accordingly would not be conceivable and consistently thinkable within the Parmenidean framework.

What is clear from these characteristics, reinforcing the arguments before, is that what can be conceived and known is in the end not cats and chickens, or anything from the empirical realm, as they all require internal or external differences; of time, space, etc. The absolutely simple Being only seems to be the logical content of a thought for Parmenides. We saw that it is what is necessary to be conceived rather than a straightforward object. Its content cannot be differentiated from truth. As such it does not refer to any specific content as, for instance, a proposition would. Why Parmenides thinks he has to think of Being as absolutely simple without any relations will become clearer once we have looked at his usage of the logical operators.[68]

3.2. Parmenides' Negation Operator

Fragment 2 seems to introduce "that [it] is" and "that [it] is not" as basic notions. Since the first 'path' or road, the path that [it] is, investigates ἐόν,

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[67] Cf. also the exclusion of μᾶλλον in fragment 8, 23 which makes it clear that there are no internal differences, but the same quality everywhere, and in fragment 8, 48 which denies any external differences, any quantitative differences (that might lead to qualitative ones).

[68] The negation operator is used as a central way to prove the σήματα, as noted already by Fränkel and Austin; cf. Fränkel 1962, 402n12, and Austin 2002, 96.

the second path, that [it] is not, might be understood as investigating μὴ/οὐκ ἐόν. Thus it might seem that Parmenides treats μὴ/οὐκ ἐόν as a second basic notion. However, "that [it] is not" and μὴ ἐόν are excluded from rational investigation as non-intelligible (it cannot be thought or said, cf. fragment 2, line 7), and hence non-Being cannot after all be a basic notion for Parmenides. What Parmenides uses nevertheless implicitly as a crucial notion is negation expressed by 'οὐ,' 'μή' and the *alpha privative*. We saw above that negation is crucial for the right determination of Being, since almost all σήματα or marks of Being are at some point expressed in negative form (e.g., ἀγένητον, or οὖλον being taken up by οὐδὲ διαιρετόν). And the reasons that Parmenides offers for those claims about Being are often themselves put in negative form (for instance, Being is un-generated, ἀγένητον, because all possibilities to understand it as generated turn out to be not consistently thinkable, as Parmenides attempts to show in the first deduction, fragment 8, lines 6-21).

Today we are probably inclined to understand negation in philosophy as primarily or at root an operation on a proposition taking truth to falsity and vice versa. But this is an understanding that was at least influenced by the Stoics[69] and Frege, so we should not simply presuppose it for understanding Parmenides. Parmenides does not explicitly introduce or discuss his usage of negation in his poem. However, as I want to show below, his particular understanding of negation is crucial for grasping central claims of his philosophy, and the semantic value of the expression to which the negation is applied in his poem changes due to the negation in a systematic but for us not straightforwardly familiar way. Accordingly, it will be useful to look briefly at a variety of possible understandings of negation, which will make it easier to grasp in which way Parmenides uses negation in his poem and how far his understanding of negation differs from our standard use in modern times.

Nowadays negation tends to be studied as a matter of either logic or language or both. For the present project we will concentrate on the logical possibilities of negation, rather than the linguistic ones—though they are often, no doubt, interconnected. It is true that the Greek language possesses some particular features concerning negation which might have been important for Parmenides. Most notably, Greek uses two different terms and their compounds for different forms of negation, οὐ and μή. Very roughly speaking, οὐ normally negates objectively, i.e., facts, while μή negates sub-

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69 Where the idea of an external negation ('Not: x is F') seems to have been employed systematically for the first time, cf. Horn 2001, 21.

jectively, i.e., demands, wishes, and conditions that are willed or thought.[70] However, I will be focusing on the logical rather than these linguistic possibilities of negation, since this is what is crucial for Parmenides' philosophy. And we should be prepared for the possibility that negation can be seen as having also some ontological basis or counterpart, or ontological implications—as is obvious, for instance, in Plato's *Sophist* or in Aristotle's *Categories*. There Aristotle points out that it is not merely the case that the affirmation 'he is sitting' is opposed to the negation 'he is not sitting'; we may equally say that what these expressions assert is opposed to each other in the very same way (12b). So the opposition we derive by negating 'he is sitting' also corresponds to an opposition 'in the world,' his sitting opposed to his not-sitting. Within the context of the question what is a negative judgment about, the discussion about the possibility of negative facts shows a possible connection to ontology even in modern debates of negation, as does the discussion about the existential import of propositions in logic.

In order to figure out in a systematic way a broader (if very rough) range of possible understandings of negation suitable for this project, I will first look at what a negation operator can take as 'argument,' i.e., what are the things that can be negated, then at the relation between the original input and the result,[71] before considering the possible results of a negation on their own. Subsequently, I will look at the passages involving negations in Parmenides' poem, trying to analyze them with the help of this outline of the spectrum of possible understandings of negation. It is only at the very end that possible ontological consequences of Parmenides' negation operator will be looked at.

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70 Cf. Smyth 1956, section 2688, and Kühner and Gerth 1904, 2, Teil, 2. Band, 179. Furthermore, the Greek language uses iterations of negations which might be used to strengthen the negative sense (an example of a strengthening of negations in Parmenides we find in fragment 7,1-2: "οὐ γάρ μήποτε," "never"); but under certain circumstances they cancel each other out, e.g., if a simple negation follows a compound one, cf. Kühner/Gerth, 1904, 205.

71 Readers steeped in the Fregean tradition might want to think of this as the relation between value and argument, as long as they do not employ from this framework the idea that value and argument have to be the True and the False. At the moment I want to be as neutral as possible about what the input and results of a negation might be, it could be an expression, or the things referred to, etc.

3.2.1. *Possible Understandings of Negation*

To begin with, we can distinguish different kinds of negations according to what is negated: from a logical point of view,[72] what is negated can prima facie be a term (including subjects and predicates), a proposition, etc. Prime examples for term negation might seem to be general terms, like man and mortal; but I do not want to rule out for present purposes that negation might be combinable with singular terms. So in principle, there is the option to negate the different parts of a statement (S is P)—the subject-term (not-S is P), the predicate-term (S is not-P) and the copula (S is not P)[73]—as well as the whole statement (not: S is P). And if a sentence has a quantifier or a modal operator these can of course also be negated.

The relation between the result of a negation in a broad sense and the original input can be seen to form either a contradictory or a contrary opposition. Contradictory opposites are such that one of the two has to be true, the other false, while contrary opposites can both be false (either because there is a possible third in between the two poles, or because we are dealing with things which cannot be characterized by either opposite). Both kinds of opposites are governed by the law of non-contradiction; in addition, contradiction is also governed by the law of excluded middle. While healthy and ill can be understood as contrary opposites, so that there will be things that are neither healthy nor ill, healthy and not-healthy might count as contradictory opposites,[74] one of which has to hold true of everything.[75]

In addition, contrary opposites can also allow what we might call different degrees or intensities. If we have a contrary opposition that allows for a

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[72] Of course, a negation can also be seen as a linguistic entity that is applied to linguistic expressions or their meanings. However, as mentioned above, I will only concentrate on negation as a logical tool.

[73] However, negating the copula will normally amount to the same as negating the whole statement.

[74] Given that we do not know yet what it is that Parmenides is actually negating, it seems to be reasonable to allow also for the possibility that (at least general) *terms* are seen as contradictory or contrary. Contradictory terms can be understood as terms which, if both are applied to whatever subject, will necessarily produce one true and one false statement, while the application of contrary terms to whatever subject can produce two false statements and cannot produce two true ones.

[75] We should be aware, however, that these logical difference need not always correspond to the different linguistic expressions used here, like the difference between 'ill' and 'not-healthy,' which we understand here as referring to a contrary and a contradictory opposite of 'healthy,' respectively; so if we encounter an expression like 'not-healthy,' we will have to look at the context to figure out which logical possibility is actually employed.

tertium—a mediate contrary pair, as Boethius, among others, calls them—like black and white, then negating 'S is white' could either mean that S is black, or that it is some colour in between black and white, let us say some gray. The former case we can call an extreme negation as it excludes white completely and produces as a result the polar opposite of the positive. The latter case we can term a moderate negation,[76] the result of such a moderate negation is different only in some sense from what is negated, or, as Horn 2001, 38-39 calls it, it is a simple, not polar contrary.

The result of the negation will be in principle the same kind of thing as the argument, a term, proposition, etc. But it will be more or less determined or restricted, depending on whether it is situated within a restricted or an unrestricted domain. In the case of a contrary opposite we normally seem to deal with a restricted domain: only within a restricted domain, as, for instance, the realm of living beings, will the negation of healthy lead to the opposite ill; only in such a clearly defined realm will everything either have to be ill or healthy.[77] Outside this realm, let us say with respect to numbers, healthy and ill is not a reasonable opposition; the number 4 will neither count as healthy nor ill. But we can say that the number 4 is not-healthy, if by this expression we are referring to the contradictory opposite of being healthy. In the case of a contradiction, the result of a negation will often belong to an unrestricted domain, and thus be not clearly defined. Everything is either healthy or not-healthy; whatever is not living will count as not-healthy, while living things will either be healthy or ill (cf. also Aristotle, *Cat.* 13b).

So the product of a negation is either situated in a restricted domain, i.e., a clearly defined realm[78] (as a contrary opposite is) or in an undetermined

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[76] For this distinction between extreme and moderate negation cf. also Plato's *Sophist*, 257b-c, where Plato introduces non-Being as different from Being by referring to the not-Big, which can indicate the small as well as the equal.

[77] And if we understand, for instance, not-white as a contrary negation of white, it will also be at least relatively determined, since we then know that it is some colour, either black or something in between white and black. The same counts for all other kinds of term negation. 'not-Socrates,' for instance, if understood as contradictory opposite to Socrates is not determined, while 'not-Socrates' qua the contrary opposite is at least determined as some human with the exception of Socrates (or something similar).

[78] It is not necessary that this realm is always *explicitly* defined, if it is clear from the context what the realm is. So if, for instance, we go to a concert at a College and we see a sign 'tickets for non-members $15,' the realm over which the negation ranges is not explicitly defined. But we know from the circumstances that it is meant to extend over the realm of all human beings who want to go to this concert, and it is within this group that the negation operator separates those who want to have a College affiliation from those that have not. The context makes it clear that the realm is not meant to include, for instance, cats or frogs, thoughts or

one. If a certain realm is specified over which the negation ranges, for instance, a certain group containing two or more elements like the realm of living beings, the negation produces something which is (relatively) well determined—if I know that Socrates is not healthy in the sense of being ill, I will send him at least best wishes for a speedy recovery. If, on the other hand, the realm is not determined at all, then the negation will produce something indefinite, since we know of the result only that it is not the positive argument (term, proposition, etc.) out of all possible things in the universe. If Socrates is not healthy in the sense of the contradictory opposite of healthy, then I had better wait with my wishes, for he might no longer be with us.

However, not all contradictory opposites must be situated in an unrestricted realm. For instance, the contradictory result of the negation 'Swans are necessarily white' will be 'Swans are not necessarily white,' a statement which might also be counted as 'situated' within the realm of statements about swans and their colour.

3.2.2. *Evidence of Negation in Parmenides*

In what follows I will start with a quick survey of the most important occurrences of negation in Parmenides' poem. This should help to get a rough sketch of his general understanding of negation, so that eventually the immediate impact of this understanding on Parmenides' philosophy can be shown. There are more than forty occurrences of negation in Parmenides' poem. Most of them are found in the ἀλήθεια part of the poem, the largest number in fragment 8, and a couple each in fragment 2 and 6, one in fragment 7. What is negated are mainly terms. However, right at the beginning of the ἀλήθεια part, in fragment 2, Parmenides seems to work with different arguments when he claims ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι, "that it is not that [it] is not" in line 3, and ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν, "that [it] is not" in line 5. Given that we saw above that ἔστι in fragment 2, line 3 ff., which is negated in line 5, is not a name but rather a minimal sentence, line 5 could be understood as negating a proposition '~ (it is).' And line 3 seems to be a clear case of negating a proposition '~ (it is not).' However, as we have seen above, there are good reasons for following the traditional translation of line 3 as "that it is impossible that [it] is not." So the first negation of this line seems to ne-

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numbers. In the Plato reference given above, *Sophist*, 257b-c, the fact that the not-Big refers to the Small or the Equal (but not, let us say, to the Green) makes the domain restriction on the negation obvious—it is situated within the range of everything that can have a certain size.

gate a modality rather than a proposition: '(~ possible) (~ [it] is).'[79] And in lines 6-8 Parmenides translates the second negation of line 3 and the claim of line 5, that [it] is not, into μὴ ἐόν, non-Being, when he writes that the suggestion from line 5 is an altogether unknowable trail "for neither could you think of non-Being (μὴ ἐόν)—that cannot be done—nor say anything about it" (line 7-8). What seems to be a negation of a term, 'non-Being,'[80] the result of which he claims to be not thinkable and sayable. What Parmenides is claiming in lines 6-8 is thus not that the hypothesis from line 5 is intelligible but false (as he would if he claimed that 'it is not the case that it is'). Rather, he is claiming that it is not even intelligible, but meaningless words—hence it is sayable in the sense that words can be uttered, but not in the sense that a meaningful thought is thus conveyed (cf. also below).[81]

This reinforces what we saw above in our attempt to give an account of Parmenides' notion of Being, namely that Parmenides does not—and given his account of Being *cannot*—draw a difference between truth and what the truth is about (cf. also fragment 1, lines 28-32). Using a negation to make a negative claim or to claim a negative proposition, 'it is not the case that p' or 'it is the case that not-p' would imply a difference between truth (which is denied) and propositional content, in which case non-Being would after all be sayable and thinkable (in the form of 'p'), even if it does not hold.[82]

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[79] We might think of fragment 2 as presenting nested negations.

[80] Accordingly, it seems to be only a term, a predicate, that he is negating in these sentences in fragment 2, saying in line 5 "that (it) is-not" and in line 3 "that (it) is not-possible that (it) is-not"; hence, what prima facie seems to be the negation of a proposition should also be properly understood as the negation of terms, expressing the impossibility of non-Being.

[81] Mourelatos 1970, 75 claims that the negative route is "rejected not as meaningless but as ineffectual" and refers to οὐκ ἀνυστόν in fragment 2, 7 for that. However, the next line, fragment 2, 8 claims οὔτε φράσαις, "you could not even single out the goal," as Mourelatos translates it on the next page—but if you cannot even specify the goal of the journey, then at least the goal is not simply ineffectual but rather meaningless (which is all I need for my claim above). And the οὐκ ἀνυστόν in fragment 2, line 7, does not directly refer to the negative route, but to οὔτε γνοίης, to the impossibility of thinking of non-Being. This seems to leave the possibility open, however, that the journey itself is still conceivable, even if its object or goal is not. As the poem itself lists the negative route in fragment 2 as one of two initial possibilities for inquiry, we might think it better that it should be conceivable. But it is not quite clear how we could indeed conceive the journey, if we cannot even single out its goal, i.e., that which makes it the journey it is, in contrast to the other one, that of truth. So Parmenides might after all only bring up the second route as a ladder to be thrown away, cf. also footnote 11.

[82] Talking about non-Being in line 7 does not lead into the same problem that its content can be distinguished from its truth value, since a) non-Being as such (independent of any

That Parmenides is in general negating terms rather than propositions is also supported by the fact that the goddess does not make any statements like: "It is not the case that this path is in any way knowable."[83] Rather she says that she wants to show this path to be utterly unknowable (fragment 2, line 6) or that she wants to hold him back from this path (fragment 6, line 3-4), or that he shall hold back his thought from this way (fragment 7, line 2).[84]

Apart from the negations referring to some form of ἔστι, the most important negations we come across in Parmenides' poem are explicit negations of modalities and the predicate-term negations used extensively to characterize Being in fragment 8. What is negated in fragment 2 when sketching the only two possible paths of investigation—the first of which will turn out to be necessary, the second impossible[85]—is the *possibility* of non-Being in line 3. And lines 6-8 negate the assumption of non-Being and its *necessity* from line 5.[86] So we would understand the relation between the original input and the result of the negation as contradictory in one case (possibility and impossibility) and contrary in the other (necessity and impossibility).

An indirect negation of modality we also find with the negation of some of the terms used to characterize Being in fragment 8,[87] namely with the negation of verbal adjectives, like ἀκίνητον (line 26) or οὐδὲ διαιρετόν (line

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statement in which it is used) does not have any truth value, and b) the input of the negation here, Being, is, according to Parmenides, thinkable and sayable.

[83] I owe this point to Richard Sorabji. An interesting and more extensive treatment of negation in Parmenides can be found in Austin 1986, chapter I. Austin's central claim that Parmenides is not negating the copula when talking about Being (οὐκ ἔστι "is never used assertorically to deny a predicate of being, nor, of course, is it used to say that being does not exist," 22) leads him to results that are to a certain degree similar to mine. However, for him whole sentences can be negated, which I argued above is actually not fitting Parmenides' framework, since it would require differentiating between truth value and intelligibility. Besides, I try to show that we have to understand how Parmenides' negation operator functions in order to understand his philosophy, rather than setting up rules of application as Austin does.

[84] Similarly, I think fragment 8, lines 44-45, negate terms, predicates, rather than propositions, line 36 negates the subject term and line 5 negates the temporality implied in ἦν and ἔσται. Only lines 46-47 might be an exception and negate a proposition.

[85] In fragment 8, line 16, we seem to get a kind of second order necessity, the necessity to leave alone the one path and take the other, necessary one.

[86] The negation of the second path is not, as we might expect, the contingency, that [it] is not (the negation of necessity as the possibly-not), but impossibility. Cf. also fragment 8, lines 9-11, where Parmenides derives from the lack of any necessity that would have made Being to come into being sooner or later that it *cannot* have come into being. In all these cases the result is presented as a direct inference, since no further premise is mentioned nor is it obvious that any other implicit premise is at work in the background.

[87] Fragment 8 also contains some simple term negation, as for instance, ἄναρχον in line 27.

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22).[88] These verbal adjectives ending in "-τος" can either denote a possibility (what can be V-ed) or a passive resulting state (having the force of a perfect passive participle, what has been V-ed). From the context in which they are used—for instance, οὐδὲ διαιρετόν seems to have the sense of 'being not divisible,' not simply 'not divided,' since the background assumption seems to be that division is possible only where there are differences—and from Parmenides' prominent employment of impossibility in fragment 2, we can infer that the negations of these verbal adjectives are not simply negations of a resulting state but of the *possibility* of whatever is expressed by the verb, the result of which is the impossibility of the original input.

The result of the negations discussed is normally clearly determined or restricted, obviously so in the case of explicitly negating possibility and necessity. But also in cases which prima facie seem to produce an indeterminate or unrestricted result, like ἀκίνητον in line 26. Ἀκίνητον might refer to everything in the world apart from something movable or to that of which motion/change and rest cannot be sensibly predicated. But we actually find that it is referring to an extreme (and hence contrary) opposite, as it is clearly equated with resting (cf. line 29-30).[89] How this plays out in the case of non-Being we will look at below.

Prima facie, the relation between the original argument and the result of the negation sometimes seems to be what we would call contrary (as we just saw in the case of ἀκίνητον, which is equated with resting, κεῖται) sometimes contradictory (as, for instance, in fragment 2 line 3, the relation between the possibility and the impossibility of non-Being). However, Parmenides normally employs features from what we would see as contrary as well as from contradictory oppositions: the result is treated like an extreme or complete opposite of the original argument, hence as what we would think of as a contrary opposite. On the other hand, it is also made clear that of the two, the original input and the result of the negation, one has to be true, the other false—a feature we would see as belonging to a contradictory opposition.[90]

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[88] The word order shows that we are dealing with the negation of the predicate-term here and not with the negation of the whole proposition. In Greek, the former has a marked word order 'S negation-particle P copula,' the later has the unmarked order 'S P negation-particle copula.' Although we are missing a separate subject here, it seems to be clear that οὐδὲ διαιρετόν ἐστιν shows the marked word order of predicate-term negation.

[89] And double negation equals the affirmation (as, e.g., in fragment 8 where Parmenides assumes that claiming Being not to be incomplete shows it to be complete).

[90] It is clear that Parmenides is thus not simply working with what Boethius called an immediate contrary pair, i.e., a contrary pair that does not allow for a *tertium*, like odd and

That Parmenides treats the result of the negation as the complete opposite of the original input, and hence as contrary, can most clearly be seen from fragment 2, line 6: assuming the necessity of non-being is παναπευθέα ἀταρπόν, an altogether or utterly unknowable trail. The παν ('altogether') indicates that we are dealing with a complete or greatest opposite, what I called an extreme negation: it is not only the case that non-Being is not necessary—the contradictory opposite to the necessity of non-Being would be that non-Being is possibly not—but rather that this is an assumption that cannot even be thought, that hence is impossible.

Although we are dealing with complete opposites, Parmenides always assumes that one of the two poles has to be true, the other false. This becomes most obvious in fragment 8, line 11, which claims it to be necessary that Being either is or is not wholly (πάμπαν) i.e., either it is in every respect or it is not and in no respect.[91] For us, both poles of the complete opposite 'being in every respect or in no respect' could be false (namely if something were in some respect but not in others), while the contradictory opposite to being in every respect would be not being at least in one respect. We see how Parmenides thus combines features of what we would call contrary and contradictory opposites, which we might think of as illegitimate; and this he does also when something prima facie seem to us to be a clear case of either contrariety or contradiction.

We find the co-existence of features of contrariety and contradiction again in fragment 8, line 33: "it is not lacking [in anything], for if it were [lacking in anything] it would be lacking in everything."[92] For Parmenides the negation of "not lacking in anything" amounts to "lacking in anything." By contrast, we would normally either think that negating "not lacking in anything" results in "lacking in at least one thing (aspect etc.)," if we want one of the two opposites to be necessarily true (which Parmenides does, otherwise his argument in lines 30-33 would not work). Or, if we dealt with the opposition of "not lacking in anything" and "lacking in everything," we would not think that one of the two has to be true.

Summing up, we can say that Parmenides uses negation as a one-place operator that normally takes terms and modalities as arguments and, work-

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even, since also with immediate contraries both elements can be false, e.g., outside the realm of numbers, not everything is either odd or even, but could be neither.

[91] I am reading the πάμπαν (completely) as being related to πέλεν (to be) as well as οὐχί (not (to be)), which is supported by the argument in fragment 2, line 6-8. KRS also read it like this when they translate "it must either be completely or nothing at all," similarly Tarán 1965 and Coxon 1986.

[92] For possible readings of this line given the problems of the text handed down to us cf. Tarán 1965, 114-115.

ing as what I termed 'extreme negation,' produces results which are clearly defined, they are the polar opposites of the original input. The relation between the original argument and the product of negation shows features of what we would call contradictory opposites—one of them has to be true, the other false—as well as of contrary ones—they are the extreme poles of a certain domain.

What are the immediate consequences of this way of understanding negation? First, Parmenides' understanding that 'S either is completely P or it is completely not-P' makes differences of respect impossible.[93] Accordingly, Parmenides has to understand the Law of Non-Contradiction as 'not (P and not-P)' without any respects.[94] As a consequence, the Law of Excluded Middle also has to hold between any pair of opposites, also between what we would think of as contrary: '[not (S is P and S is not-P)] in any respect, and S has to be either P or not-P.' So Parmenides does not seem to distinguish between contrariety and contradiction within the realm of ἀλήθεια, but employs one kind of negation which shows features of both.

The central role that the negation of modality plays shows that Parmenides is not interested merely in what happens to be the case factually (in some contingent way), but rather in what has to be the case and what cannot be the case. In accordance with this understanding of negation, non-Being seems to be what cannot be and what is in no way—now we are also going to spell out the ontological consequences: non-Being not merely is not but it cannot be. This becomes clear from Parmenides' negation of modals and verbal adjectives.[95] The impossibility of non-Being is also expressed in fragment 7, line 1, "for never can it be forced that non-Being is." An extreme negation of Being as that 'which-can-be-thought-of-in-a-logically-consistent-way' has to result in non-Being as what cannot at all be thought

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[93] Parmenides' extreme negation does not allow for any respects as we saw in fragment 8, line 11; in line 5 he even explicitly excludes the possibility of any temporal respects. So he is excluding possibilities like S being P when it came into being, but being not-P once it has come into being or is passing away.

[94] This does not mean that the criteria for knowledge are determined by Parmenides' logic, but that his logic restricts which interpretations of them are in principle possible. A negation of only one or another aspect of something would, of course, presuppose a difference in respect and allow for understanding the principle of non-contradiction as 'not (P and not-P) in the same respect.' The basis for this possibility was only developed in Plato's Sophist, where the negation operator is re-defined to denote not absolute opposition, but rather otherness.

[95] Obviously, I am very sympathetic in principle to a modal interpretation of Parmenides as Palmer 2009 develops it. However, while Palmer claims that non-Being means "non-Being must not be" ("non-Being' is just a short for this, according to Palmer), I think the impossibility connected with non-Being is only implied, and comes in through Parmenides' understanding of negation and Being.

of as logically consistent, and hence what cannot be intelligible—as not even thinkable and sayable (we might utter something but we would not communicate a consistent thought).[96] With an extreme negation at work, the supposed choice sketched in the beginning in fragment 2 turns out to be a choice between what is necessary to be conceived (since only it can be consistently conceived) and what is impossible to be conceived. Non-Being as the polar opposite of Being, as what cannot be thought at all, thus does not seem to be something like a triangular quadrangle, which, while it can be uttered in words, is inconsistent and thus cannot be meaningfully conceived.[97]

As the result of an extreme negation, non-Being is not at all. It is not non-Being qua being simply different from Being itself, in which case it would also be in some sense. Rather, it is the polar opposite of Being. Accordingly, non-Being seems to be clearly restricted. However, since one of the two, Being or non-Being, has to be true, as we can infer from lines 3-5 in fragment 2, and what is true is Being qua what is completely, everything that is not completely should also belong to non-Being.

On the other hand, complex elements and differences are explicitly supposed only in the world of δόξα, where, accordingly, another way of negation is employed, which is not permitted in the realm of true Being. This negation operator wrongly allows for merging extreme opposites. Ταὐτά in fragment 8, line 55, refers to the basic opposites of light and night, which are blended for the mortals, as fragments 9 and 12 and testimonium 35 make clear. And in fragment 6, there is even a double merging going on: S and not-S are P and not-P (Being and οὐκ εἶναι are the same and not the same, lines 8-9).[98]

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96 Cf. also Wiesner 1996, 23-26.
97 Cf. also Palmer 2009, 101-2. While a triangular quadrangle can be part of a negative statement such as 'there are no triangular quadrangles,' it is impossible to affirm the existence of it.
98 Cf. Miller 2006 for an account of negation in the proem and a possible connection of the understanding of negation with the different ways in fragment 6.

3.3. *Parmenides' Identity Operator*[99]

So far we have seen that Parmenides has one basic object of investigation, Being, and one operator for separation which is required to deny wrong ideas about Being. These can only be uttered but not thought. What is needed in addition is an operator for connection that allows for positive claims about Being.[100] Within Parmenides' logical framework the counterpart to his negation operator, which allows for denying any complexity of Being, is a form of identity- or sameness-operator. The absoluteness of Parmenides' negation—an extreme negation that negates the argument completely—corresponds to the absoluteness of identification, i.e., identification with no exception[101]—as we would say: in every respect, if Parmenides would allow for respects.

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99 If we understand an operator as something that operates on propositions to yield other propositions, it might seem strange to call 'identity' an operator. I think of identity as an operator, nevertheless, since it is a logical tool that operates on an 'object' in a way that can be grasped independently of any knowledge of the content of the object, only that the 'object' need not be a proposition but can be different forms of operands, like, for instance, a term, as we saw above with the negation operator. And thinking of identity as an operator might be more plausible if we take into account that we could also understand the identity relation as a truth function (and hence as an operator) which takes T to T and F to F; so for every input there is a unique output. With respect to the more specific characterization of identity given below, we might keep in mind that while identity in a Fregean scheme is a binary function, xRx, it could be treated as a unary one, if we understand it as taking an argument x to the property Rx (so the function Rx is applied to x).

100 Within Parmenides' framework we cannot clearly separate between separation and denial, on the one hand, and connection and affirmation, on the other. For only if we distinguish the content of a claim from the claim of its truth can we claim that it is the case that x is F (connection) or that it is the case that x is not F (separation), affirming a connection and a separation, respectively. However, without such an understanding, 'x is F' is a connection and at the same time an affirmation, and 'x is not F' is a denial as well as a separation. Plato in his *Sophist* introduces non-Being as a separation operator and identity as a connection operator, and differentiates the two from denial and affirmation, by showing that they only come into play once the operators are connected with statements and thoughts, 260a ff.

101 While it seems likely that the predicative and identity sense of εἶναι were not clearly separated in Parmenides' time (cf. also Mates 1979), a simple positive predication will not do since it would still imply a difference between Being and its determinations (cf. also Zeno's paradox against plurality in Philoponus, *Phys.* 42.9, which claims that one thing, like Socrates, having many predicates, like pale, philosophic, pot-bellied and snub-nosed, can thus not truly be one). The identity operator is the least developed of the three basic concepts of Parmenides, which is also the case in Plato's *Sophist* where 'is' designating Being and 'is' designating Identity are not always strictly kept apart. Interestingly also Frege still feels the need to point out that while in sentences like 'x is green,' 'is' is used in a copulative way, in a sentence like 'x is Venus,' the 'is' only seemingly has the same role as in the other sentences; but it is indeed used as an identification; cf. Frege 1892, 192-205.

The kind of identity Parmenides has to employ is the identity of one thing with itself ($x = x$). Let me call it *absolute identity* as there is no difference in any aspect, nor is there any context in which the x on the left hand side of the equation sign cannot replace the x on the right hand side. And let me distinguish it from *relative identity* or *sameness* ($x=y$) as any form of likeness which involves also a difference between x and y in *at least* one respect (for instance, a difference in sense or in number).

If Parmenides employed relative identity, he would have to state that x and y are not the same in every respect, so in at least one respect x would be not-y. But according to the above sketched negation operator, x being not-y (in one respect) is the same as saying that it is not y at all, it is its polar opposite. So if y *is*, this also implies that x *is not*, and for Parmenides this means *is not at all*. Hence, Parmenides can only think of absolute identity, he has to employ an identity of the x=x kind, rather than having one referent be given in different senses. So although Parmenides ascribes some σήματα to Being, he nevertheless can only think of absolute identity statements as far as true Being is concerned. For any kind of relative identity would state a difference between the two relata and thus not-Being (at all). Actually, if he were absolutely consistent, Parmenides could only claim 'Being is Being.' Very much the way Plato's late learners only acknowledge that the good is good, 251b-c.[102] This absolute identity also seems to be a reason why we find a lot more negative descriptions of Being than positive ones in the poem. And it also explains why Parmenides calls the description of Being in fragment 8 σήματα, line 2, for they cannot really be identified with Being, and thus, according to Parmenides' framework, in fact cannot be ascribed to it. Hence, Parmenides' strategy to explain Being to us is either to use allusions or by arguing for the exclusion of other possibilities, as he does in fragment 2 where he establishes the path of ἔστιν by arguing against the alternative path, οὐκ ἔστιν. In fact, of the basic characteristics of Being only being One is not negatively expressed,[103] but positively identified with Being.

A crucial passage for seeing the identity operator at work seems to be fragment 8, lines 29-30, where ταὐτόν is used to determine ἐόν further: 'Being as the same and remaining in the same it rests in accordance with

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102 And in a way this seems to be what Parmenides is doing when he describes the path of inquiry as ὅπως ἔστιν, fragment 2, line 3: "that ( ) is" seems to be the only possible true statement.

103 Also being continuous is not negatively expressed, but this characteristic turns out to be an inference, rather than a basic σῆμα in the course of the deduction.

itself[104] and remains firmly here." I understand this line to claim that Being rests according to itself (not following anything else) by remaining the same and in the same (condition). Identity is introduced here as a property-like determination[105] rather than as a relation (so we do not get a two-place structure 'Being is the same as itself,' which could be extended, as we see it in Plato's *Sophist* later on, to 'x is the same as something else').

This understanding of ταὐτόν, however, seems to get us into trouble when we look at fragment 3 and its variant in fragment 8, line 34. Does our reading of ταὐτόν not require that εἶναι and νοεῖν are absolutely identical? And might this not sound like an absurd claim given that something can easily be without being thought, and something might be thought without existing (at least in the world we ordinarily take ourselves to inhabit)? Things might get somewhat clearer if we remember that the object that is and is thought is not an empirical, but a logical thing. Accordingly, if it is thought, it also exists, since a logical object exists (also) as the content of a thought. It cannot be thought without being in this sense. Fragment 8, line 34, "Thinking and the thought that it is are the same," can be read accordingly: thinking something also means thinking this something as existing (at least) in the sense that it is a logically consistent structure. Pushing this thought a little further, it seems to be possible to suggest that if the logical object in question is nothing other than the consistent content of a thought, it cannot be independent of the thought, for then *it is thought* and hence identical with it, and Parmenides can claim "τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι."[106]

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104 I translated ἐν as 'in' and καθ' as 'in accordance with' here (understanding 'in accordance with itself' as indicating something like being autonomous, not being constrained by something else), while Hölscher 1968 and Barnes 1979 take καθ' as well as ἐν to mean 'in.' For the thought that Being is in itself and not in another cf. also Plato's *Parmenides*.

105 xRx is treated like a unitary function taking x to the property Rx, to 'being identical with x,' as we saw above.

106 This reading comes in the end close to some of the so-called idealistic readings of fragment 3. While αὐτό is often translated as an operand ("the same can be thought and be,' e.g., Hölscher), according to our interpretation it should be understood as an operator (νοεῖν and εἶναι are the same). It seems as if the connection operator works in the very same way in the realm of the mortals when it is claimed in fragment 8, line 57-58, that fire is "everywhere identical with itself but not identical with the other." However, this formulation "but not identical with the other" shows that the self-identity of fire, in contrast to that of Being, is claimed from the standpoint of a plurality. And since for the mortals Being and Non-Being are the same and not the same (fr. 6, lines 8-9), obviously they claim more than that the identity x=x Parmenides restricts himself to.

4. The Connection of the Three Basic Concepts

The three basic concepts investigated, Being as the operand and negation and identity as operators, can be shown to form a 'system' together[107] in the sense that they depend on each other in such a way that any changes in one concept would necessitate changes in the others.[108] The way these basic concepts fit together can be roughly understood as follows: An extreme negation of non-Being leads to an absolutely simple Being (since only such a Being excludes any differences and hence non-Being). And if Being is absolutely simple, then a negation of it will be a negation of any Being, and hence an extreme negation; and the result will be absolute non-Being.[109]

The only way to ascribe something to such an absolutely simple Being is by absolute identity, which is the counterpart to extreme negation. For if Parmenides had employed relative identity, he would have to state that x and y are not the same in every respect, so in at least one respect x would be not-y. But according to his negation operator, x being not-y (in one respect) is the same as saying that it is not at all. Thus Parmenides can only think of an absolute identity, not of a relative one if ascribing something to Being.

We already see how this system of basic concepts gives the impression of fulfilling the requirement of consistency on the systematic level. And we saw how in fragment 8 the criterion of consistency is used to exclude wrong assumptions about Being. Furthermore, we are not only explicitly asked to prove this doctrine with our own rationality, we are also given the premises and arguments needed to prove the statement of the goddess with our own λόγος (especially in fragments 2 and 8). So Parmenides' system of basic concepts seems to satisfy both criteria for philosophy, consistency and rational admissibility. But Parmenides' philosophy meets these criteria in a particular austere interpretation: it attempts to satisfy the law of non-

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107 As we mentioned above, Parmenides himself refers to systematic connections in his philosophy in passages like fragment 5 where he claims it does not matter where he starts from, for he will come back to it. Cf. also fragment 1, 31-32, where the opinion of the mortals is claimed to be also valid "in so far as it is whole" (for the Greek variants of this passage cf. Cordero 1984), and line 29 quoted above about the well-rounded truth.

108 Correspondingly, we see in Plato's *Sophist* that changing the understanding of 'not,' to mean only 'difference,' requires the understanding of 'Being' to change accordingly such as to include complexity. Although Parmenides cannot actually state any relation among the three concepts with the just sketched functions of negation and identification, these three concepts are exactly tailored to each other, and they and their implications do not contradict each other.

109 Negation necessarily has to be part of the system in order to give any kind of description of Being and to hold off wrong assumptions about Being that creep in from the mortals caught in δόξα; for the latter reason cf. also Furth 1968, 132.

contradiction as allowing for no respects, and rational admissibility as excluding that sense perception could play any role.

The ontological and epistemological consequence of Parmenides' interpretation of the basic criteria and the system of his basic operators is that the only 'object' which can be conceived with these operators and which passes these criteria is something absolutely simple—from an Eleatic perspective, only such an object guarantees reliable knowledge as no contradictory statements about it seem to be possible. If we want to acquire reliable knowledge, we have to make sure that we do not ascribe any form of non-Being to Being, and that means not to ascribe any difference. Hence, Being cannot be different from some other Being (for then it would not be this other Being), no plurality is possible. And Being cannot possess any internal differences (for then one of its aspects would not be the other and thus would not be in some respect); hence Being has to be absolutely simple. The ironic implication of this result is that this sole object that can be seriously talked about according to Parmenides is actually very hard to talk about; we saw that strictly speaking no normal predication is possible about Being. How we can think of it has to be indicated with the help of signs, like a *via negativa*,[110] and so the question arises whether Parmenides can in the end *express* his philosophy in a consistent way.[111]

Parmenides' philosophy not only established criteria that made philosophy a more rigorous discipline. It also led to a logical monism that challenged all philosophy that admits of plurality or change, and thus also the very basis of natural philosophy, the dominant philosophy before Parmenides entered the stage. His philosophy excludes all plurality and relation, which means that time, space, motion and change—the basic concepts of all natural philosophy—have to be expelled from the realm of reliable knowledge. Nature as changing and moving in time and space is thus not a possible object of investigation.

Accordingly, Parmenides' philosophy puts forward the most serious challenge for natural philosophers—whether nature can ever be conceptualised so as to satisfy the criteria for rigorous philosophy, and hence, whether natural philosophy is indeed possible. As Parmenides' challenge includes a

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110 This, however, seems to be the reason why fragment 2 calls our enquiry a route, *pace* Mourelatos, who thinks that the image of the routes speaks against an existential understanding of ἔστι since "a route takes us somewhere but existential propositions are already there." 1970, 275.

111 A problem familiar from Kant and Wittgenstein, cf. also Mourelatos 1970, 53. The consistency of expression violated by Parmenides seems to be a kind of consistency distinct from the three kinds of consistency I have named above, as Kenneth Winkler pointed out to me.

rigid restriction of the logical operators and basic concepts, it is here where his successors started attempting to meet his challenge. This included developing further his logical tools as well as his criteria for knowledge in order to keep both, the new rigour introduced by Parmenides' philosophy as well as the realm of motion and change as an object of philosophical investigation. And eventually it also showed that Parmenides' system of basic notions could, after all, not be conceived of consistently.[112]

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112 This paper profited very much from initial inspiration from Ulrich Bergmann, and from helpful comments from George Bealer, Susanne Bobzien, Justin Broackes, David Charles, Michael Della Rocca, my BACAP commentator Wes DeMarco, Verity Harte, Stephen Menn, David Sider, Kenneth Winkler, and an anonymous reader for BACAP, all of whom I would like to thank for their generosity with their time. I also would like to thank participants in the discussion at the BACAP meeting at Holy Cross, and at subsequent presentations at the Presocratic research group of André Laks in Paris and at the Oxford Ancient Philosophy Workshop.

COMMENTARY ON SATTLER

C. WESLEY DEMARCO

ABSTRACT
In this commentary, Barbara Sattler is praised for taking seriously the logic of Parmenidean thinking and for her openhanded reconstruction of that thinking. She is chided for leaving hanging the question of the consistency of Parmenides' concept, and criticized for failing to consider a noetic reading of Parmenidean being and a conventionalist reading of his *doxa*. The noetic option is feasible in itself and useful for Sattler's larger interest in the development of Greek natural science. That is because the idea of pure noetic being fathered by Parmenides and adapted by Aristotle and the later tradition served as basis for a metaphysic that—for better or worse—shaped the approach to natural science long dominant in the West.

Barbara Sattler offers a rational reconstruction of the ποίημα of Parmenides that makes its logical aspect to be decisive. The criteria that Parmenides uses to judge what is to count as knowledge and what is real are reflections of his logic, and his objects of inquiry are logical objects logically defined. Because it is conceived and applied with a severity that refuses all qualifications, Parmenidean logic in the strictness of its strictures applies only to the One Being [sic[1]] in its unity. That leaves no rationality worthy of the name for the multiplicity of phenomena that comprise the subject matter of natural philosophy. Any sameness is absolute identity; any negation is absolute annulment; any difference is tantamount to absolute non-Being. The logical approach to Parmenides is not new.[2] Nor is the idea that Parmenides' thinking is absolutistic, refusing all qualifications—all the distinctions of sense and the specifications of aspect and context and so on that allow us to apply logical means to things with other than unqualified identities. What is of particular value to my mind in Sattler's treatment of the logic of Parmenidean thinking is her attention to his logical operators. Sattler argues that Parmenides' operators *constrain* his thinking to absolute identity[3] and

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1 For Sattler's translation of *eon* as 'Being' see her note 31.
2 Sattler refers to Owen (Sattler, 27) in this connection, and later makes brief mention of Austin, for example.
3 Sattler writes (66), "Let me call [this] absolute identity as there is no difference in any aspect nor is there any context in which the x on the left hand of the equation sign [x = x] cannot replace the x on the right hand side." Hence, "Parmenides can only think of absolute identity. . . ."