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The Argumentative Unity of Plato's *Parmenides*

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2014

David Horan

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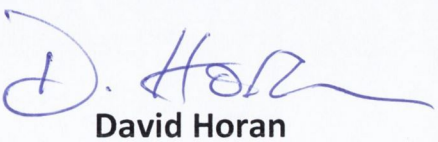

David Horan

7th April 2014

The Argumentative Unity of Plato's *Parmenides*

Summary

The purpose of this thesis is to make the case that Plato's dialogue *Parmenides* constitutes an argumentative unity whereby certain philosophic difficulties presented in the first part of the dialogue are resolved by the series of eight arguments that constitute the second part of the dialogue. In order to accomplish this objective we shall first explain, in general terms, the nature and overall structure of the dialogue and the complexities and interpretational possibilities it presents. Having described this we will be able to explain why the reading of the dialogue which we propose to establish and defend may not be universally accepted and indeed is often opposed quite strenuously. Once we describe the content and structure of the *Parmenides,* and the complexity and the difficulty of the dialogue has become evident we will explain why, in spite of the fact that most interpreters accept that the dialogue falls into two distinct parts, they do not at all agree on the nature or existence of any relationship between those two parts and we will also explain that the dialogue is not written in such a way as to make such a relationship obvious.

We will also show that the complexity of the second part of the dialogue in particular is such that it lends itself to a great variety of interpretations, some negative and dismissive, others positive in varying degrees. There is a consequent need to present a basis for our interpretation of the second part of the dialogue with its eight complicated arguments, beset with apparent contradictions and absurdities, whereby we may defend its integrity and reasonableness. We will thus be enabled to respond to some of the more cogent interpretations to the contrary. Such a defence of the coherence of the arguments in the second part of the dialogue will be central to our overall objective of using the second part of the dialogue to resolve the difficulties crystallised in the first part of the dialogue.

Accordingly, we shall select the first of the eight subsections of the second part (commonly referred to as 'the first hypothesis') and the transition from that first subsection into the second subsection ('the second hypothesis'), both of which are addressed to the concept of unity ('the one'), and present an overall interpretation and analysis thereof. This analysis of a subset of the opening material in part two will establish a basis for an interpretation of that

second part whereby it presents serious, coherent and defensible philosophic arguments and concepts. We will then be in a position to show how such defensible and coherent arguments may be applied to the resolution of the difficulties or *aporiai* raised in the first part of the dialogue. To this end we will select just one of those opening *aporiai*, explain some recent approaches to its resolution and argue that these modern interpreters do not make significant use of the second part of the dialogue for such resolution. This is the famous regress typically referred to as 'the third-man argument' (TLA). We will then present our own resolution of this particular *aporia*, a resolution that does indeed rely upon the arguments and concepts of the second part of the dialogue and, in doing so, we will have provided evidence in support of our contention that there is an actual argumentative connection between the first and second parts of the dialogue. Having made the case that the second part of the dialogue presents coherent, defensible arguments that may be taken seriously, and having demonstrated that the first and second parts of the dialogue constitute an argumentative unity we shall have completed our primary objective of asserting the argumentative unity of the *Parmenides*.

The significance of our argument for this argumentative unity of the dialogue – our argument being that the first two sections of the second part (the first and second hypotheses), addressed to the concept of unity, provide the material for analysing and resolving the *aporiai* articulated in the first part and in particular the all-important third-man argument – is of the first order. This is because the *aporiai* articulated in the first part are conceived as so many radical difficulties about the acceptance that there are forms and about the theory of forms in general; while at the same time it is expressly stated that the existence of forms, as envisaged in the first part of the dialogue, is a necessary condition for dialectic and, arguably, meaningful discourse in general.

Finally we shall use our own interpretation of the dialogue as a basis for revisiting the so called NeoPlatonic interpretation of the *Parmenides* particularly as exemplified by Plotinus. We will give an account of some of the ancient controversies surrounding the key issues dealt with by the dialogue and will place the Plotinian reading thereof in that context. We shall then argue that Plotinus reading of the *Parmenides* is, as he claims, a well-argued exegesis sharing many aspects of our own interpretation as presented in this thesis.

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Most of all I would like to thank Prof Vasilis Politis for helping me and directing me in turning the collection of ill-formed and disjointed intuitions with which this project began four years ago, into a presentable and structured set of arguments, the cogency of which any readers may now judge for themselves. He has brought a rigour to this work and to my approach to philosophy in general for which I am hugely grateful.

My colleagues in the Plato Centre and Philosophy Department in Trinity College Dublin have all been invaluable to the process of developing and refining the ideas which found their way into this thesis and to the process of highlighting the incongruity of many notions that were discarded along the way. I am particularly grateful to Prof John Dillon for his untiring encouragement and constant, generous, learned guidance throughout.

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The Argumentative Unity of Plato's *Parmenides*

General Thesis Introduction

Summary

The purpose of this thesis is to make the case that Plato's dialogue *Parmenides* constitutes an argumentative unity whereby certain philosophic difficulties presented in the first part of the dialogue are resolved by the series of eight arguments that constitute the second part of the dialogue. In order to accomplish this objective we shall first explain, in general terms, the nature and overall structure of the dialogue and the complexities and interpretational possibilities it presents. Having described this we will be able to explain why the reading of the dialogue which we propose to establish and defend may not be universally accepted and indeed is often opposed quite strenuously. Once we describe the content and structure of the *Parmenides,* and the complexity and the difficulty of the dialogue has become evident we will explain why, in spite of the fact that most interpreters accept that the dialogue falls into two distinct parts, they do not at all agree on the nature or existence of any relationship between those two parts and we will also explain that the dialogue is not written in such a way as to make such a relationship obvious.

We will also show that the complexity of the second part of the dialogue in particular is such that it lends itself to a great variety of interpretations, some negative and dismissive, others positive in varying degrees. There is a consequent need to present a basis for our interpretation of the second part of the dialogue with its eight complicated arguments, beset with apparent contradictions and absurdities, whereby we may defend its integrity and reasonableness. We will thus be enabled to respond to some of the more cogent interpretations to the contrary. Such a defence of the coherence of the arguments in the second part of the dialogue will be central to our overall objective of using the second part of the dialogue to resolve the difficulties crystallised in the first part of the dialogue.

Accordingly, we shall select the first of the eight subsections of the second part (commonly referred to as 'the first hypothesis') and the transition from that first subsection into the second subsection ('the second hypothesis'), both of which are addressed to the concept of unity ('the one'), and present an overall interpretation and analysis thereof. This analysis of a subset of the opening material in part two will establish a basis for an interpretation of that second part whereby it presents serious, coherent and defensible philosophic arguments and concepts. We will then be in a position to show how such defensible and coherent arguments may be applied to the resolution of the difficulties or *aporiai* raised in the first part of the dialogue. To this end we will select just one of those opening *aporiai*, explain some recent approaches to its resolution and argue that these

modern interpreters do not make significant use of the second part of the dialogue for such resolution. This is the famous regress typically referred to as 'the third-man argument' (TLA). We will then present our own resolution of this particular *aporia*, a resolution that does indeed rely upon the arguments and concepts of the second part of the dialogue and, in doing so, we will have provided evidence in support of our contention that there is an actual argumentative connection between the first and second parts of the dialogue. Having made the case that the second part of the dialogue presents coherent, defensible arguments that may be taken seriously, and having demonstrated that the first and second parts of the dialogue constitute an argumentative unity we shall have completed our primary objective of asserting the argumentative unity of the *Parmenides*.

The significance of our argument for this argumentative unity of the dialogue – our argument being that the first two sections of the second part (the first and second hypotheses), addressed to the concept of unity, provide the material for analysing and resolving the *aporiai* articulated in the first part and in particular the all-important third-man argument – is of the first order. This is because the *aporiai* articulated in the first part are conceived as so many radical difficulties about the acceptance that there are forms and about the theory of forms in general; while at the same time it is expressly stated that the existence of forms, as envisaged in the first part of the dialogue, is a necessary condition for dialectic and, arguably, meaningful discourse in general.

Finally we shall use our own interpretation of the dialogue as a basis for revisiting the so called NeoPlatonic interpretation of the *Parmenides* particularly as exemplified by Plotinus. We will give an account of some of the ancient controversies surrounding the key issues dealt with by the dialogue and will place the Plotinian reading thereof in that context. We shall then argue that Plotinus reading of the *Parmenides* is, as he claims, a well-argued exegesis sharing many aspects of our own interpretation as presented in this thesis. The next four subsections of this introduction outline the content of the four chapters of this thesis.

Chapter One

This chapter outlines the structure of Plato's *Parmenides* a dialogue which begins with an exchange between the young Socrates and the older Parmenides and unfolds into a lengthy and elaborate response by the older man to the difficulties raised in that opening exchange. Accordingly, the dialogue falls into two parts, the first of which presents the concept of 'forms' as they are envisaged by the young Socrates and then develops, through the agency of the older Parmenides, a series of *aporiai* in relation to the nature and function of forms themselves. There follows a second part, made up of a series of eight complex arguments presented by Parmenides himself in response to the problematic conclusions of the first part. Having given an overview of the contents and background

to the dialogue and some of the varied interpretations which have been developed in more recent scholarship we then set out our own interpretation and position it with respect to the broad interpretational categories that have evolved. Within the context of this general background we position our own reading of the *Parmenides* as constituting an argumentative unity in which certain philosophic issues presented in the first part of the dialogue are resolved by the series of eight arguments that constitute the second part of the dialogue. We explain that only one of the opening *aporiai* in part one will be selected for analysis, the so called third-man-argument, and rather than tackling all of the complex responses in the second part we will rely upon part of the initial exposition by Parmenides and show how this may afford a resolution of the third-man *aporia*. We conclude this chapter by highlighting the first significant challenge that faces us in defending this thesis; the apparent incoherence of the first of the eight arguments presented by Parmenides in the second part of the dialogue, his so called 'first hypothesis'. We explain the difficulties associated with the first hypothesis and our need to defend its argumentative integrity and the concept of unity contained therein if we are to make any use of the contents of this hypothesis (abbreviated as H1) in resolving the third-man *aporia*. This sets the scene for a comprehensive analysis of H1, the arguments it contains and the concept of unity it presents, in our next chapter.

Chapter Two

In order to justify our proposed reading of this dialogue we will need to present some understanding of the eight complex subsections (the eight hypotheses) that constitute the second part of the Parmenides whereby we may defend them as constituting a coherent series of philosophic arguments. We focus in this chapter upon the first of these arguments and explain that although it can easily be read as a reductio this could, in turn, lead us to discard the concept of unity or the 'type of one' that it presents; a strictly non-multiple one which does not enter into any relations and is entirely non-temporal. We refer to a one of this kind as 'the one of H1' and we explain that we do not wish to be forced to reject this one of H1 or the argumentative structure of the first hypothesis itself because, if we do so, the integrity of the entire second part of the dialogue and its schematic connection to the first part is called into question. Accordingly, we analyse the transition from the first hypothesis into the second (H2), argue that the one of H1 remains as a key concept in the development of the initial argument in H2 and make the case that the strictly non-multiple one that is posited in H1 therefore features as part of the argumentative apparatus of H2 and is not meant to be rejected on account of the aporetic ending of H1. In support of the concept of unity enshrined in the strictly non-multiple one of H1 and the coherence of the first hypothesis itself we revisit the concluding argument of H1, a conclusion that reads like a reductio and seems to point to the rejection of the concept of unity captured by the one of H1. In revisiting H1 in this manner we

analyse its conclusions in the light of numerous varieties of 'self-refutation' arguments and based upon this analysis we make the case that although we may even go so far as to accept that the first hypothesis may be read as a reductio, this reading does not necessarily lead to the falsification of the concept of unity enshrined within the strictly non-multiple one of H1. We conclude this chapter with an appendix defending the arguments contained within the first hypothesis against the charge of invalidity. We do so by taking a short subsection of H1 which is often said to be invalid and showing that its validity can be defended. On this basis we defend the philosophic utility of the one of H1, a one which does not partake of being, is entirely devoid of multiplicity, enters into no relations and has no temporality. Accordingly, we may now be justified in applying the concept of the one of H1 to the *aporiai* of part one of this dialogue and so, in the next chapter we argue that the concept of the one of H1 may be used to resolve the regress in the third large argument at 132a-b. We also provide textual evidence that the concept of the one of H1 is indeed intended to resolve that particular regress. This provides further evidence for the philosophic utility of the basic concept presented in H1 and further supports our case for the overall argumentative unity of the dialogue itself as it demonstrates that the concepts, distinctions and arguments of the hypotheses provide a basis for resolving the *aporiai* of the first part of the dialogue.

Chapter Three

In the previous chapter we defended the integrity of the first hypothesis and the coherence of the concept of unity it presents; the strictly non-multiple one of H1. In this chapter we demonstrate how this one of H1 and the model of forms based upon such a concept may be used to resolve one of the crucial *aporiai* in the first part of Plato's Parmenides; the third large argument, often referred to as the 'third man argument'. We begin with a review of the precise nature of this *aporia* and some of its treatment in more recent scholarship. We concentrate here on the readings of: Vlastos, Meinwald, Pelletier & Zalta, Gill, and Rickless. We point out that some modern scholars see this *aporia* as threatening the entire basis of Plato's theory of forms and they argue that Plato himself was not necessarily aware of any means of resolving the *aporia* and saving his theory. Others maintain that this argument and others in the first part mandate a substantial revision of the theory of forms as formulated in those dialogues which are understood as 'earlier' in terms of the development of Plato's own understanding of forms. There are also scholars who do indeed propose a resolution of this *aporia* but whose means of doing so is different from ours and is not reliant upon the second part of the dialogue to the extent that our resolution of the third large argument (abbreviated as the TLA) relies upon the second part. We review all of these more recent approaches to this issue, highlight their strengths and weaknesses and we then present our own approach to the resolution of the TLA. Our approach is heavily reliant upon a conception of forms which is based

upon the concept of unity that is captured in the one of H1, the very concept we had to defend in our previous chapter. Having presented our own model for the resolution of the TLA we compare and contrast it with the other interpretation of that same *aporia* and we argue for the superiority of our own approach primarily based upon the much greater fidelity of that approach to the concepts, arguments and overall structure of Plato's dialogue itself. In particular we argue that our approach alone brings the material from the second part of the dialogue to bear in the resolution of the *aporia* of the first part. Accordingly, we have, in completing this chapter, accomplished our primary objective in writing this thesis.

Chapter Four

The Parmenides has always been a most significant and controversial dialogue in the Platonic corpus and it has been read in many different ways over the millennia. In the works of Plotinus we encounter a very positive disposition towards the dialogue and a reading thereof which is now referred to as NeoPlatonic. This chapter affords an opportunity to develop our understanding of the nature of the one of H1, explore the issue of the relation between 'one' and 'being' in the context of the *Parmenides*, evaluate the arguments of Plotinus on this issue and his use of the *Parmenides* for that purpose and assess the overall defensibility of Plotinus' concept of the One as a supreme principle with ontological priority over all else. We trace the origins of this controversy over the relation between one and being back to Aristotle and Speusippus and we explain where Plotinus, some six hundred years later, stands on the same issue. We carry out a detailed analysis of Plotinus' tractate VI.6.13 and we show that it begins by presenting an objection to the concept of the one and its priority as held by Plotinus, an objection that aligns with Aristotle's viewpoint in *Metaphysics*, Γ, 2. We show how Plotinus refutes this objection and, in the process, uses arguments which are based upon the *Parmenides*, other Platonic sources and his own adaptations thereof, in order to establish the distinctness of the one from being, the pre-existence, foreknowledge and ontological priority of the existent one over any other essence, and the priority of the one itself, the one of H1 over the existent one, the one of H2. We also see how this conclusion about the supreme ontological priority of the One is established by a different argument in an earlier chapter of this same tractate (VI.6.5) again relying upon the *Parmenides* as the basis of its reasoning.

In this chapter we compare our treatment of the TLA with Plotinus' analysis of oneness in VI.6.13 and show that our reading is capable of further development in ontological terms based upon arguments that feature in the *Parmenides* itself. This comparison also establishes that Plotinus can derive his famous concept of 'the one beyond being' from arguments that are based upon a reading of Plato's *Parmenides*, a reading whereby the dialogue is accepted as serious ontology advocating a position to which Plato himself is committed. In concluding this chapter we have defended the

argumentative philosophic unity of the *Parmenides* from two directions. Firstly we have shown in chapters two and three, through an analysis of the arguments of the dialogue itself, that the one of H1 is a defensible philosophic concept that should not be discarded as the mere subject of a reductio but is capable of being employed in dealing with problems and issues regarding a major philosophical theory, that of forms. We have proved this by demonstrating the use of the one of H1 to resolve the problematic regress that occurs in the TLA in the first part of the dialogue. In so doing we have also showed an argumentative connection between the aporetic first part of the dialogue and the complex hypotheses of the second part, insofar as the latter are capable of resolving the former. Secondly we have, in this chapter, shown that one great philosopher, Plotinus, has adopted a similar interpretation of the *Parmenides* to our own. However, based upon this interpretation of the dialogue Plotinus has developed ontological conclusions about the primacy of the One itself and the relation between the One and being. These additional conclusions whereby Plotinus develops his highly influential concept of what a modern scholar calls the SuperOne, are also based upon a very detailed recourse to arguments from the first three hypotheses of the *Parmenides* and a particular difficulty that is formulated in the first part of the dialogue. This shows that Plotinus' metaphysics, to the extent that we have analysed it in this chapter, originates in an exegesis of Plato's *Parmenides* that is no less legitimate than that of any modern scholar or indeed our own.

Chapter One

Plato's *Parmenides* - clearing up a scandal

It is the purpose of this chapter to introduce Plato's dialogue *Parmenides*, explain some of the interpretational difficulties it presents and set out the basis for the particular contribution to their resolution which will be presented in this thesis.

Introduction to the scandal

When Plato wrote his relatively short forty page dialogue called the *Parmenides* he certainly was not intent upon making things easy for the reader or interpreter. Perhaps there was some inner circle around the founder of the Academy during his own lifetime who knew the precise background and intent of this most challenging of philosophic texts. Perhaps those who knew its author directly were aware of his precise aim and intent at every stage in its terse complexity. If so they kept their secrets with them, for since the death of its author this dialogue has embarked upon a long career in which it was always difficult, constantly controversial and, at times, hugely influential. In this thesis we shall have cause to consider those controversies and complexities, their origin within the text and their treatment by scholars both ancient and modern, and humbly attempt to make some small additional contribution to the millennia of exegeses of this daunting work. A few footnotes by Plato would really have helped; a short introduction might have saved very many readers from severe perplexity, but Plato does not do footnotes and he may well have intended generating the very perplexity which continues to drive Parmenidian scholarship two thousand five hundred years after his own death, controversy which, on occasion, breaks into outright frustration. R.E. Allen captures the latter reaction quite well when he divides the dialogue into three parts and gives free rein to his own views on the last and longest of those parts, in which an aged Parmenides, having already reduced the young Socrates to perplexed silence in relation to the theory of forms, takes an even younger Aristoteles through a bewildering series of eight complex arguments which should (or should not?) bear some relation to a series of difficulties which have been raised in an earlier part of the dialogue:

> In the third and lengthiest part of the *Parmenides*, Parmenides illustrates a method of inquiry using the young Aristoteles as respondent. The method is hypothetical. The subject matter is the Idea of Unity. The inferences Aristoteles draws under Parmenides' questioning lead to absurdity.
> Not surprisingly, those inferences have been read in a multitude of ways. They are not logical but metaphysical: they exhibit the Unknown God beyond Being, or perhaps a proto-Hegelian dialectic of Being, Not-being, and Becoming, or Unity in Difference. On the contrary, they are not metaphysical but logical: they offer an exercise in the detection of

> fallacies, perhaps especially fallacies involving ambiguity: or perhaps they anticipate Russell's Paradox and the Theory of Types; or perhaps they are a tu quoque argument against the Eleatics and Megarians; or perhaps they are a joke. The concluding part of the *Parmenides* recommends a method; it does not recommend a method; it contains positive doctrine; it does not contain positive doctrine. Assertion meets denial in a welter of strife. Twenty-five hundred years after it was written, the *Parmenides* remains a puzzle for ordinary readers and, for scholars whose business it is to understand it, a scandal.[1]

Scandal normally ensures high readership but when that scandal derives from incomprehensibility it can lose its attraction for 'ordinary readers'. However, taking the view that Platonism should not be tainted by scandal of any kind, it is the intention of this thesis to make some contribution towards clearing Plato's name. Yet this dialogue has reduced not only the young Socrates to perplexity but many generations of scholars besides. However, a few philosophical complexities should not be allowed to defeat us but should spur us on to increased endeavour and the development of new insights. The dialogue is only forty pages long; surely it cannot be that difficult?

What happens in the *Parmenides?*

Allen's summary quoted above captures the nature of the controversies surrounding the *Parmenides* very nicely but his references will not be entirely comprehensible to someone not familiar with its themes and structure. Accordingly, we should explain how such a short work can be the subject of such a wide variety of interpretations and we should indicate some initial basis on which we may begin to suggest a resolution. We have seen that Allen discerns three parts to this dialogue but we shall adopt an immediate simplification and reduce the number of divisions to two. In the first of these, after some narrative scene setting, we are presented with a discussion between a young Socrates who is aged about twenty and a sixty five year old Parmenides who has travelled to Athens from Elea in Southern Italy with his somewhat younger companion Zeno who has written a book and has been reading extracts from it to interested parties. Socrates is among the attendees at the book reading and having listened to that he tackles its author, Zeno, on a number of issues and in the course of their discussion he introduces the concept of 'forms', describing them in a manner quite familiar to any reader of Plato's other dialogues. For instance Zeno refers to the 'likeness' of sensible objects but Socrates refers instead to 'likeness just by itself' which is not amenable to sense perception, is unchanging and does not exhibit opposing characteristics. This 'likeness just by itself' is a 'form' as is 'unlikeness' and 'unity', and such forms contrast with the physical entities referred to by Zeno in his treatise, insofar as those physical objects certainly do exhibit contrary characteristics because every large object is also, in some sense, small; whatever is one is also, in a sense, many;

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[1] R. E. Allen Plato's *Parmenides.* Trans. with commentary. Yale University, 1997. P 227

anything heavy is also light. But forms do not, according to Socrates, exhibit such contrary characteristics.

Parmenides having overheard part of this conversation between the two younger men and having observed Socrates also on the previous day, intervenes at this stage and proceeds to question Socrates on the subject of these forms, a concept to which they are both, apparently committed. Now forms are a Platonic commonplace, so with Socrates, Parmenides and Plato committed to the concept of forms we may be surprised to find that Socrates, under cross-examination by Parmenides, is unable to give any account of forms that does not end up in contradiction or perplexity throughout a considerable series of dialectical arguments in which Parmenides formulates various objections to the beloved theory. One such objection is the famous 'third man argument' (really the third-large-argument as it is about largeness not man-ness) whereby the assertion that there is but one form of a particular kind, in this case largeness, is shown to lead to an infinite regress, generating an unlimited multiplicity of 'largenesses', which thereby contradicts the initial assertion that there is only one form of largeness. This particular difficulty combined with numerous other problematic conclusions leads to such a state of perplexity in the end that, according to Parmenides, the very existence of forms themselves is cast into doubt:

> The result is that whoever hears us is perplexed and contends that there are no forms, or even if in fact there are, they must necessarily be unknowable by human nature, and whoever says this also seems to make sense, and, as we said before, he is extraordinarily difficult to persuade otherwise.[2]

Parmenides takes this outcome very seriously and he warns that any non-acceptance of forms undermines the operation of the power of dialectic and the very basis of philosophy itself. But he blames this troubling outcome on Socrates' lack of training and he proposes an exercise that will enable him to be '...perfectly trained and see truth clearly.'[3] However, if their initial predicament was perplexing, things now seem to get even worse because the exercise as outlined by Parmenides sounds impossibly complex to the hearers and they immediately request a worked example. Parmenides agrees to provide this demonstration albeit with some reluctance for he knows that it is a huge undertaking and although the exercise, as described, has general applicability he chooses to demonstrate it for the case of 'the one' or unity. This worked example of the exercise is presented through the eight very complicated arguments that constitute the enormously complex and

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[2] Plato; *Parmenides, 135a, 3-7;* ὥστε ἀπορεῖν τε τὸν ἀκούοντα καὶ ἀμφισβητεῖν ὡς οὔτε ἔστι ταῦτα, εἴ τε ὅτι μάλιστα εἴη, πολλὴ ἀνάγκη αὐτὰ εἶναι τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει ἄγνωστα, καὶ ταῦτα λέγοντα δοκεῖν τε τὶ λέγειν καί, ὃ ἄρτι ἐλέγομεν, θαυμαστῶς ὡς δυσανάπειστον εἶναι.

[3] *Parm*, 136c, 4-5: εἰ μέλλεις τελέως γυμνασάμενος κυρίως διόψεσθαι τὸ ἀληθές.

'scandalous' last part of the dialogue and once these are concluded the dialogue ends. So, on a superficial reading the initial perplexity over forms is augmented by the complexity of Socrates' training exercise and is increased further by the extreme difficulty of Parmenides' demonstration of that exercise.

So there we have it: Socrates introduces the concept of forms, Parmenides reduces him to perplexed silence on this topic, Parmenides regards this as a serious problem but puts it down to Socrates' lack of training and therefore prescribes and sets out an exercise whereby Socrates may be '...perfectly trained and see truth clearly.' He is asked to demonstrate the exercise and he reluctantly agrees and this concludes what we are calling the first part of the dialogue which represents about one quarter of the entire work. Parmenides' complicated worked example or demonstration of this exercise represents the second part of the dialogue; the final three quarters thereof. It has an eight part structure which we will describe in detail later and its difficulties of interpretation are the basis of what Allen calls the 'scandal' represented by this dialogue. Whether or not the demonstration helped Socrates to be '...perfectly trained and see truth clearly.' we do not know, since he does not speak again in this dialogue after the end of the first part because the interlocutor in the second part is a younger man called Aristoteles and the dialogue ends once the demonstration of the exercise ends.

Having given this very high level summary of the *Parmenides* we shall, in the rest of this chapter, do some systematic revisiting of the various subsections of part one and explain how selected commentators have developed their own particular readings of them depending upon how they interpret: the opening exchange with Zeno; the *aporiai* developed through Parmenides' interrogation of Socrates; the exercise given to Socrates; and the transition into Parmenides' demonstration thereof. Some of these interpreters will afford a useful counterpart to our own reading and we shall select these for further more detailed study in later chapters. Other commentators will prove too divergent from our own reading of the dialogue to be useful in making any case for our own interpretation. What is our own interpretation? At this point in our thesis it is simplest to say that, if the dialogue presents a series of perplexities in its first part then such perplexities, in their Aristotelian sense as '*aporiai*', should afford the basis for the further development of the dialogue towards their analysis and eventual resolution. According to Aristotle, philosophy proceeds best upon the basis of *aporiai*;

> Now for those who wish to get rid of perplexities it is a good plan to go into them thoroughly; for the subsequent certainly is a release from the previous perplexities and release is impossible when we do not know the knot. The perplexity of the mind shows that

> there is a knot in the subject; for in its perplexity it is in much the same condition as men who are fettered: in both cases it is impossible to make any progress. Hence we should first have studied all the difficulties, both for the reasons given and also because those who start an enquiry without first considering the difficulties are like people who do not know where they are going; besides one does not even know whether the thing required has been found or not. [4]

Based upon this view, perplexities or *aporiai* may afford a basis for philosophic enquiry. Indeed the Aristotle quotation is taken from the so called 'book of *aporiai*' in the *Metaphysics* and Aristotle, in subsequent sections of the book, sets about analysing and resolving those *aporiai*. If the *Parmenides* presents *aporiai* in the first part of the dialogue then surely it is reasonable to suggest that it must be offering further analysis and eventual resolution of those difficulties in the second part and that such analysis and resolution should be discernible and demonstrable. We should note also that there is of course a psychological aspect to any aporetic developments in a Platonic dialogue because, quite apart from the problematic nature of the argument itself, the interlocutor himself is also very likely to be in a state of mental perplexity or confusion on account of meeting such an argument and this personal experience may act as a spur and an incentive to resolve the 'knot in the subject'. The *aporiai* we will be following here are argumentative in nature but, as Aristotle explains;

> '...the equality of opposite reasonings is the cause of *aporia*; for it is when we reason on both [sides of a question] and it appears to us that everything can come about in either way, that we are in a state of *aporia* about which of the two ways to take up '[5]

So for Aristotle the psychological aspect, the puzzlement aspect, of *aporia* is what points us to the cause of that mental state, namely the conflict in the arguments with which we have been engaging. Now Socrates is in perplexed silence by the end of the first part of this dialogue having discovered that his much favoured theory of forms contradicts its own assertions when subjected to the questioning of Parmenides. The conflict in the arguments produces the perplexity but the solution to the perplexity lies in the resolution of the conflict in the underlying arguments. This is how we wish to interpret the *Parmenides*; as presenting a series of cogent *aporiai* in relation to forms which are further analysed and eventually resolved through the concepts, distinctions and arguments of the second part of the dialogue. This gives the work a structure akin to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* or any of Plato's other dialogues in which investigation and enquiry crystallises into *aporiai* about such

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[4] Aristotle; *Metaphysics*, 995a, 27-36 – 995b1, Tredennick translation from the Loeb edition, 1923; ἔστι δὲ τοῖς εὐπορῆσαι βουλομένοις προΰργου τὸ διαπορῆσαι καλῶς· ἡ γὰρ ὕστερον εὐπορία λύσις τῶν πρότερον ἀπορουμένων ἐστί, λύειν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγνοοῦντας τὸν δεσμόν, ἀλλ' ἡ τῆς διανοίας ἀπορία δηλοῖ τοῦτο περὶ τοῦ πράγματος· ἦ γὰρ ἀπορεῖ, ταύτῃ παραπλήσιον πέπονθε τοῖς δεδεμένοις· ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἀμφοτέρως προελθεῖν εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν. διὸ δεῖ τὰς δυσχερείας τεθεωρηκέναι πάσας πρότερον, τούτων τε χάριν καὶ διὰ τὸ τοὺς ζητοῦντας ἄνευ τοῦ διαπορῆσαι πρῶτον ὁμοίους εἶναι τοῖς ποῖ δεῖ βαδίζειν ἀγνοοῦσι, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις οὐδ' εἴ ποτε τὸ ζητούμενον εὕρηκεν ἢ μὴ γιγνώσκειν·

[5] Aristotle *Topics*, 145b, quoted from V.Politis; *Aristotle and the Metaphysics*, Routledge, 2005, p 69.

topics as the science of being qua being, the nature of justice or how false opinion can arise. These *aporiai* are then made the basis of further analysis and are taken to a point of resolution in which there is greater clarity and a growth of understanding even though further avenues of enquiry may be indicated. Why couldn't the *Parmenides* be read like that?

The focus and scope of our exploration

We should take the opportunity here to define our precise scope and avoid building up false expectations in our readers and setting ourselves too ambitious a task. We have so far referred to 'forms', the theory of forms, a series of *aporiai* in relation to forms and a set of hypotheses whereby we hope to respond to those *aporiai* and resolve them. We have already explained that the *Parmenides* has two main parts and that the first part is largely aporetic in character insofar as it presents a series of difficulties in relation to forms which are left without explicit resolution in the first part of that dialogue. In this first part Socrates shows a commitment to these forms or 'things in themselves' which we may best and most usefully understood in terms of an abstraction process whereby some manifest quality or characteristic is considered apart from or in isolation from the manifest objects in which it is said to 'be instantiated'. Having said that, I don't mean, of course, that forms are mere abstractions and don't have any reality except through that process of abstractions. In the case of many items exemplifying a particular property Socrates maintains that there is a single entity called a 'form' which is instantiated in each of those objects. The form is one but the instantiations are many and we can arrive at consideration of the form only by an abstraction process whereby we consider the quality, 'just by itself', apart from whatever it is instantiated in. So in the case of the large objects which feature in the so called 'third man argument', we may consider the largeness itself, a form, through an abstraction process in the mind. Socrates commits himself to this approach at a very early stage of the dialogue after he has heard Zeno, Parmenides' companion, presenting the series of paradoxes whereby Zeno shows that manifest objects exhibit contrary properties as they are both one and many, like and unlike. Having heard this, Socrates comments that;

> However, I would have been even more pleased, if someone were able to show this same complex web of perplexity also arising among the forms themselves, among the things we apprehend by thought, (ἐν τοῖς λογισμῷ λαμβανομένοις) just as you have done in the case of visible objects.[6]

So we note that Socrates himself introduces a particular step at this early point in the dialogue with the phrase 'by thought' (λογισμῷ), a step which takes him away from the visible entities which are

[6] 129e5-130a2: ἀγασθείην εἴ τις ἔχοι τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην ἀπορίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς εἴδεσι παντοδαπῶς πλεκομένην, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς ὁρωμένοις διήλθετε, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τοῖς λογισμῷ λαμβανομένοις ἐπιδεῖξαι.

the subject of Zeno's argument about contrary properties in order to consider what he refers to as 'the forms themselves' which he regards as exempt from this phenomenon of contrariety. Socrates' preference for considering 'forms', arrived at by this process of abstraction, is directly endorsed a little later in the first part of the dialogue by Parmenides himself;

> I was pleased when you said to him that you would not allow the exposition to consider visible objects and their realm, but those that one may apprehend mostly by reason (λόγῳ λάβοι) and may regard as forms. [7]

We note that we have a distinction here between what can be considered by the senses and what can be considered by thought and we have two phrases 'by thought' (λογισμῷ) and by reason (λόγῳ) which are anticipatory of another phrase, 'in the mind' (τῇ διανοίᾳ -143a7), which we shall meet in our review of the hypotheses. In the first part of the dialogue we find the first two phrases being employed primarily to mark a process of abstraction from manifest objects to the forms which are instantiated therein. The first part of the dialogue thus represents a commitment to forms as understood in the manner described above.

Plato is of course very much associated with the 'theory of forms' although he himself never uses that particular phrase. The so called 'theory of forms' is assembled from the references to forms dispersed throughout his writings, and due to discrepancies between what he asserts in one set of dialogues and what he asserts in another, many commentators argue that there is a discernible development and revision of the theory or even an abandonment thereof in his later writings. Vast amounts of scholarly writing have focussed upon this famous theory but, when it comes to stating what precisely that theory is, each commentator must review the varied references to forms in the dialogues and decide for themselves what precisely that theory actually consists in; what is included, what is central, what is excluded and what is peripheral. A very simple aspect of this is captured in the *Parmenides*[8] when the venerable visitor asks the young Socrates whether there are forms belonging to mud and dirt. Socrates recoils at the prospect but gives no cogent reasons for denying that there are such forms; the older man chides him for his coyness, but the matter is left open and commentators are tasked with speculating about the answer to the question. Also, in the *Republic*[9] we have a reference to the form associated with a 'bed' and once more the literalness of the implication that there is indeed such a form has been a matter of interpretation for commentators ever since. Accordingly, it is not easy to come up with some comprehensive and definitive

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[7] 135e1-4; σου καὶ πρὸς τοῦτον ἡγάσθην εἰπόντος, ὅτι οὐκ εἴας ἐν τοῖς ὁρωμένοις οὐδὲ περὶ ταῦτα τὴν πλάνην ἐπισκοπεῖν, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἐκεῖνα ἃ μάλιστά τις ἂν λόγῳ λάβοι καὶ εἴδη ἂν ἡγήσαιτο εἶναι.

[8] *Parm*, 130c

[9] Plato: *Republic*, Book X, 596a

formulation as to what precisely the theory of forms actually states and nigh impossible to get agreement thereon. And yet there is quite general agreement that the formulations about forms presented in the first part of the *Parmenides* do represent many crucial aspects of Plato's views on forms and exhibit no significant conflict with corresponding views expressed elsewhere in the dialogues.

In this thesis we have undertaken to show that the *aporiai* about forms that are developed in the first part of the dialogue are resolved by the concepts, distinctions and arguments in the hypotheses of the second part of the dialogue. Since these *aporiai* relate to forms we should make it clear that we shall resolve the *aporiai* in terms of the understanding of forms as crystallised in those particular *aporiai* and we shall avoid the daunting prospect of coming up with a general formulation of the theory of forms and situating our proposal within that context. Indeed, to retain a degree of focus and defined scope throughout this work we shall select just one particular *aporia* from the first part, namely the 'third large argument', which is often referred to as the 'third man argument', and show how the later hypotheses may be employed in its resolution. Furthermore, in view of the extensiveness and breadth of argument within the eight hypotheses, we shall confine our application thereof to the first hypothesis, the beginning of the second hypothesis and part of the third hypothesis. In the process we shall find that the concept of forms as captured by the formulation of the TLA is rendered more precise and exact through recourse to the material available in the selected hypotheses. The issue over of whether the introduction of such precision and exactness should be regarded as a revision of the theory of forms or the mere clarification of an implicit ambiguity within the TLA formulation itself is not central to our overall thesis and its associated assertions here. Once we can show that our two selected hypotheses are capable of resolving the TLA *aporia* and can, by so doing, bring a precision to our understanding of forms, we shall have fulfilled our objective. We may therefore set aside the task of situating these matters within the context of the entirety of the theory of forms, as being outside of the scope of our present work.

Some possible interpretations

Of course, given the difficult and complex nature of the *Parmenides,* there are many other interpretations of this dialogue and we should consider some of these now. Perhaps the most obvious line of interpretation is based upon the fact that Parmenides and Zeno were actual historical characters who came from Elea in Southern Italy and that both were philosophers in their own right. Burnet's classic text *Greek Philosophy* has an entire section on the philosophy of the historical Parmenides as presented in his philosophic poem and another chapter entitled *'Eleatics and*

Pythagoreans' dealing with the system of philosophy that evolved in Elea and the influence of Pythagoreanism upon that system.[10] The former chapter presents Parmenides as a monist who is writing in conscious opposition to Heraclitus' concept of the tension of opposites. This aspect of his philosophy is often captured by Plato and Aristotle in the phrase 'the all is one' although no such phrase actually occurs in his own poem. So Parmenides is often portrayed as rejecting the pluralism and flux of Heraclitus in favour of a 'Sphere of Being' that is "not the outcome of any process; 'it never was nor will be, but is now all at once'"[11]. Burnet also describes him as a Pythagorean by background, who revolted against certain doctrines of the system associated with that sect, a sect which was also based in Southern Italy. Zeno is described in the latter chapter as an Eleatic who complemented the views of his master by opposing any concept of plurality and again, as with his master, there is good evidence that, as reported on Plato's dialogue, he did indeed write a book.

On the basis that these two men from Elea were actual historical characters and that both of them were philosophers in their own right with similar or identical views, it is surely worthwhile exploring where Plato himself stood in relation to this Eleaticism and whether the primary thrust of the *Parmenides* is reflective of Plato's stance with respect to that system. Plato himself would certainly have been familiar with this system of philosophy because, by his time, there were many exponents of a similar philosophy, closer to Athens in Megara and some of its adherents are specifically referred to in other dialogues.[12] Accordingly, many interpreters see Plato's relationship with Eleaticism as a significant and dominant element in his construction and framing of this dialogue and its associated arguments. We shall refer to such interpretations as 'historicist'.

The foundation text for such a reading of the *Parmenides* was written by Cornford[13] who takes the dialogue and the arguments of the second part in particular, with far greater seriousness than some of his immediate predecessors such as Taylor or Burnet. Burnet, whose work we have just been referring to in the context of the historical Parmenides, devotes some twenty pages in a later chapter of his book to Plato's *Parmenides* and he states that;

> It seems to me quite possible that to Plato's circle the second part of the *Parmenides* seemed highly entertaining.[14]

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[10] Burnet; *Greek Philosophy*, Macmillan, 1914, Chapters III and V.
[11] Cornford (1939); reference below, p 51
[12] Burnet, ibid, p 230ff.
[13] Cornford, F. MacDonald, *Plato and Parmenides. Parmenides' Way of Truth and Plato's Parmenides.* Trans. with introduction and running commentary, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1939.
[14] Burnet; ibid, p 263

He then proceeds to provide a translation of this 'entertaining' second part, omitting the responses of Aristoteles, but, in spite of taking the trouble to translate it, he informs the reader;

> I have thought it right to analyse these somewhat fully as a guide to students of the *Parmenides*. From what has been said, it will be clear that the reader may omit them if he likes.[15]

Such an attitude to the second part of the dialogue from such an influential authority as Burnet is hardly an encouragement to later generations of scholars but it does follow in a tradition which goes back to Schleiermacher[16] who, referring in particular to the second part, describes Plato as 'running his jokes', 'proposing riddles' and presenting 'useless obscurity'. Burnet was followed in turn by the equally influential A.E. Taylor who wrote that the *Parmenides:*

> ...bears ... the stamp of being an occasional composition. Its purpose is to have some fun with the Monists who regard the sensible as illusion, and nothing more.[17]

Cornford breaks with these more negative readings and states;

> The conviction that Plato's purpose was serious and not merely destructive grows, the more closely the Hypotheses are studied. If it is justified, the theory of the humorous polemic falls on the ground.[18]

Cornford also reminds us that although Taylor's view, as expressed above in his 1926 work was far from positive, such was not always his attitude to the *Parmenides* for in 1896 he had written in a much more positive vein;

> The dialogue *Parmenides* falls as is universally known into two well-defined and unequal parts which seem at first sight quite independent of each other. Such a want of connection would, however, be without a parallel in the rest of Plato, and, in the present case especially, it is flatly incredible that Parmenides should, after reducing Socrates to a state of hopeless perplexity by his criticisms of the Ideas, turn quietly to an entirely different subject without any attempt to answer the difficulties he has himself created. The case of the dialogues of search, where an investigation consistently pursued throughout the conversation nevertheless ends fruitlessly, is quite dissimilar. We have thus a test supplied by Plato himself of the correctness of our readings of the dialogue: that interpretation will have the highest claim for acceptance which succeeds best in establishing an intimate and

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[15] Burnet; ibid, p 264, note 1.
[16] Schleiermacher, *Introductions to the dialogues of Plato,* translated by Dobson. Cambridge, 1834.
[17] Taylor: *Plato the Man and his Work* (Methuen, 1926), p 351.
[18] Cornford: *Plato and Parmenides* (RKP, 1939), Preface, p vii.

> vital connection between the criticism of the Ideas in the first part of the dialogue and the results of the conflicting hypotheses in the second.[19]

Indeed the criterion set out by Taylor in his last sentence above is the one we shall use to evaluate our own interpretation for we hope to show that there is indeed a connection between the two parts and that the second part can resolve the *aporiai* of the first part: In doing so we shall, as Taylor puts it, be "establishing an intimate and vital connection between the criticism of the Ideas in the first part of the dialogue and the results of the conflicting hypotheses in the second." In this earlier article Taylor's analysis deals mainly with the arguments of the first part of the dialogue and, in contrast to his later viewpoint as quoted above, he regards an attack upon the Megarian monists as, at best, no more than Plato's secondary motive here and he is far from being dismissive of the arguments of part two;

> Hence I shall assume in my analysis that Plato is almost everywhere serious in his inferences, and that we are intended to gather from the intolerable contradiction between the conclusions of one hypothesis and those of another which is nominally the same some fundamental and all-important difference in the interpretation of first principles.[20]

However, Taylor's 1896 article does not go so far as to establish any specify and actual argumentative connection between the two parts of the dialogue and it may perhaps have been his ultimate failure to establish such a connection that led to the more dismissive reading of the part two arguments in his own later work.

We began to look at interpretations of the *Parmenides* that are based upon Plato's position with respect to the philosophies of the historical Parmenides, Zeno and their successors in Megara. But in setting the scene for the work of Cornford we have encountered a significant strand of negative readings of this dialogue on the part of some of Cornford's influential predecessors or contemporaries such as Schleiermacher, Burnet and, in his later writings, A.E. Taylor. We now see that these key figures in Platonic scholarship adopt a reading of the dialogue which is tantamount to rejectionism with respect to the entire work or the second part at least. But, since the second part of this dialogue represents three quarters of the entire, the rejection thereof leaves nothing but the aporetic first part with its *aporiai* left unanswered by the second part and no explanation as to why we are presented with such a lengthy and complex second part when it has little of direct significance to contribute to the resolution of the opening *aporiai*. The challenge we have taken on in this thesis will, if we are successful, by demonstrating a strong argumentative connection between

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[19] A. E. Taylor; On the Interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides*, pp, 300-301, *Mind*, N.S., Vol. 5, No. 19 (July, 1896).
[20] Taylor, ibid 1896; p 326

the first and second parts, show the inferiority of such rejectionist readings on the grounds that our "...interpretation will have the highest claim for acceptance" because it "...succeeds best in establishing an intimate and vital connection between the criticism of the Ideas in the first part of the dialogue and the results of the conflicting hypotheses in the second."[21]

We have seen that Cornford proposed a more serious reading of the entire dialogue and the second part in particular than these other scholars. In doing so he situates Parmenides himself within the context of the Pythagorean tradition and Zeno as an advocate of the Parmenidian position through his arguments in opposition to certain Pythagorean doctrines. Accordingly, he describes Parmenides as rejecting the pluralism and flux of Heraclitus in favour of a "Sphere of Being" that is "not the outcome of any process; 'it never was nor will be, but is now all at once'" and in doing so Parmenides also stands in opposition to the Pythagoreans and their 'process of cosmogony'[22]. Cornford asserts that he was hugely influential and he states that "Parmenides is responsible for the course taken by natural philosophy in the fifth century", draws attention to the rigour of Parmenides' 'remorseless logic' and declares that;

> The essential weaknesses of his reasoning were not evident to his immediate successors; it remained for Plato to expose them.[23]

Therefore, for Cornford, Plato is taking on the 'remorseless logic' of Parmenides' poem, a logic that had been unchallenged for a hundred years, and highlighting its weaknesses and he makes the further claim that Plato is, at the same time, taking the opportunity to revisit his own theory of forms and deal with some issues associated therewith. It is in the second part of the dialogue that Cornford finds these two activities taking place and in contrast to the earlier work of Taylor and the dismissive contribution of Burnet, he provides a comprehensive interpretative commentary of the eight hypotheses. We have seen that the second part of the dialogue breaks down into eight subdivisions whose connection to the *aporiai* of the first part is not immediately obvious. At the end of the first of those subdivisions in which Plato has Parmenides consider a one or unity that is strictly devoid of duality, Cornford makes the following comments;

> In this way, by taking the bare 'One' which can equally well stand for the One of Parmenides and for Socrates' Form, Unity itself, Plato has, with extraordinary ingenuity, contrived at once to expose the inconsistency of Parmenides and to clear up an ambiguity in his own

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[21] Ibid , pp, 300-301
[22] Cornford; ibid, p 51
[23] Cornford; ibid, p 53

> theory. On this interpretation the conclusions so far reached become relevant to the problems raised in the original discussion between Socrates and Zeno.[24]

We shall explain all of the details of this particular subdivision of part two later, but for now we should simply note that Cornford does indeed posit an argumentative connection between the first and second parts of the *Parmenides*. He detects a use of this first subdivision of part two for the purposes of refuting Parmenides' conception of the one as presented in his philosophical poem. He also finds this same part two argument being used to highlight issues with the concept of forms as presented earlier by Socrates in the first part and he claims that we are revisiting issues raised in the opening exchange between Socrates and Zeno. We shall have cause, later in this thesis, to revisit the immense difficulties presented by this first subdivision of part two but for our present purposes we need only note that Cornford has presented a cogent reading of this first subdivision in part two as being centrally concerned with the views held by the historical Parmenides and also with Plato's attempt to highlight their weakness by means of the arguments in the second part of the dialogue. This is the fundamental case made by Cornford in his book and many other interpreters since then have refined and developed such a historicist reading.

Another example of this overall approach is reflected more recently in Turnbull[25] who claims that the eight hypotheses each stand for, or represent, either a Parmenidian or a Platonic ontology in every case. The Parmenidian version is in effect a very pure Monism which does not even accept a distinction between name and thing named.[26] The Platonic version, on the other hand, deals with the problems of pure Monism and the 'need to establish a way of writing about the others that is not available in the Parmenidian version'. Hence the first hypothesis is alleged to be Parmenidian while the second and third are Platonic, the fourth is Parmenidian, the fifth Platonic and so they alternate thereafter. Turnbull does go further, and he also discerns in the *Parmenides,* an abandonment by Plato of his 'middle period doctrine of the forms and participation'[27]. This, he claims was brought about by reflection on Parmenides' poem and Zeno's treatise. We shall find this interpretation of the *Parmenides* as representing Plato's occasion for a revision of his theory of forms, in other commentators too and indeed one of these will be particularly useful in establishing and defending our own reading of this dialogue.

Having noted and explained this historicist mode of interpretation we should now consider our own wish to interpret the *Parmenides* as presenting a series of cogent *aporiai* in relation to forms, *aporiai*

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[24] Cornford; Ibid. p. 135.
[25] Turnbull: *The Parmenides and Plato's late Philosophy,* (UTP, 1998). pp 48 - 49
[26] As per *Sophist* 244d
[27] Turnbull, ibid, p 140

which are further analysed and eventually resolved by the concepts, distinctions and arguments of the second part of the dialogue. Where does our proposed reading stand with respect to the historical Parmenides and Zeno and the place of their own philosophical views in the overall structure of this dialogue? What status or significance should we ascribe to the actual philosophical views of these two visitors who came from Elea to Athens in 450 B.C.? Cornford claims that a meeting in which such topics were discussed in such a manner could not ever have taken place;

> To suppose that anything remotely resembling the conversation in this dialogue could have occurred at that date would make nonsense of the whole history of philosophy in the fifth and fourth centuries;[28]

So, although he accepts that the meeting may actually have taken place, the discussion as described is impossible for Cornford because the views expressed by Socrates and Parmenides in the dialogue are not truly reflective of the actual views held by these two men at that time. We have seen that the eight arguments of the second part consider unity or 'the one' in eight different ways and, for Cornford, the first of these modes of analysis exposes problems with the theories of the historical Parmenides and the views of Plato himself. We should note however that although Plato's views have been well presented in part one through the formulations of Socrates, we do not have a correspondingly detailed presentation of Parmenides' views. In any of Plato's other dialogues where a theory is under attack or scrutiny, the precise nature of that theory is made clear first. In this case, if Plato's dialogue *Parmenides* were the sole source for our understanding of the views of the historical Parmenides or Zeno we would have only the most simplistic of notions as to what those views actually were.

We may reasonably accept that Plato could well be doing what Cornford says he is doing and thus accept that Parmenides' views may indeed be a target of attack here. However, we also note that the difficulties formulated in part one do not obviously relate to any theories held by Parmenides because these arise, in first instance, from the views on forms expressed by Socrates in response to the arguments in Zeno's book. And although Parmenides raises difficulties about Socrates' views on forms, he too, in Plato's dialogue anyway, believes that these difficulties can be solved and must be solved and that forms must be defended from rejection or the charge that they are unknowable. Surely we should always prefer the reading that lies on the surface of the text to a reading that requires an awareness of views merely hinted at in the text, namely the views of the historical Parmenides. The reading that lies on the surface of the text is that a series of problems in relation to

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[28] Cornford, F. MacDonald, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge. The Theaetetus and Sophist of Plato.* Trans. With a running commentary, Kegan Paul, 1935. p. 1

forms have been developed in part one. Surely it makes sense to persist with exploring an interpretation whereby the second part of the dialogue will attempt to resolve those problems.

The reading proposed by Cornford certainly affords a connection, in very general terms, between the first part of the dialogue and the second, once we agree that forms as referred to by Socrates in part one and unity as referred to by Parmenides in part one, remain as themes of the later arguments. But what about the very detailed *aporiai* as formulated in part one? Are these revisited specifically and at a level of detail that corresponds to their initial formulation? Is it ever the intention of part two to resolve these specific *aporiai* or are we meant to realise that there is a more general problem with the theory of forms and with Parmenides' concept of unity and accept that the second part of the dialogue deals with these two general problems without dealing with the specific *aporiai* of part one?

Our own further exploration of the dialogue should provide an answer to these questions. If we succeed in doing what we intend to do in this thesis we shall have provided substantial evidence that the answer to this latter question is 'no'; the intent of part two is not primarily the resolution a general issue relating to forms or Parmenides' own concept of unity. It is, we will argue, much more specific than that, since is directed to the detailed resolution of the specific *aporiai* formulated in the first part. We wish to defend an interpretation of the dialogue as presenting a series of cogent *aporiai* in relation to forms in the first part of the dialogue, *aporiai* which are further analysed and eventually resolved in the second part of the dialogue. Or as Taylor phrased if in his earlier work;

> For this first part of the dialogue sets the problem and pitches the key for the rest.[29]

Although Cornford's interpretation may well highlight an important aspect of Plato's intention, the historicist reading is not an interpretation which enables Cornford to revisit any particular *aporia* of part one and show how it may be resolved in the light of the arguments of part two in the level of detail we hope to demonstrate in this thesis. Other such historical readings suffer from a similar shortcoming, and so Turnbull[30], for instance, in dealing with the so called 'third man argument' in part one resolves it in its own terms without any recourse to the arguments in the second part of the dialogue. We intend to provide evidence that the specific *aporiai* of part one can be resolved, in the terms in which they were formulated, through recourse to the concepts, distinctions and arguments of the hypotheses in part two. Once we have done so we shall have made a stronger and more

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[29] Taylor, ibid (1896), p 301
[30] Turnbull, ibid, p 28

detailed connection between the two parts of the dialogue than any historical interpretation can, and accordingly we shall be able to claim, on that basis, that our interpretation is superior.

Why is the theory of forms involved here?

We should now work through the various stages of the first part of the dialogue and the transition into the second part and find out whether the developments therein present any difficulties for our proposed interpretation. The key stages are: the initial exchange between Socrates and Zeno and the introduction of the theory of forms; the interrogation of Socrates by Parmenides and the development of the *aporiai* about forms; the exercise proposed by Parmenides to assist Socrates; and the initial demonstration of that exercise in the second part of the dialogue. We shall begin with the exchange between Socrates and Zeno and the introduction of forms by Socrates.

We have declared our intention to divide the dialogue into two parts but we have already read that R.E. Allen discerns three parts. This is because Allen attaches much significance to the opening exchange between Socrates and Parmenides' companion Zeno. So much so that he prefers to designate their discussion as a distinct and important part of the dialogue because he sees therein the actual reason for Socrates' initial introduction of the concept of forms. Allen considers the possible philosophic content of Zeno's argument in great detail and concludes that Zeno is developing paradoxes in order to establish that there is no such thing as plurality and that Socrates, for his part, is responding to those paradoxes and their associated denial of plurality. Allen claims that the essence of the paradox is that, if there is plurality, the same things must be both like and unlike; nothing can be both like and unlike; therefore there is no plurality.[31] He defends the cogency of this paradox against allegations of superficiality and gross confusion on the subject of relations[32], argues that its purport is metaphysical and places Socrates' presentation of forms within the context of a response to Zeno's paradox:

> The essence of Socrates' reply to Zeno is that a distinction obtains between things qualified by opposites and the opposites that qualify them. There would have been no point in drawing that distinction unless Socrates thought that Zeno assumed its denial.[33]
>
> Zeno's paradox then is a special case applied to opposites, of a more general failure to distinguish characters from things characterised.[34]

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[31] Allen, ibid, p 84.
[32] Allen; ibid, p 85ff.
[33] Allen; ibid, p 90
[34] Allen; ibid, p 91

The means whereby Socrates distinguishes characters from things characterised is, of course, by invoking ideas or forms. Accordingly, Allen sums up the difficulty presented by Zeno and the solution presented by Socrates by saying;

> Without the theory of ideas the coincidence of opposites implies the identity of opposites – the identity indeed of every characteristic and what it characterises. The theory of Ideas prevents this. The combination of opposites in sensibles leads us to recognise the existence of purely intelligible objects, characteristics that exist apart from sensibles. That is, it leads us to recognise the existence of Ideas.[35]

Although Allen's arguments are quite intricate and detailed the essence of his interpretation is that there is an argumentative unity between Zeno's initial contribution to the discussion and the rest of the dialogue. Socrates responds to Zeno by proposing that there are such things as forms, 'purely intelligible objects, characteristics that exist apart from' the sensible objects discussed by Zeno. Accordingly, we are landed in familiar territory for Platonists because the theory of forms has been presented in response to and as a solution to a philosophical problem. The theory is also formulated in language familiar to us from other dialogues and, at times, almost seems to quote them. However, we should note that there is no aspect of the exchange between Zeno and Socrates as interpreted by Allen that threatens the interpretation we wish to establish and defend here. We need only note that Socrates does present the concept of forms to Zeno in response to the arguments in Zeno's book. Allen's conclusions about the precise content of the arguments formulated by Zeno are quite plausible and such arguments might well be answered through the presentation of the theory of forms as depicted in the dialogue. But no aspect of his interpretation is in conflict with the interpretation we wish to propose and we can readily read the Socrates/Zeno exchange as the first step in the development of the *aporiai* we wish to discern in this dialogue.

We wish to make the case that the subsequent criticisms levelled by Parmenides against the theory of forms as presented by Socrates are aporetic in nature insofar as they develop philosophical problems or challenges which are resolved as the dialogue proceeds. We therefore need to consider, in the next section, the precise nature of the criticisms raised by Parmenides and the exact status of the difficulties that crystallise in his interrogation of Socrates.

Are there *aporiai* about forms?

Socrates is suddenly faced with objections from Parmenides in relation to the quite familiar concept of forms which he has just presented to Zeno and he proves unable to respond adequately to these objections. This is something of a puzzle since both Socrates and Parmenides (in Plato's dialogue at

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[35] Allen; ibid, p 99

any rate) are committed to forms and Socrates' formulation of the theory is quite a recognisable one. However, Allen[36] analyses this puzzle very thoroughly and concludes that these objections to the theory could, on the one hand, point to an intended revision of or even despair over the theory of forms on Plato's part because the criticisms voiced by Parmenides are actually decisive. Or they could, on the other hand, represent a formulation of unpersuasive objections to Plato's theory or, alternatively, decisive objections that overthrow some competing theory. In these latter cases Plato would be intending to show the falsity of those competing theories of forms or, the unpersuasiveness of certain objections to his own theory. Allen points out that if we adopt either of these two alternatives and regard the criticisms as either 'valid' or 'invalid' (his terminology), then the objections raised by Parmenides do not constitute *aporiai* in the sense required for our interpretation of the dialogue. For instance, if the 'third man argument' encapsulates a compelling objection to the theory of forms, then Plato intends that we either revise that theory or discard it because the theory of forms as captured by the third man argument generates an unacceptable regress. If this is the case we may not be dealing with an *aporia* that should be resolved through further analysis and argument in a later part of the dialogue, rather we are dealing with a cogent objection that could force us to discard or revise some stated or unstated premises. However, we need to be cautious about Allen's assertions here, for although the TLA does indeed present an *aporia* which arises out of an analysis of the theory of forms we should not assume that the resolution of that *aporia* will not ever mandate the introduction of some greater precision in our understanding of the concept of forms implied by the aporetic argument. Indeed we shall see in chapter three of this thesis that it is the introduction of just such a refinement in our understanding of the precepts about forms implied by the TLA that will lead to the elimination of the TLA regress. We wish to establish that we are dealing here with *aporiai* that are indeed answerable once a greater precision is introduced into our understanding of forms; a precision greater than that enshrined within the aporetic arguments themselves.

Allen argues quite forcibly and persuasively against the view that the objections should be taken as decisive and yet one modern scholar, Rickless, bases his entire interpretation of the *Parmenides* on just such a revisionist reading of the dialogue whereby Plato is seeing problems with his own theory and revising it accordingly in the light of the difficulties therewith as highlighted by the part one *aporiai* and the analyses within the hypotheses themselves. We shall deal with Rickless' revisionist arguments in detail later in this thesis when we will have reason to contrast his interpretation with our own. However, it is central to our reading of the dialogue that the objections to the theory of

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[36] Allen; ibid, pp 104-113

forms that are developed by Parmenides as he questions Socrates are not, in themselves, decisive objections, rather they are *aporiai* that are capable of being resolved by the material presented in the second part of the dialogue. If the criticisms are cogent criticisms pointing directly in their own right to the revision or abandonment of the theory, then there is much less for the second part of the dialogue to deal with and this is indeed how many modern commentators read the TLA. Once the aporetic arguments of part one of the dialogue are read as carrying decisive force in their own right then all of the analysis of their implications focusses upon those actual arguments themselves and no clues need be sought in the later hypotheses: this is indeed the thrust of much modern TLA scholarship. This too is part of Rickless' interpretation of the *Parmenides,* and once more we must await our systematic analysis of Rickless' work in order to establish more certainly that Parmenides' objections are not intended as compelling objections, in their own right, but are capable of resolution. Yet, even from the evidence at our disposal at this stage we can satisfy ourselves that there is a good case for not taking these objections as decisive and compelling in their own right, and indeed arguments to this effect are presented by Allen.[37] Among his more significant arguments against the actual validity of Parmenides' criticisms is the internal evidence in the first part of the dialogue itself:

> In fact, it may be said with certainty that the claim of revolution is false, and this on the basis of Parmenides' own stated view of his criticisms. At 133b, Parmenides says that a man of wide experience and natural endowment could show (or be shown) that the concluding criticism is mistaken. The comment is directed to only one argument; but that argument, as we shall see, is structurally so related to those preceding it that it applies to them as well. The generality of the remark is confirmed by 135c, where Parmenides holds that to reject the theory of Ideas is to destroy the power of discourse. Thus, assuming that texts ought not to be understood to mean the opposite of what they say, the *Parmenides* itself forbids the view that the criticisms are valid.[38]

He concludes his refutation of the cogency of the criticisms formulated by Parmenides most forthrightly by stating that;

> Perhaps no more persistent thesis in the literature of Platonism, and anti-Platonism, has been advanced than that the criticisms in the *Parmenides* are meant to herald a rejection of the theory of Ideas or Forms found in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*. Few claims are more demonstrably false.[39]

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[37] Allen, ibid, pp 105-6
[38] Allen, ibid, p 105
[39] Allen, ibid, p 106

Allen, however, also rejects the assertion that the criticisms are unpersuasive and of no force by making the case that the objections raised by Parmenides are convincing objections directed against what is very recognisably Plato's own theory, objections which still remain unanswered by the end of this part of the dialogue. So if the objections are not intended as decisive and unanswerable and are not unpersuasive and unconvincing either, what precisely is their status? Allen's answer is the answer we require in order to sustain our interpretation of the dialogue:

> Given that Parmenides' criticisms are directed against the theory they criticise, the question of why the criticisms are put remains unanswered. The answer is direct: The criticisms are *aporiai*, perplexities, which must be faced and thought through if philosophy is to be pursued.[40]

The variety of interpretational possibilities afforded by this exchange between Socrates and Parmenides is highly instructive for us at this stage. Allen requires quite a lengthy exposition to make his very cogent case that the exchange does indeed present a series of *aporiai* which require further attention, yet he also lists a range of scholars who read this part of the dialogue in a very different way. We accept Allen's arguments that the theory being criticised by Parmenides is, by and large, the theory to which Plato is traditionally committed. We accept his internal evidence that the objections are not intended as decisive, because Parmenides clearly states his belief that the theory of forms can be defended against them and that it is only Socrates lack of methodological experience that has left the objections unanswered. Accordingly, we shall set about our project of showing how the selected hypotheses of part two of the dialogue enable us to answer one of these *aporiai* from the first part and allow us to refine our understanding of forms in the process.

We have explained that our interpretation of the dialogue is based upon the interpretation of the opening exchanges as aporetic in nature so that we can show how the rest of the dialogue analyses those *aporiai* and resolves them in whole or in part. It is salutary to note that we cannot merely take the aporetic nature of the initial exchanges for granted because, even before we enter the more intricate controversies relating to the complicated final part of the dialogue, it turns out that the apparently straightforward assertion that the Parmenides/Socrates exchange is aporetic is an assertion that requires defence. It is central to our overall interpretation of the *Parmenides* that this opening section of the dialogue presents *aporiai* which are resolved by the lengthy concluding section of the dialogue. Allen's defence of its aporetic nature is quite comprehensive and develops a very good case that we are dealing with genuine *aporiai* in relation to forms in the opening section

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[40] Allen, ibid, p 108

of this work. This is important for our proposed reading but, as our analysis proceeds, we shall take further opportunities to strengthen the argument that such is indeed the case.

An exercise for Socrates

Up to this point Allen's reading of the dialogue aligns quite closely with our own intended reading insofar as he claims that, by the end of this section, we have developed a set of *aporiai* or perplexities which must be tackled thereafter. However, while we wish to assert that the final part of the dialogue offers further analysis of those *aporiai* and a basis for their resolution, Allen's view begins to diverge from our own at this point in the dialogue for reasons that will become clear once we explain how the dialogue unfolds from here and how Allen interprets that development. We both agree that a series of *aporiai* have been developed in relation to Plato's theory of forms as formulated by Socrates. We have seen that Parmenides takes this perplexity over forms very seriously and proposes to deal with the predicament in which the interlocutors find themselves. Accordingly, we might expect that the *aporiai* would be revisited in their own terms and scrutinised once more in order to 'go into them thoroughly' as Aristotle directs us. Given Parmenides' dramatically expressed concern over the failure of the power of dialectic and the threat to the progress of philosophy we might expect that forms, dialectical power and the future of philosophy will take over as central themes of the rest of the dialogue. Such would be the anticipated response to a set of *aporiai* as serious as those in the *Parmenides*. But if that is actually what happens next it is far from obvious that it is actually happening because the language and terminology used subsequently does not directly reflect the content of the opening *aporiai*.

We expect *aporiai* to be tackled but, as we have explained, Parmenides does not actually undertake to analyse them directly in their own terms nor does he ignore them, for his acknowledgement of their seriousness is quite fulsome. Instead he puts the problem down to Socrates' lack of training and proposes an exercise that will enable him to be '...perfectly trained and see truth clearly.'[41] But we are left with the question as to what sort of 'exercise' could possibly help us to deal with the difficulties we encountered in relation to forms. The exercise which we will now quote sounds, on first reading, as if it might be purely logical, but if this is the nature of the exercise does it mean that if Socrates had adopted a logically rigorous approach to the appreciation of forms he would not have put up such a poor showing under Parmenides' cross-examination? If, on the other hand, it is not merely an exercise in logic we need to ask how it relates to the *aporiai* that have been formulated since the language of the exercise is very general and does not seem to reflect the issues captured in those *aporiai*. Accordingly, we need to consider this exercise in some detail as it is a crucial link

[41] *Parm*, 136c, 4-5: εἰ μέλλεις τελέως γυμνασάμενος κυρίως διόψεσθαι τὸ ἀληθές.

between the first part of the dialogue and its concluding part. It reads as follows – Parmenides is speaking;

> "For instance," he said, "take, if you like, this hypothesis that Zeno proposed: if things that are, are many, what must the consequences be for the many themselves, in relation to themselves and in relation to the one, and also for the one, both in relation to itself and in relation to the many. Then again, if they are not many, you must consider what will follow both for the one and for the many, in relation to themselves and to each other. ... Indeed, to sum up, no matter what you ever hypothesise as being or not being, or exhibiting any other characteristic, you must consider the consequences both in relation to itself, and in relation to each one of the others, whichever you may select, and in like manner the consequences in relation to more of them, and in relation to all of them together. Furthermore, you must consider the others, both in relation to themselves, and to any other you choose whether you hypothesise the being or non-being of the subject, in order to be perfectly trained and see truth clearly." [42]

This description, which we shall refer to hereafter as 'the schema', sets out an approach whereby we may set about the consideration of any philosophic proposition. It makes a series of twofold divisions the first of which is based upon the reckoning up of the consequences if the particular proposition is assumed to be true and then reckoning the consequences if that same proposition is assumed not to be true. But we are given two bases on which to consider those consequences; the first is for the subject itself the second is for things other than that subject. There are then two further bases upon which either of these two considerations should be made and these seem to correspond to two directions of relationship, directions which are referred to as πρὸς αὐτὸ and πρὸς ἄλλο; these terms mean 'towards or in relation to (πρὸς) itself (αὐτὸ)' and 'towards or in relation to another (ἄλλο) respectively. However, not everyone agrees that these πρὸς relationships are indeed the basis of the last of the three divisions so we shall simply refer to the third basis of division as 'basis X'. Accordingly, we may attempt to summarise the schema as follows;

1. Consider the consequences if
    a. the proposition is true
    b. The proposition is false
2. Consider those consequences under two headings

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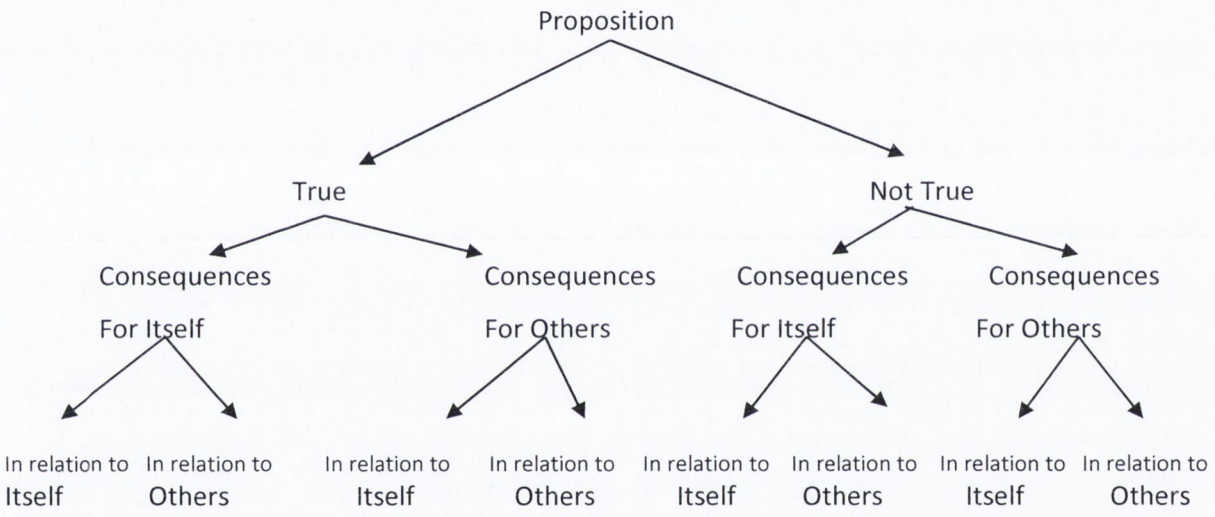
[42] *Parm*, 136a4–b1 ... 136b6–c5: οἷον, ἔφη, εἰ βούλει, περὶ ταύτης τῆς ὑποθέσεως ἣν Ζήνων ὑπέθετο, εἰ πολλά ἐστι, τί χρὴ συμβαίνειν καὶ αὐτοῖς τοῖς πολλοῖς πρὸς αὐτὰ καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἓν καὶ τῷ ἑνὶ πρός τε αὐτὸ καὶ πρὸς τὰ πολλά: καὶ αὖ εἰ μή ἐστι πολλά, πάλιν σκοπεῖν τί συμβήσεται καὶ τῷ ἑνὶ καὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς καὶ πρὸς αὐτὰ καὶ πρὸς ἄλληλα: ... καὶ ἑνὶ λόγῳ, περὶ ὅτου ἂν ἀεὶ ὑποθῇ ὡς ὄντος καὶ ὡς οὐκ ὄντος καὶ ὁτιοῦν ἄλλο πάθος πάσχοντος, δεῖ σκοπεῖν τὰ συμβαίνοντα πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ πρὸς ἓν ἕκαστον τῶν ἄλλων, ὅτι ἂν προέλῃ, καὶ πρὸς πλείω καὶ πρὸς σύμπαντα ὡσαύτως: καὶ τἆλλα αὖ πρὸς αὐτά τε καὶ πρὸς ἄλλο ὅτι ἂν προαιρῇ ἀεί, ἐάντε ὡς ὂν ὑποθῇ ὃ ὑπετίθεσο, ἄντε ὡς μὴ ὄν, εἰ μέλλεις τελέως γυμνασάμενος κυρίως διόψεσθαι τὸ ἀληθές.

a. As they apply to the subject of the proposition itself
b. As they apply to things other than that subject

3. Conduct the consideration in 2 upon
   a. basis X
   b. the counterpart of basis X

If we set this out in a diagram we shall see that it yields an exercise with 8 sub-parts as set out below – here we assume that basis X is the relation to either Itself (the subject of the proposition) or to others (anything other than the direct subject of the proposition);



This particular series of subdivisions will yield a series of eight sets of consequences which will correspond to the eightfold structure of the latter part of the dialogue; and the majority of modern commentators do indeed agree that there are eight sub-divisions to the final part of the *Parmenides*. However, not all commentators agree on the precise relationship between the eight hypotheses and the schema outlined by the exercise. Some say that the eight hypotheses arise from the faithful working out of the schema but others deny this. Both Allen and Cornford state that the schema leads us to expect only four hypotheses and that we require another explanation, not captured by the schema, to explain why there are eight. Hence Allen, referring to the hypotheses as 'deductions', expresses his view as follows;

> The Multiplicity of Deductions derives from their inconsistency. Though the Hypotheses conform exactly to Parmenides' description of proper method, that description does not,

> before the Idea to be hypothesised is chosen, indicate the manifold inconsistency that the exercise will expose.[43]

So Allen is saying that the part two hypotheses, or deductions as he calls them, have an inconsistency arising from the particular proposition selected, an inconsistency that causes the four hypotheses that we expect on the basis of the schema to turn into eight or nine hypotheses. Cornford's basic argument is quite similar to Allen's and neither of them accept that the schema exactly anticipates the eightfold structure that finally materialises in the hypotheses. But even those who accept that the schema does fully anticipate the eight hypotheses do not, as we have noted, agree upon the basis for the final division which turns the four hypotheses into eight. We have seen that some[44] favour the πρὸς relationships as the basis for that final division and this is what we have shown in our diagram but others dispute this and prefer to say that the final division is based upon whether the consequences that emerge from the analysis in the second set of divisions is positive or negative.[45]

So we have more controversy and quite a degree of complexity here but if we keep our overall objective in mind perhaps we do not need to be too concerned about the precise details of the relationship of the part one schema to the part two hypotheses in order to make the case we wish to make. Whether the schema anticipates four hypotheses, eight hypotheses or even nine (as Proclus, the fifth century successor of Plato, would have it), there is overwhelming agreement that the schema is indeed intended to set out the plan for the hypotheses. Regardless of whether the final division is based upon the πρὸς relationships or upon some other aspect of the consequences from the previous divisions the continuity of the argument beginning with the *aporiai*, continuing through the schema and concluding with the hypotheses is unaffected.

The schema is given to Socrates as an exercise which will enable him to be perfectly trained and see truth clearly but none of those present are in any way clear as to how it should be applied in practice and so they request a demonstration from Parmenides. We shall consider that demonstration in a moment but we now need to decide whether these uncertainties attaching to the schema and its implementation affect the overall interpretation of the dialogue that we wish to establish and defend here. It would be hard to argue that this schema is anything other than a response to the

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[43] Allen; ibid, p 216. For Cornford's assertion along similar lines see, Cornford; p 107

[44] For this reading see: Meinwald, C. C; *Plato's Parmenides.* Oxford University Press, 1991. pp 36-37 and also Francis Jeffry Pelletier, Edward N. Zalta; *NOÛS* 34:2 (2000) 165–202, who broadly support Meinwald's reading.

[45] For this reading see: Plato. *Parmenides.* Trans. by Mary Louise Gill and Paul Ryan with introduction by Mary Louise Gill. Hackett, 1996. pp 56 – 59. And also Rickless, S.C. *Plato's Forms in Transition.* A reading of the Parmenides. Cambridge University Press, 2007. pp 109-111

aporiai since it is only presented to us in the first place because those *aporiai* arose. But this does not necessarily mean that it will help us deal with the *aporiai* in a direct manner. Perhaps it presents an approach to philosophical propositions in general which, had it been observed, might have avoided the difficulties encountered by Socrates in the face of Parmenides' objections. If we are interested in a resolution of the third-man-argument, where is there any recourse within the schema to any language or terminology which implies a possible resolution to that argument? But at this point in the dialogue the clear message is that the purpose and practical use of the schema has not yet been clarified by Parmenides and his impending worked example, as requested by his audience, is intended to demonstrate exactly how the schema may be implemented. This demonstration which will unfold through the eight hypotheses has not yet been presented. So is there an immediate threat to our interpretation on account of the controversies which are associated with the schema?

Where to begin

It is hardly surprising that Parmenides' audience wish to hear a demonstration of the exercise as quoted in the previous section or that Socrates declares that he does not understand what Parmenides is proposing;

> "You are describing an immense undertaking, Parmenides," he said, "and I do not fully understand. But why not frame some hypothesis yourself and work through it for me so that I may understand better?"[46]

With some reluctance in the face of this enormous undertaking and impelled by the insistence of the rest of the company, Parmenides agrees but, in view of the generality of the exercise, he must first, as Socrates has observed, select some particular proposition. When he originally outlined the exercise Parmenides made use of Zeno's proposition about multiplicity but now he has the opportunity to choose a proposition of his own for the purposes of the demonstration. Here is his suggestion;

> So then, where shall we begin and what shall we first hypothesise? Indeed, since we are apparently going to play this laborious game, do you wish to start with myself and my own hypothesis, hypothesising about the one itself and what must follow, if it is one or not one?[47]

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[46] *Parm*, 136c, 6-8; Ἀμήχανόν γ' ἔφη, λέγεις, ὦ Παρμενίδη, πραγματείαν, καὶ οὐ σφόδρα μανθάνω. ἀλλά μοι τί οὐ διῆλθες αὐτὸς ὑποθέμενός τι, ἵνα μᾶλλον καταμάθω;

[47] *Parm*, 137a7-b4; πόθεν οὖν δὴ ἀρξόμεθα καὶ τί πρῶτον ὑποθησόμεθα; ἢ βούλεσθε, ἐπειδήπερ δοκεῖ πραγματειώδη παιδιὰν παίζειν, ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ ἄρξωμαι καὶ τῆς ἐμαυτοῦ ὑποθέσεως, περὶ τοῦ ἑνὸς αὐτοῦ ὑποθέμενος, εἴτε ἔν ἐστιν εἴτε μὴ ἕν, τί χρὴ συμβαίνειν; See Meinwald, Plato's *Parmenides*, pp 40–45 for a discussion on translation options here.

Zeno accepts this apparently random proposition but like most other developments in the dialogue this step does require some more careful attention. Firstly there is a textual issue at 137b4 above which presents itself again in part two at 137c4 at the very start of the demonstration. This revolves around the phrase, translated above as 'whether it is one or not one' and this has been the subject of much scholarly attention and the footnote to the above quotation refers the reader to an extensive discussion in Meinwald's book which also includes further references. Allen too provides a useful discussion.[48] However, when we come to consider the beginning of the hypotheses in detail we shall find that there are also two significant alternative readings of the text at 137c4 where the first of the eight hypotheses begins. But we shall make the case that it is a matter of indifference to our overall reading of the first hypothesis whether one variant or the other is adopted and we shall present the reasoning behind this assertion when we come to consider the first hypothesis in detail in the next chapter. Accordingly, we shall explain in the next chapter that regardless of which variant we adopt we shall end up discussing whether a particular proposition is true or false and the proposition under consideration will be 'if one is'. As Allen puts it;

> Parmenides offers two and only two hypotheses: that Unity is and that Unity is not. These two hypotheses are considered respectively from the point of view of consequences for Unity itself and consequences for the others.[49]

So the proposition for consideration throughout the second part of the dialogue will be 'if one is'. We know that the schema and the unfolding of the analysis of this proposition will generate eight subdivisions in the second part of the dialogue. We need only note two concerns at this stage. The first is a slight divergence between the terminology used by Allen and the terminology that we ourselves shall prefer. The second concern is the seeming change of topic. We were discussing *aporiai* about forms but now we are all set to spend the second part of the dialogue analysing a proposition about 'the one'. Does this latter development undermine our assertion that the second part of the dialogue will help us deal with the earlier *aporiai* in relation to forms, because forms are not the theme of the eight hypotheses of part two?

On the question of terminology Allen, as we have seen, finds only four 'deductions' and here he says that there are only two 'hypotheses' each of which is considered in two different ways in order to yield the fourfold structure which he discerns. There is potential for some confusion of terminology here because a tradition has arisen whereby all of the eight subsections of the second part of the dialogue are referred to as 'hypotheses'. Allen prefers to refer to these eight subsections as

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[48] Allen; ibid, pp 208-210
[49] Allen; ibid, p 212

'deductions' and he prefers the notion, as explained above, that there are only two actual 'hypotheses'. We shall find that various interpreters introduce terminology of their own while others, as we do, stick to the traditional 'eight hypotheses' terminology. In our terminology we have a single 'proposition' about unity as selected by Parmenides and this is analysed for its consequences based upon the phrase 'if one is'. On account of the approach outlined in the schema the treatment of this single proposition yields a series of eight analyses with eight corresponding sets of consequences and each of these eight analyses, with its corresponding set of consequences, is referred to as a 'hypothesis'.

We should now consider Parmenides' choice of that particular proposition about unity as his candidate for the demonstration of the schema. If Parmenides' selection of that proposition about unity is entirely random then he may not be attempting to do any more than demonstrate a logical or procedural exercise and he may be doing so by making use of an example whose propositional content is of no particular significance. But having given his summary of the exercise earlier by invoking Zeno's proposition about plurality as an example why did he not just stay with that proposition from Zeno? He selected a proposition about unity as an alternative and this may well indicate some definite intent on his part yet and could be a declaration that the treatment of that subject in part two will be instrumental in the resolution of the opening *aporiai*. Yet it is still open to an interpreter to contradict this and make the case that the earlier schema is just an exercise and what will be demonstrated in the hypotheses is a demonstration of a mere exercise and, as such, we should not expect to find that the proposition about unity that Parmenides selected has any particular significance in its own right arising from its philosophic or indeed metaphysical content.

If this latter claim is true then our exploration of the assertion that the eight hypotheses of the last part of the dialogue resolve the *aporiai* of the first part will reveal a purely logical or methodological intent to the schema, this will in turn be reflected in the hypotheses and the philosophical content of the proposition about unity will prove not to be central to the process. As long as the concepts, distinctions and arguments of the hypotheses allow us to resolve the opening *aporiai* it does not matter for the purposes of justifying our interpretation whether their contribution is purely logical and methodological or derives from the actual philosophical content of Parmenides' chosen proposition. If on the other hand the nature of the proposition selected by Parmenides for his demonstration is not random but is significant in terms of its propositional content then our use of the eight hypotheses to resolve the opening *aporiai* will reflect to some extent how these eight hypotheses unfold when they set about exploring Parmenides' proposition about unity. Accordingly, our exploration of the hypotheses in the context of the opening *aporiai* should elucidate the precise

relevance and importance of the particular proposition about unity that Parmenides has selected and clarify whether the actual content of that proposition is indeed significant. Only our detailed analysis of the applicability of the hypotheses of part two to the *aporiai* of part one can reveal whether considering a proposition about the one can help us resolve the opening *aporiai* about forms. The fact that the relevance of the selected proposition remains an open question for the moment does not undermine or threaten our proposed interpretation at this stage.

The first of eight hypotheses

Now that we described Parmenides' proposition and the schema whereby it may be analysed we are in a position to begin our evaluation of the final three quarters of the dialogue. If we look again at our earlier diagram and adopt 'if one is' as our proposition and accept that the direction of the πρὸς relationships is what determines the final division which we have called basis X then we shall obtain eight hypotheses as set out below;

Proposition; 'if one is';

I. Consider the consequences for the one in relation to itself (πρὸς αὐτὸ)
II. Consider the consequences for the one in relation to others (πρὸς ἄλλο)
III. Consider the consequences for the others in relation to the one (πρὸς ἄλλο)
IV. Consider the consequences for the others in relation to themselves (πρὸς αὐτὸ)

Proposition; 'if one is not';

V. Consider the consequences for the one in relation to itself (πρὸς αὐτὸ)
VI. Consider the consequences for the one in relation to others (πρὸς ἄλλο)
VII. Consider the consequences for the others in relation to the one (πρὸς ἄλλο)
VIII. Consider the consequences for the others in relation to themselves (πρὸς αὐτὸ)

(Where πρὸς αὐτὸ means in relation to itself, and πρὸς ἄλλο means in relation to another.)

The above is broadly in line with what Meinwald presents[50] in her book although she herself is intent upon assigning paramount emphasis and a technical significance to the πρὸς αὐτὸ, πρὸς ἄλλο distinction based upon her overall interpretation of the dialogue whereby these two variants of any relationship are the key to understanding the *Parmenides*. The above also reflects an approach recognised by Proclus[51] who gives a number of examples of how it may be applied although he also

[50] Meinwald; Ibid, pp 36-37
[51] Proclus. *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides.* Trans. By Glenn R. Morrow and John M. Dillon with introduction and notes by John M. Dillon. Princeton University Press, 1987. 1008, pp 357-8

states that these eight are really a simplification of what are properly twenty four hypotheses[52] and when he eventually comes to analyse the hypotheses themselves he recognises nine of them and explains that this is because there are three senses of 'One' and two senses of 'Not-Being'.[53] A reading based upon the πρὸς relationships is not favoured by many modern commentators including Rickless[54] and Gill[55] because they cannot adequately detect and trace the operation of the two πρὸς relationships within the actual hypotheses themselves. Indeed Meinwald herself, in spite of their importance to her interpretation, acknowledges a similar textual support issue because the actual hypotheses do not actually use the word πρὸς with the frequency and technical rigour which would strongly support her argument. This she puts down to Plato's 'programme of making us work actively, with written work proving at most an occasion for thought'[56]. Gill and Rickless are both satisfied however that the first two hypotheses are indeed concerned with the one and the next two are concerned with the others (things other than one). However, they prefer to say that the final distinction between the hypotheses i.e. basis X, is determined by whether the conclusions drawn are negative or positive and we will appreciate why they make this claim in a moment when we analyse the first of these hypotheses from part two. We should note here that neither Rickless nor Gill indicate the actual process whereby such positive or negative consequences are generated. Accordingly, they do not tell us what approach we should adopt in the arguments within the hypotheses themselves in order to generate either the negative consequences or the positive consequences that are required to complete the final division of the schema.

So on the basis that Parmenides does develop the argument in fidelity to the first set of divisions in the above structure we should expect the first hypothesis (H1) to begin the consideration of 'the one' in relation to itself and introduce our first set of πρὸς αὐτὸ consequences according to Meinwald or our first set of negative consequences according to Rickless and Gill or demonstrate Parmenides' ambiguous use of the phrase 'there is a One', according to Cornford. Here is how the demonstration of the exercise actually begins;

> "If one is, the one would not be many?"
> "Indeed, how could it be?"
> "So the one does not have parts, nor is it a whole?"
> "Why is that?"
> "The part is presumably part of a whole."/ "Yes."

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[52] Proclus; ibid, 1000-1008, pp 351-357
[53] Proclus; ibid, 1039, pp 400-401
[54] Rickless; Ibid, pp 109 - 111
[55] Plato. *Parmenides.* Trans. by Mary Louise Gill and Paul Ryan with introduction by Mary Louise Gill. Hackett, 1996. pp 56 – 59.
[56] Meinwald; Ibid, pp 177-8, note 2.

> "But what about the whole? Is not a whole that from which no part is missing?"
> "Yes, certainly."
> "So in both cases, the one would consist of parts, whether it is a whole or has parts." / "It must be so."
> "So in both cases, it follows that the one would be many and not one." / "True."
> "But it should, in fact, be just one and not many." / "It should."
> "So if the one is to be one, it will neither be a whole nor will it have parts."
> "It will not."
> "Now, if the one does not have a part, it would have neither a beginning, nor end, nor middle, for such things would then be parts of it." / "Correct."
> "And indeed, beginning and end are the limits of a thing." / "Of course."
> "So the one is limitless and does not have a beginning or end." / "Limitless."[57]

Thus begins the first hypothesis and we can see immediately why Rickless and Gill categorise this as constituting an enumeration of the negative consequences of the opening proposition 'if one is'. In the short extract above the one has been denied any involvement with part or whole and it has been denied any limits. This all happens because of the initial acceptance that it will have no multiplicity whatsoever; it is a strictly non-multiple One. The analysis goes on in the same way deducing that 'if one is' then the one is devoid of shape, is neither in itself nor in another, neither at rest nor moving, is not the same as itself or another nor other than itself or another. The same conclusions are also drawn in relation to the absence of likeness and unlikeness, equality and inequality, either with itself or with another. All temporal relations such as being older, younger or the same age as itself or another and any involvement with past present or future time are also denied to the one, if it is. In summary then we can say that this argument, called the first hypothesis (H1), concludes that if one is, it is devoid of any multiplicity whatsoever and, in consequence, enters into no relations whatsoever either with itself or with another and is devoid of any temporality. However, having accumulated these conclusions throughout some five pages of argument in a forty page dialogue it then proceeds to draw the following additional conclusions about the one;

> "So then, if the one does not participate at all in any aspect of time, it has never become, nor was it becoming, and it never was, nor has it become now, nor is it becoming, and it

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[57] *Parm*; 137c4-d8: Εἶεν δή, φάναι· εἰ ἕν ἐστιν, ἄλλο τι οὐκ ἂν εἴη πολλὰ τὸ ἕν; {—} Πῶς γὰρ ἄν; {—} Οὔτε ἄρα μέρος αὐτοῦ οὔτε ὅλον αὐτὸ δεῖ εἶναι. {—} Τί δή; {—} Τὸ μέρος που ὅλου μέρος ἐστίν. {—} Ναί. {—} Τί δὲ τὸ ὅλον; οὐχὶ οὗ ἂν μέρος μηδὲν ἀπῇ ὅλον ἂν εἴη; {—} Πάνυ γε. {—} Ἀμφοτέρως ἄρα τὸ ἓν ἐκ μερῶν ἂν εἴη, ὅλον τε ὂν καὶ μέρη ἔχον. {—} Ἀνάγκη. {—} Ἀμφοτέρως ἂν ἄρα οὕτως τὸ ἓν πολλὰ εἴη ἀλλ' οὐχ ἕν. {—} Ἀληθῆ. {—} Δεῖ δέ γε μὴ πολλὰ ἀλλ' ἓν αὐτὸ εἶναι. {—} Δεῖ. {—} Οὔτ' ἄρα ὅλον ἔσται οὔτε μέρη ἕξει, εἰ ἓν ἔσται τὸ ἕν. {—} Οὐ γάρ.Οὐκοῦν εἰ μηδὲν ἔχει μέρος, οὔτ' ἂν ἀρχὴν οὔτε τελευτὴν οὔτε μέσον ἔχοι· μέρη γὰρ ἂν ἤδη αὐτοῦ τὰ τοιαῦτα εἴη. {—} Ὀρθῶς. {—} Καὶ μὴν τελευτή γε καὶ ἀρχὴ πέρας ἑκάστου. {—} Πῶς δ' οὔ; {—} Ἄπειρον ἄρα τὸ ἕν, εἰ μήτε ἀρχὴν μήτε τελευτὴν ἔχει. {—} Ἄπειρον.

never is, nor will it come to be hereafter, nor be becoming, and it will never be." / "Very true."
"However, is there any way that something can partake of being unless it is based on any of these?" / "There is not."
"So the one does not partake of being at all." / "It seems not."
"So the one is not, in any way at all." / "It appears not."
"Nor is it, on this basis, able to be one for, if this were so, it would then be and partake of being. Rather it seems that the one neither is, nor is it one, if we are to be persuaded by such an argument." / "Very likely."
"But if something is not, could anything relate to it or belong to this something that is not?" / "How could it?"
"Therefore, there is no name of it, nor any account, knowledge, perception or opinion." / "It appears not."
"Then it is neither named, nor spoken of, nor is it subject to opinion or knowledge, nor is it perceived by anything that is." / "It seems not."
"Now can all this apply to the one?" / "Well, I don't think so anyway."[58]

Now we should step back from the complexities of H1 for a moment and remind ourselves of our earlier expectation that these hypotheses in the second part of the dialogue might resolve the *aporiai* of the first part of the dialogue. This hope might now appear to have been dashed because of the utterly aporetic nature of what appears at the end of the very first of these hopeful hypotheses. We began with the proposition that 'one is' and having followed through the consequences of that admission we find that we are led to the conclusion that 'one is not' and one is 'not even one'. This sounds like a classical reductio ad absurdum and we are led to suspect that something must be seriously wrong somewhere.

This outcome of H1 has led to a two thousand five hundred year history of diagnosing the source of the problem, explaining the problem away, or using it as the basis for a very negative reading of the entire dialogue. One thing is certain however; no one can ignore what happens at the end of H1. Proclus the fifth century head of the Academy in Athens, a successor of Plato himself, refers to this conclusion as 'unexpected' and he declares that it 'raises a grave doubt' and so he asks the question

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[58] *Parm*, 141e3-142a8: Εἰ ἄρα τὸ ἓν μηδαμῇ μηδενὸς μετέχει χρόνου, οὔτε ποτὲ γέγονεν οὔτ' ἐγίγνετο οὔτ' ἦν ποτέ, οὔτε νῦν γέγονεν οὔτε γίγνεται οὔτε ἔστιν, οὔτ' ἔπειτα γενήσεται οὔτε γενηθήσεται οὔτε ἔσται. {—} Ἀληθέστατα. {—} Ἔστιν οὖν οὐσίας ὅπως ἄν τι μετάσχοι ἄλλως ἢ κατὰ τούτων τι; {—} Οὐκ ἔστιν. {—} Οὐδαμῶς ἄρα τὸ ἓν οὐσίας μετέχει. {—} Οὐκ ἔοικεν. {—} Οὐδαμῶς ἄρα ἔστι τὸ ἕν. {—} Οὐ φαίνεται. {—} Οὐδ' ἄρα οὕτως ἔστιν ὥστε ἓν εἶναι· εἴη γὰρ ἂν ἤδη ὂν καὶ οὐσίας μετέχον· ἀλλ' ὡς ἔοικεν, τὸ ἓν οὔτε ἕν ἐστιν οὔτε ἔστιν, εἰ δεῖ τῷ τοιῷδε λόγῳ πιστεύειν. {—} Κινδυνεύει. {—} Ὃ δὲ μὴ ἔστι, τούτῳ τῷ μὴ ὄντι εἴη ἄν τι αὐτῷ ἢ αὐτοῦ; {—} Καὶ πῶς; {—} Οὐδ' ἄρα ὄνομα ἔστιν αὐτῷ οὐδὲ λόγος οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη οὐδὲ αἴσθησις οὐδὲ δόξα. {—} Οὐ φαίνεται. {—} Οὐδ' ὀνομάζεται ἄρα οὐδὲ λέγεται οὐδὲ δοξάζεται οὐδὲ γιγνώσκεται, οὐδέ τι τῶν ὄντων αὐτοῦ αἰσθάνεται. {—} Οὐκ ἔοικεν. {—} Ἦ δυνατὸν οὖν περὶ τὸ ἓν ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχειν; {—} Οὔκουν ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

'are not all the foregoing arguments dismissed by this single remark?'[59] He then goes on to state that 'some people have therefore been persuaded by this passage to say that the First Hypothesis reaches impossible conclusions, and so that the one is not a real subject'. The 'some people' is inferred by Dillon to be the Platonist, Origen, a contemporary of Plotinus who was writing some two hundred years before Proclus. This is also the point where Allen's interpretation of the dialogue diverges somewhat from our own. Having accepted that the Parmenides/Socrates exchange develops a series of *aporiai* he sees the development of *aporiai* continuing into the second part of the dialogue and being reflected in the eight hypotheses;

> The exercise that concludes the *Parmenides*, like what has gone before, is aporetic; the wrong admissions have been made. But the Parmenides does not undertake to do the work meant for the reader and determine which admissions are wrong.

And also

> The structure of the concluding part of the *Parmenides* is absurd and since it is not subtly but blatantly absurd, we are surely meant so to understand it.[60]

His concluding remark is that "The final result is the perfection of aporetic structure."[61] At no stage therefore does Allen apply any of the concepts, distinctions and arguments of the hypotheses of part two to the resolution of the *aporiai* of part one. Like Turnbull he resolves the so called 'third man argument' in its own terms with no recourse to any aspect of the hypotheses.

We wish to make the case that the *aporiai* of the first part of this dialogue may be resolved through recourse to the concepts and arguments presented in the eight hypotheses of the second part of the dialogue. In considering the very first of these hypotheses we have an encountered an issue whereby H1 has presented us with a concept of unity, a one, that is strictly devoid of multiplicity, does not enter into any relations and has no temporality whatsoever. H1 then proceeds to draw some further and even more dramatic conclusions whereby this 'pure one' seems not to exist and is not even one. So, we are faced with the question of whether or not this 'pure one' should now be discarded as the mere subject of a reductio like the notion of a right angled equilateral triangle. But if we discard it how should we regard the substantial argumentative edifice of H1 with which it was analysed and found to be so problematic? If we discard it shall we find something in the next hypothesis that will be more useful to us in tackling our part one *aporiai*? In order to do justice to these questions we shall devote our entire second chapter, the next chapter of this thesis, to an

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[59] Proclus. Ibid, 64K, p 596

[60] Allen, ibid, p 218

[61] Allen, ibid, p 339

analysis of H1 in order to determine how the arguments therein should be appreciated, how the conclusions presented at the end of H1 should be construed and what status we should accord to the 'pure one' that H1 presents to us, a one that we shall hereafter refer to as the one of H1. Once we have completed this effort we shall be in a position to consider what use, if any, we may make of the one of H1 for the purposes of developing philosophical arguments and, in particular, of resolving the opening *aporiai* of the *Parmenides*.

The overall plan

We have stated our intention to establish and defend the argumentative unity of Plato's *Parmenides* by showing that the concepts, distinctions and arguments of the eight hypotheses in the second part of the dialogue may be used to resolve the *aporiai* of the first part in the precise terms in which those *aporiai* are formulated. We have satisfied ourselves that none of the other developments in the first part of the dialogue seriously undermine or threaten our overall intention here. The developments in question are: the nature of the opening exchange between Socrates and Zeno with its introduction of the theory of forms; the exchange between Socrates and Parmenides and the problems for the theory of forms that are formulated there; the variety of possible interpretations of the exercise given to Socrates by Parmenides and the schema that it presents; and the status of the actual proposition, 'if one is', that Parmenides selects for analysis in the hypotheses of part two.

However, we have just highlighted the need to revisit the first of these hypotheses (H1) of part two in some detail in order to ensure that our entire project is not undermined by the problematic nature and structure of that argument and its relationship to the subsequent part two arguments. Provided we succeed in defending the cogency of that opening argument of part two and its associated subject, the 'pure one', we can then make the case that the concepts, distinctions and arguments therein are defensible and that the subject of that first hypothesis, the 'pure one', should be capable of being used in further arguments in order to solve philosophical problems. This will complete our second chapter. We shall then be justified in making use of that subject, the 'pure one', combined with an analysis of the second hypothesis (H2) of part two in order to develop a resolution of the so called 'third man argument' of part one based upon the precise terms in which that particular *aporia* is formulated. This will constitute our second chapter and having completed these two chapters we shall have established what we set out to establish; that the, concepts, distinctions and arguments of the second part may be used to resolve the *aporiai* of the first part in the precise terms in which those *aporiai* are formulated.

At that point we shall step back from the precise task we have set ourselves here in order to revisit some more ancient interpretations of this dialogue, readings which are often classed as Neo-

Platonic. We shall assess the cogency of such Neo-Platonic readings in the light of our own overall analysis to assess whether, in the case of Plotinus in particular, such interpretations represent a defensible reading of the *Parmenides* or, as some critics allege, a misunderstanding or a mystical interpretation which undermines the credibility of the exegesis. Based upon this approach to our work we shall have four chapters in this thesis: this introduction; chapter two on the first hypothesis and the use that may be made of its philosophic concepts; chapter three on the application of the first and second hypotheses of part two to the resolution of the so called 'third man argument' of part one; chapter four on Plotinus' use of the *Parmenides* and the cogency of his exegesis thereof.

We have argued in this chapter that interpretations which place primary emphasis upon the thought of the historical Parmenides and Zeno do not succeed in establishing a precise and detailed argumentative connection between the *aporiai* of part one and the subsequent arguments of part two. We have also noted the existence of a rejectionist strand running through modern scholarship in particular and we can safely say at this stage that if we succeed in our own objective here we shall have undermined the case for such rejectionism. On this basis, neither of these two interpretations or any variation upon them is likely to assist us in establishing or defending the case we wish to make here.

We have also noted the revisionist or developmentalist reading of the dialogue whereby, in the *Parmenides*, a later dialogue of his middle period, Plato is finding fault with his own theory of forms. We have seen that Turnbull is inclined towards this view and it is well expressed by McCabe, though her main concern is the question 'What is an individual?'

> What Plato badly needs is to consider 'What is an individual?' as a general question, leaving open the issue of which entities qualify. And that general investigation, I argue, is on hand in the second part of the *Parmenides* (hereafter *Parmenides* II), continues in the *Theaetetus* and the *Timaeus*, and is brought to a satisfactory conclusion in the *Sophist*. The agenda from here onward, that is, is not the viability of the theory of forms, but the nature of individuation. What is one? – as *Republic* 523 has predicted – is the question that demands an answer first.[62]

We need not concern ourselves with the details of McCabe's assertions above but we should note her reiteration of the very common claim that many issues raised in the *Parmenides* are resolved in the *Sophist* or even the *Philebus*. Hence Rickless' statement that "... as developmentalists agree, the *Parmenides* is succeeded by (at least) five dialogues: T*heaetetus*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Philebus*, and *Laws*."[63] He too reads the *Parmenides* as featuring a revision of the theory of forms and he reads the

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[62] McCabe, *Plato's Individuals*, PUP, 1999, p. 99.

[63] Rickless, S.C., *Plato's Forms in Transition: A reading of the Parmenides*. (Cambridge University Press, 2009). p. 240

aporetic ending of the first hypothesis as a significant step in that process. By contrast we, for our part, have highlighted the need to revisit the first hypothesis (H1) of part two in some detail in order to ensure that our entire project is not undermined by the problematic nature and structure of that argument and its relationship to the subsequent part two arguments. We shall need to argue that H1 establishes a conclusion that connects it to the next part two argument and develops a concept that can be used to resolve the opening *aporiai*. Rickless needs to make the case that H1 is a reductio based argument highlighting problems with certain aspects of the theory of forms. Accordingly, we must come to terms with his arguments and make a case against them in our next chapter as we take the first step in defending the interpretation we have outlined above. In so doing we shall also be forced to highlight some of the shortcomings of such revisionist readings of the dialogue and make a detailed case for preferring our own interpretation. As Rickless has a consistent revisionist approach to the entire dialogue we shall also make use of his interpretation of the 'third man argument', which he reads consistently as highlighting problems with the theory of forms, and we shall contrast this with our own reading of that argument whereby the regress is resolved by the concepts, definitions and arguments provided by the hypotheses of part two.

In recent scholarship there is one influential interpretation that does not easily fall into the category of rejectionist, revisionist or historicist, an interpretation that is capable of being aligned closely with what we are proposing here. This interpretation is Meinwald's,[64] who developed a reading of the *Parmenides* whereby Plato is employing the two modes of predication we described earlier, predication with respect to the thing itself and predication with respect to other. She claims that it is the failure to distinguish between these two modes of predication that generates the *aporiai* of part one and the apparent contradictions in the hypotheses of part two and she claims that the *aporiai* are resolved and the contradictions and difficulties of part two are explained once we distinguish these two modes of predication. According to Meinwald and other scholars who have developed and refined her approach, these two modes of predication, as prefigured in the schema and exemplified in part two, enable us to resolve the *aporiai* of part one. Therefore when we are dealing with our own interpretation of the 'third man argument' we shall have to consider Meinwald and one pair[65] of authors who refined and developed her work, in order to argue that our own interpretation offers a more textually faithful, coherent and precise connection between the two parts of the dialogue than that afforded by the 'two modes of predication' reading.

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[64] Meinwald, C. C; *Plato's Parmenides*. Oxford University Press, 1991.
[65] Francis Jeffry Pelletier, Edward N. Zalta; NOÛS 34:2 (2000) 165–202

Therefore, just as we have made much use of Allen's work in this chapter, we shall use Rickless, Meinwald and Meinwald's successors as a test of the cogency of our own interpretation of the dialogue and the steps whereby we establish and defend that approach. We shall reserve more comprehensive accounts of the views of these interpreters until the time comes for the detailed presentation of our own interpretation of the relevant parts of the dialogue.

We should now proceed to our next chapter and revisit the strange conclusions of the first hypothesis, the first step in the exercise which was intended by Parmenides to enable Socrates to be "...perfectly trained and see truth clearly."[66] At first sight it is offering further obscurity rather than increased clarity. We know that Proclus the fifth century head of the Academy in Athens, a successor of Plato himself, refers to this conclusion as 'unexpected', declares that it 'raises a grave doubt' and asks the question 'are not all the foregoing arguments dismissed by this single remark?'[67] He then goes on to state that 'some people have therefore been persuaded by this passage to say that the First Hypothesis reaches impossible conclusions, and so that the one is not a real subject'. We should now take up the challenge of seeking out the clarity we were promised, amid the array of difficulties with which we are presented by the unexpected conclusions of the first hypothesis.

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[66] *Parm*, 136c, 4-5: εἰ μέλλεις τελέως γυμνασάμενος κυρίως διόψεσθαι τὸ ἀληθές.

[67] Proclus. Ibid, 64K, p 596

Chapter Two
What is going on in the first hypothesis?

Introduction

We now have a good general sense of what is going on in Plato's *Parmenides* and have explained our favoured interpretation of the dialogue. In the last chapter we explained the two part structure of the work and we surveyed the first of those parts in some detail in case any of the developments there were entirely inconsistent with our proposed reading. Although we found controversies of interpretation surrounding many of the developments in part one we satisfied ourselves nevertheless that none of those uncertainties posed an immediate threat to our proposed interpretation. Our most serious concern arose over the actual demonstration of the exercise given to Socrates by Parmenides. We saw that the presentation of that exercise arose out of an overall assessment of the *aporiai* of part one and the general threat to the acceptance of forms posed by those *aporiai*. The exercise was supposed to enable the young Socrates to be "...perfectly trained and see truth clearly."[68] And so it held out the hope that its implementation might lead to a resolution of the *aporiai* and elimination of any doubt over the theory of forms implied by the *aporiai* in part one. We noted some controversies over the interpretation of the exercise and how it should work in practice and again we could see no particular threat to our own interpretation of the dialogue emerging from the controversies about the implementation of the exercise. The exercise is generally agreed to be a response to the part one *aporiai* and is generally agreed to anticipate and set out a schema for the eightfold structure of the second part of the dialogue.

We declared our intention to make the case that the TLA *aporia* of part one can resolved by recourse to the certain concepts, distinctions and arguments in selected hypotheses of part two, so we considered the first of those hypotheses (H1) at the end of our last chapter. In doing so we encountered the first threat to our proposed interpretation because the conclusions of the overall argument of H1 seemed to contradict the opening assertion and indeed seemed to render any assertions about the subject of H1 impossible. In short we were faced with an argument whereby 'if one is' then we must conclude that 'the one is not' and 'is not even one'. Nothing here seems, at first sight, to offer us any assistance in our project of resolving the TLA *aporia* of part one and we face a bigger problem because the practical demonstration of this exercise for which so much was promised has added more *aporiai* rather than resolving the one we are interested in. This development surely places a serious question mark over the entire status of all the arguments in the

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[68] *Parm*, 136c, 4-5: εἰ μέλλεις τελέως γυμνασάμενος κυρίως διόψεσθαι τὸ ἀληθές.

second part as they all originate in the same schema derived from the exercise, a schema that has generated this first very problematic outcome that is the first hypothesis.

This leaves us with quite a few questions to deal with before we can reinstate our intention of using these hypotheses for the purpose we proposed. Ultimately we need to revisit the startling conclusions at the end of that hypothesis and offer some explanation of them which places the entire argument in the context we require in order to defend our proposed interpretation and prevent it from being totally undermined by serious problems with the second part of the dialogue, the part in which we had placed our hopes of finding the resolution of the *aporiai*. We explained that the conclusion of H1 reads like a classic reductio which should falsify some initial assertion and could well force us to discard the very concept we require for the defence of our interpretation. We therefore need to consider this hypothesis in detail to determine what precise concept it is proposing, what precise conclusions it establishes and what we are to make of its final conclusions whereby 'the one is not' and 'is not even one'.

How many subjects?

If we remind ourselves of the exercise given to Socrates by Parmenides and the schema associated therewith we will see that the starting point thereof is some single proposition which is then considered in a number of different ways. If the schema at 136a-c is entirely based upon a single proposition which is then considered in a number of different ways, then the subject of the initial proposition is the subject of each of those different ways of considering that proposition. Since the different ways of considering the initial proposition are reflected in the schema which corresponds exactly to the number of hypotheses in part two, the subject of each of the hypotheses of part two should be the same. We may therefore argue, on this basis, that the schema is to be read as setting out a methodology for discussing a single referent in eight different senses or under eight different sets of relations. Given the very simple proposition 'If one is' we can take it that the subject is indeed unity or oneness in some sense or other. We reviewed the start of the first hypothesis in our last chapter and we saw that oneness or 'the one' was assumed in that argument to be totally devoid of multiplicity and was consequently admitted to be devoid of any relations or temporality. However, the argument appeared to lead ultimately to the conclusion that the one therefore 'is not' and 'is not even one'. So the initial premise 'that one is' is apparently contradicted by these conclusions. What are we to make of this? Is this a classic reductio in which we posit a one that is totally devoid of multiplicity, discover that proposing a one of this nature leads to impossible conclusions, and therefore discard the concept of the entirely non-multiple one as false. But what about our acceptance of the fact that there is only one proposition at work throughout the eight hypotheses and therefore only one subject in all of the hypotheses: Has this subject been falsified by the very

first of those hypotheses? If so, what is the status of the other hypotheses given that their subject has been falsified by the first?

We have read enough of Cornford in our first chapter to anticipate that he regards the subject of the first hypothesis as different from that of the second and he assumes that the pure one of H1 is to be discarded because it has been falsified by a reductio based argument. H2 will, in his view, offer a more acceptable concept of the one. And so Cornford writes:

> If Parmenides' One and Socrates' Unity itself are to be rescued from self-destruction... both must be something more than 'just one and nothing else'. The least we can add is 'being'. We shall then have a one that is and can be truly said to be one."[69]

In treating the subject of the first hypothesis as different from that of the second Conford follows an approach which seems to have been adopted by the Neo-Platonists whom we will consider in our last chapter. However, while Cornford discards the falsified subject of the first hypothesis the Neo-Platonists retain it and accord it a very significant status. The approach whereby different referents are proposed from one hypothesis to another is called a 'multisubjectist' interpretation and Rickless[70] sides with Meinwald and Allen in rejecting it and pointing out that it contradicts the opening of the schema where it is indicated that the subject is the same throughout. It is simplest for us to follow these other commentators and assume that the subject of the first and second hypotheses is the same and tackle the anomalies at the end of H1 within that context avoiding the temptation to solve the problem by discarding the referent of the argument of H1. In our last chapter we shall have to consider the multisubjectivism of the Neo-Platonists and explore their rationale for such a reading in the context of our own preferred single subject interpretation.

On this interpretation the referent has the characteristics of a form[71] and in this context the form in question would be the one itself; that by which any of the many particular things, each of which are one thing in kind, are each one thing in kind. Or, to copy the phraseology of the *Phaedo,* we may say that just as 'by beauty, all that is beautiful becomes beautiful'[72] so also 'by the one, all that is one becomes one'. In the case of the argument of H1 such a one partakes of no multiplicity whatsoever and therefore does not enter into any relations such as sameness or otherness even with itself nor is it not involved in any temporality. The argument of H1 in considering such a one leads to a number

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[69] Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, p 135, underlining is mine

[70] Rickless, ibid, p 100, note 4.

[71] It is not a part of our overall argument here that the one of the first hypothesis corresponds in every way to a form as discussed in the *Phaedo* or *Republic.*

[72] *Phaedo*, 100d, 7-8; τῷ καλῷ πάντα τὰ καλὰ γίγνεται καλά.

of aporetic conclusions including the conclusions that such a one is not, is not one, and is, among other things, unknowable and not amenable to discourse. In this chapter we wish to;

i. Assess any implications of these aporetic conclusions which are damaging for our overall interpretation here
ii. Isolate possibly damaging conclusions from those which are more acceptable in order to give special consideration to these damaging conclusions
iii. Consider whether any apparently damaging conclusions may be understood as ultimately non-problematic
iv. Give a possible context for all of the key H1 conclusions with respect to the next hypothesis, H2, and the aporetic argument of the TLA.
v. Attempt to establish a non-problematic status for the strictly non-multiple one of H1 within the overall framework of H1, H2 and the 136a-c schema

It is important for the defence of our overall interpretation here that we develop a reading of the first hypothesis that is consistent with that overall interpretation and which gives us an understanding of the very puzzling final conclusions of H1 whereby they do not undermine our efforts to use the distinctions, concepts and arguments of the hypotheses in order to resolve the *aporiai* of part one of the dialogue.

The conclusion of the first hypothesis (H1)

The first hypothesis proposes that 'one is' or, on another reading of the text, 'it (the one) is one'. We discussed the question of these textual variants in our first chapter but Rickless[73] points out that these formulations may be reconciled as follows;

If the one is
Then the one is one

It is the second formulation, the statement that the one is one, that leads quite directly to the first conclusion of the overall H1 argument, namely that the one is not many. We would have preferred a translation of the opening of the H1 argument which presents the hypothesis as proposing this second wording and thus opening with the words 'if it is one', but it can be seen that even if we begin from the first wording we may derive the second formulation and thus arrive at the first conclusion that the one is not many. It is simplest for our present purposes to adopt the reading most favoured by modern commentators and avoid a situation whereby our entire interpretation stands or falls upon a controversy about textual variants. We have noted the admission that 'if the one is' it is just one and therefore devoid of any multiplicity whatsoever and we have seen that this

[73] Rickless, ibid, p. 114

leads to the conclusion that this 'pure one' is utterly devoid of any relations even with itself and is devoid of any temporality. The real challenges are presented by the additional conclusions which are drawn for these conclusions. We should remind ourselves of these now;

> "So then, if the one does not participate at all in any aspect of time, it has never become, nor was it becoming, and it never was, nor has it become now, nor is it becoming, and it never is, nor will it come to be hereafter, nor be becoming, and it will never be." / "Very true."
> "However, is there any way that something can partake of being unless it is based on any of these?" / "There is not."
> "So the one does not partake of being at all." / "It seems not."
> "So the one is not, in any way at all." / "It appears not."
> "Nor is it, on this basis, able to be one for, if this were so, it would then be and partake of being. Rather it seems that the one neither is, nor is it one, if we are to be persuaded by such an argument." / "Very likely."
> "But if something is not, could anything relate to it or belong to this something that is not?" / "How could it?"
> "Therefore, there is no name of it, nor any account, knowledge, perception or opinion." / "It appears not."
> "Then it is neither named, nor spoken of, nor is it subject to opinion or knowledge, nor is it perceived by anything that is." / "It seems not."
> "Now can all this apply to the one?" / "Well, I don't think so anyway."[74]

We may readily accept that the concluding section of H1 is aporetic in nature and reflective of Aristotle's concept thereof when he says that 'the equality of opposite reasonings is the cause of *aporia*'[75]. Here we have a number of negative assertions including the statements that the one 'is not' and is not even one, statements which contradict the earlier proposition which attributed unity and being to the one. Hence we have the overtly aporetic statements that 'the one is and is not' and that 'the one is one and is not one'. The crystallisation of a reductio would of course resolve the *aporia* by falsifying the proposition which is initially proposed but we would then be faced with a further difficulty as to the status of the referent of that proposition; the strictly non-multiple one. If we accept that a reductio is at work are we forced to discard that referent as being a flawed and incoherent concept? However, if there is no reductio we are left with a concern about the precise

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[74] *Parm*, 141e3-142a8: Εἰ ἄρα τὸ ἓν μηδαμῇ μηδενὸς μετέχει χρόνου, οὔτε ποτὲ γέγονεν οὔτ' ἐγίγνετο οὔτ' ἦν ποτέ, οὔτε νῦν γέγονεν οὔτε γίγνεται οὔτε ἔστιν, οὔτ' ἔπειτα γενήσεται οὔτε γενηθήσεται οὔτε ἔσται. {—} Ἀληθέστατα. {—} Ἔστιν οὖν οὐσίας ὅπως ἄν τι μετάσχοι ἄλλως ἢ κατὰ τούτων τι; {—} Οὐκ ἔστιν. {—} Οὐδαμῶς ἄρα τὸ ἓν οὐσίας μετέχει. {—} Οὐκ ἔοικεν. {—} Οὐδαμῶς ἄρα ἔστι τὸ ἕν. {—} Οὐ φαίνεται. {—} Οὐδ' ἄρα οὕτως ἔστιν ὥστε ἓν εἶναι· εἴη γὰρ ἂν ἤδη ὂν καὶ οὐσίας μετέχον· ἀλλ' ὡς ἔοικεν, τὸ ἓν οὔτε ἕν ἐστιν οὔτε ἔστιν, εἰ δεῖ τῷ τοιῷδε λόγῳ πιστεύειν. {—} Κινδυνεύει. {—} Ὃ δὲ μὴ ἔστι, τούτῳ τῷ μὴ ὄντι εἴη ἄν τι αὐτῷ ἢ αὐτοῦ; {—} Καὶ πῶς; {—} Οὐδ' ἄρα ὄνομα ἔστιν αὐτῷ οὐδὲ λόγος οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη οὐδὲ αἴσθησις οὐδὲ δόξα. {—} Οὐ φαίνεται. {—} Οὐδ' ὀνομάζεται ἄρα οὐδὲ λέγεται οὐδὲ δοξάζεται οὐδὲ γιγνώσκεται, οὐδέ τι τῶν ὄντων αὐτοῦ αἰσθάνεται. {—} Οὐκ ἔοικεν. {—} Ἦ δυνατὸν οὖν περὶ τὸ ἓν ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχειν; {—} Οὔκουν ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

[75] Aristotle; *Topics*, 145b, 18

status of those *aporiai* and their role in the second part of the *Parmenides* and therefore within the dialogue as a whole. We may adopt a standard definition of a reductio here as:

> **reductio ad absurdum:** (1) The principles (A ⊃ - A) ⊃ -A and (-A ⊃ A) ⊃ A. (2) The argument forms 'If A then B and not-B; therefore, not-A' and 'If not-A then B and not-B; therefore, A' and arguments of these forms. Reasoning via such arguments is known as the method of indirect proof. (3) The rules of inference that permit (i) inferring not-A having derived a contradiction from A and (ii) inferring A having derived a contradiction from not-A.[76]

On the basis of this definition we certainly have the contradictions expected of a reductio in the concluding argument of H1 as it is presented here for we find that the proposal that the one is and that it is one leads to the conclusion that 'the one is not' and that 'the one is not one'. Accordingly, if we accept that the arguments of H1 conclude in a reductio should we expect that a negative truth value is being assigned to the proposition which posits the one of H1; a one which does not involve any multiplicity and therefore enters into no relations whatsoever and involves no temporality? Cornford adopts this understanding of the ultimate conclusions of H1 when he writes;

> Why should this conclusion not be accepted as what Plato means, with the inference he actually draws, that this cannot be a satisfactory account of Unity itself, but we must at least add ' being ' to unity, as we proceed to do in the next Hypothesis?[77]

So based upon this account we should discard the concept of unity presented in H1 as incoherent and adopt some other; perhaps the concept offered by the next hypotheses, H2, where being is 'formally' added to 'the one' so that it 'is' and partakes of being. But where does that leave our proposed interpretation of the dialogue whereby the *aporiai* of part one are resolved by the concepts, distinctions and arguments of part two? As this exposition proceeds it will become clear that there are particular concepts, distinctions and arguments in H1 that we will need to preserve from falsification so that they may be used in the resolution of the part one *aporiai*. If we read H1 as a reductio that renders incoherent all of the concepts and distinctions within the argument we shall end up discarding the very material from H1 that we require to resolve the opening TLA *aporia*.

The consequences of H1 being a reductio

Let's assume that the reductio interpretation could lead to the conclusions that: Proposing such a one generates problematic conclusions insofar as these contradict and negate the very characteristics, namely unity and existence, that are initially asserted of that very one itself; the problematic consequences highlight genuine issues with the propositional content of what has been

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[76] *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd edition, p 778
[77] Cornford, ibid, p 133

asserted namely that there is a one which does not involve any multiplicity and therefore enters into no relations whatsoever and involves no temporality; the proposition which posits such a one is false; it is not appropriate to assign any philosophic status or utility to such a one in view of the problematic and contradictory consequences which emerge from the overall argument of H1.

The first point above is hard to dispute as the entire tone of the last section of the H1 argument is aporetic in character and this is further emphasised by the nature of Parmenides' own comments upon the conclusions which are reached. There is no escaping the fact the there is a denial of being and unity to the one at the end of H1 and that such a denial apparently contradicts the opening assertion of the hypothesis itself, the assertion that the one is and is one. Consequently we shall revisit these conclusions and the precise wording employed in their formulation in order to assess their exact import and implications.

It also seems inevitable that the conclusions whereby being and unity are denied to such a one must, if they are to stand, cause us to reconsider the propositional content and the status of what has been asserted namely that there is a one which does not involve any multiplicity and therefore enters into no relations whatsoever and involves no temporality. It therefore seems difficult, once we admit those conclusions, to avoid the third consequence and actually accept that the proposition which posits such a one and indeed the concept of this 'pure one' are false. However, we should also note that a typical appreciation of a reductio based argument is that it renders the concept in question devoid of any further philosophic status or utility in the construction of positive arguments – the subject of the reductio, like a right angled equilateral triangle, proves, in general, to be a genuine and literal *aporia*; a philosophic dead end.

We are left with the question as to how far we should go in accepting the consequences of a reductio based reading of H1. If we only accept the first three sets of consequences listed above then we are, in truth, reading H1 as a reductio. However, even if we do allow the actual referent of H1 to be called into question and falsified we may be able to avoid the damaging impact of the last consequence listed above. In other words we can make a case that in spite of the problematic consequences which arise when we assert a one such as the one of H1 and in spite of the fact that this may reflect upon the propositional content of the H1 argument and perhaps even falsify it, the strictly non-multiple one of H1 may nevertheless preserve a status which allows us to employ it in argument in order to pursue and develop certain metaphysical issues and indeed to develop the second hypothesis of this very dialogue. On such a reading we could accept the first two possible consequences and even the third but would escape the fourth outcome – the uselessness of the subject concept itself. If we read the overall argument of the first hypothesis in this way we shall be

departing form a very literal reductio based reading and taking it instead to involve a degree of 'self-refutation'. We shall therefore explore the nature of self-refutation based arguments later in this chapter.

It will be important for our overall thesis here to at least avoid the fourth of the above consequences of a reductio based reading of H1. If we cannot avoid the consequence that the one of H1 is akin to a right angled equilateral triangle and accordingly does not represent a concept with any logical utility then we cannot expect such a one to be capable of resolving any of the *aporiai* of the first part of the dialogue as we would have to discard the concept entirely. However, we shall wish to argue in the next chapter that the one of H1 or its counterpart in the context of other forms may be invoked in order to avoid the regress which constitutes the TLA *aporia*, the so called 'third man argument' at 132a-b. Accordingly, if we are unable to justify assigning some status or utility to the one of H1 then this proposed application of such a one to resolve the TLA regress will be unjustifiable and one of our key arguments in favour of the overall unity of the dialogue will fail. Hence it is important for our overall case for the unity of the dialogue to be able to establish some status for the one of H1 which will allow its employment in the construction of philosophic arguments.

The case that H1 is a reductio

The case that H1 is a reductio can be made quite persuasively by reference to the concluding extract of H1 as quoted above. If we look for the basic formula '(A ⊃ - A) ⊃ -A' then we do indeed observe that there is an evident contradiction of the opening assertion that 'the one is', by the later conclusion at 141e12 that 'the one neither is nor is it one'. The assertion that 'the one is one' is also contradicted by this same conclusion. We shall make the assumption in this chapter that Plato intends the arguments of H1 to be read as valid arguments and we shall deal with some of the allegations that there is invalidity or unsoundness in these arguments, in the appendix to this chapter. Consequently we ourselves are open to the counter-assertion that this is a validly constructed reductio on the basis of which we should discard the concept enshrined within the initial proposition; the concept of a one which involves no multiplicity whatsoever, which enters into no relations and therefore involves no temporality and therefore cannot be said to be or to be one. Once we deny any multiplicity to the one all of the other consequences follow through a series of valid arguments, consequences which include the ultimate denial of existence and indeed unity to the one. As the latter consequences contradict the opening assertion this clinches the reductio and falsifies the opening proposition of a one that is entirely devoid of multiplicity. Should such a concept therefore be discarded?

Such a reading is given further emphasis by Parmenides' phrase at 141e12; 'if we are to be persuaded by such an argument'. Since this phrase follows the two damaging conclusions which falsify the opening assertion of a pure and non-multiple one we could reasonably assume that it highlights the fact that there is a problem with the initial hypothesis or, as Cornford puts it; 'the reasoning is not entirely trustworthy'. We have already indicated the presumption of the validity of the overall series of arguments which constitute H1, and Rickless, for his part, demonstrates that the entire series of arguments which are presented in H1 may ultimately be traced back to the opening proposition that the one is one and accordingly does not partake of any multiplicity. Hence we may be faced with a further indication, through this comment by Parmenides, that there is an issue with the opening proposition and that there is an intended falsification of this opening proposition as a result of which we should discard the associated concept of a one which is just one, enters into no relations and is devoid of temporality.

To add to the case for a reductio reading, Parmenides closing question (142a7) as to whether the conclusions whereby the one, as presented here, is unnameable, unknowable etc. are actually applicable to the one, may also be read as implying a reductio if he is indicating that such conclusions are impossible and some assertion upon which they are based is therefore false. Indeed, since this final question in H1 is soon followed by the series of analyses that constitute the second hypothesis and its argument and conclusions, we may easily read Parmenides' question as falsifying some aspect of the opening proposition of H1 and then developing this argument further within the overall argument of H2 in order to remedy the weakness highlighted within H1. If we are to substantiate our case that H1 is not a reductio we shall need to find some other basis for understanding the two reservations which are expressed by Parmenides towards the end of the H1 section of this dialogue so that these do not force us to discard the concept enshrined in such a one.

We should note however that these two concluding reservations as expressed by Parmenides are somewhat ambiguous. It is not entirely clear what argument is being indicated as 'unpersuasive' when that term is used. We may of course presume that the comment refers to the entire argument which is constituted by H1 and its conclusions and such an understanding would indeed be consistent with a reductio style argument. However, we should also consider whether there are any other possibilities as to where precisely the unpersuasive reasoning lies. A similar issue arises with Parmenides' closing question as to the applicability of 'these' (ταῦτα) to the one. 'These' may of course refer to the aporetic conclusions about its non-being, non-oneness and the added consequences that it is un-nameable and unknowable. Such an interpretation would again be consistent with a reductio based reading and would receive further support from the nature of the

argument which follows in H2. Nevertheless we should also consider other possible readings of Parmenides' concluding question and its implications for our overall understanding of H1.

The structure of the opening argument of H2 seems to provide additional evidence that H1 is a reductio. We have seen that being is denied to the one at the end of H1, an aporetic conclusion which supports a reductio based reading as it establishes that ' the one is not' which is a contradiction of our opening proposition whereby 'the one is'. At the beginning of H2 a reductio reading of H1 receives further support from the assertion (142b6) that if the one is it must partake of being. This seems to highlight the unacceptability of the conclusion about the non-being of the one as stated at the end of H1 by emphasising that being is of course essential to the one. The H1 argument then appears to establish that positing a one which is entirely devoid of multiplicity and which is therefore without parts, enters into no relations whatsoever and has no temporality, leads to the conclusion that such a one is not, that this conclusion about the one is unacceptable and so we must revisit this H1 argument recognising that the one must partake of being and therefore be. This is precisely what we see happening at the start of H2 and this fact lends further support to the reductio based interpretation of H1. Such is Cornford's reading of the first hypothesis and its relation to the second hypothesis;

> ...this cannot be a satisfactory account of Unity itself, but we must at least add ' being ' to unity, as we proceed to do in the next Hypothesis?[78]

One could also infer (as does Rickless) that the overall argument of H1, being a reductio, falsifies the initial proposition whereby any multiplicity is denied to the one. Because all of the conclusions within H1 ultimately depend upon this opening assertion of non-multiplicity all of the aporetic conclusions could serve to falsify the concept of a one which involves no multiplicity. Such a reading receives support from the argument of H2 wherein, at 143a2 and also at 144e5-6, the one is indeed alleged to partake of multiplicity and to be many. This represents a further piece of evidence that the aporetic conclusions of H1 are unacceptable and indicate the problematic nature of the one of H1: the one cannot have the single characteristic of unity alone – it must also partake of multiplicity and being.

If we are to make a case that H1 preserves some philosophic utility for the one of H1 then we must respond to all the above evidence that H1 is obviously intended as a reductio which compels us to discard the concept enshrined in such a one. We must therefore show some other context within which the aporetic conclusions may be placed other than a pure reductio context that will lead us to

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[78] Cornford, ibid, p 133

discard the one of H1. We must also provide other possible explanations for the reservations expressed by Parmenides when he refers to the unpersuasive argument and questions the applicability of the aporetic H1 conclusions to the one. And finally we must consider a possible interpretation of H2 whereby it does not read purely as a remediation of the reductio which crystallises at the end of H1. We also need to consider how the overall argument of H1 integrates into the dialogue as a whole and serves a role and purpose there which is not based solely upon a reductio role in which it merely falsifies a particular proposition or concept.

Reconciliation of the hypotheses to the schema at 136a-c

We have seen that Parmenides gives an outline of his overall methodology at 136a-c and that most commentators accept that this anticipates the eightfold structure of the hypotheses. These eight hypotheses are accepted by most as a demonstration of the overall methodology summarised in 136a-c based upon a particular instance, the case of the one. If we wish to defend our assertion of the argumentative unity of this dialogue we should make the case that the schema is adhered to throughout and anticipates the structure and inter-relations of the eight hypotheses about the one because the eight hypotheses constitute a demonstration of that schema. There is quite general agreement that the first four hypotheses are concerned with the positive proposition that 'the one is'. It is also generally agreed that the first four hypotheses consider the consequences of this assertion for the case of the one in H1 and H2 and for the others (things other than one) in H3 and H4. The distinction between the nature of the analysis taking in place in H1 versus that of H2 is not the subject of universal agreement because some commentators claim that H1 considers the one in relation to itself and H2 considers it in relation to the others (things other than one)[79]. Other commentators however read H1 as presenting the negative consequences of the analysis and H2 as representing positive consequences[80] and they detect no significance in the nature of the relationships being considered. We have discussed this issue earlier and have indicated why we favour the former interpretation but regardless of which view we take there is still appears to be issue with a purely reductio based reading of H1 when considered in relation to the 136a-c schema.

We need to ask whether we should anticipate any progression of the argument from H1 into H2. In other words, should the content of H2 be influenced by the consequences of H1? There is nothing in the wording of the 136a-c schema which indicates that the content of H2 should be in any way dependent upon the conclusions or outcomes of H1 or that any of the hypotheses have an interconnectedness whereby the outcome of one determines the opening position of the next. The

[79] Meinwald and Scolnicov.
[80] Gill and Rickless

schema outlines the development of the hypotheses in such a way as to imply that they are independent of one another because the progression from one to the next is driven by the methodology of the schema itself and not by the conclusions of the previous hypotheses. Accordingly, despite quite obvious contradictions between the outcomes of the arguments in H1 and those in H2 there is no highlighting of such contradictions or any indication that this is a problematic state of affairs. And so we find, for instance, in H1 that the one is neither the same as itself nor the same as another while in H2 it *is* both the same as itself and the same as another. However, when this conclusion is reached in H2 there is no reference to the fact that it contradicts a conclusion reached in H1.

If H1 is merely a reductio based argument then it is not unreasonable to expect that the consequences of its conclusions would be addressed and the propositions remediated in the succeeding parts of the dialogue. On this basis we would anticipate that H2 would deal with the consequences of the H1 reductio and would attempt to resolve those aporetic conclusions about the one. If that is the case then there is a connectedness between H1 and H2 which is not explicitly indicated by either of the two readings (self/others or positive/negative) of the 136a-c schema as described above. A lack of fidelity to the methodology outlined at 136a-c certainly weakens any case for the overall unity of the dialogue as it implies that the methodology introduced in order to resolve the *aporiai* of part one of the dialogue, is not adhered to within the interrelated structure of the hypotheses themselves. It therefore raises the possibility that what we find in the hypotheses is not actually intended to resolve the opening *aporiai* but has some other purpose because the connection linking part one to the eight hypotheses via the 136a-c schema has now been broken. We shall wish to apply the concept of the one of H1 to the 'third large argument' in our next chapter and we will make the case that the one of H1 is presented there for that very purpose, the purpose of resolving the *aporiai* of part one. This will constitute part of our overall case for the unity of the dialogue as a whole but such a case will be much damaged if we cannot show that the hypotheses reflect the schema at 136a-c and do not involve additional interrelations which are not anticipated by that schema.

If we are fully to appreciate the status and consequences of the aporetic conclusions of H1 we will need to examine the transition from H1 into H2 in order to determine whether the overall development of the argument is being driven by the methodology reflected in the 136a-c schema or by the conclusions which emerge in the course of the analysis within the hypotheses themselves. It may be the case that H1 ends aporetically and this mandates a revision of certain assumptions because the proposition which posits the one of H1 has been falsified. This revision may be reflected

in H2 which then proceeds to show that the revised assumptions, in contrast, do not lead to any aporetic conclusions and there is no falsification of the proposition which posits the one of H2. Alternatively the H1 argument may lead to aporetic conclusions which are the consequences of the sense in which the one is considered in H1 as mandated by the schema. The adherence to the methodology of the schema may then, of itself, provide an alternative sense in which the one may be considered and the aporetic conclusions may be resolved within that context. The distinction between these two alternatives may appear minor but if we wish to use the concept enshrined within the one of H1 as a means of resolving the *aporiai* of the first part of the dialogue then we will wish to avoid reading H1 as a reductio and will favour the second alternative over the first, an alternative whereby the content of H2 is not determined by the falsification via a reductio of the concept of the one as enshrined in H1. Consequently we should analyse the transition from H1 into H2 to see how the argument develops in the second hypothesis and the manner in which its development relies upon concepts in H1.

The transition from H1 to H2

We should first consider the opening words of the H2 argument to determine whether these imply a direct connection back to H1 which would justify reading H2 as remedying the consequences of a reductio at the end of H1. We should also note that H1 is the only one of the eight hypotheses to end with any obvious indication that its conclusions should be read aporetically. On this basis we would anticipate the reductio at the end of H1 would lead to a different wording in the transition from H1 to H2 than between other pairs of hypotheses where no reductio is involved. We should therefore examine the opening wording of some other hypotheses to determine whether the H1 to H2 transition is exceptional in this respect.

H2 begins with an invitation from Parmenides;

> Now do you want us to go back over the hypothesis from the beginning, in case something different may become evident to us in the review? [81]

This wording may indeed be read as consistent with a reductio based reading and seems to imply an intended revision of the H1 argument consequent upon its aporetic conclusions. However, a similar wording also occurs in the transition from H3 to H4:

> Therefore, if we now accept these points as obvious, should we consider once more, if one is, do these conclusions apply to things other than one, or do they not apply?[82]

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[81] *Parm*, 141b1-2, βούλει οὖν ἐπὶ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπανέλθωμεν, ἐάν τι ἡμῖν ἐπανιοῦσιν ἀλλοῖον φανῇ;

[82] *Parm*, 159b2-4, οὐκοῦν, εἰ ταῦτα μὲν ἤδη ἐῳμεν ὡς φανερά, ἐπισκοποῖμεν δὲ πάλιν ἓν εἰ ἔστιν, ἆρα καὶ οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει τὰ ἄλλα τοῦ ἑνὸς ἢ οὕτω μόνον;

Again between H5 to H6 we find:

> "Now let us go back again to the beginning to see if matters will appear the same to us as they did just now or differently."[83]

And from H7 to H8 we find:

> "Now let's go back once more to the beginning and ask what must be, if one is not, but things other than one are."[84]

Based upon review of these transitions we can see that there is nothing particularly exceptional about the way in which the transition from H1 to H2 is introduced. The wording declares the intention to reconsider the hypothesis from the beginning but so also does the wording of the H3 to H4 transition and the H5 to H6 transition and the H7 to H8 transition. So we find a consistency in the way in which the second manner of considering either the one (H1 to H2) or the others (H3 to H4) is introduced when we are considering the consequences of the hypothesis 'if one is'. In the case of the negative version of the same hypothesis namely 'if one is not' we find that similar wording recurs in the case of the consequences for the one (H5 to H6) and for the others (H7 to H8). In every case the intention is to go back to the beginning in order to see if the same consequences arise when the hypothesis is revisited. In this respect the H1 to H2 transition is no exception and there are no special implications in the opening wording that the relationship between H1 and H2 is significantly different from the relationship between any of the other pairs of hypotheses.

In each of the transitions above there is no question of a review of a previous and problematic argument about the same subject; instead the transitions involve the development of a different aspect of the schema and they are determined by the schema itself and not by the consequences of the previous hypotheses. So after the aporetic closing wording of H1 we do not find that H2 is introduced in a manner which is particularly reflective of resolving an *aporia* or remedying some error which has given rise to a reductio. H2 is introduced in a similar manner to other corresponding hypotheses in the dialogue and in those other cases the hypotheses are not preceded by any indication that the ending of the previous hypothesis is aporetic or may constitute a reductio. It is as if the *aporiai* at the end of H1 are effectively ignored and we are proceeding forward into the next hypothesis in fidelity to the schema as if they had never arisen in the first place.

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[83] *Parm*, 163b7-8, αὖθις δὴ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἴωμεν πάλιν ὀψόμενοι εἰ ταὐτὰ ἡμῖν φανεῖται ἅπερ καὶ νῦν ἢ ἕτερα.
[84] *Parm*, 165e2-3, ἔτι δὴ ἅπαξ ἐλθόντες πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν εἴπωμεν, ἓν εἰ μὴ ἔστι, τἆλλα δὲ τοῦ ἑνός, τί χρὴ εἶναι.

After the transitional comment as quoted above, the argument of H2 proceeds to propose the hypothesis this time with a different word order from the proposition in H1; 'one, if it is - ἓν εἰ ἔστιν'. And it then argues that if one is it must partake of being and if it partakes of being it must be other than being. Accordingly, we now have a one that partakes of being and therefore 'is', a 'one that is', let's call it an existent one. This existent one, the one of H2 must be a whole with two parts; one and being. This of course contrasts with the one of H1 which did not have parts because having parts would have rendered it multiple. We saw that the overall H1 argument can trace all of its aporetic conclusions back to this single statement at the very beginning, that the one is not multiple and therefore does not have parts and cannot be a whole because a whole is characterised by the possession of parts. But now, in the argument of H2, we find that the existent one, in contrast, is a whole with parts.

However, if we consider these two parts of this existent one of H2 we are faced with the question as to the nature of the one that partakes of being and becomes the existent one of H2. We are told that the one that partakes of 'being' is not itself 'being' because it must be different from being as the process of partaking implies that what partakes is different from what is partaken of. But what now is the status of the one which partakes of being and becomes the existent one of H2?

In introducing the overall argument of the hypotheses Parmenides explained that his subject would be 'the one itself' (αὐτὸ τὸ ἕν)[85]. We then find that the argument of H2 introduces a quite consistent terminology to describe its own subject, the existent one. It is referred to as 'the one that is' (τὸ ἓν ὂν at 143a2 and 143a5[86] and in the genitive at 142d1, 142d3 and 142e1) and it is a whole with two parts; one and being. H2 distinguishes this existent one from its component part by referring to the latter as 'the one itself' (αὐτὸ τὸ ἕν – at 143a6 and 144e6) and it refers to it as 'the one itself which, we say, partakes of being' (αὐτὸ τὸ ἕν, ὃ δή φαμεν οὐσίας μετέχειν – 143a6-7). This distinction between the existent one and the one itself is made very clear in a twofold conclusion within the overall context of the H2 argument, a conclusion which brings together a pair of arguments about the multiplicity of the one and concludes that 'not only is <u>what is one</u> multiple but <u>the one itself</u> must also be multiple having been apportioned by being'[87]. This conclusion follows two arguments within the overall H2 argument one of which (142d9 to 143a2) establishes that the existent one is multiple and another which establishes (144b1 to 144e7) that the one itself can be multiple. The

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[85] 137b3

[86] The phrase recurs in H5 at 162c3

[87] *Parm*, 144e5-7; Οὐ μόνον ἄρα τὸ ὂν ἓν πολλά ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἓν ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄντος διανενεμημένον πολλὰ ἀνάγκη εἶναι.

details of the arguments need not concern us here[88] but we should note that there are two distinct arguments relating individually to these 'two ones'; the existent one and the one itself. H2 is clearly distinguishing two kinds of one.[89]

One of these ones partakes of being and the other does not. And we really have only one candidate in the dialogue so far for a one which does not partake of being. The overall H1 argument has already used this very terminology to refer to the one of H1 when it stated that 'the one does not partake of being at all'[90] and so we can see that this is how the one of H1 has effectively been defined. The one of H1 is a one which does not partake of being and such a one is referred to as the one itself within the argument of H2. Once this one itself partakes of being it forms a whole with two parts (one and being) and this one which is a whole with parts is referred to as the existent one. We may hereafter refer to this existent one as the one of H2.

Is the one itself as produced by the abstraction step in H2 the same as the pure one of H1?

We have seen that the existent one of H2 is a whole with two parts namely 'one' and 'being' and that the 'one part' is considered, in the mind (τῇ διανοίᾳ), in isolation from the being of which it partakes. The product of this abstraction step is referred to as 'the one itself' (αὐτὸ τὸ ἕν), and we have noted that this is the same phrase that is used by Parmenides in introducing the subject of the eight hypotheses. The one of H1 does not partake of being while its counterpart, the existent one of H2 is a one that is partaking of being. However, the abstraction step in H2 'removes' the being from the one of H2 and we have suggested that the product of the H2 abstraction step, a one devoid of being, is the same as the pure one of H1. Nevertheless, in spite of the plausibility of this conclusion, we should note that the one of H1 is not formally introduced in that hypothesis in the context of an abstraction step and so we should justify our assertion that the pure one of H1 may be equated with the product of the abstraction step performed upon the existent one of H2. Scolnicov does indeed consider the possibility that the one of H1 and the one produced by the abstraction step in H2 are the same but he rules this out on the grounds[91] that the product of the abstraction step in H2 is a one that partakes of being but also partakes of 'difference' in order that it may be different from being, this he contrasts with the one of H1 which does not partake of being or difference or any

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[88] The existent one is many because it is a whole with parts while the one itself is many because it is apportioned by being.

[89] Meinwald, ibid pp 108/9 and p 112 recognises these facts but questions their significance due to what she refers to as 'textual problems' and the precise significance that should be attached to each of the 'two ones'.

[90] 141e9; Οὐδαμῶς ἄρα τὸ ἓν οὐσίας μετέχει

[91] Scolnicov, Plato's *Parmenides*, Cambridge, 2003. p 102

other relation. Yet, this argument by Scolnicov is surely questionable since, once the abstraction step has been presented, H2 continues to state explicitly that;

> Now if being is one thing and one is another, it is not by being one that one is different from being, nor by being being that being is other than one. No, it is by the different and by the other that they differ from one another.[92]

The extract establishes that the one generated by the abstraction step is indeed different from being but it is not different on account of what it, itself, is. It is different because of something else, namely 'difference'. Therefore it is certainly not, of itself, a one that is different although of course it may and does partake of difference in order to become different from being. But nothing in the nature of the one produced by the abstraction step makes it, of itself, different from being and so, considered just by itself, it is not different from being or from anything else. Therefore, in this respect too, the product of the abstraction step in H2 is the same as the one of H1 insofar as it is not, by its own nature, different from anything else just as the one of H1 enters into no relations and is, by its own nature, not different from anything.

However, in spite of the fact that the product of the abstraction step in H2 has now demonstrated two features in common with the one of H1, namely non-participation in being and failure, of itself, to exhibit the characteristic of difference, we must still face the fact that H1 does not explicitly present the pure one as an abstraction. Accordingly, we should look again to the beginning of H1 and the manner in which that particular consideration of the one is introduced there, in order to determine whether there are any further indications of a commonality of approach between the H1 and H2 arguments as they introduce their respective concepts of the one. H1 begins as follows:

> If one is, the one would not be many? / No, how could it be?
> So the one does not have parts, nor is it a whole? / Why is that?
> The part is presumably part of a whole. / Yes.
> But what about the whole? Is not a whole that from which no part is missing? / Yes, certainly.
> So, in both cases, the one would consist of parts, whether it is a whole or has parts.
> It must be so.
> So, in both cases it follows that the one would be many and not one. / True.
> And yet it should be not many but one. / It should.
> So if the one is to be one, it will neither be a whole nor will it have parts.
> It will not.[93]

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[92] *Parm*, 143b3-6; οὐκοῦν εἰ ἕτερον μὲν ἡ οὐσία, ἕτερον δὲ τὸ ἕν, οὔτε τῷ ἓν τὸ ἓν τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερον οὔτε τῷ οὐσία εἶναι ἡ οὐσία τοῦ ἑνὸς ἄλλο, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἑτέρῳ τε καὶ ἄλλῳ ἕτερα ἀλλήλων.

[93] *Parm*, 137c4-d3; εἰ ἕν ἐστιν, ἄλλο τι οὐκ ἂν εἴη πολλὰ τὸ ἕν; / πῶς γὰρ ἄν; - οὔτε ἄρα μέρος αὐτοῦ οὔτε ὅλον αὐτὸ δεῖ εἶναι. / τί δή; - τὸ μέρος που ὅλου μέρος ἐστίν. / ναί. - τί δὲ τὸ ὅλον; οὐχὶ οὗ ἂν μέρος μηδὲν ἀπῇ ὅλον

We note an initial reluctance on the part of Aristoteles to accept that the one cannot be a whole or have any parts. This is understandable for surely a whole with parts is a unity and is one in that sense, so why can the one not be a whole with parts? The argument establishes that a whole or anything with parts is undeniably multiple insofar as it has parts but is that an impediment to its being one? The answer is that it depends upon the kind of one that this one is to be and this point is emphasised by the statement that:

> And yet it should be not many but one.
> δεῖ δέ γε μὴ πολλὰ ἀλλ' ἓν αὐτὸ εἶναι.

The occurrence of the twin strictures of being "not many but one" determine the kind of one we encounter in H1 and although these twin strictures do not equate to an abstraction step such as we encounter in H2 their effect is surely the same. In order to preserve its status as being "not many but one", the one cannot partake of anything else nor can it exhibit any other characteristic apart from unity. In H1 any other characteristic, even the characteristic of being or difference, is denied to the one in order to adhere to these requirements of being "not many but one". In H2 we encounter an existent one which is a whole with parts and which will, as the argument progresses, be said to partake of difference and other relations. But in the abstraction step in H2 we remove being from this existent one to yield a one that is devoid of being and we also find, in the other passage quoted above, that the one produced by the abstraction step is not, by its own nature, different from being. Accordingly, the one produced by the abstraction step, by its own nature, exhibits neither being nor difference and these surely are the only two qualities it should exhibit apart from its own oneness[94]. On this basis we may claim that the abstraction step in H2 removes all characteristics from the one apart from its oneness while the twin strictures in H1, whereby the one is "not many but one", prevent the one from having any other characteristics apart from its oneness. In this sense the strictures imposed in H1 whereby the one must be "not many but one" have the same effect as the abstraction step in H2 which removes all other characteristics from the existent one. In either case the result is a one that is just one, enters into no relations and does not partake of being. So we have recognised that the product of an abstraction process need not necessarily constitute a genuine entity in its own right. However, we have made a case that the opening argument of H2 can be read as arriving at the 'one without being' of H1 through the application of an abstraction process to the existent one of H2.

ἂν εἴη; / πάνυ γε. - ἀμφοτέρως ἄρα τὸ ἓν ἐκ μερῶν ἂν εἴη, ὅλον τε ὂν καὶ μέρη ἔχον. / ἀνάγκη. - ἀμφοτέρως ἂν ἄρα οὕτως τὸ ἓν πολλὰ εἴη ἀλλ' οὐχ ἕν. / ἀληθῆ. - δεῖ δέ γε μὴ πολλὰ ἀλλ' ἓν αὐτὸ εἶναι. / δεῖ. - οὔτ' ἄρα ὅλον ἔσται οὔτε μέρη ἕξει, εἰ ἓν ἔσται τὸ ἕν. / οὐ γάρ.

[94] Omitting consideration of being 'the same as itself', another relation specifically denied to the one of H1.

It might still be objected that the mere fact of being able to perform an abstraction step and arrive at an entity of a particular kind, in this case a one that is devoid of being and of difference, does not establish that there must indeed be a one of this nature. H1 presents us with an argument which seems ambivalent as to whether the one of H1 is a coherent concept or not. Yet we are arguing in this chapter that the pure one of H1 is indeed a coherent and defensible concept whose nature is established by valid arguments and that it is, in turn, capable of being used, in its own right, in the development of philosophic arguments. This goes some way towards answering such an objection and yet there must still be further to go in considering the precise nature of the one of H1, a one from which all other characteristics and relations have been excluded, or the one produced by the H2 abstraction step; a one abstracted from any other qualities or relations. In our next chapter we shall present a further argument whereby forms, corresponding in nature to the pure one of H1, actually have a part to play in the development of an overall theory of forms, the employment of which assists in the resolution of the TLA. In our final chapter we shall see how the neo-Platonic tradition interpreted the relationship between the pure one of H1 and the existent one of H2 within the context of an overall metaphysics and a system of ontological priority which relies upon both of these concepts of the one and regards the pure one of H1 as ontologically fundamental. Hence, by means of the current chapter and the next two chapters we shall show that H1 develops the concept of a pure one by excluding all other characteristics or relations from the one; that H2 arrives at this same pure pure one by abstracting the one from any other qualities characteristics or relations that may attach to it; and that this pure one can play a fundamental role in the construction of a theory of forms or a fundamental metaphysics and its associated system of ontological priority.

The one of H1 in the second hypothesis

We have made the case that the one itself which is referred to in H2 can be equated with the one of H1, a one which, within that hypothesis, does not partake of being at all. This one without being, the one of H1, does – somehow – partake of being within the following hypothesis, H2 and forms a whole with two parts, one and being, a whole which constitutes the existent one of H2. We should note the structure of the opening argument in H2 in order to understand the status of the one itself, the one of H1 within that argument. The following is a suggested summary of the opening argument of H2:

The one is
Therefore the one partakes of being
Therefore the one is other than being
Therefore the one, if it is, contains two parts; one and being
Therefore the one, if it is, is a whole with two parts
This whole with parts is the existent one of H2

We are now faced with the question as to how the one of H1, a one which here partakes of being to constitute the existent one, may be discussed in H2. The H2 argument immediately proceeds to show (142d6 – 143a2) that the one itself (the one of H1), as it is part of a whole which constitutes the existent one of H2, *is* and therefore partakes of being. So, this whole which is the existent one of H2 has two parts 'a one part' and 'a being part' but being cannot be missing from the 'one part' – it makes no sense to have a part which is not. But this 'one part' is the one of H1 so the one itself, the one of H1, always partakes of being once it becomes part of that whole which is constituted by the existent one of H2. It is as if there is no longer a one of H1 any more - a one which does not partake of being in any way. Once such a one becomes a part of a whole it must always be and partake of being. So we are left wondering once more about this one of H1 and whether it is a false concept and it is only acceptable to consider a one which partakes of being and 'is'. In short if there is a whole with two parts, one and being, how can we avoid the conclusion that the one must 'be' and 'being', for its part, must be one? So how may we consider the one which does not partake of being, the one which we have termed the one of H1? Is this one of H1 a false concept after all which must be discarded to arrive at an acceptable understanding of the one as the existent one of H2, a one which must partake of being and must therefore be?

In the lines which follow the early H2 argument for the multiplicity of the existent one we do however find a basis on which we can consider this one of H1, this one which does not partake of being and therefore is not. The argument first asks us to consider 'the one itself', giving it this very title whereby it is distinguished form 'the one that is', the whole with parts that constitutes the one of H2, the one that is said to partake of being. However, in this particular development of the H2 argument we are asked to take hold of it 'in the mind' (τῇ διανοίᾳ -143a7), without that of which we say it partakes i.e. without being. Once we take this step in the mind (we may refer to this as 'the abstraction step') we are dealing thereafter with the product of that abstraction step in the mind and we arrive at a one which corresponds to the one of H1 as it is a one without being. The outcome of the abstraction step must correspond to the one of H1 as it is a one which does not partake of being. The product of this abstraction step is then made the subject of an entire argument (143b1 to 144e6) which demonstrates how number arises and also indicates that this one of H1 actually becomes multiple as it is apportioned by being. Hence we have a clear demonstration within the argument of H2 that the one of H1, despite not partaking of being, can be used in a philosophic argument in order to draw certain conclusions. If H1 is read as a reductio which falsifies the concept enshrined within the one of H1 then that one, like a right angled equilateral triangle, would not be amenable to use in constructing positive philosophic arguments. Rather the one of H1 would be

discarded and would certainly not be expected to reappear as an integral element in the development of the H2 argument. But now we can see that it survives the threat of annihilation at the hands of a reductio and features in the argument of H2.

This abstraction step which we are asked to take in the mind at 143a7, isolates the one itself from the being of which it is said to partake. The product of such a step is therefore a one which does not partake of being, a one which is called 'the one itself', a one that corresponds to the one of H1. We see that this one itself is actually one of the parts of the existent one of H2 while the other part of the existent one is being. The one itself also features as the subject of an extensive section of the overall H2 argument (143b1 to 144e6) once the one itself has been introduced into the H2 argument via the abstraction step. So, far from being discarded as false at the end of H1 we find the one itself, the one of H1, playing an integral role in the development of the concept of the existent one of H2 and in the overall argument of H2.

The one of H1 as an abstraction

We have seen that the one itself, the one of H1, may be derived from the existent one of H2 through an abstraction step. We have also seen at the end of H1 that the non-being of the one is presented as aporetic. We now have a context in which we may appreciate the nature of this aporetic 'one that is not', the one itself of H1. Had the H2 argument been presented first, before the H1 argument, we would have been presented initially with a less aporetic existent one, the one of H2, and we could then have seen that we can derive the concept of the one itself from this existent one through an abstraction process carried out in the mind. From the existent one which is a whole with two parts, one and being, we can arrive at the one itself, a one which is without being, through an abstraction process in the mind. This one itself does not have parts, only the existent one has parts. So the one itself is not a whole with parts and is therefore not in any way multiple. Hence, beginning with the existent one of H2 which is a whole with parts and therefore multiple, we can arrive by abstraction at the one itself, the one of H1 which is not a whole, has no parts and is therefore devoid of multiplicity. Of course it does not partake of being as being would then be a part of it and, having parts, it would therefore be multiple and not strictly one.

We know from the argument of H1 that once we have accepted the non-multiplicity of the one and the conclusion that such a one is not a whole with parts, all of the other conclusions follow through a series of arguments which, as we have claimed, Plato intends us to take as valid. This series of valid arguments will lead us to a conclusion which is presented at the end of H1 whereby the one does not partake of being. However, if the argument were constructed in a different way, beginning from the existent one of H2 and proceeding through an abstraction step to derive the one itself which

does not partake of being, the *aporia* at the end of H1 would appear in a different light because the abstraction process itself would generate a one which does not partake of being - a one which therefore is not. Hence, beginning from H2 we may conclude, via abstraction in the mind, that there can be a one which is devoid of being. Such a one will be non-multiple and the argument set out in H1 will confirm that a non-multiple one does not partake of being. Positing a strictly non-multiple one as we do in H1 or abstracting the 'one part' of the existent one, from its 'being part' as we do in H2 lead in either case to the development of a one that does not partake of being. This one corresponds to the one itself, the one of H1 and we should also note that at 137b3, just before H1 commences, Parmenides formulates his initial proposition employing this precise phrase 'the one itself'. Earlier in this chapter we wondered whether there is a single subject or referent for all of the hypotheses. Here we have evidence that in H1 and in H2 the subject is the one itself, considered in H1 without participation in being and in H2 with participation in being and we have now noted that Parmenides himself declares this to be that actual subject before he ever begins the elaboration of H1.

On this basis we may clarify the relation between the abstraction step in H2 and the argument of H1 as follows:

In H2

The abstraction step → the one which does not partake of being

The one not partaking of being → a one which is not

In H1

The one which is not multiple → a one which does not partake of being

The one not partaking of being → a one which is not

Therefore

Since both the abstraction step of H2 and the non-multiple one of H1 → a one which does not partake of being

And

A one which does not partake of being → a one which is not.

We may conclude that the conduct of the abstraction step in H2 is equivalent to positing a one which is just one and devoid of multiplicity and such a step therefore corresponds to the initial conclusion in H1[95] that the one itself is strictly non-multiple.

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[95] 137c4-5

The nature of the aporetic conclusions of H1

If we now revisit the aporetic conclusions of H1 in the light of the above discussion we may find that we can accept their aporetic nature and indeed may even accept that they constitute a reductio provided we can avoid certain consequences thereof. Our only serious concern about accepting a reductio was the associated rejection of the one of H1 as a concept without any philosophic utility and status. However, if we do admit that a reductio is at work in H1 we still need to decide what exactly is being falsified thereby and consider whether perhaps it is not, after all, the one of H1 or its strict non-multiplicity. We have now seen that the one itself, the one of H1, may be generated via an abstraction step from the existent one of H2. The product is this abstraction step is a one which does not partake of being and it is therefore a one that is not. However, this 'one that is not', a one that corresponds to the one of H1, is actually used in the development of the H2 argument and becomes therein a part of the existent one of H2. On this basis our concern that 'a one which is not' would lack any philosophic status or utility has been shown to be unfounded. This one which is not is clearly employed in developing the concept of the existent one of H2 because the one which is not, the one of H1, is actually a part of that existent one of H2. The concept of a one that is not, the one itself of H1, is also employed in the account of the origins of number within the early argument of H2. Furthermore this same one is made the subject of an argument for the multiplicity of the one itself once the origin of number has been set out in H2. Accordingly, we can see that whatever conclusions we may draw from the aporetic ending of H1 we should not conclude that the one which is discussed in H1, the one itself which is without being, should be discarded as incoherent and useless at the end of the H1 argument. Were that the case we would not see its use in the three instances described above in the early argument of H2, an argument which follows immediately upon the aporetic ending of H1.

Although it is important to revisit the precise wording at the end of H1 and decide how we should understand the aporetic conclusions, we have now made a significant case that the one of H1 is a useful abstraction which may be employed in philosophic argument. We have avoided the damaging conclusion that the one of H1 is being presented as a flawed concept devoid of any status in philosophic argument and on this basis we may justify our proposed application of the concept enshrined in the one of H1 in order to resolve one of the *aporiai* of the first part of this dialogue. We shall demonstrate how such an application of the one of H1 actually operates, in the next chapter. It would be useful however at this stage to revisit some of the aporetic statements from the end of H1 and satisfy ourselves that we can adequately deal with the issues that are flagged as problematic at the end of H1. In doing so we shall look at a broader concept of argumentative refutation than the simple reductio by turning our consideration to the overall topic of self-refutation.

Castagnoli in his analysis of ancient self-refutation[96] affords us a broader scope for describing the issues which arise at the end of H1 than the simple definition of a reductio we provided earlier. Developing the analysis of Burnyeat and Mackie among others he provides an investigation of self-refutation arguments in which he also refers to Plato's *Parmenides*. Burnyeat, to whom Castagnoli acknowledges most debt, defines self-refutation as follows;

> The verb *peritrepein* means to turn around or over hence to refute a claim or idea - whether because this is thought of as turning it around into its contradictory opposite or because the notion of overturning is dominant. Any refutation, of course, establishes the contradictory of what it refutes, but *peritrepein* tends particularly to be used of the special case where the thesis to be refuted itself serves as a premise for its own refutation, where starting out with "p" we deduce "not-p" and so conclude that the original premise was false...[97]

Castagnoli differs from both Burnyeat and Mackie by arguing that the final claim, 'therefore not-p', is characteristically absent from self-refutation arguments at the time of Plato and thereafter. We can see from the Burnyeat extract above that he does indeed regard the 'not-p' conclusion as an aspect of the self-refutation process – he also says;

> For precisely what self-refutation consists in is a reversal whereby advancing a proposal commits one to its contradictory opposite.[98]

We could summarise H1 as an argument which states that if one is and is just one then the one is not, and is not one and is not nameable. On this basis it reads as an example of self-refutation as it is '...advancing a proposal commits one to its contradictory opposite'. Now we have seen from the concluding extract from H1 as quoted at the beginning of this chapter that the fact that the one does not partake of being at all and that the one therefore 'is not', is not overtly flagged as problematic by Parmenides. This is commented upon by Castagnoli as follows;

> It is worth noting that the first deduction of the *Parmenides* might have been described as a damning reversal of 'the one is' into 'the one is not (in any way)'; Plato, however, does not seem to be interested in making this point, but immediately goes on to draw further problematic consequences ... Proclus (in Prmd 6.1241, 25-8) signals this possible argument: 'the most ridiculous thing of all was to say straight from the beginning "if the one is, the one is not: for this very thesis seemed to eliminate itself".[99]

The 'damning reversal' referred to above lies in the assertion that 'the one is not in any way' and this is the very basis upon which both Rickless and Cornford categorise H1 as a reductio. But with no

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[96] Castagnoli; *Ancient Self-Refutation*, CUP, 2010

[97] M. F. Burnyeat, Protagoras and Self-Refutation in Later Greek Philosophy, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (Jan., 1976), pp. 44-69 – p 48

[98] Burnyeat, ibid, p 49

[99] Castagnoli; *Ancient Self-Refutation*, p 237, footnote 115

emphasis placed upon the conclusion that 'the one in no way is' and an expressed reservation about some of the later conclusions we are led to re-examine the exact nature of any reductio or self-refutation which is at work here and take note of the two further conclusions that are derived from the initial conclusion that the one is not.

Parmenides' phrase at 141e12; 'if we are to be persuaded by such an argument' follows an argument which implies that if the one is not then the one is not one. It would appear that Parmenides is questioning the persuasiveness of such reasoning, reasoning whereby non-being implies non-unity. The conclusion that the one does not partake of being and therefore is not, has been left without any overt indication by Parmenides that this is problematic. However, there is a clear indication that the further conclusion that non-being implies non-unity is to be regarded with some reservation through Parmenides' phrase at 141e12; 'if we are to be persuaded by such an argument'.

Furthermore, Parmenides closing question (142a7) as to whether the conclusions reached are indeed applicable to the one seems also to refer to the additional series of conclusions which are drawn from the non-being of the one. These conclusions really begin with the assertion that the impossibility of any relation with that which is not implies that there will be no name of the one nor any account, knowledge, perception or opinion of the one. Parmenides closing question in H1 flags these conclusions and further conclusions which follow thereafter as problematic. Castagnoli[100] discusses the element of self-refutation which is involved in conclusions of the kind which Parmenides indicates as problematic. He points out the self-refuting nature of a claim such as 'non-being implies non-unity' as it is couched in language which does actually attribute unity to the one by the use of the singular definite article and so the very assertion of the non-unity raises a self-refutation issue. A similar problem applies to any conclusion asserting that there is no name or account of the one since this very conclusion, by its own verbal formulation, is naming the one and giving some account thereof. In both cases therefore we find an element of self-refutation.

The unpersuasive argument referred to by Parmenides at 142a7appears to be that in order to be one the one must partake of being and, as a consequence, 'be'. This has an immediate element of un-persuasiveness due to the self-refuting nature of the statement itself - in the formulation we are attributing unity by the very grammatical construction. We may therefore be cautious about this conclusion on grounds of self-refutation alone. However, the succeeding analysis in H2 goes on to show that an argument may be developed which avoids the conclusion that the one is not one

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[100] Castagnoli, ibid, p 240. His arguments here relate to *Sophist* 238d5-239b4

because of its 'non-being'. It does this by establishing a one that 'is not' but which is nevertheless still one and it establishes this by an abstraction process in the mind. So whether we give emphasis to the self-refutation aspect or not we should certainly note the reservation expressed by Parmenides as to the validity of the argument that non-being implies non-unity and we should also note that H2 goes further and shows that the non-being of the one does not imply its non-unity. Indeed it is central to the argument of H2 that the one which does not partake of being is still one in any case.

The other questionable conclusion at the end of H1 revolves ultimately around the argument that non-being implies non-nameability etc. Again, this involves an element of self-refutation as we have actually named the one even though it is not. In H2 we shall, via the abstraction step, arrive at this same one which is not and although we shall give it a special name (the one itself) we shall name it nevertheless and its non-being will not be a barrier to its being named. Hence these two consequences of the non-being of the one which feature at the end of H1 are flagged as problematic at the end of that hypothesis because they present *aporiai* which require further examination, *aporiai* which are resolved by the different emphasis afforded by the H2 argument. As Castagnoli points out, the non-being of the one as a conclusion in its own right is never flagged as problematic near the end of H1 when this concept is first introduced. Furthermore, in H2 this 'one that is not', this 'one itself' of H1, is actually allowed to stand un-falsified alongside 'being' as one of the two parts of the existent one of H2. In addition the same 'one itself' of H1 is arrived at again in H2 through an abstraction in the mind whereby the one itself is derived from the existent one of the second hypothesis itself. For something that does not exist it is surely demonstrating a great persistence.

We have seen that Castagnoli[101] highlights the two elements of self-refutation which occur at the end of H1 as described above but he effectively restricts his consideration of self-refutation in the Parmenides to its occurrence in the concluding part of H1 alone. Politis points out that the entire argument of H1 from its inception to its aporetic conclusions may be read as self-refuting insofar as;

> The hypothesis is that (H1) 'The one is'; or, on a different reading, (H1*) 'The one is one [and not many]' (137c4). One among several ultimate consequences derived from this hypothesis is that (C) 'The one is not in any way' and (C*) 'The one is not one' (141e9-12). This clearly exemplifies the pattern: (p → not-p). Plato goes on conclude that these things (including, that the one should both be/be one and not be/not be one) cannot possibly be true of the one; and he goes on to set this hypothesis aside in favour of the contradictory hypothesis (H2) that the one is both one and many. This Platonic argument, therefore, looks like a

[101] Castagnoli, ibid, pp 236-9

> perfect example of a self-refutation in conformity with CM. Castagnoli (237-8) considers, and quotes from, the ending of Plato's argument in response to H1/H1*. Remarkably, however, he places the whole emphasis on the conclusion that the one is not an object of thought and speech, and does not mention or comment on the fact that the overall structure of the argument is its deriving not-p (the one is not/is not one) from p (the one is/is one). Plato's argument, moreover, clearly is not situated in the dialectical context of a person's entertaining or asserting the statement that the one is/is one, but takes as its starting-point simply the content of this proposition and hypothesis.[102]

Both Castagnoli[103] and Burnyeat refer to Mackie who defines pragmatic self-refutation as arising when a certain propositional content is denounced as being in conflict with and perhaps falsified by the particular way it is being put forward. Castagnoli[104] divides this pragmatic self-refutation in two – *ad hominem* and strict. *Ad hominem* self-refutation means that the act of asserting is inconsistent with what is asserted but what is asserted might still be true. Strict self-refutation means that there is actual falsification e.g. the refutation of the monists in the *Sophist* is described as actual self-refutation 'as by their assertion the monists exemplify the existence of more than one word' (this falsifies their strict monism). He goes on to cite examples from the *Theaetetus* and the *Euthydemus* which, by contrast, are *ad-hominem* self-refutations. However, even in the case of the monists Castagnoli[105] says that although they have been reduced to silence their thesis 'has not been explicitly rejected as false.' The suggestion by Castagnoli that a proposition can be falsified but not rejected as false is very subtle and in the case of the treatment of the monists in the *Sophist* this same argument (the details of which need not concern us here) is indeed described by McCabe as leading to actual falsification;

> "...he must show that the Parmenidean doctrine — that all there is is one — is false. This is the purpose of the pair of arguments which follow at 244—5, and it is accomplished by 243d."[106]

This contention by McCabe that there is actual falsification in this part of the *Sophist* is noted but not adopted by Castagnoli[107] He himself comments on the refutation of the Heracliteans in the *Sophist* that they '... have very little to cheer for the fact that they have not been convicted of absolute self-refutation'.[108] He is satisfied that Socrates has dismissed them but he does not wish to go so far as to

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[102] *The Classical Review*, Volume 62, Issue 01, April 2012, p 88.
[103] Castagnoli, ibid, p205
[104] Castagnoli, ibid, p 221. Burnyeat's analysis is different. He has 3 (or four) categories of SR: strict (falsified by its own content), pragmatic (falsified by the way it is expressed – but this has two subdivisions) and dialectical (falsified by arising in a dialectical context where it is opposed)
[105] Castagnoli, ibid, p 224
[106] McCabe, *Plato and his Predecessors,* 2000, p.63
[107] Castagnoli, p 224, n79
[108] Castagnoli p 218

say that their assertions have been falsified so he says that there is no absolute self-refutation here. Castagnoli therefore differs from McCabe , Burnyeat and Mackie by arguing that the absence of the explicit final claim, 'therefore not-p', an absence characteristic of self-refutation arguments at the time of Plato and thereafter, implies that the proposition in question is not rendered false by the self-refutation argument. We can see from the Burnyeat extract that he, by contrast, certainly does regard the 'not-p' conclusion as an aspect of the self-refutation process;

> Any refutation, of course, establishes the contradictory of what it refutes, but *peritrepein* tends particularly to be used of the special case where the thesis to be refuted itself serves as a premise for its own refutation, where starting out with "p" we deduce "not-p" and so conclude that the original premise was false...[109]

The overall structure of the H1 argument from beginning to end effectively derives not-p from p as it derives 'is not one' and 'one is not' from the proposition that 'one is' or 'one is one'. It may be possible to make a case that this refutation is purely ad hominem. In other words we could attempt to argue that in this instance "...the act of asserting is inconsistent with what is asserted but what is asserted might still be true...". However, it is the propositional content of the opening assertion in H1 which is subjected to scrutiny within the H1 argument itself and this propositional content itself is contradicted in the conclusion of the argument of H1. It is therefore perhaps simplest to accept these as the bald facts of the H1 argument and on this basis it certainly reads as an absolute or strict self-refutation. As such it is effectively equivalent to a reductio except that 'the thesis to be refuted itself serves as a premise for its own refutation...'. One other distinction we can make between such absolute self-refutation and a classic reductio per the definition at the start of this chapter is that H1 lacks a typical feature of reductio based arguments which is the formal conclusion in the form 'therefore not-p'. Castagnoli expresses this aspect of a self-refutation based argument as follows "...the crucial inference from 'if *p*, then not-*p* to not-*p*' is, as a matter of fact consistently missing from our texts...".[110] He claims that the absence of this 'crucial inference' is a particular feature of self-refutation and we see from our dictionary definition that the presence of this inference is by contrast a standard feature of a reductio. We have seen that Burnyeat and McCabe do regard the final step ('therefore not-p') as implied in a strict self-refutation argument. This H1 argument, exemplifying the structure 'if one is' then 'one is not', comes very close to a classic reductio structure and yet the clinching 'therefore one is not' is indeed absent from the argument . Nevertheless it is simplest to classify the overall argument of H1 as a self-refutation on the basis of Burnyeat's

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[109] M. F. Burnyeat, ibid, pp. 44-69 – p 48
[110] Castagnoli p 356

criterion that 'the thesis to be refuted itself serves as a premise for its own refutation...' and since we prefer not to make the case that it is an ad-hominem self-refutation we are led to classify it as an absolute or strict self-refutation. We should therefore consider the consequences of H1 being a strict self-refutation equivalent in its consequences to a reductio. But what is refuted is the proposition that 'one is' or 'one is one' when the referent of these statements is the strictly non-multiple one of H1. And we are now satisfied that although these propositions are the subject of a reductio and are falsified by the argument of H1, we need not regard the concept enshrined in the referent of these propositions, the pure one of H1, as also rendered incoherent by this reductio. The pure one survives the refutation process and this is the most important outcome for us because we will need this concept in our next chapter in order to apply this and other concepts, distinctions and arguments from the hypotheses to the resolution of the TLA *aporia* from the first part of the dialogue.

What really happens at the end of H1?

We have seen that the non-being of the one as a conclusion in its own right is never flagged as problematic at the end of H1. In H2 this one which is not, this one of H1, survives un-falsified to become an integral part of the H2 argument. The same one of H1 makes its appearance again in H2 as an abstraction which can be derived in the mind from the existent one of the second hypothesis itself.

Accordingly, we may say that H1 does not highlight any problem with the reasoning that:

If one is,
then one is one.
If one is one,
then one is not many.
If one is not many,
then one enters no relations.
If one enters no relations,
then one cannot partake of being.
If one cannot partake of being,
then one is not.

In going thus far we just need to appreciate that at the second step and thereafter we are considering the one itself, a one which has no multiplicity, a one which arises again in H2 through considering the existent one of H2 without the 'being' of which it must partake in order to 'be'.

Based upon the reasoning of the five steps above, steps which Parmenides does not flag as suspect, H1 goes on to draw two further conclusions which are indeed flagged as problematic;

If one is not,
then one is not one.

And finally

If one is not,
then one is not nameable etc.

Both these formulations, as Castagnoli points out, involve an element of self-refutation and both are flagged as suspect by the wording used by Parmenides himself in referring to them. H2 will go on to show that the one can 'not be' and still be one. H2 will also give a name to this one which is not but will make a concession to the H1 conclusions by giving it a name which distinguishes it from the existent one of H2. Hence we see that at the end of H1 there is no need for any questioning of the conclusion that a non-multiple one does not partake of being and therefore is not. H2 will show that this one, a one which is not, can be arrived at via an abstraction process from the one that is, the existent one of H2. There is an effective implication in all this that the abstraction step has effectively been taken at the second step in our above summary of the start of the H1 argument and we noted the phrase which asserts that "it should be not many but one". Therefore our summary above may be amended for emphasis to read;

If one is,
then one is one.

If one is <u>not many but</u> one,
then one is not many.

The addition of the phrase 'not many but one' clarifies the fact that the abstraction step which isolates the one from being is also effectively in operation at the beginning of H1 as the insistence upon the strict non-multiplicity one of H1 excludes 'being' from the one because the addition of being to the one would make it a whole with parts and therefore multiple.

Although H1 does not flag the non-being of the one as problematic it does question two further possible conclusions which may be derived from the non-being of the one. These are;

If one is not,
then one is not one.

If one is not,
then one is not nameable

There may actually be a sense in which these two conclusions are acceptable[111] but in both cases Parmenides highlights their aporetic nature and in both cases H2 presents a sense in which they are both falsified because it presents 'the one that is not', the one itself of H1, as one nevertheless and, as such, an integral part of the existent one of H2. Accordingly, it falsifies the first conclusion above whereby the one is not one if the one is not. H2 also gives a name, albeit a special name, to this same one which is not and, in naming 'the one that is not', H2 falsifies the second conclusion whereby it is unnameable because it is not.

We are led to the conclusion that the one of H1 has the following features: It is an abstraction derivable from the existent one of H2; It does not partake of being and in that sense it 'is not'; The fact that it 'is not' does not prevent it from having the characteristic of unity; the fact that it 'is not' does not prevent it from being named. We are therefore left with a summary of H1 as an argument which states that if the one is and is just one then the one is not[112]. This argument may now be tolerated even as a reductio or strict self-refutation as it is not damaging to our overall thesis here once we accept that such a one, which is just one, excludes being and therefore is not, is developed as an abstraction in the mind. The strict self-refutation outcome is not damaging because it does not lead us to discard the concept enshrined in such a one, a one which is just one, has no multiplicity, enters into no relations, has no temporality, does not partake of being and therefore is not. It is the nature of such a one as the product of an abstraction step that leads to the self-refutation and consequent falsification of any proposition which posits such a one. The argument may falsify such a proposition and in doing so it points to the particular nature of the one of H1, a nature which derives from the fact that such a one is the production of an abstraction step. It is the nature of such a one as an abstraction which gives rise to the self-refuting outcome of the H1 argument. However, the fact that the overall H1 argument does not deprive the concept enshrined in such a one of philosophic utility is affirmed by the employment of such one in the argument of H2 in order to develop the existent one of H2 and to describe the origins of number.

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[111] The fact that the strange conclusion that 'the one is not even one' is not formally rejected in H1 receives further support from its restatement, this time without any reservation, in the brief summary of the first four hypotheses presented at 160b2-3; "Consequently, if one is, the one is both everything and not even one, both in relation to itself and in relation to the others, on the same basis." οὕτω δὴ ἓν εἰ ἔστιν, πάντα τέ ἐστι τὸ ἓν καὶ οὐδὲ ἕν ἐστι καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα ὡσαύτως. This fact lends force to reading the *Parmenides* as exemplifying operational self-refutation as described by Castagnoli, ibid, p 205ff.

[112] Burnyeat (p 49) questions whether the requirement for an additional premise prevents an argument from being a self-refutation: "But caution is needed. If in a peritrope a proposition is turned round into its contradictory, does this mean that to classify an argument as a reversal is to claim for it the form "(p → not-p) →not-pH--in other words, that 'p' is the **sole** premise used on the way to 'not-p'..." – my emphasis.

Were such a one rendered utterly devoid of any applicability in argument by the reasoning of H1 then, like a right angled equilateral triangle, it would not be of any utility as a positive element in the development of the H2 arguments. But we see that it plays just such a positive role on H2 and at the same time we need not deny that strict self-refutation is in operation in the overall argument of H1 in relation to the proposition which posits such a one. Accordingly, we may accept the outcome of H1 and the facts of the development of the H2 argument simultaneously. However, we can reconcile their apparently contradictory outcomes by arguing that the one of H1 is an abstraction and it is this aspect of its nature which leads to aporetic conclusions when any proposition which posits such a one is analysed in argument. In spite of these aporetic conclusions the concept of such a one is not a concept devoid of philosophic utility and this in evidenced by the fact that we can employ such a one in the development of the argument of H2. This important outcome will justify us in applying the concept enshrined in such a one to the resolution of the third large argument as contained in part one of the dialogue.

Overall conclusion

A one such as the one of H1 is not a concept unique to the *Parmenides* but it occurs also in *Sophist* 245a-b[113] – 'what is truly one must be entirely without parts' and also in *Republic* VII, 525e[114] 'being careful lest the one ever prove to be not one but a multiplicity of parts'. We have now made a case for the status and significance of the non-multiple one of H1 within the first two hypotheses of the *Parmenides* and we have argued that we can account for the aporetic conclusions of the H1 argument in a manner which avoids the entire falsification of the concept enshrined within the one of H1. On this basis we have defended the philosophic utility of the one of H1, a one which does not partake of being, is entirely devoid of multiplicity, enters into no relations and has no temporality. Accordingly, we may now be justified in applying the concept of the one of H1 to the *aporiai* of part one of this dialogue and so, in the next chapter we shall argue that the concept of a one such as the one of H1 may be used to resolve the regress in the third large argument at 132a-b. We will also provide textual evidence that the concept of the one of H1 is indeed intended to resolve that particular regress. This will provide further evidence for the philosophic utility of the basic concept presented in H1 and will support our case for the overall argumentative unity of the dialogue itself as it will demonstrate that the, concepts, distinctions and arguments of the hypotheses provide a basis for resolving the *aporiai* of the first part of the dialogue.

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[113] ἀμερὲς δήπου δεῖ παντελῶς τό γε ἀληθῶς ἓν

[114] εὐλαβούμενοι μή ποτε φανῇ τὸ ἓν μὴ ἓν ἀλλὰ πολλὰ μόρια

Appendix to Chapter 2
Is the First Hypothesis based upon invalid arguments?

Introduction

The plausibility of the case advanced here in favour of the applicability of the concepts distinctions and arguments of H1 to the third large argument would be somewhat undermined if the arguments within H1 itself were shown to be lacking in integrity or were invalid. Any significant exposure of weaknesses within the arguments of H1 itself must also weaken the case for making use of the core concept of H1, the one without being which enters into no relations, as it must lead us to consider whether Plato himself intended us to afford any significant status to that hypothesis or, even if he did, whether it is truly acceptable to do so if there are weaknesses in its internal reasoning.

We have seen that the analysis in H1 begins by positing a strictly non-multiple one and we have seen that such a one turns out to enter into no relations whatsoever. Among the relations denied to such a strictly non-multiple one is the relationship of 'otherness' or 'difference' – these are alternative translations of the same Greek word. It is denied the relationship of otherness either with itself or with another and it is the first of these instances of otherness or difference that we focus upon here – otherness from itself. According to this argument the one is not other than itself and Rickless explicitly singles out this argument as being unsound although he does regard the associated conclusions within H1 as true nevertheless.

The schema as set out at 136a-c does not indicate that such independent evaluation of the arguments themselves and their validity is envisaged by the overall method of hypotheses. Therefore if we follow an independent approach in order to satisfy ourselves as to the validity of the hypotheses we would be departing from the 136a-c schema by employing some independent means of evaluating and establishing the validity of the H1 conclusions, and employing methods of authentication not indicated by Parmenides himself. In addition we must recognise that there is not universal agreement among modern commentators as to which H1 arguments are sound or unsound and in the absence of a universal methodology for agreeing this we are faced with a degree of arbitrariness in the interpretation of the first hypothesis and its conclusions which must make us very cautious about how we apply them. If some arguments are valid and some are invalid then some conclusions may be false and other true, come concepts by be acceptable while others may be doubtful, and we would lack any certain means of determining which were which. Accordingly, our reliance upon the concepts, distinctions and arguments of H1 would be potentially unsafe.

Hence there is merit in exploring the extent of any potential invalidity within the arguments of H1 and since Rickless analyses this issue very closely and indeed claims to find weakness it should prove useful to consider his analysis in order to explore the extent of the possible difficulty which this may raise for our overall thesis here.

The possible invalidity of 139b, 4-7

Rickless makes the case[115] that the argument used in what he terms D1A9 is unsound and that Plato is unaware of its unsoundness. The extract in question (first conclusion only) reads as follows;

> "What's more, it would be neither the same as itself nor the same as another, and it would not be different from itself or another." / "How is that?"
> "Well presumably, being different from itself, it would be different from one and would not be one." / "True."[116]

However, Rickless does regard the two conclusions of this section as obvious in any case and states that "...nothing could be more obvious than, that if X is, then X is neither different from itself nor the same as another."[117] His analysis transforms the last sentence above into three propositions and a lemma as follows;

P1: If X is different from itself then X is different from what it is
P2: What the F is is F
P3: If X is different from F then X is not F
L1: If the one is different from itself the one is not one

Rickless asserts that the validity of this hypothesis must stand or fall on the question of employing the *is* of identity as distinct from the *is* of predication in the second *is* of his P3 formulation. He argues for the invalidity of the argument by asserting that the two usages are 'fudged' by Plato here and he makes that case quite persuasively based upon his own analysis and reconstruction of this part of the dialogue. Hence He states; "...if D1A9 is valid then it is unsound and if its premises are true then it is invalid. Either way the argument is unsound; it gives the appearance of being sound only because it fudges the distinction between the 'is' of predication and the' is' of identity." He then proceeds to consider whether Plato is aware or unaware of the unsoundness and concludes that he is unaware of it. The essence of his case for unsoundness is that we cannot validly proceed from the negative identity statement at P2 to the negative predication at P3. Now we can certainly accept

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[115] Rickless, ibid, pp 121-123
[116] *Parm*, 139b, 4-7; οὐδὲ μὴν ταὐτόν γε οὔτε ἑτέρῳ οὔτε ἑαυτῷ ἔσται, οὐδ' αὖ ἕτερον οὔτε αὐτοῦ οὔτε ἑτέρου ἂν εἴη. / πῇ δή; --ἕτερον μέν που ἑαυτοῦ ὂν ἑνὸς ἕτερον ἂν εἴη καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἕν. / ἀληθῆ.
[117] Rickless, ibid, p 123

that, as a general principle, this is a good objection. The question is whether the objection applies in this particular case. The full text from Rickless is as follows: -

> It is something of a vexed question whether D1A9 is sound. On balance, I think it is not. The problem is that the phrase "different from" appears to mean different things depending on whether it is followed by a singular term (such as "itself" or "the one") or a predicate (such as "one"). Where "X" is a singular term, to say that X is different from Y (where "Y" is a *singular term*) is to say that X is not numerically identical to Y...
>
> On the other hand, assuming again that "X" is a singular term, to say that X is different from Y (where "Y" is a *predicate*) is to say that X is not Y, in the sense of not having the property of being Y. Thus, when Parmenides says that the one would be "different from one, and would not be one," he means not that the one would not be (numerically identical to) *the one*, but that the one would not be *one*, in the sense of not having the property of being one.
>
> Given the ambiguity of "X is different from Y" (depending on whether "Y" is a singular term or a predicate), the following problem arises. In order for P1 to be true, "what it is" needs to be read as a singular term referring to X. And in order for L1 to follow from P1, P2, and P3, "what the F is" in P2 must also be read as a singular term referring to the F. Now the second occurrence of "is" in P2 might be read as the "is" of identity or as the "is" of predication. If it is read as the "is" of identity, then L1 follows from P1, P2, and P3, but P2 is clearly false: it is false, perhaps even meaningless, to say that the F is identical to F (where "F" is a predicate). But if the second occurrence of "is" in P2 is read as the "is" of predication, then P2 turns out to be true (at least within the higher theory, since it is a mere restatement of **SP**), but L1 does not follow from P1, P2, and P3. Thus, if D1A9 is valid, then it is unsound; and if its premises are true, then it is invalid. Either way, the argument is unsound; it gives the appearance of being sound only because it fudges the distinction between the "is" of predication and the "is" of identity.[118]

Hence we may summarise his interpretation of the argument and its alternative readings (in my *italics*) as follows:

P1: If X is different from itself then X is different from what it is
P2: What the F is **is** F - *The second IS (highlighted), is either predicative or existential*
P3: If X is different from F then X is not F – *the highlighted IS is predicative (per Rickless)*
L1: If the one is different from itself the one **is** not one
- final IS is predicative (per Rickless)

We note that he rules out the possibility that the second IS in P2 is existential as making the statement false and thus making the argument unsound. Let's accept this for the moment. He then says that having taken the second IS to be predicative P2 becomes a familiar self-predication, which

[118] Rickless, ibid, p 122

is quite acceptable, but the overall argument then becomes invalid. Let's just accept all of Rickless assignments of predicative or existential import to each IS in the arguments as he reconstructs and see whether there is any possibility of arriving at an understanding of this argument whereby it is valid in spite of those assignments of meaning to the word IS in each case.

The Validity of 139b4-7

Rickless' fundamental basis for declaring unsoundness comes back to his claim that (above quotation repeated with highlighting): "Thus, when Parmenides says that the one would be 'different from one, and would not be one,' he means **not** that the one would not be (numerically identical to) *the one*, but that the one would not be *one*, in the sense of **not having the property** of being one." Hence this conclusion is predicative and the predication is said to follow from a negative identity statement and hence it is invalid in the way that (given that Sodium metal is white) it is invalid to argue;

I. It is different from Sodium – a negative identity relation
II. So it is different from that white entity – a valid conclusion
III. So it is not white – invalid conclusion from the previous valid step - a negative predication

Of course it could be a snow flake and therefore still be white so the argument is invalid. Hence, in general, we obviously cannot construct a valid argument by following a negative identity relation by a negative predication as is illustrated by the above example. However, consider the following example (given that Sodium has an atomic mass[119] of 23);

I. It is different from Sodium – a negative identity relation
II. So it is different from an element with atomic mass 23 – a valid inference from the previous statement
III. So its atomic mass is not 23 – a valid conclusion from the previous two statements – a negative predication about atomic mass

On this basis we can see that following a negative relation by a negative identity statement may be valid and in this second case it is valid because Sodium IS that which has an atomic mass of 23 and nothing else can have that atomic mass unless it is Sodium. In the case of the H1 argument about the one we may maintain that it parallels the argument based upon Sodium being equivalent to that which has the property of having an atomic mass of 23. However, it does not parallel the argument based upon Sodium as having the property of being white. With this interpretation of the argument, and leaving Rickless' assignments of meaning to the word IS we may now understand this argument

[119] It actually has an average Atomic Mass of 22.98976928.

as valid, given that the one is one and not many in the same way that Sodium has a mass of 23 and no other;

I. It is different from itself– a negative identity relation
II. So it is different from one - a negative identity relation
III. So it is not one – a valid conclusion from the previous two statements as difference must imply at least one characteristic being different – a negative predication

So for the transition step from I to iii to be valid in the above examples we must select a characteristic which is essential to the subject in question as is atomic mass of 23 to Sodium and oneness to the one. In the case of the one the selection of the appropriate property is easier than in the case of Sodium; Sodium has many properties and characteristics but the pure one of H1 has only the single characteristic or property of oneness, without which it is no longer what it is, just as Sodium without an atomic mass of 23 is no longer Sodium. Once we recognise this we can construct a generally valid argument as follows;

I. X is different from Y – a negative identity relation
II. Y has a characteristic different from the characteristic that makes X be X – a valid conclusion from the previous statement because if Y actually had that characteristic it would not be different from X
III. Y is not X – it does not have the characteristic called X which makes X be X – a valid negative predication

Hence we can see that Rickless' detection of the unsoundness of this particular H1 argument based upon the general invalidity of the third step in the examples above is questionable. Once we accept that the argument at 139b, 4-7 can be sound under the circumstances of this particular instance then we can make the case that there is no unsoundness here based upon a predicative reading of P3.

The Validity of 139b, 4-7 by other means

We have seen that Rickless makes his case for invailidity by assigning particular meanings to the word 'is' in the extract under consideration. On the other hand, Rickless' reconstruction of the overall argument is not the only possible way of reading this passage and Brumbaugh[120] employs an approach using mathematical notation which does not discover any unsoundness in this passage – his reading, opening with his translation of the text, is as follows;

> 1.45 (139b7) If it were other than itself, this would be being other than one; and thus it would not be one. Ar: True.

[120] Brumbaugh, R; *Plato On The One*, Yale, 1961, p 71

> An application of the notion of "other than" to the one. Compare "alteration" in 1.24. Here if [O(y,x) ⊃ y ≠ x], by definition, then, by substitution, [O(x,x) ⊃ x≠ x], which contradicts 1.01. This quickly eliminates the first of the four cases to be considered.

For Brumbaugh this is very simple because 1.01 referred to above is the very first assertion of H1 where it is stated 'that one is', but the otherness proposed here leads to the conclusion that the one is not identical with the one and the fact that this contradicts the opening assertion clinches the reductio. We also note that he relies upon a reference to 1.24 and this is a reference to an earlier argument in H1 138c1-2 which we need not consider in detail here. We may now reword[121] his interpretation of this argument as follows (The ⊃ in this notation means 'logical implication'.);

> So O(x,y) implies y ≠ x where O stands for "other than" – i.e. otherness implies non-identity (In English "if x is other than y then y is not equal to x".)
> [O(x,x) ⊃ x≠ x] – By definition of Otherness if x is other than x it is not equal to x and so is not x. Hence, in the case of the one we conclude that the one is other than one and is not (the) one which is absurd.

Hence the reading here is that the relationship of other, by definition of that relationship, presupposes non-identity. The opening phrase 'other than itself' is not formally a statement of non-identity but once the concept of different or other is recognised as mandating non-identity of the accordingly related entities, then that concept and the associated reductio operate, as 'other than itself' → 'non-identity with itself' and that is absurd. The fact that he translates the Greek word ἕτερον as 'other' rather than 'different' does make the point conceptually clearer. Brumbaugh simply reads all of the uses of the copula 'is' in this passage as existential and so he finds no invalidity; otherness implies non-identity and for something to be non-identical with what it is, is absurd. Rickless, for his part, detects invalidity based upon the meanings he assigns to the copula 'is' in the passage but we have shown that, even with the senses of 'is' which Rickless insists upon, the passage may still be read as a valid argument.

Conclusion re 139b4-7

Based on the above analysis we can certainly make the case that 139b, 4-7 need not necessarily be regarded as unsound. Indeed a good case can be made for its soundness based upon either a predicative or identity based reading of the use of the copula 'is' throughout. This is important for our overall thesis here as the unsoundness of the H1 arguments would certainly introduce an additional layer of justification for any use we might make of their associated conclusions, concepts or definitions. Rickless' argument, that the conclusions are often true independently of the

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[121] Courtesy of Arthur Hughes, TCD Computer Science department, who also assisted with the understanding of the next Brumbaugh extract.

associated unsound arguments advanced by Parmenides, would certainly require much careful consideration before it could be adopted as it raises many further issues as to the overall status of H1.

The arguments in this part of H1 are reminiscent of the arguments in *Euthydemus* 298a;

> ἕτερος ὢν χρυσοῦ οὐ χρυσὸς εἶ; ...being different from gold you are not gold

In this case the relation of difference is taken again to imply non-identity as does our reading of the above argument of Parmenides. However, the nature of the highly sophistical arguments in 298a-b of that dialogue certainly shows that Plato was fully aware of the scope for invalid manipulation of certain expressions which involve the word for 'different' or 'other'; ἕτερος. This very evident exploitation of the ambiguities associated with this word in the *Euthydemus* must somewhat weaken Rickless' contention that Plato was unaware of the unsoundness of the 139b argument in the *Parmenides* and render superfluous his conclusion that: "...even the most sophisticated of modern-day philosophers are trapped by background assumptions they do not see themselves making. That Plato is no different is no skin off his nose."[122]

In order to discover whether there indeed is a good overall prima-facie case for the soundness of the H1 arguments and the acceptability of the associated conclusions it is best also to consider Rickless' next objection which arises in the context of the next argument that 'the one is not different from another '.

The Soundness of 139c3-d1

Rickless goes on to maintain[123] that the argument, at 139c3-d1 in H1, asserting that 'the one is not different from another' is valid but likely to be unsound. He bases much of his argument on the falsity of one of the premises as detailed below although his own particular analysis of the argument into seven propositions would also merit further consideration. The extract reads as follows:

> Nor indeed will it be different from another as long as it is one, for it does not belong to the one to be different from something. No, it belongs only to different and to nothing else to be different from another. / Correct
> So by actually being one it will not be different: or do you disagree?" / Of course not
> However, if it is not different by being one, it will not be different by itself, and if it is not different by itself, it is not itself different. / Correct
> But not itself being different in any way, it will be different from nothing at all.[124]

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[122] Rickless, ibid, p 123

[123] Rickless, ibid, pp 123-4

[124] *Parm*, 139c3-d1; Ἕτερον δέ γε ἑτέρου οὐκ ἔσται, ἕως ἂν ᾖ ἕν· οὐ γὰρ ἑνὶ προσήκει ἑτέρῳ τινὸς εἶναι, ἀλλὰ μόνῳ ἑτέρῳ ἑτέρου, ἄλλῳ δὲ οὐδενί. {—} Ὀρθῶς. {—} Τῷ μὲν ἄρα ἓν εἶναι οὐκ ἔσται ἕτερον· ἢ οἴει; {—} Οὐ δῆτα.

Proclus regards this particular proposition about the one as 'more difficult'[125] to prove though he proceeds, of course, to defend it. He does show an awareness of the problem of maintaining the distinctness of the one whilst asserting that it is not different, a problem which is also highlighted by Rickless as part of his argument for unsoundness here. Ficino describes this claim by Parmenides and the claim which follows as 'beyond the common range of perception'[126], though he too defends it. Cornford[127] declares it to be sound and offers a very brief supporting argument which Meinwald refers to as 'gallant' and 'unconvincing'. Meinwald herself argues quite extensively[128] for its soundness employing her own thesis of the πρὸς αὐτὸ, πρὸς ἄλλο distinction between modes of predication. Gill also accepts much of the H1 arguments as "...plausible, once we recognise that it is examining what the one is by itself, that is, solely by virtue of oneness." [129] Her overall thesis in this area captures the approach of most modern commentators in avoiding any step by step analysis of the argument in favour of an overall thesis that;

> In these two arguments Parmenides contends that the nature of the different and the nature of the same differ from the nature of the one. So if the one is one in the very strong sense that the only features it has are those explained by its oneness, then it cannot be the same as or different from anything at all, because these features would be explained by natures other than its own.[130]

She naturally refers for support to *Sophist* 255e "...each one is different from the others, not because of its own nature, but because of the character of the different"[131]. Allen[132] also finds the argument sound based upon a somewhat similar justification. Scolnicov[133] accepts the argument because difference is a πρὸς ἄλλο relation which is 'denied in the current hypothesis' a hypothesis (i.e. H1) which he regards as Parmenidian - again he does not analyse the argument step by step. Proclus, Ficino, Rickless and Brumbaugh, in contrast to the five commentators summarised above, do analyse every step of this argument and Rickless alone of the four concludes that it is unsound. It is worth considering the basis of Rickless' concerns in the context of Brumbaugh's approach in order

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{—} Ἀλλὰ μὴν εἰ μὴ τούτῳ, οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἔσται, εἰ δὲ μὴ αὐτῷ, οὐδὲ αὐτό· αὐτὸ δὲ μηδαμῇ ὂν ἕτερον οὐδενὸς ἔσται ἕτερον. {—} Ὀρθῶς.

[125] Proclus, ibid, pp 531-2

[126] Ficino. Commentary on *Plato's Parmenides. Evermore Shall Be So.* Trans. by Arthur Farndell. Shepheard-Walwyn, 2008. pp 131-2

[127] Cornford (1939), pp 123-4

[128] Meinwald, ibid, pp 64-66

[129] Gill, ibid, pp 72-74

[130] Gill, Ibid, p 73

[131] Gill, ibid, p 74

[132] Ibid, p 235

[133] Scolnicov, Samuel; Plato. *Parmenides*. Trans. with introduction and commentary, University of California Press, 2003. p 86

to satisfy ourselves that a more rigorous case can be made in support of the soundness of the argument than the more general justification captured by Gill above.

Analysis of 139c3-d1

Brumbaugh's initial analysis here is more difficult to summarise than the very succinct mathematical logic he uses in dealing with the two previous extracts. He employs the concept of the 'complement' of a set which is defined as everything which is not an element of that set or, in the case of the one, everything other than the one. The complement of x is symbolised below as x*. He opens with his own translation of the passage and then presents his analysis:

> 1.48 (139c3) But it will not be other than some other thing while it is one; for it is not a proper attribute of one to be "other than" something, but only an "other" is other, and nothing else. Ar: Right (a strong assent).
> Something strange is involved in the notion of "complement" introduced here: apparently O/O(x,y) does not imply S(x,y). ..The present distinction of an entity from the complement of its complement illustrates the added complexity. But the idea is perfectly sound. If y is other than x, y is included in x*, the total complement of x, and x is included in y*. But neither is y = x*, nor is x = y*: z may well be other than y, but not the same as x. If we were to define x as "neither a, nor b nor c . . . ," this would at once make it a composite entity, a whole with parts a*, b*, c*; which is just what 1.01 prevents.[134]

The overall point here seems to be that if we allow the one to be different from the complement of the one it will enter into a relation of being different from the, perhaps, unlimited number of things which constitute that complement. Therefore it will be defined not as one but as one and also different from a, b, c, etc. Hence it will no longer be one but many and this contradicts our opening hypothesis which he refers to as 1.01. We can see that Gill's general thesis, as quoted above, is supported by Brumbaugh and receives additional support from two textual references in the passage indicating the conditions under which this conclusion is valid:

> as long as it is one - ἕως ἂν ᾖ ἕν
> by being one - τῷ μὲν ἄρα ἓν εἶναι

The requirement that the one must remain as the 'pure one', as captured by the stipulation 'as long as it is one', reminds us of the strict non-plurality of the one of H1. The further assertion that it cannot be different 'by being one', once it is understood as "by being not many but one", emphasises that the strict non-multiplicity of the one of H1 debars it from any other property

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[134] Brumbaugh, ibid, p 71

besides oneness. Therefore it cannot have the characteristic of otherness. Brumbaugh's point above is actually similar to McCabe's assertion about the effect of relations upon forms;

> "If, however, something is forbidden to be many in any respect (as forms are required to be austere individuals), then it cannot enter into relations that would make it one among many, since this would pluralise it and destroy its austerity."[135]

The pluralising effect referred to means that the relation of the one to its complement will 'pluralise' it and it will no longer be just one – hence such a relationship cannot be tolerated 'as long as it is one'.

Rickless claims that the argument here is unsound and he develops a generalisation, as in his previous analysis of 'other than itself'. Using his generalised argument he can only make the case that it is problematic in this generalised formulation but we are still left with the question as to whether or not it is acceptable for the particular case of the pure one of H1. Rickless's generalised propositions need to be treated very cautiously as they detach the steps of the argument from the precise context in which they occur in the dialogue and can make them appear invalid because of their isolation from context. We were able to argue for the validity of the argument in the previous passage by restoring the precise context in which the assertion was made while accepting that it was invalid when generalised outside of that context. Rickless breaks this current argument into seven sections;

> **P1:** It is proper to the different-from-another and to nothing else to be different from something
> **P2:** If P1 is valid then it is not proper to the one to be different from something
> **P3:** If P2 is valid then the one is not different by being one
> **P4:** If P3 is valid then the one is not different by itself
> **P5:** If X itself is not different by itself then X is not different in any way
> **P6:** If X itself is not different in any way then X is different from nothing
> **P7:** If X is different from nothing then X is not different from another

For Rickless the non-identity certainly does imply difference and for him it is this point which makes the argument unsound as it forces a false step to be taken at what he terms P5 "If X itself is not different by itself then X is not different in any way";

> D1A10 is clearly valid. Whether it is sound depends entirely on the truth values of P1–P7. Although reason might be found to question P1, P3, and P4, I take it that the most questionable premise is P5. For from the fact that X is not different by itself (i.e., by being what it is), it does not follow that X itself is not different in any way. In fact, it seems obvious

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[135] McCabe (1999), ibid, p 86

> that a thing should be different from (in sense of not being numerically identical to) anything that is other than it, even though its being what it is is not responsible for the fact that it is different. So it is not surprising that Parmenides should fail in his attempt to argue for something that seems obviously false, even self-contradictory, namely that the one does not differ from anything that is other than it, i.e., that the one does not differ from anything that differs from it. [136]

For Proclus, Ficino, Brumbaugh and McCabe the response to this is that the one is of course not numerically identical to its complement however it cannot enter into a relation of difference with the elements of its complement as this will pluralise it and it will no longer be the strictly non-multiple one of H1. Again it is Rickless' use of a generalised formulation that allows us to agree with him that, in general, an assertion such as P5 (If X itself is not different by itself then X is not different in any way) is indeed questionable. However, in the specific case of the one of H1, difference must be denied to a one of this kind because it would otherwise partake of multiplicity by being both one and different. Once 'difference' is denied to the one it relies upon its own nature in order to be different as it cannot do so by means of 'difference'. However, by its own nature it is just one and not different and there is no aspect to its own nature apart from strict oneness devoid of any multiplicity. It is Rickless' failure to allow for the strictures of the pure, strictly non-multiple one, that makes it impossible for him to discern a sense in which P5 may be true.

Summary and conclusions

By taking Brumbaugh's reading of these passages and elaborating our own analysis thereof we have made a case that the arguments here are valid and sound and this should give us a degree of confidence in applying any H1 conclusions or concepts to any *aporiai*, such as the 'third large argument' in the first part of the dialogue. In spite of the strangeness of the conclusions arrived at in H1 we have been able to argue that they are derived from defensibly valid and sound arguments which ultimately rest upon the opening premise of H1 and its assertion of a strictly non-multiple one. It was explained at the beginning of this appendix that it is necessary to have an overall confidence in the arguments within H1 if we are to apply any conclusions from this hypothesis to the first part of the dialogue with some degree of confidence. We have demonstrated here that the allegations of invalidity and unsoundness as presented by Rickless are certainly not beyond dispute and, in so doing, we have shown a number of bases upon which the validity and soundness of two somewhat suspect arguments can be defended and the logical integrity of the first hypothesis be rendered plausible. Having done so we may now proceed to take the concepts, distinctions and

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[136] Rickless, ibid, p 124

arguments of H1 and of H2 and apply them to the resolution of the TLA without the lurking doubt that they are all born of problematic arguments.

Chapter Three
The resolution of the Third Large Argument based upon the first and second hypotheses

Introduction

The first chapter of this work set out in detail the nature and structure of Plato's Parmenides, described a number of difficulties normally associated with it and outlined in general terms the approach of scholarship, mostly recent, to the interpretation of the dialogue. Our second chapter dealt with one particular difficulty, namely the aporetic ending of the first hypothesis, an argument with which the second part of the dialogue begins. We showed that the first hypothesis despite its aporetic nature and the element of self-refutation which it contains, does present us with an 'austere one' which is carried into the next section of the dialogue and which is capable of being employed as an acceptable and useful concept in philosophical arguments.

The purpose of the present chapter is to show how this austere one and the arguments and concepts of the first two hypotheses of the *Parmenides* can be used to resolve one of the *aporiai* of the first part of the dialogue, namely the Third-Large-Argument (hereafter the TLA), more commonly referred to as the Third-Man-Argument. We will therefore present a detailed analysis of this argument and the *aporia* that it presents and will contend that the distinctions, conclusions and arguments contained within the first two hypotheses of the second part of the dialogue are capable of resolving this *aporia* by affording a more precise understanding of what is actually occurring at each step in the development of the TLA itself. If we can show that the resolution of the difficulties raised by the TLA lies in the first two hypotheses of the second part we will also have shown that any readings of the TLA which do not recognise this fact are deficient insofar as they fail to treat the TLA in the context in which Plato presents it and they fail to resolve it using the arguments and concepts which Plato develops for that very purpose.

We will need to review some significant readings of this particular argument and we will find that these readings fall under two main headings; those which regard the problems raised by the argument and its associated regress as being solvable in some way in its own terms and those which regard the argument and its associated regress as indicating a problem with the underlying theory of forms itself. In either case the interpreters regard the regress as indicating a problem and they differ only in whether they offer some means to prevent the regress from recurring or accept it as truly problematic and incapable of being prevented as it indicates problems with the theory of forms itself. In one case the focus and emphasis will go to the actual TLA argument itself whereas in the other case the focus and emphasis is ultimately upon forms. In the end however we will see that

consideration of forms is unavoidable and we will finally assess all interpretations on the basis of their treatment of the theory of forms.

Hence we will summarise the TLA, explain its position within the dialogue as a whole, consider the two main categories of interpretation of the argument and present our own interpretation thereof. We will argue that our own interpretation is to be preferred on the basis that it utilises the actual arguments and concepts of the dialogue itself more faithfully and accurately and therefore must capture Plato's intentions better than other interpretations which do this to a lesser extent.

The third large argument itself occurs in the first part of the dialogue and is based upon an exchange between an aged Parmenides and a young Socrates who is committed to the concept of forms. The TLA opens with a statement from Parmenides himself which he directs to Socrates, saying;

> I imagine you believe that each form is one, based upon something like this:[137]

Here we have a reference to a form and to its unity so we should say something more about forms and the unity thereof and situate these within the context of the TLA.

Forms and abstraction

We have already explained that the *Parmenides* has two main parts and that the first part is largely aporetic in character insofar as it presents a series of *aporiai* in relation to forms which are left without explicit resolution in the first part of the dialogue. In this first part Socrates shows a commitment to these forms or 'things in themselves' which we may understand in terms of the abstraction process referred to in the previous chapter. In the case of many items exemplifying a particular property Socrates maintains that there is a single entity called a form which is instantiated in each of those objects. The form is one but the instantiations are many and we can arrive at consideration of the form only by an abstraction process such as we described in the previous chapter. So in the case of large objects we can consider the largeness itself, a form, through an abstraction process in the mind just as we previously considered the one itself in isolation from the being of which it partakes, via an abstraction process 'in the mind' (τῇ διανοίᾳ -143a7) when we were dealing with H2. Socrates commits himself to this approach based upon forms at a very early stage of the dialogue after he has heard Zeno, Parmenides' companion, presenting a series of paradoxes whereby Zeno shows that manifest objects exhibit contrary properties as they are both one and many, like and unlike. Having heard this, Socrates comments that;

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[137] 132a1; οἶμαί σε ἐκ τοῦ τοιοῦδε ἓν ἕκαστον εἶδος οἴεσθαι εἶναι:

> However, I would have been even more pleased, if someone were able to show this same complex web of perplexity also arising among the forms themselves, among the things we apprehend by thought, (ἐν τοῖς λογισμῷ λαμβανομένοις) just as you have done in the case of visible objects.[138]

So we note that Socrates himself introduces a particular step at this early point in the dialogue by using the phrase 'by thought' (λογισμῷ), a step which takes him away from the visible entities which are the subject of Zeno's argument about contrary properties in order to consider what he refers to as 'the forms themselves' which he regards as exempt from this phenomenon of contrariety. We have already seen how Parmenides employs a similar process 'in the mind (τῇ διανοίᾳ)' to arrive at the one itself, the one of the first hypothesis by considering the existent one in isolation from the being of which it partakes. Socrates' preference for considering forms which are arrived at by this process of abstraction is directly endorsed a little later in the first part of the dialogue by Parmenides himself;

> I was pleased when you said to him that you would not allow the exposition to consider visible objects and their realm, but those that one may apprehend mostly by reason (λόγῳ λάβοι) and may regard as forms. [139]

We note that we have a distinction here between what can be considered by the senses and what can be considered by thought and we have two phrases 'by thought' (λογισμῷ) and by reason (λόγῳ) which are reminiscent of the phrase 'in the mind' (τῇ διανοίᾳ -143a7) which we met in H2. In the first part of the dialogue we find the first two phrases being employed mainly to mark a process of abstraction from manifest objects to the forms which they exemplify. In the second hypothesis we found the phrase 'in the mind' (τῇ διανοίᾳ -143a7), being employed to mark an abstraction step leading from an existent one to a pure one which does not even partake of being.

We should note that in part one of the dialogue forms are arrived at by a process of abstraction from manifest objects. In making this statement we effectively define the process of abstraction as a step taken by thought or reason whereby some aspect of a manifest entity can be considered in isolation from the manifest entity itself and its other characteristics or qualities. So in the case of large objects we can consider largeness itself through a process of abstraction from the objects under consideration and consequently we may refer to largeness itself as an abstraction in this sense. In the H2 example we looked at in the previous chapter we were initially considering the existent

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[138] 129e5-130a2: ἀγασθείην εἴ τις ἔχοι τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην ἀπορίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς εἴδεσι παντοδαπῶς πλεκομένην, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς ὁρωμένοις διήλθετε, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τοῖς λογισμῷ λαμβανομένοις ἐπιδεῖξαι.
[139] 135e1-4; σου καὶ πρὸς τοῦτον ἡγάσθην εἰπόντος, ὅτι οὐκ εἴας ἐν τοῖς ὁρωμένοις οὐδὲ περὶ ταῦτα τὴν πλάνην ἐπισκοπεῖν, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἐκεῖνα ἃ μάλιστά τις ἂν λόγῳ λάβοι καὶ εἴδη ἂν ἡγήσαιτο εἶναι.

one[140]. This existent one may be arrived at by a process of abstraction from the many manifest objects, each of which is one (single) object. By considering these single manifest objects we may arrive at an abstraction called the existent one. In H2 we saw that there is a further abstraction step taken, whereby the existent one, a one which partakes of being, is considered 'in the mind' (τῇ διανοίᾳ -143a7), without the being of which it partakes. This additional abstraction step yields the one itself which we equated with the one of H1. We can now see that such an abstraction step, which was critical to arriving at the one itself in the argument in H2 in the second part of the dialogue, is also central to arriving at forms in the first part of the dialogue.

We should clarify however that by referring to forms or the one itself as abstractions we are not reducing them to mere concepts, indeed they are described as being responsible for the actual qualities or characteristics of manifest entities and so in the case of largeness we find the reference to 'some large by which all of these appear large'[141] and in the case of the one we find that the one is responsible for the fact that other multiple entities are one;

> What of this? If we tried, in the mind, to take away as little as we could from such multiplicities, mustn't that portion be a multiplicity and not one; if in fact it does not share in the one?[142]

This is saying that without the 'abstraction' which we call 'the one' there would only be ever-recurring multiplicity and nothing would be one. So largeness and the one, although we are speaking of them as abstractions because they are products of an abstraction process, are not *mere* concepts or notions. Indeed in the last quotation we see an interesting counterpart to the τῇ διανοίᾳ process which we introduced in the context of H2 to consider the one in isolation from the being of which it partakes. In the above extract the same τῇ διανοίᾳ phrase is repeated but here we have separated the one from the entities in which it is instantiated, entities which are each one because of participation in the one and are left as undefined multiplicities in its absence. In contrast to the H2 example, in this case we do not isolate the one by abstraction and consider the one, rather we consider those entities which are 'left behind' after the one has been abstracted and we find that in the absence of the one they present only an ever recurring multiplicity.

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[140] The One is included in Socrates' own list of forms at 129d8-e1 and Parmenides includes it in a list of forms at 130b5 which Socrates accepts without question.

[141] 132a7-8

[142] 158c2-4; εἰ ἐθέλοιμεν τῇ διανοίᾳ τῶν τοιούτων ἀφελεῖν ὡς οἷοί τέ ἐσμεν ὅτι ὀλίγιστον, οὐκ ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸ ἀφαιρεθὲν ἐκεῖνο, εἴπερ τοῦ ἑνὸς μὴ μετέχοι, πλῆθος εἶναι καὶ οὐχ ἕν; - this extract is from the third hypothesis.

Having considered what is meant by forms and how these relate to the process of abstraction we should consider what is meant by the next statement in the opening of the TLA, a statement which asserts that each of the forms is one.

Each form is one

Parmenides' statement to Socrates; "I imagine you believe that each form is one, based upon something like this", reflects his awareness of Socrates' commitment to the fact that each form is just one. This commitment may be placed alongside four tenets which are central to the unfolding of the third large argument. The following is their formulation by Pelletier & Zalta[143]:

> The four principal propositions which play a role in the Third Man Argument can be stated as follows:
> **One Over The Many 'OM':** If there are n pairwise-distinct things that are F, then there is a Form of F in which they all participate.
> **Self-Predication 'SP':** The Form of F is F.
> **Non-Identity 'NI':** If something participates in the Form of F, it is not identical with that Form.
> **Uniqueness 'U':** The Form of F is unique.

It is the last of these propositions which is of interest to us here although we will explain the role which they all play in the unfolding of the TLA. Rickless formulates this Uniqueness (U) principle by saying; "For any property F there is exactly one form of F-ness"[144] and he distinguishes Uniqueness from what he refers to as Oneness whereby "every form is one"[145]. This distinction[146] need not concern us immediately but it will affect Rickless' own reading of the third large argument. Here we need only note that in the case of largeness and large objects we expect, by U, to find only one (unique) form of largeness by which all of the large objects will be large.

We may now consider the next step in the development of the third large argument and this will illustrate another of the four principles. Parmenides continues as follows:

> ...whenever many things seem to you to be large, it probably seems that there is one characteristic that is the same, as you behold them all, and hence you believe that largeness is one.[147]

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[143] Pelletier, F.J. & Zalta, E.N., *NOÛS* 34:2 (2000) 165–202, p 168

[144] Rickless, p 28

[145] Rickless, p 37

[146] In simple terms we may say that there are many fruits of which the banana is one. Banana is one fruit but there is not only one banana – it is one but not unique. This is the distinction made by Rickless (p 38)

[147] 132a2-4; ὅταν πόλλ' ἄττα μεγάλα σοι δόξῃ εἶναι, μία τις ἴσως δοκεῖ ἰδέα ἡ αὐτὴ εἶναι ἐπὶ πάντα ἰδόντι, ὅθεν ἓν τὸ μέγα ἡγῇ εἶναι.

This development of the argument introduces the OM principle as quoted "(One Over The Many): If there are n pairwise-distinct things that are F, then there is a Form of F in which they all participate." So in the case of the large objects there is one form of F-ness in which all the large objects participate. By U there should be only one such form but as the argument develops we will see that this principle is threatened. So up to this point we find that the One-Over-The-Many principle leads us to conclude, from the sameness of characteristic among the large things, that there is one form called 'largeness'. Uniqueness leads us to conclude that there is only one such form and by this we mean that there should be one and only one 'largeness'. So far Parmenides is merely reflecting Socrates' own theory back to him before he develops the argument further and shows its weaknesses.

Two more tenets and the problem

Parmenides now has recourse once more to the One-Over-The-Many principle and this time he includes this form called largeness in the process as, by SP, it is also large;

> Now, if you take largeness itself and the other large objects, and you behold them all in the same way in the soul (ὡσαύτως τῇ ψυχῇ), will not a further single large entity appear by which all of them appear large?[148]

There are two significant points to note here. Firstly, as we said, largeness is large; this is another of our propositions about forms as stated by Pelletier & Zalta, the principle of Self-Predication: The Form of F is F. Accordingly, we have a number of objects which are large, and largeness which is also large and so by OM there must be some additional form of largeness by which all of these are large. But we should also note that this process is carried out 'in the same way in the soul (ὡσαύτως τῇ ψυχῇ)' and so we have a recurrence of a mental abstraction step which we have already used in the second hypothesis, in the mind, to isolate the one from the being of which it partakes. Here the τῇ ψυχῇ step is used, in the soul, to arrive at the largeness whereby the large objects and the form called largeness are all large. We should note that there is a commonality here between the τῇ ψυχῇ step here and the τῇ διανοίᾳ step in H2 – they both signify an abstraction step and in neither case are we only considering manifest objects. Having noted these two points it is best to consider the conclusion of the argument and then review its impact.

It is evident that we now have two forms of largeness and Parmenides confirms this and concludes that the process which produced these two will produce and unlimited number;

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[148] 132a6-8; τί δ' αὐτὸ τὸ μέγα καὶ τἆλλα τὰ μεγάλα, ἐὰν ὡσαύτως τῇ ψυχῇ ἐπὶ πάντα ἴδῃς, οὐχὶ ἕν τι αὖ μέγα φανεῖται, ᾧ ταῦτα πάντα μεγάλα φαίνεσθαι;

> So another form of largeness will make its appearance alongside largeness itself, which already exists, and the objects that participate in it; then, in addition to all these, another one by which all these will be large, and each of your forms will be one no longer, but unlimited in multiplicity.[149]

Obviously the principle of Uniqueness is entirely undermined by this argument as there are now an unlimited number of forms of largeness rather than just one. Socrates confirms the unacceptability of this outcome by immediately attempting to preserve this uniqueness principle by presenting a different way of considering forms, an attempt which also ends aporetically.

Pelletier & Zalta introduce another proposition into their analysis which they call "Non-Identity 'NI': If something participates in the Form of F, it is not identical with that Form". This means that whatever makes largeness large cannot be identical with largeness and on this basis the operation of OM generates a new form of largeness with every iteration of the process. They review the entire argument in terms of the four principles already quoted and summarise the outcome as follows;

> Note that the first three principles alone jointly yield an infinite regress, given the assumption that there are two distinct F-things, say a and b. For by OM, there is a Form of F in which both a and b participate. Furthermore, by NI, the Form of F is distinct from a and b. By SP, the Form of F is itself an F-thing. So, by OM, there is a Form of F in which the Form of F, a, and b all participate. But, by NI, this second Form of F must be distinct from the first; by SP, it is itself an F-thing. Thus, OM yields yet a third Form, and so on. However, the larger difficulty for the foundations of Plato's theory of Forms is not the infinite regress but rather the contradiction that results when the first three principles are coupled with the Uniqueness Principle. The inconsistency with the Uniqueness Principle arises as soon as the argument reaches the stage where it is established that there is a second distinct Form of F.[150]

Hence we find that Uniqueness, one of the four key propositions of the theory of forms as formulated above has been falsified. It is not directly obvious what the source of the problem is and we know from the further development of the dialogue that Socrates does not find this outcome acceptable as he immediately attempts to preserve the claim that each form is one by presenting another conception of forms. If any solution is offered to this problem within the entire dialogue itself it is certainly not stated explicitly as a formal solution to the TLA in the first part of this dialogue. And if we are meant to note a fundamental problem with the underlying theory of forms then this is not explicitly stated at this point either although the theory is certainly under threat

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[149] 132a10-b2; ἄλλο ἄρα εἶδος μεγέθους ἀναφανήσεται, παρ' αὐτό τε τὸ μέγεθος γεγονὸς καὶ τὰ μετέχοντα αὐτοῦ: καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις αὖ πᾶσιν ἕτερον, ᾧ ταῦτα πάντα μεγάλα ἔσται: καὶ οὐκέτι δὴ ἓν ἕκαστόν σοι τῶν εἰδῶν ἔσται, ἀλλὰ ἄπειρα τὸ πλῆθος.

[150] Pelletier & Zalta, ibid, pp 168/9

because one of its principles, U, is being falsified. We need to consider the precise nature of the problem presented by the TLA and the extent to which any solution may reflect our own thesis here, a thesis whereby the solution to the regress within the TLA should lie in the second part of the dialogue.

What is the problem?

In terms of the dating of dialogues which deal with the theory of forms it is generally agreed that the *Parmenides* comes after the *Republic* and *Phaedo* and before the *Sophist* and that the *Philebus* is later again. This gives scope for reading the *Parmenides* in terms of the development of the concept of forms by Plato over a period of time and allows for a reading of the dialogue whereby it highlights problems with this theory which are either resolved in this dialogue or in a later dialogue or, some say, are incapable of resolution. This latter more radical reading of the outcome of the TLA was advocated by Vlastos in his seminal 1954 paper in which he claimed that the TLA "is a record of honest perplexity".[151] In 1969[152] Vlastos, revisiting his own earlier paper, stands by his original reading of the third large argument and even reiterates the phrase just quoted. His original assertion was that Plato himself had no solution to the third large argument;

> In stating the Third Man Argument, and in leaving it un-refuted, he is revealing (a) that he did not know all of its necessary premises, whence it would follow that (b) he had no way of determining whether or not it was a valid argument.[153]

He went on to state that for Plato the argument, as formulated was fatal to the theory of forms and that Plato was unable to determine precisely why this was so;

> He begins to feel that something is wrong, or at least not quite right, about his theory, and he is puzzled and anxious. If he has courage enough, he will not try to get rid of his anxiety by suppressing it. He may then make repeated attempts to get at the source of the trouble, and if he cannot get at it directly he may fall back on the device of putting the troublesome symptoms into the form of objections. He can hardly make these objections perfectly precise and consistent counterarguments to his theory unless he discovers the exact source of its difficulties and can embody the discovery in the formal premises of the objections. If he fails to make this discovery, the objections are likely to be as inadequate in their own way as is their target. They will be the expression of his acknowledged but unresolved puzzlement, brave efforts to impersonate and cope with an antagonist who can neither be justly represented nor decisively defeated because he remains unidentified and unseen. This, I believe, is an exact diagnosis of Plato's mind at the time he wrote the *Parmenides*.[154]

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[151] Gregory Vlastos; *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (Jul., 1954), pp. 319-349, p 343

[152] Gregory Vlastos; *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 77 (Oct., 1969), pp. 289-30. The phrase in question is repeated in footnote 4.

[153] Vlastos, 1954, p 329.

[154] Vlastos, 1954, pp 343/4

Vlastos himself identifies the unseen culprits which undermine the theory of forms as Self-Predication and Non-Identity and his terminology and approach to the analysis of this argument has set a direction for much subsequent scholarship. His highly influential and eloquently formulated analysis of the TLA nicely captures a reading of the dialogue whereby no solution whatsoever to this *aporia* would be expected from the second part of the dialogue as Plato had no solution to offer. Vlastos' own work generated a large volume of scholarly application to this problem which we will attempt to capture through an analysis of Pelletier & Zalta's 2000 contribution[155]. This latter analysis pays tribute to that of Vlastos but it also draws significantly upon the 1990 work of Meinwald, an author who does, by contrast with Vlastos, present a solution to the regress in the third large argument and does so within the framework of the *Parmenides* as a whole. We will also consider the interpretation of Rickless who is closer to Vlastos in regarding the TLA difficulties as symptomatic of deeper difficulties with the theory of forms itself.

Hence we have two broad categories of readings the first of which recognises that there is a difficulty and sets about resolving that difficulty within the overall framework provided by the dialogue itself. We will consider the work of Meinwald and of Pelletier & Zalta as representative of this approach.

The other broad grouping regards the difficulties within the TLA as symptomatic of more fundamental problems with the theory of forms itself. These problems with the theory of forms are then said to be resolved either within the *Parmenides* itself or in later dialogues particularly the *Sophist*. Hence McCabe, though her main concern is the question 'What is an individual?' states that:

> What Plato badly needs is to consider 'What is an individual?' as a general question, leaving open the issue of which entities qualify. And that general investigation, I argue, is on hand in the second part of the *Parmenides* (hereafter *Parmenides* II), continues in the *Theaetetus* and the *Timaeus*, and is brought to a satisfactory conclusion in the *Sophist*.[156]

And Rickless similarly states that;

> Given that the *Sophist* and *Philebus* (thematically) postdate the *Parmenides,* this evidence provides further support for the hypothesis that the main purpose of the *Parmenides* is to advocate, and provide reasons for, the rejection of these principles. [157]

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[155] Pelletier & Zalta, 2000, p 198, footnote 9; "Vlastos (1954) is a landmark in the analysis of this argument, and we accept its presupposition that one way to show that a theory is consistent and worthy of being taken seriously is to try to reconstruct it using modern logical methods."

[156] McCabe, *Plato's Individuals*, PUP, 1999, p. 99.

[157] Rickless, *Plato's Forms in Transition*, CUP, 2009, p. 244.

We will see later that 'these principles' are principles of the theory of forms, principles which, according to Rickless, the arguments of the *Parmenides*, the TLA among them, falsify. The principles in question are accordingly rejected.

Hence we have one reading (Meinwald and Pelletier & Zalta) which claims to resolve the difficulties highlighted in the TLA and does so within the context of the argument as formulated in the dialogue itself. And we have another which attributes the problems to the underlying theory of forms itself and sets about resolving the difficulties by adjusting the principles of that theory. Then we have our own reading which will apply the arguments of the first two hypotheses in order to resolve the difficulties of TLA. One significant objective in the rest of this chapter is to analyse these other readings and compare them to our own reading. We should discern any shortcomings of these alternatives to our own reading and the extent to which they overlap with our own or are identical to our own interpretation. It is not asserted that these other broad categories of interpretation capture all possible readings of the TLA and its resolution. Nevertheless they are well argued and comprehensive and accordingly they offer a good basis for the assessment of any deficiencies in our own interpretation and a means of assessing whether ours does indeed offer any new insights into the issues which surround the TLA and the dialogue as a whole.

Modes of predication

Given that the nub of this problem should lie in the four principles quoted earlier from Pelletier & Zalta, principles which were originally formulated by Vlastos, we can see that some alteration of the formulation or application of these principles may resolve the regress and the associated undermining of the principle of Uniqueness. It is obvious that the principle of self-predication, whereby largeness is itself large, is central to generating additional forms of largeness at each iteration of the argument thus destroying the Uniqueness of the forms. If this self-predication can be construed in such a way that it does not repeatedly generate new forms of largeness the regress could obviously be prevented and the Uniqueness preserved. Meinwald[158] (1991) drew upon the 1967 work of Frede[159] to distinguish two types of predication in Plato's dialogues. Frede based his analysis primarily upon a passage from the *Sophist*;

> Str: But I think you concede that some things that are, are always discussed just by themselves, while others are discussed in relation to others.[160]

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[158] Meinwald, C. C. *Plato's Parmenides*. Oxford University Press, 1991.

[159] Frede, M: 1967, *Prädikation und Existenzaussage, Hypomnemata* 18, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.

[160] *Sophist*, 255c12-13; ἀλλ' οἶμαί σε συγχωρεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν αὐτὰ καθ' αὑτά, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἄλλα ἀεὶ λέγεσθαι.

On this basis it is argued that we have two modes of predication one of which is exemplified by the notion of 'difference'. Difference must always be discussed in relation to something else and so it is said to exemplify predication in relation to another or *'pros ta alla'* predication. 'Being' on the other hand is not discussed in relation to another but only in relation to the entity itself and so it is said to exemplify predication relative to the entity itself or *'pros heauto'* predication. Meinwald took this thesis of two modes of predication and applied it to the *Parmenides* relying heavily upon the recurrence of the word 'pros' in the 136a-c schema. She explains the overall approach as follows:

> We may now sum up our present understanding of the in-relation-to qualifications as follows. The qualifications belong to the kind of use of the preposition pros in which a sentence of the form
>
> A is B pros C
> A is B in relation to C
>
> indicates that some relation unnamed in the sentence is relevant to A's being B. In the *Parmenides*, the qualifications mark a difference in the way in which B can be predicated of A. They do this by indicating the relations that ground each of the two kinds of predication. Thus, the difference between what holds of a subject in relation to itself and what holds of the same subject in relation to the others is not simply due to the distinction between the others and the subject. It derives more fundamentally from the fact that a different relation is involved in each kind of case. Predications of a subject *pros heauto* hold in virtue of a relation internal to the subject's own nature. Predications *pros ta alla* on the other hand concern individuals' displays of features, which Plato takes to involve a relation to natures - that is, to other things. [161]

Meinwald spends the first seventy five pages of her book arriving at the definitive exposition of her dual predication thesis as encapsulated in the above extract. In the penultimate chapter she devotes only ten pages to revisiting the issues raised in the first part of the dialogue and makes the case that once we employ these two modes of predication the issues raised in part one are resolved. This of course does not in any way constitute the application of the conclusions of part two to the issues raised in part one. What we certainly find in her work is the employment of a consistent mode of interpretation based upon dual predications across the entire dialogue. But we are left with the question as to why we need the eight very elaborate hypotheses which constitute over 75% of the dialogue when a simple explanation of the two modes of predication, an explanation which she herself fits into the short extract above, would suffice to settle all the *aporiai* of part one? In fact, she herself notes the succinctness with which this distinction of predications is made in the *Sophist*

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[161] Meinwald, 1991, p 70

(255c, 12-13) quoted above, though she claims that it may be emphasised less in that dialogue "because of the fanfare he gave the distinction when he introduced it in the *Parmenides*". [162]

In spite of these reservations we should now go on to see how her development of this dual predication thesis may be used to prevent the regress in the TLA and preserve the Uniqueness of forms. In general it is a quite straightforward application of the *'pros heauto'*, *'pros ta alla'* predication model which she applies consistently throughout the dialogue:

> We noted before that, while the argument is seriously underspecified, it relies on some version of the crucial claim
>
> The Large is large
>
> in order to reach the threatening conclusion
>
> The Large and the other large things now require something new in common, by which all of them will appear large
>
> Indeed, the production of new Larges depends crucially not just on the claim that The Large itself is large being made, but on that claim's being treated in the same way that (say) 'Montblanc is large' would be. To begin with, The Large itself and the original group of visible large things are treated as being large in the same way. This induces the notion that we have a new group of large things whose display of a common feature must now be analysed in the same way the display of the common feature of the original group was. If this is taken to require the introduction of a new form, a regress is started. And the regress will be vicious, given the purpose of forms. Each form purports to be the single thing that grounds and explains the predications it is invoked in connection with and should therefore not yield to an unending series of further forms....
> But we are now clear that that predication does not claim that The Large itself is large in the same way that the original group of large things is. It therefore does not force on us a new group of large things whose display of a common feature requires us to crank up our machinery again and produce a new form....
> The *Parmenides* has now emerged as showing conclusively that Plato does not suppose each property to do its job by having the property that it is. Because his support of the self-predication sentence does not require him to take The Man itself as an additional member of the group that displays the feature common to men, and as requiring a new form to explain the display of this new group, there will be no regress. Plato's metaphysics can say good-bye to the Third Man. [163]

The different mode of predication, namely *pros heauto* predication, applicable to the largeness of the large itself does not allow the regress to continue because the large itself is not large in the same way as the large objects are large. Hence, she claims, 'Plato's metaphysics can say good-bye to the

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[162] Meinwald, 1991, note 19, p 179.
[163] Meinwald, ibid, pp 155-7

Third Man.'[164] It is evident that this analysis regards the eight hypotheses as an exercise in the application of predications which may, once mastered, be applied to the resolution of numerous philosophical issues. She does not refer specifically to any of the hypotheses in order to deal with the TLA, in the way that our analysis will apply the conclusions of H1 and H2 to its resolution. This must raise the question as to why Plato occupies three quarters of the dialogue with eight hypotheses which are very elaborately developed when the only point to be made is that there are two modes of predication. We can see from her analysis however that tackling the self-predication issue by distinguishing two modes of predication does indeed prevent the development of the regress; and her claim that Plato intentionally employs two modes of predication is defended by the *Sophist* reference and the wording of the 136a-c schema of the *Parmenides* thus lending additional support to her claim that this is a textually defensible solution to the TLA aporia.

We should however note a number of issues with Meinwald's approach at this stage. Firstly, on her own admission, Plato does not make frequent and evident use of the two modes of predication in a manner which would provide significant textual support to her reading. Secondly she makes no use of the analysis within the hypotheses themselves in order to resolve the TLA nor does she claim that this was Plato's intention. Accordingly, she offers no real basis for understanding the purpose served by the very extensive analysis within the hypotheses, apart from treating these as a very elaborate exercise in the employment of the dual predication approach. There are a number of other problems or deficiencies, relating to Meinwald's not employing, the distinction between two kind of predication, to analyse *each step* of the statement and articulation, at 132ab, of the TLA. But these will become apparent when we turn to defending our own interpretation, one of whose distinctive features is that it does indeed use the material derived from the first and second hypotheses of the second part of the dialogue to analyse each and every step of the TLA as articulated by Plato.

Modes of participation rather than modes of predication

The *Sophist*, 255c12-13, extract from which Frede developed his original analysis of two modes of predication is applied to the *Parmenides* by Meinwald in a manner which repays more careful analysis. Predication is obviously a linguistic phenomenon and the *Sophist* quotation reflects this fact but then goes on to indicate that this distinction in the use of language reflects underlying ontological distinctions. Hence the two relevant *Sophist* extracts read:

> Str: But I think you concede that some things that are, are always discussed just by themselves, while others are discussed in relation to others.

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[164] Ibid, p 157

Here we have a deliberation upon the way language is used leading in the next extract to a conclusion about the non-identity of two forms (Being and Difference) which is drawn on the basis of this linguistic distinction:

> Theae: So they are.
> Str: And difference is always in relation to another. Is this so?
> Theae: Just so.
> Str: But this would not be the case if being and difference were not entirely distinct. But if difference were to partake of both relations, just as being does, some of the different things would sometimes be different but not in relation to another. But now we find, simply, that whatever is different turns out to be different because some other makes it so.[165]

And so, as Pelletier & Zalta point out;

> If there are two modes of predication, then a Platonist could plausibly argue that there are two corresponding kinds of participation, since modes of predication are, in some sense, the linguistic mirror of participation.[166]

If we are discussing forms, and that after all is what the TLA is concerned with, then the fundamental issue which is directly relevant in the context of forms is participation not predication. Predication is a linguistic phenomenon while participation is the actual process which is directly associated with forms – things have the characteristics they have through participation in the relevant forms. The large objects in the TLA are large due to participation in largeness. Hence we find that Meinwald's efforts to find textual support for her interpretation by reference to the second part of the *Parmenides* run into a problem: in spite of the frequent use of the word 'pros' in the 136a-c schema of the first part she finds that its occurrence is very rare in the eight hypotheses of the second part of the dialogue and it certainly does not preponderate in a manner which would directly support her assertion of the centrality of the two modes of predication to the overall integrity of the dialogue. She admits this herself, albeit in a footnote, by saying:

> There is in fact a great contrast between the language of the methodological advice (*136a-c schema*) and the summaries of the results of the dialectic (*conclusions of the hypotheses*) on the one hand, and that of the actual arguments (*the hypotheses themselves*) on the other. While the in-relation-to qualifications occur very prominently in the former, Plato uses them extremely sparingly in the latter. I can only suppose this to be part of his program of making us work actively, with written work providing at most an occasion for thought.[167]
> (*Bracketed elaborations mine.*)

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[165] *Sophist;* 255d1-5; οὐκ ἄν, εἴ γε τὸ ὂν καὶ τὸ θάτερον μὴ πάμπολυ διεφερέτην: ἀλλ' εἴπερ θάτερον ἀμφοῖν μετεῖχε τοῖν εἰδοῖν ὥσπερ τὸ ὄν, ἦν ἄν ποτέ τι καὶ τῶν ἑτέρων ἕτερον οὐ πρὸς ἕτερον: νῦν δὲ ἀτεχνῶς ἡμῖν ὅτιπερ ἂν ἕτερον ᾖ, συμβέβηκεν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἑτέρου τοῦτο ὅπερ ἐστὶν εἶναι.

[166] Pelletier & Zalta, 2000, p 171

[167] Meinwald, 1991, footnote 2, p 177.

So the attempt to find a link between the first part of the dialogue and the second part does not obtain much textual support, if we follow the thread based upon modes of predication, as this is not a marked feature of the second part of the dialogue. This point is also strongly emphasised by Rickless in his rejection of Meinwald's reading of the *Parmenides*.[168] On this basis the Pelletier & Zalta suggestion of looking at participation shows more promise.

A solution to the TLA via modes of participation

Pelletier & Zalta begin their work with a review of various responses to Meinwald's own work, responses which highlight a number of additional shortcomings apart from those we have presented. These need not concern us in detail here and we may note that, in general, our two authors are positive about the work of Meinwald as a basis for resolving the TLA issue. They report broad acceptance among scholars that Plato employs two modes of predication and they rely upon their own extensive development of the concept of two modes of participation in order to evolve their own comprehensive approach to the resolution of the TLA *aporia*. They state;

> Meinwald's interpretation of Plato's work contains the seeds of a genuine way to say goodbye to the Third Man. But her specific proposals only say *auf Wiedersehen* to the problem, for they omit important details and fail to consider the consequences of the position. Our friendly amendment to Platonic theory allows us to keep all the genuine insights that Meinwald propounded while at the same time providing us with a logically secure solution.[169]

Their work develops out of their recognition that predication is the linguistic counterpart of participation[170] and accordingly they take Meinwald's two modes of predication and formulate two modes of participation. Taking the four principles which operate as a background to the TLA they go on to formulate two concepts of OM and two concepts of NI based upon participation rather than predication. Uniqueness has only a single formulation. Accordingly, in the case of participation they define the two modes of participation as follows[171]:

pros ta alla - SPa

> In simple terms, y participates$_{PTA}$ in x just in case x is the Form corresponding to some property which y exemplifies.

pros heauto - SPb

> In simple terms, y participates$_{PH}$ in x just in case x is a Form which corresponds to some property which is part of the nature of y.

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[168] Rickless; *Plato's Forms in Transition*, Cambridge, 2007, pp 105/6
[169] Pelletier & Zalta, p 187
[170] Ibid, p 171
[171] Ibid, pp 171 and 172 respectively

They then proceed to derive OM and NI principles on a PTA and PH basis as follows[172];

> OMa: If there are n pairwise-distinct things that are F (*pros ta alla*), then there is a Form of F in which they all participate$_{PTA}$.
>
> OMb: If there are n pairwise-distinct things that are F (*pros heauto*), then there is a Form of F in which they all participate$_{PH}$.
>
> NIa: If something participates$_{PTA}$ in the Form of F, it is not identical with that Form.
>
> NIb: If something participates$_{PH}$ in the Form of F, it is not identical with that Form.

The application of the principles can be seen quite easily from their recasting of Meinwald's solution to the TLA in terms of their two modes of participation. Meinwald simply works with the TLA as formulated in the *Parmenides* and accordingly her formulations are primarily based upon predication *pros ta alla* with the introduction of *pros heauto* predication as a special case to prevent the regress. Pelletier & Zalta accordingly recast her argument on the basis of participation rather than predication:

> The above formal renditions of the principles involved in the Third Man argument allow us to restate Meinwald's position as the following two claims:
>
> > **1** - OMa, SPa, NIa and U are jointly inconsistent, (*i,e, the first 3 principles generate multiple forms and therefore violate U*)
> > - SPa is false (*i.e. largeness does not participate in largeness pros ta alla*);
> >
> > **2** - while SPb is true (*i.e. largeness does participate in largeness pros heauto*), OMa, SPb, NIa and U are jointly consistent (*recognising that PH participation rather than PTA participation is at work restores the consistency as U is not violated*) (*Bracketed elaborations mine*) [173]

The two authors then go on to show that if we begin with PH participation rather than PTA participation (i.e. if we begin with many forms rather than many objects), we will still develop a second TLA type regress. This latter TLA which originates from PH participation rather than the PTA participation demonstrated in the *Parmenides* is resolved in their article by falsifying the PH counterpart of non-identity which they refer to as NIb. And so they conclude that participation does not imply non-identity if the participation is PH;

> ...every Form participates PH in itself, assuming that its corresponding property is part of its nature.[174]

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[172] Ibid, pp 172 and 173 respectively
[173] Pelletier & Zalta, p 173
[174] Ibid, p 174

So the form of largeness can be large without the need for some other form in which it participates in order to be large. Hence we may conclude that if we express Meinwald's predication based solution to the TLA in terms of modes of participation, then we do resolve the TLA once more and we also derive the conclusion that forms participate in themselves and that the non-identity principle is false in the case of forms as it does not apply when participation is *pros heauto*. We can see that the Pelletier & Zalta analysis leads naturally to consideration of the nature of the forms themselves and allows us to draw conclusions about them such as the fact that they can participate in themselves and that non-identity is false in the case of the *pros heauto* participation which applies to forms. These two authors develop their arguments in such a way as to draw further conclusions about forms and we should consider some of these now as they are applicable to our overall purpose in this work. We shall also need to consider the extent to which this approach to the resolution of the TLA and the associated conclusions about forms are supported by the text of the *Parmenides* itself.

Forms defined

We should now recall a key sentence from the TLA which reads;

> Now if you take largeness itself and the other large objects, and you behold them all in the same way in the soul (ὡσαύτως τῇ ψυχῇ), will not a further single large entity appear by which all of them appear large?[175]

Here we have a reference to 'largeness itself' and although it is not explicitly referred to as a 'form' it is an obvious candidate for such designation on the basis of our earlier discussion and the context here. If we are to consider how to stop the TLA regress or whether we should accept that it cannot be resolved we will need to consider these 'things in themselves' such as largeness and the characteristics they possess. Pelletier & Zalta, having switched from predication to participation and presented two modes thereof, undertake a very comprehensive further development of the participation concept. They employ their two modes of SP, OM and NI to carry out a 'friendly amendment' to Plato's work'[176] on forms which they describe as follows;

> Our friendly amendment is constructed within a more comprehensive axiomatic theory of 'ideal' or 'abstract' objects. This more encompassing theory provides a conceptual framework within which a Platonic theory of Forms can take shape.[177]

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[175] 132a6-8; τί δ' αὐτὸ τὸ μέγα καὶ τἆλλα τὰ μεγάλα, ἐὰν ὡσαύτως τῇ ψυχῇ ἐπὶ πάντα ἴδῃς, οὐχὶ ἕν τι αὖ μέγα φανεῖται, ᾧ ταῦτα πάντα μεγάλα φαίνεσθαι;

[176] Pelletier & Zalta p 175

[177] Pelletier & Zalta p 175

These ideal objects are contrasted with real objects which are everyday objects. The real objects only exemplify properties whereas the ideal objects (of which forms are a special case) both exemplify and encode properties. In the process of developing their concept of forms as a special case of ideal objects they introduce one particular type of ideal object which is relevant to us as it enables us to align their treatment of the TLA with ours. They present ideal objects in order of increasing complexity beginning with the simplest possible conception of ideal object as follows;

> Thus, for example, consider the condition '*F* is identical to the property of being in motion' (*F* =*M*). This condition is satisfied by exactly one property, namely, the property of being in motion. So, the following instance of the comprehension principle asserts that there is an ideal object which encodes the property of being motion, and only this property: ...By the principle of identity, there is exactly one ideal object that encodes the single property of being in motion, and only this property.[178]

This first example is their simplest conception of ideal objects wherein only a single property is encoded. Their second example allows for the fact that certain properties entail other properties and give rise to recognition that there must be ideal objects to encode all of the properties entailed by that first property. They go on to summarise these two types of ideal object as follows;

> The first example could be used to develop a 'thin' conception of Plato's Forms— the nature of such entities is constituted by a *single* property. However, this object would not give a satisfactory explanation of the fact that Forms have a more complex nature. For example, The Form of Justice contains virtue as part of its nature. So, in what follows, we hope to show that ideal objects analogous to the second example have many of the features that Plato attributed to Forms. Using this example as a guide, here is a general definition of what it is to be a Form of *G* (for any property *G*): *x* is a Form of *G* iff *x* is an ideal object that encodes all and only the properties entailed by *G*.[179]

This 'thin conception' is reminiscent of the one of the first hypothesis, a one that is just one and neither exemplifies nor encodes any other characteristics. Their concept of the more complex forms which entail additional properties may be aligned with the largeness of the TLA or the one of the second hypothesis which exemplifies being, difference and oneness. However, in spite of the very comprehensive nature of their analysis Pelletier & Zalta do not carry out any significant comparison between their own concept of forms and the formulations presented by Plato in this dialogue itself or elsewhere. It will be important to consider how their formulations may be reconciled with the text of the *Parmenides* itself when it states for example;

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[178] Pelletier & Zalta p 176
[179] Pelletier & Zalta, p 177

> Now, as things other than one are a communion of themselves and the one, it follows that something different, seemingly, arises within themselves that furnishes a limit relative to one another. However, by themselves their own nature is unlimited.[180]

So it is not in the nature of anything other than the one to be one and, accordingly, limited. Oneness and the associated limitedness are furnished by the one – a different form. Similarly in the *Sophist* we have;

> Str: Then, based upon its own nature, being is neither at rest nor in motion.[181]

Being is not at rest by its own nature, it is a rest because of another form, namely rest. It would take considerable scrutiny of Pelletier & Zalta's conclusions about forms to decide definitively whether or not they are in conflict with such statements from the *Parmenides* and *Sophist* and indeed the further similar statement in the *Sophist* that;

> Str: And we shall say that this nature pervades all the others, for each one is different from the others, not because of its own nature but because of participation in the form of difference.[182]

These extracts must force some reconsideration of the notion by Pelletier & Zalta that there are forms which, by their nature, entail other forms. This may not be the concept of forms envisaged by Plato in the extracts just quoted and the concept of entailment may need to be more rigorously defined in order to align it with the concept of forms in the *Parmenides* and *Sophist*.

Nevertheless Pelletier & Zalta's first example of ideal objects corresponds quite closely to the concept of forms as discussed in the quoted extracts from the *Parmenides* and *Sophist*. Hence we readily find support for their 'thin conception' of forms in Plato's treatment thereof in these two dialogues and so we may assume that it is this 'thin conception' which we should apply in the consideration of the one itself referred to in H1 and H2 if we are to align their terminology with the treatment of forms offered in this dialogue. Their 'forms of a more complex nature' may reasonably be assumed to correspond to the one of H2, the existent one, which is a whole with two parts, being and the one itself, a form which has also been shown to include the form of difference or otherness whereby the two parts (one and being) differ from one another. However, for Plato, the one by its own nature is not different nor does it partake of being. The generalised concept of forms presented by Pelletier & Zalta in terms of ideal objects lends support to our intention of generalising the ones

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[180] 158d3-6; τοῖς ἄλλοις δὴ τοῦ ἑνὸς συμβαίνει ἐκ μὲν τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ ἐξ ἑαυτῶν κοινωνησάντων, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἕτερόν τι γίγνεσθαι ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, ὃ δὴ πέρας παρέσχε πρὸς ἄλληλα: ἡ δ' ἑαυτῶν φύσις καθ' ἑαυτὰ ἀπειρίαν.

[181] Sophist, 250c6-7; κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν ἄρα τὸ ὂν οὔτε ἕστηκεν οὔτε κινεῖται.

[182] Sophist 255e3-6; καὶ διὰ πάντων γε αὐτὴν αὐτῶν φήσομεν εἶναι διεληλυθυῖαν: ἓν ἕκαστον γὰρ ἕτερον εἶναι τῶν ἄλλων οὐ διὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ μετέχειν τῆς ἰδέας τῆς θατέρου.

of H1 and H2 into a model which applies to all forms. Hence we may be justified in expecting to find a largeness itself which corresponds to the one of H1 and an existent largeness corresponding to the existent one of H2 and we may align these with their 'thin conception' of forms and 'forms of a more complex nature'.

It is surely significant that Pelletier & Zalta can derive this type of ideal object, an ideal object corresponding to the concept of forms as developed in the *Parmenides* and *Sophist*, from a set of axioms which are based around the definition of two modes of participation, two associated formulations of one-over-many and two associated formulation of non-identity. Their 'friendly amendment' whereby they place forms within a broader context of ideal objects and develop a terminology of 'encoding' properties and 'exemplifying' properties ultimately opens out a more extensive discussion of forms than we require for this work. Their conclusion, however, places Meinwald's work in a context which is more closely aligned to the dialogue itself as it aligns her concept of predication to its ontological counterpart, namely forms and participation therein.

Is Pelletier & Zalta's solution the same as Plato's solution?

We should now consider whether the solution offered by Pelletier & Zalta can be supported by the text of the *Parmenides* itself. In other words do we have any evidence that this is the kind of resolution to the TLA *aporia* that Plato himself might have envisaged? And, more importantly, can we show that the concepts they employ to resolve the TLA are reflected in the second part of the dialogue for, if they are not, then their solution, in spite of its rigour, raises further questions about the purpose of the vast edifice of hypotheses in the second part of this work and their philosophical import.

We have already seen that Meinwald was unable to find extensive direct textual evidence for the employment of her dual predications within the eight hypotheses themselves. She relies ultimately upon the 136a-c schema in the first part of the dialogue and its explicit formulation of the dual predications there in order to develop her own resolution to the TLA. The question now is whether Pelletier & Zalta in formulating their solution in terms of participation rather than predication are drawing upon concepts which are contained in the dialogue itself. We have noted already that no textual analysis of this nature is provided by the two authors themselves so we should summarise their key assertions and then seek support for such principles in the text of the *Parmenides* itself.

We wish to detect the assertion that[183];

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[183] Pelletier and Zalta, Ibid, pp 171 to 173

> *pros ta alla* participation (SPa) is asserted in the dialogue - In simple terms, y participates$_{PTA}$ in x just in case x is the Form corresponding to some property which y exemplifies.
>
> *pros heauto* participation (SPb) is asserted in the dialogue - In simple terms, y participates$_{PH}$ in x just in case x is a Form which corresponds to some property which is part of the nature of y.

We also wish to detect the assertion of OM and NI principles on both a PTA and a PH basis as follows:

> One over many (OMa): If there are n pairwise-distinct things that are F (*pros ta alla*), then there is a Form of F in which they all participate$_{PTA}$.
>
> One over many (OMb): If there are n pairwise-distinct things that are F (*pros heauto*), then there is a Form of F in which they all participate$_{PH}$.
>
> Non-identity (NIa): If something participates$_{PTA}$ in the Form of F, it is not identical with that Form.
>
> Non-identity (NIb): If something participates$_{PH}$ in the Form of F, it is not identical with that Form.

It is quite easy to find instances of SPa, OMa and NIa throughout the dialogues and the very opening of the TLA has a formulation involving these principles:

> ...whenever many things seem to you to be large, it probably seems that there is one characteristic that is the same, as you behold them all, and hence you believe that largeness is one.[184]

In this case we have many large objects but they participate in largeness PTA as they are not large on account of their own nature but on account of some other, namely largeness. This is also an instance of OMa as we deduce the existence of the single form of largeness from the existence of the many large objects. NIa is also in operation as we know that the form of largeness, on account of which the large objects are large, is not identical with the large objects. We also have instances of these three PTA formulations in the example from the second hypothesis we considered in the previous chapter:

> "So let's begin again. If one is, could it possibly be and not partake of being?"
> "It could not."

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[184] 132a2-4; ὅταν πόλλ' ἄττα μεγάλα σοι δόξῃ εἶναι, μία τις ἴσως δοκεῖ ἰδέα ἡ αὐτὴ εἶναι ἐπὶ πάντα ἰδόντι, ὅθεν ἓν τὸ μέγα ἡγῇ εἶναι.

> "In that case there would also be the being of the one, which is not the same as the one, or else it could not be the being of the one, nor could it, the one, partake of that..."[185]

Now this extract reiterates the PTA non-identity principle as it claims that if one is to partake of being it must be other than being – this is Pelletier & Zalta's NIa principle. This is also an instance of *pros ta alla* participation which they call SPa because the one must partake of something other than itself in order to have the characteristic of 'being'. In this case the one must partake of being in order to *be* and it must not *be* being otherwise it could not partake of being. Now it is this latter assertion by Parmenides that presents a problem for any attempt to establish *pros heauto* participation on the basis of the text of this dialogue. The extract we have quoted considers the fact that the one partakes of being and concludes therefrom;

> In that case there would also be the being of the one, which is not the same as the one, or else it could not be the being of the one, nor could it, the one, partake of that.

So the existent one *is* because the 'one itself' partakes of being. The existent one is a whole with two parts; one and being. The existent one is one because of the one itself. It is never stated that the existent one partakes of being. This can be generalised into a principle whereby participation implies non-identity. This is accepted by our two authors and corresponds to their concept of *pros ta alla* predication or SPa. However, if we include the final phrase of this quotation we have the added implication that the one could not partake of being unless it were non-identical to being. This appears to claim that non-identity is required for participation and seems therefore to deny the possibility of any mode of participation other than *pros ta alla* participation. If this is so it rules out *pros heauto* participation (SPb) as this requires the falsification of the associated non-identity principle so that the form can participate in itself. In short the above quotation indicates that if there is participation there must be non-identity and conversely in the absence of non-identity there cannot be participation. Accordingly, in this example two principles are illustrated (1) if one partakes of being it is other than being (participation implies NI) and (2) if it were not other than being it could to partake of being (NI is necessary for participation).

From this converse conclusion illustrated by the second principle we can see that the concept of *pros heauto* self-predication as formulated by Pelletier & Zalta is not part of the solution to the TLA as envisaged by Plato in this dialogue as it is explicitly ruled out in the extract quoted whereby non-identity is required for participation. We now have a formulation whereby if a form is to participate

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[185] 142b5-c1: ὅρα δὴ ἐξ ἀρχῆς. ἓν εἰ ἔστιν, ἆρα οἷόν τε αὐτὸ εἶναι μέν, οὐσίας δὲ μὴ μετέχειν;//
οὐχ οἷόν τε.//οὐκοῦν καὶ ἡ οὐσία τοῦ ἑνὸς εἴη ἂν οὐ ταὐτὸν οὖσα τῷ ἑνί: οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐκείνη ἦν ἐκείνου οὐσία, οὐδ' ἂν ἐκεῖνο, τὸ ἕν, ἐκείνης μετεῖχεν...

in itself it must be other than itself and in the case of the one, this possibility is explicitly denied in the first hypothesis;

> What's more, the one would be neither the same as itself nor the same as another, nor again could it be other than itself or another.[186]

However, our two authors claim that;

> ...every Form participates PH in itself, assuming that its corresponding property is part of its nature.[187]

Accordingly, they are at variance with the text of the dialogue itself even if their analysis does afford a solution to the *aporia* of the TLA and is a natural outcome of their own development of the theory of forms. Plato's concept of forms as presented in the second part of the dialogue denies the concept of self-participation while it most certainly affirms the concept of self-predication in H1. In denying that the one can be a whole or have parts Parmenides argues;

> So, in both cases it follows that the one would be many and not one.
> True.
> And yet it should be not many but one..[188]

So the one must indeed be one as affirmed above but it does not do so by participation in itself as this would require that it be other than itself and we have seen that such a possibility is explicitly denied.

Self-participation and self-predication

We may satisfy ourselves even further that the concept of self-participation is not employed in any part of the *Parmenides* by reviewing the uses of the verb μετέχειν (to participate) throughout the entire work. The verb arises in a variety of forms 97 times in the *Parmenides* and its distribution is quite even as it occurs 17 times in the first part, 13 times in H1, 24 times in H2, 11 times in H2a, 13 times in H3, 8 times in H4 and 11 times in the final 4 negative hypotheses. It can be seen from a review of all these occurrences that in no case whatsoever is a thing's participation in itself ever mentioned and indeed it is explicitly denied in many other cases in addition to the instance we have just quoted. In every case of participation there is non-identity and whatever participates, participates in something other than itself.

Self-predication on the other hand certainly features and, as Meinwald explains;

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[186] 139b4-5; οὐδὲ μὴν ταὐτόν γε οὔτε ἑτέρῳ οὔτε ἑαυτῷ ἔσται, οὐδ' αὖ ἕτερον οὔτε αὐτοῦ οὔτε ἑτέρου ἂν εἴη.
[187] Ibid, p 174
[188] 137d1-2; οὕτως τὸ ἓν πολλὰ εἴη ἀλλ' οὐχ ἕν. / ἀληθῆ. / δεῖ δέ γε μὴ πολλὰ ἀλλ' ἓν αὐτὸ εἶναι.

> Predications of a subject *pros heauto* hold in virtue of a relation internal to the subject's own nature.[189]

One instance captures the alternatives of self-predication vs *pros ta alla* participation quite succinctly:

> Obviously, it would participate in the one because it is other than the one, or else it would not participate in, but would be, one itself. But presumably it is impossible for anything to be one, except the one itself.[190]

The extract above first explains that a part of any whole is *one* part because it participates in the one while being other than one (i.e. non-identical with it). Any single part can therefore be one part through participation in the one. The extract goes on to explain that the only other way a part (or anything else) can be one is by actually being the one itself. So something can be one in two ways, either by partaking of one as other than the one or else by being the one itself. If we revert to the contention by Pelletier & Zalta that "modes of predication are, in some sense, the linguistic mirror of participation.[191]" we now find that the ontological counterpart of *pros ta alla* predication is participation and participation is always *pros ta alla* in the *Parmenides* and always involves non-identity. We also find that the ontological counterpart of self-predication, whereby the one in the above quotation is said to be one, is an assertion about the nature of the thing itself or what belongs to the thing itself and this is never formulated in terms of self-participation or self-partaking.

Therefore the statement 'one is' asserts that the one partakes of being, while the statement 'one is one' is an assertion about the nature of the one and the statement that 'each part of the whole is one part' asserts that each part of the whole participates in the one and is one as a consequence of such participation. These are the ontological realities that correspond to each of these predicative statements but in no case is there any reference to self-participation as the verb μετέχειν (to participate) is never used in that context in this dialogue.

We now have good evidence that neither the two modes of predication model nor two modes of participation model afford a basis for resolving the TLA through an approach which is fully supported by the text of the dialogue itself. In the case of the Meinwald's dual predication model we have seen that all she requires for the resolution of the TLA via her approach is contained within the 136a-c schema from the first part of the dialogue. She does not need to refer to the second part of the

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[189] Meinwald, 1991, p 70

[190] 158a3-6; μετέχοι δέ γε ἂν τοῦ ἑνὸς δῆλον ὅτι ἄλλο ὂν ἢ ἕν: οὐ γὰρ ἂν μετεῖχεν, ἀλλ' ἦν ἂν αὐτὸ ἕν. νῦν δὲ ἐνὶ μὲν εἶναι πλὴν αὐτῷ τῷ ἑνὶ ἀδύνατόν που.

[191] Pelletier & Zalta, 2000, p 171

dialogue at all to resolve the TLA via her dual predication model nor indeed does she, on her own admission, find any significant evidence of dual predications in use in the eight hypotheses.

In the case of Pelletier & Zalta and their dual participation model we have seen that only a single mode of participation is employed within the *Parmenides* and there is no evidence of the second mode which their model requires. They could well respond and justify their approach by arguing that the concept of self-participation *pros heauto* which they employ does correspond precisely to statements about the nature of the ideal objects in question and is therefore at work in the dialogue under that guise. However, to justify the employment of the notion of self-participation *pros heauto* when there is not a single instance in the entire dialogue where participation is expressed in that way involves an imposition upon the actual treatment of predication in this dialogue. Let's accept that this can be well justified because it does, as they successfully argue, lead to a resolution of the TLA. But once we grant this concession and read the nature of ideal objects in terms of *pros heauto* predication we have developed a model which does not reflect the arguments of the dialogue as formulated within the dialogue and based upon its own terminology. There is no disputing the fact that the Pelletier & Zalta model and their 'friendly amendment' does afford a basis for a very comprehensive analysis of all of the issues associated with the TLA and the associated aspects of the theory of forms. However, their use of participation is not consistent with its use in the dialogue. This of course implies that Pelletier & Zalta, like Meinwald, cannot offer us a way of connecting the second part of the dialogue, as formulated, with the first part, as formulated, by showing that the hypotheses help to resolve the TLA. And though we may note, in their support, that neither Meinwald nor Pelletier & Zalta make any claim to have resolved the TLA on the basis of the arguments of the second part of the dialogue, this is something we must now attempt to do.

The Third Large Argument and the hypotheses

We should now step through the TLA once more and this time we should consider each of the steps in the light of our understanding of the arguments presented in the hypotheses of the second part of the dialogue. The argument opens with Parmenides saying to Socrates that;

> I imagine you believe that each form is one, based upon something like this...[192]

This reflects a commitment to the uniqueness of forms and it is elaborated in the case of large objects as follows;

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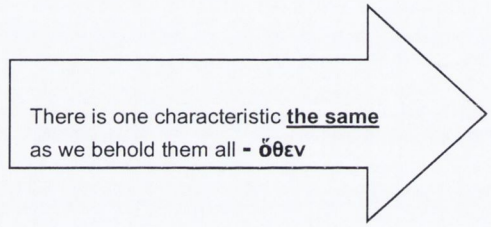
[192] 132a1; οἶμαί σε ἐκ τοῦ τοιοῦδε ἓν ἕκαστον εἶδος οἴεσθαι εἶναι:

> ...whenever many things seem to you to be large, it probably seems that there is one characteristic that is the same, as you behold them all, and hence you believe that largeness is one.[193]

This development of the argument introduces the OM principle as quoted from Pelletier & Zalta "(One Over The Many): If there are n pairwise-distinct things that are F, then there is a Form of F in which they all participate." So in the case of the large objects there is one form of F-ness in which they all participate. By U there should be only one such form but as the argument develops we are aware that this principle is threatened. We will refer to these large things as TL (thing large) and to largeness as L and so the first part of the argument proceeds as follows;



Here, L_i is called 'largeness itself' as that is what it is termed in the next sentence and this 'thing in itself' is the outcome of the first iteration of the function described above. The argument then proceeeds by adding this largeness (L_i) into the items for consideration on the left hand side,that is, it includes largeness along with the large things and it then performs another iteration. Parmenides now has recourse once more to the One-Over-The-Many principle and this time he includes this form called largeness in the process as, by the self-predication principle (SP), it is also large;

> Now, if you take largeness itself and the other large objects, and you behold them all in the same way in the soul (ὡσαύτως τῇ ψυχῇ), will not a further single large entity appear by which all of them appear large?[194]

There are two significant points to note here. Firstly largeness is large; this is another of our propositions about forms formulated by Meinwald as Self-Predication and by Pelletier & Zalta, as reflecting Self-Participation. But we should also note that this second step is carried out 'in the same way in the soul (ὡσαύτως τῇ ψυχῇ)' and so we have a formulation reminiscent of the mental abstraction step which we have already used in the second hypothesis, in the mind, to isolate the one from the being of which it partakes. Here the τῇ ψυχῇ step is used, in the soul[195], to arrive at the

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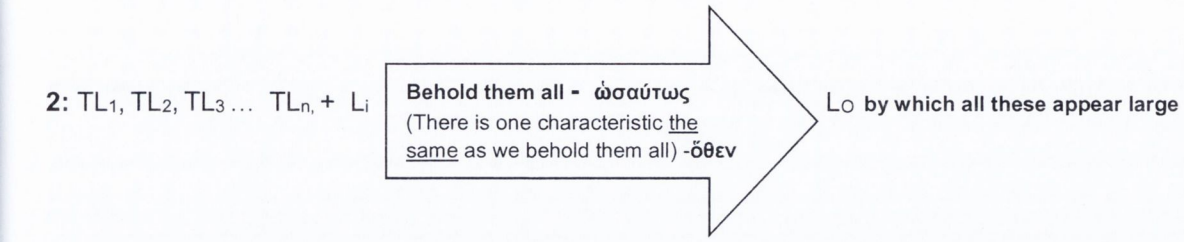
[193] 132a2-4; ὅταν πόλλ' ἄττα μεγάλα σοι δόξῃ εἶναι, μία τις ἴσως δοκεῖ ἰδέα ἡ αὐτὴ εἶναι ἐπὶ πάντα ἰδόντι, ὅθεν ἓν τὸ μέγα ἡγῇ εἶναι.

[194] 132a6-8; τί δ' αὐτὸ τὸ μέγα καὶ τἆλλα τὰ μεγάλα, ἐὰν ὡσαύτως τῇ ψυχῇ ἐπὶ πάντα ἴδῃς, οὐχὶ ἕν τι αὖ μέγα φανεῖται, ᾧ ταῦτα πάντα μεγάλα φαίνεσθαι;

[195] Most modern translators would simply translate 'soul' as 'mind' in such a context. However, we would prefer to point out that Plato has chosen to use two different words; 'soul' in the TLA and 'mind' in H2: But there is, in our view, no basis upon which one can assert that they have significantly different meanings.

largeness whereby the large objects and the form called largeness are all large. So we should note that there is a commonality here between the τῇ ψυχῇ step here and the τῇ διανοίᾳ step in H2 – they both signify an abstraction step and in neither case are we only considering manifest objects. The step we have just taken may be presented as follows;



The outcome of the process as repeated here is based on the assumption that there is again one characteristic that is the same in all the elements on the left hand side which is now further stated to be that by which they are all large.

Now let us bring to bear the lessons of the first and second Hypotheses of the second part of the dialogue to this very articulation and analysis of the TLA as formulated in the famous passage of the first part of the dialogue. We may do so as follows. If we take it that the L_i produced in step 1 is largeness conjoined with being, the largeness counterpart of the existent one of H2, then we can say that it too is large and so there is indeed one characteristic that is the same and so we get another largeness which we here call L_O (largeness other). This new largeness, L_O, could be the largeness counterpart of the one of H1, a largeness by which L_i is large. The probability that this second form of largeness is the largeness counterpart of the one of H1 is increased once we note the formulation of the abstraction step which is taken here in the TLA τῇ ψυχῇ (in the soul/mind). We know that when the corresponding step occurs in H2 it yields the one itself by a process of abstraction τῇ διανοίᾳ (in the mind) by separating the one itself from the being in which it partakes. The abstraction step τῇ διανοίᾳ (in the mind) yields the one itself in H2 so it should yield largeness itself in the τῇ ψυχῇ (in the soul/mind) step in the TLA.

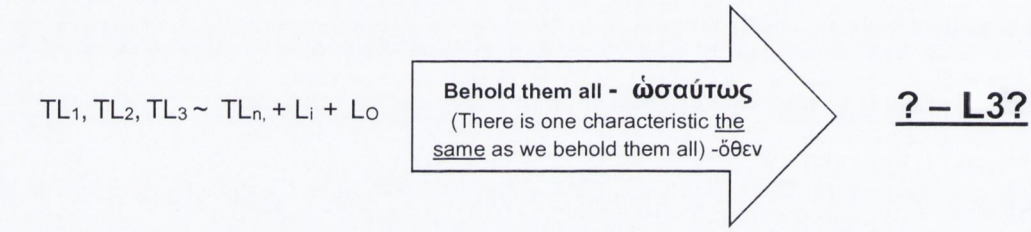
If we now add this L_O to the left hand side of the function we may attempt to repeat the process once more. It is evident that we now have two forms of largeness and Parmenides confirms this and argues that the process which produced these two will produce and unlimited number of such forms;

> So another form of largeness will make its appearance alongside largeness itself, which already exists, and the objects that participate in it; then, in addition to all these, another

> one by which all these will be large, and each of your forms will be one no longer, but unlimited in multiplicity.[196]

Obviously the principle of Uniqueness is entirely undermined by this argument as there are now an unlimited number of forms of largeness rather than just one. Socrates confirms the unacceptability of this outcome by immediately attempting to preserve this uniqueness principle by presenting a different concept of forms, an attempt which also ends aporetically.

Recalling the lessons of the first and second hypotheses of the second part of the dialogue, however, we wonder whether a regress really does get started here. Do we really get an L_i and an L_O and if we get these two do we have to get an unlimited number of L's? The step under consideration may be represented as follows;



How many L's are there?

The question is what happens at this third iteration? We should note that the development of the argument throughout relies upon the phrase '...there is one characteristic that is the same...' Accordingly, the first iteration generates the largeness L_i because the relation of sameness obtains between a characteristic exemplified by the objects. The second iteration is carried out in the same way (ὡσαύτως) and accordingly it too will rely upon the fact that a relation of sameness obtains between a characteristic exemplified by the objects and a characteristic exemplified by L_i. Without this relation of sameness no new L will be generated. The third iteration will in turn generate another L provided a relation of sameness obtains between a characteristic exemplified by the objects and a characteristic exemplified by both L_i and L_O. The question of how many L's get generated reduces to the question of how long the relation of sameness persists. We might have said that there is nothing which refuses to enter into the relation of sameness but we are now aware of the one of H1 which enters into no relations whatsoever. If this has a counterpart in terms of other forms then the H1 counterpart of any form will not enter into the relation of sameness even with itself.

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[196] 132a10-b2; ἄλλο ἄρα εἶδος μεγέθους ἀναφανήσεται, παρ' αὐτό τε τὸ μέγεθος γεγονὸς καὶ τὰ μετέχοντα αὐτοῦ: καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις αὖ πᾶσιν ἕτερον, ᾧ ταῦτα πάντα μεγάλα ἔσται: καὶ οὐκέτι δὴ ἓν ἕκαστόν σοι τῶν εἰδῶν ἔσται, ἀλλὰ ἄπειρα τὸ πλῆθος.

If L_O, produced at the second iteration, is that by which L_i, the product of the first iteration, is large and if L_i is largeness conjoined with being (i.e. the largeness counterpart of the one of H2), then L_O is the largeness of H1, i.e. it is not conjoined with being and it enters into no relations whatsoever either with itself or any other. On this basis, since L_O does not enter into the relation of sameness, there is not a relation of sameness among all the elements on the left hand side of function III above, and so there is no third largeness generated since the argument as formulated relies upon the relation of sameness to generate further L's. Therefore, in this case, the regress does not go beyond II and there is no third large.

However, we should also note that the L_i which is the outcome of the very first iteration is referred to by Parmenides as αὐτὸ τὸ μέγα at 132a, 6. If this phrase is intended literally and therefore anticipates the later hypotheses H1 and H2 then L_i is the largeness counterpart of the one of H1 (called 'the one itself') and the operation of the function at iteration II, the step which is carried out τῇ ψυχῇ, will fail to produce a result because L_i, since it is the counterpart of the one itself, does not enter into the relation of sameness with anything. However, we should not expect the Greek phrase 'the x itself' to have the exact same technical sense whenever it is encountered. In H2 it is used to contrast the existent one with a one that does not partake of being by referring to the latter as 'the one itself'. In the TLA the phrase 'largeness itself' may quite acceptably be used to contrast largeness itself with the characteristic of largeness as manifest in the large objects, insofar as the former is not amenable to sense perception while the latter are – we have all seen large objects but no one has ever seen 'largeness just by itself', or what the TLA may refer to as 'largeness itself'.

On the other hand the very fact that this second iteration is performed τῇ ψυχῇ is a strong indication that this is what we might term a process of mental abstraction which is also employed in H2 when Parmenides asks Aristoteles to consider the one itself devoid of being;

> If we take one itself that we say partakes of being and we comprehend this with the mind (τῇ διανοίᾳ), alone by itself, without that which we say it partakes in..."[197]

This gives a definite indication that the largeness which originates from the very first iteration is largeness conjoined with being which is then considered τῇ διανοίᾳ or τῇ ψυχῇ 'alone by itself, without that which we say it partakes in', thus leading us to consider, in this second iteration, the largeness counterpart of the one of H1. If this is the case, then we will get an L_i from the first iteration and an L_o from the second, but the third iteration will not yield any outcome as the sameness relationship will not operate because largeness itself, the largeness counterpart of the one

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[197]143a, 6-7; τί δέ; αὐτὸ τὸ ἕν, ὃ δή φαμεν οὐσίας μετέχειν, ἐὰν αὐτὸ τῇ διανοίᾳ μόνον καθ' αὐτὸ λάβωμεν ἄνευ τούτου οὗ φαμεν μετέχειν...

of H1, does not enter into the relation of sameness. This reading whereby we generate two forms of largeness corresponding to the ones of H2 and H1 respectively is our preferred reading as it reflects the closest connection between the first two hypotheses on the one hand and the resolution of the TLA on the other.

Gill draws attention to a possible connection between this argument and an earlier admission by Socrates;

> So tell me: do you yourself distinguish in this way certain forms themselves that are separate, apart from the things that, in turn, have a share in these forms? And do you think that there is likeness itself apart from the likeness that we have, and indeed one and many and everything else you have just heard about from Zeno?[198]

She too distinguishes two concepts of largeness. She formulates this by saying; 'forms are separate not only from their participants but also from the immanent character they explain (e.g. likeness we have)'[199]. It may be possible then to read the TLA as isolating the 'largeness that we have' in the first step above, a largeness which corresponds to the largeness of H2. The argument may then isolate largeness itself, τῇ ψυχῇ, in the second step yielding a largeness which corresponds to the one of H1. The third step will not yield anything as largeness itself will not enter into the relation of sameness with anything and so the second step is the last step. This may be why two steps are actually detailed in the argument; a further indication that the process will naturally stop after those two steps.

In any case, at whatever point the consideration of the H1 counterpart of largeness is introduced the regress will stop because the relation of sameness by which the regress is generated is no longer able to operate because the one itself is not the same as another or indeed as itself. If the process is intended to stop after the first iteration then Socrates' error lay in not realising that the largeness itself, once it has been identified, does not enter into the relation of sameness with the other entities and that the repetition of the process ὡσαύτως will not be possible and so we will not get another largeness. On the other hand if, as we prefer to suggest, the process is intended to stop after the second iteration, then Socrates was correct in accepting the logic of steps I and II since the objects are large because of an existent largeness made up of, one + being + largeness (itself) and this in turn is large because of largeness itself. However, arriving at largeness itself in step II

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[198] 130b1-5; καί μοι εἰπέ, αὐτὸς σὺ οὕτω διῄρησαι ὡς λέγεις, χωρὶς μὲν εἴδη αὐτὰ ἄττα, χωρὶς δὲ τὰ τούτων αὖ μετέχοντα; καί τί σοι δοκεῖ εἶναι αὐτὴ ὁμοιότης χωρὶς ἧς ἡμεῖς ὁμοιότητος ἔχομεν, καὶ ἓν δὴ καὶ πολλὰ καὶ πάντα ὅσα νυνδὴ Ζήνωνος ἤκουες;

[199] *Plato; Parmenides*; Gill and Ryan, 1996, p 37

concludes the iterative process and Socrates error lay in accepting its continuance once largeness itself has been arrived at.

Revision of the theory of forms

We pointed out earlier that we may classify the approaches to the TLA as twofold. Meinwald regards her dual predication model as being in harmony with Plato's own intentions. She also regards this approach as reflecting a unity between the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist* and highlighting significant principles central to Plato's concept of forms. She states;

> A final remark should be made about the *pros heauto/pros ta alla* distinction. It can now be seen to coincide with the distinction between the *kath' hauto* and *pros allo* uses of 'is' in the *Sophist*. Thus, not only are the notions involved in describing the force of the distinction connected with concerns of Plato's, but the very distinction itself is drawn in two of the late dialogues. This is added confirmation for my identification, since it is desirable to recognise continuity in Plato's work.[200]

Pelletier & Zalta on the other hand are of the view that;

> One of our goals is to show that there is a logically coherent position involving two modes of predication which both (1) allows for a precise statement of the theory of Forms, and (2) removes the threat that the Third Man argument poses. Our interests will not only be textual, for a proper solution of this kind raises serious logical issues that Plato was not in a position to consider.[201]

Because they detect 'logical issues that Plato was not in a position to consider' they carry out their friendly amendment;

> Our friendly amendment to Platonic theory allows us to keep all the genuine insights that Meinwald propounded while at the same time providing us with a logically secure solution.[202]

Nevertheless in spite of their express need to strengthen Plato's logic they do feel that their concept of ideal objects is in harmony with Plato's conception of forms although not necessarily *ad idem* therewith;

> Indeed, on our friendly amendment—and perhaps in Plato's original conception—Forms are such incomplete ideal objects.[203]

Hence there is a commonality between Meinwald's approach and that of our other two authors insofar as neither party regards the TLA as highlighting any fundamental deficiency in the theory of

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[200] Meinwald; *Plato's Parmenides,* 1991, p 75
[201] Pelletier & Zalta, p 166
[202] Pelletier & Zalta, p 187
[203] Pelletier & Zalta, p 188

forms itself, a deficiency which would somehow require remediation. We have seen however that Vlastos' did indeed read the TLA as highlighting problems with the theory of forms and we should now note the further development of such an interpretation by Rickless. In order to consider Rickless' interpretation[204] of the TLA it is best to re-present our own earlier analysis and work through it, once more contrasting it with Rickless' reading.

We emphasised that it is the fact that one characteristic is <u>the same</u> among the objects, that facilitates the conclusion that 'largeness is one' to be drawn in this argument. We referred to these large things as TL (thing large) and to largeness as L and so the first part of the argument proceeds as follows;

1: $TL_1, TL_2, TL_3 \sim TL_n$ → There is one characteristic **<u>the same</u>** as we behold them all - **ὅθεν** → L_i is one

Rickless regards this step as the operation of OM, the axiom of the 'high theory of forms', stating that 'for any property F and any plurality of F things, there is a form of F-ness by virtue of partaking of which each member of the plurality is F'. He invokes OM alone, as per the formulation quoted, to account for this step and so he does not take account of the sameness, a key relation in H1 and H2 which is not formally an aspect of the OM axiom as he formulates it. He states;

> This passage makes it plain that Parmenides is thinking of a piece of reasoning that leads to **O** (*Oneness – every form is one*) from **OM** *(One-over-Many - For any property F and any plurality of F things, there is a form of F-ness by virtue of partaking of which each member of the plurality is F)*, using the large to stand for any form whatsoever. It is easy to see that **O** is the conclusion, as the following phrases indicate: "I suppose you think that each form is one on the following ground," and "and from that you conclude that the large is one." It is less easy to see that **OM** is the major premise from which **O** is supposed to follow. As Parmenides puts it, the premise reads: "whenever some number of things seem to you to be large, perhaps there seems to be some one form [*idea*], the same as you look at them all." Given the overall context, one in which we find Parmenides criticizing the higher theory of forms put forward in Socrates' speech, and given the close similarity between the idea presented in this statement and that presented in axiom **OM**, it is difficult to read the statement as capturing anything other than what is captured in **OM**, to wit: for any property F and any plurality of F things, there is a [single] form of F-ness by [virtue of partaking of] which each member of the plurality is F.[205]
> (*Words in italics are mine. They are Rickless' own definitions added from pages xii and xiii of his book*)

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[204] Rickless, pp 64 - 75

[205] Rickless, p 65 (Words in italics are mine. They are Rickless' own definitions added from pp xii and xiii of his book)

Rickless draws attention to the incompleteness of the OM formulation here, an incompleteness whereby the phrase 'by virtue of' is not made explicit. He attaches no particular significance to this omission and indeed assumes that the phrase is understood. For the purposes of our present analysis we need not attach any significance to the omission of this wording either. We also note that he reads OM as leading to the conclusion O rather than the conclusion U and so, on his interpretation, the outcome of this first step is that largeness is one but not necessarily unique. Rickless maintains that Plato is not committed to Uniqueness as a principle of the theory of forms but only to O. This distinction means that he can assert that largeness is one of the forms in which entities participate but there may be many largenesses. It is one but not unique.

Our analysis of this first step yields L_i which is 'largeness itself' as that is what it is referred to in the next sentence and this is the outcome of the first iteration of the function described above. Rickless agrees with this but he now invokes another 'fundamental theorem' of the 'high theory' namely SP; self-predication. Rickless never excises SP in the course of his revision of the theory of forms and, since SP stands, he regards largeness as large and, unlike Meinwald, he does not enter into discussion of whether it is large in the same way that large things are large. It is large by SP and it may play the part of 'that which is large' in the argument as it unfolds regardless of the issue of 'the way in which it is large' as raised by Pelletier & Zalta and Meinwald.

The argument then proceeds by adding this L_i into the items for consideration on the left hand side along with the large things and it then performs another iteration;

2: $TL_1, TL_2, TL_3 \sim TL_n, + L_i$ → **Behold them all - ὡσαύτως** → L_O **(by which all these appear large)**

The outcome of the process here is based on the assumption that there is again one characteristic that is the same in all the elements on the left hand side which now is further stated to be a largeness by which they are all large. We took it that the L_i produced in I is largeness conjoined with being, the largeness counterpart of the one that is, then we said that it is large and so there is one characteristic that is the same and so we do indeed get another largeness which we here call L_O (largeness other). Again Rickless summarises this step as governed by OM and so he disregards the role of sameness but he is content to say, by SP, that L_i is large and so he arrives, by OM, at another large which we call L_O. Rickless however has no basis for distinguishing the new L_o from the L_i generated in the previous step using the axioms and theorems on which he bases his analysis. Our analysis, by contrast, does afford a basis for distinguishing L_i from L_O; for we may suppose that L_i is

either the largeness counterpart of the one of H1 *or* the one of H2. If, on the one hand, L_i corresponds with H1, then there is no L_O as L_i does not enter into the relation of sameness whereby L_O is generated. If, on the other hand, L_i corresponds with H2 then there is an L_O because L_i does in that case enter into a relation of sameness whereby the next iteration generates L_O. But in that case we know that the repetition of the process in the following step will not have a similar outcome as the L_o corresponds to the one of H1 and therefore does not enter into the relation of sameness and so the procedure cannot generate another form of largeness.

Rickless does indeed agree that L_O and L_i are distinct based upon another 'fundamental theorem' called NSP whereby 'no form partakes of itself'. This NSP theorem corresponds in its effect to NI as formulated by Pelletier & Zalta. However, Rickless' analysis, unlike ours, can discern no qualitative distinction but only a numerical distinction between these two L's and so we can see that a regress must be inevitable. As Gill puts the matter, "The forms generated by the regress are qualitatively identical but numerically distinct, because each exists apart from its predecessor."[206]

Rickless, we may note further, does not attach any significance to the phrase τῇ ψυχῇ and indeed, taking his translation from Gill and Ryan, he renders this phrase as 'in the mind's eye' and does not comment at all upon its significance. In failing to take account of the nature of the τῇ διανοίᾳ abstraction process, he lacks a basis for establishing a qualitative distinction between the two kinds of largeness. And so he states that;

> L2 must be numerically distinct from each one of the members of P2. In particular, L2 must be numerically distinct from L1. [207]

In this extract his L1 and L2 are the largenesses which arise from the first two steps of the argument as analysed here and so they correspond to our $L_i + L_O$.

To set up the third step we add this L_O to the left hand side of the function and we repeat the process as follows:

3: $TL_1, TL_2, TL_3 \sim TL_n, + L_i + L_O$ → Behold them all - **ὡσαύτως** → **L3 - ?**

[206] Gill and Ryan; ibid, p 38.
[207] Rickless, p 68

We know that Rickless has by this stage accepted the generation of an L1 and an L2 which are indeed distinct but only numerically. The question now is – will there be an L3? On our reading if L_O is that by which L_i is large and if L_i is largeness conjoined with being (i.e. the largeness equivalent of the one of H2), then L_O is the largeness counterpart of H1, i.e. it is not conjoined with being and does not enter into the relationships of other or same. On this basis, since L_O is a counterpart of the one of H1, it does not enter into the relation of sameness and so there is no relation of sameness among the elements on the left hand side of function III above, and so there is no third largeness generated. Therefore in this case the regress does not go beyond II and there is no third large. For Rickless however the invocation of OM, SP and NSP will simply generate another L here and the process will continue without restriction thus yielding a regress which in his view is intentional, non-problematic and mandates revisions to certain principles of the theory of forms.

Rickless' conclusions

Based on his analysis Rickless concludes that largeness is one but is not unique and so theorem U which states that 'for any property F there is exactly one form of F-ness', should be excised from the theory of forms. He asserts that this is fully established in H2 where the uniqueness of the one is shown to be false and many ones are shown to be acceptable.

Rickless makes the further claim that the final clause of the TLA constitutes a third and significant step. This states that;

> ...and each of your forms will be one no longer, but an unlimited multiplicity. (132b2)

He reads this as asserting that each of the L's which appear in his version of the regress is, for its part, an unlimited multiplicity and he presents his argument accordingly. Rickless argues that each of the L's in the regress turns out to be unlimited in multiplicity as each lies within a hierarchy[208] of participation in other forms of largeness. He explains[209] that the argument of H2 will establish that in such a case any L, partaking of many (forms), will in turn be many. But, by **RP** (**Radical Purity**; no form can have contrary properties), if it is many it cannot be one but by theorem O, which states that every form is one, it must be one. So either O is excised or RP is excised and since he has already presented arguments against RP he argues that the TLA is indicating that RP must be excised. This, he states[210], will not be conclusively established until the arguments of the hypotheses themselves

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[208] Ibid, p 70-71
[209] Ibid, p 73
[210] Ibid p 75

are presented. Obviously all of this depends upon the regress actually being sustained by the argument of the dialogue and our interpretation does not regard the regress as sustained.

In any case Gill[211] does not read the132b2 clause as Rickless reads it. She regards the words 'each of your forms' as representing a generalisation of the result obtained in the case of largeness to anything else which Socrates may regard as a form. Vlastos too makes little of this phrase from Parmenides and he states that;

> It is added solely for its rhetorical effect, which is indeed dazzling: ' If only one, then infinitely many ' is so much more impressive than 'if only one, then two'...[212]

However, Rickless argues for his own reading very well but his conclusions only apply if the regress itself is sustained in the manner which he asserts. Based upon his interpretation there is a regress here and it indicates that forms are not unique and they can have contrary properties and therefore U and RP may not be included in a coherent and consistent theory of forms. The TLA is merely giving an indication of an *aporia* generated by RP and U which will be fully dealt with when the arguments of the hypotheses demonstrate that they are both false.

Evaluation of Rickless

Rickless summarises the key iterations of the argument as being based upon the application of OM on each occasion. He regards Parmenides' initial proposition to Socrates as securing his assent to OM;

> "I imagine you believe that each form is one, based upon something like this: whenever many things seem to you to be large, it probably seems that there is one characteristic that is the same, as you behold them all, and hence you believe that largeness is one."
> "What you say is true," he said.

We can see, however, that there is more to Parmenides' opening proposition to Socrates than is required merely to establish OM. In particular, the relation of sameness of characteristic need not be included in order merely to establish the simple OM proposition and so, as with Meinwald, we find no explanation for the inclusion of sameness in the argument and on Rickless' reading it can proceed just as well without it. His version of the beginning of the argument is as follows;

> From OM and the obviously true claim that there is a plurality P of large things, it follows that there is a form of largeness (call it 'the large') that is 'over' each member of P in the sense of being that by virtue of partaking of which each member of P is large. Then, as we

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[211] Gill and Ryan, ibid, p 38

[212] Plato's "Third Man" Argument (PARM. 132A1-B2): *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 77 (Oct., 1969), pp. 289-301, p 298

> have just seen, from the fact that the large is one over many, it follows directly that the large is one. [213]

He also notes, as we have seen, that 'participation' is omitted from Parmenides' actual proposition and accordingly he contends that it is 'simply taken for granted' and this may well be the case. However, in analysing the TLA by placing it in the context of the theory of forms summarisations which he has evolved, Rickless must, in my opinion, do far more work to establish that he is, in truth, analysing the actual argument which occurs in this part of the dialogue and not, in fact, analysing a version which has undergone some alteration arising from his own framework of analysis. The fact that he reads participation back into the above extract may indeed be defensible but to read sameness out of the extract is surely less safe. Sameness is a key concept in H1 and H2 and, once it occurs here and is seen to recur so centrally in the hypotheses, we must surely pay careful attention to its significance. Treating sameness as we have done above and recognising that the hypotheses indicate when this relation operates and when it does not is, we would suggest, more faithful to the structure of the actual dialogue itself and its stated intentions than the particular theory of forms based interpretation employed by Rickless.

So we may summarise our concerns about Rickless' reading firstly by stating, as above, that the exclusion of sameness from the analysis of the argument distorts the text of the argument itself and omits a connection forward to a key relationship which is analysed in H1 and H2. The analysis within H1 and H2 as to when the relationship of sameness operates and when it does not affords, as we have shown, a basis on which we may prevent the regress of the TLA because any counterpart of the one of H1, does not enter into such a relationship and so the iterations of the TLA cannot continue to generate new forms once we encounter a form of this sort. We have also seen that the failure to consider the τῇ ψυχῇ phrase and its connection with τῇ διανοίᾳ phrase in H2 excludes consideration of the H2 abstraction step from the context of the TLA. Accordingly, he has no basis for making any qualitative distinction between the first largeness generated by the argument and any subsequent largeness and so the regress becomes inevitable. Furthermore, because Rickless believes that "Parmenides employs the axioms and theorems of the higher theory as background assumptions in the Deductions (of the second part of the dialogue)..."[214] he is not inclined to regard the second part of the dialogue as resolving *aporiai* of the first part. For him the background to the hypotheses is the theory of forms and not the first part of the dialogue. So Rickless reads the entire dialogue as involving a reassessment and revision of key principles of the theory of forms. In applying this approach to the TLA we have seen that he ignores key textual elements which effectively disappear

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[213] Ibid, p 66

[214] Rickless, p, 108 (bracketed text mine)

when subsumed into his analytical presentation of the material of the dialogue just as we have seen with the concept of sameness. In applying this approach to the entire argument of H1 he reads it as a reductio and therefore concludes that its primary purpose is to excise the concept of radical purity (**RP** – no form can have contrary properties) from the theory of forms. Accordingly, he has no basis for regarding the one of H1 as a concept which is coherent and is capable of being applied, as we have shown, in order to resolve and clarify issues which arise in philosophical arguments and *aporiai* such as the TLA.

The resolution of the TLA through forms

As the aporetic exchange between Socrates and Parmenides in the first part of the dialogue draws to a conclusion and the TLA and numerous other perplexing challenges to Socrates' understanding of forms have been presented, Parmenides says to Socrates;

> ...the forms must present such difficulties and many more besides, if there are these characteristics of the things that are and we delimit each form as something itself. The result is that whoever hears us is perplexed and contends that there are no forms, or even if in fact there are, they must necessarily be unknowable to humankind...[215]

We can see from this extract that Parmenides views the *aporiai* which have arisen as threatening our ability to assert the existence and defend the knowability of forms. We need not necessarily accept that the entire dialogue is concerned with forms but we can certainly see from the above extract that proper understanding of their nature is of great significance, and that Socrates' inability to understand their nature is presented as giving rise to the *aporiai* including that of the TLA. As he prepares to present the exercise which will be exemplified by the eight hypotheses, Parmenides again refers to forms as the key concept for consideration. Referring back to Socrates' conversation with Zeno he says;

> I was pleased when you said to him that you would not allow the exposition to consider visible objects and their realm, but those objects that can be apprehended primarily by reason and that are regarded as forms.[216]

Again we have the emphasis upon the consideration of forms within the context of resolving the *aporiai* of the first part and again we have the reference to the fact that forms are not appreciated by the senses when he says that they are apprehended primarily by reason (μάλιστά τις ἂν λόγῳ λάβοι). Accordingly, we can see the basis for Rickless assertion that "Parmenides employs the

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[215] 133e8-134a5; ταῦτα μέντοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἔφη ὁ Παρμενίδης, καὶ ἔτι ἄλλα πρὸς τούτοις πάνυ πολλὰ ἀναγκαῖον ἔχειν τὰ εἴδη, εἰ εἰσὶν αὖται αἱ ἰδέαι τῶν ὄντων καὶ ὁριεῖταί τις αὐτό τι ἕκαστον εἶδος: ὥστε ἀπορεῖν τε τὸν ἀκούοντα καὶ ἀμφισβητεῖν ὡς οὔτε ἔστι ταῦτα, εἴ τε ὅτι μάλιστα εἴη, πολλὴ ἀνάγκη αὐτὰ εἶναι τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει ἄγνωστα,
[216] 135e1-4: σου καὶ πρὸς τοῦτον ἡγάσθην εἰπόντος, ὅτι οὐκ εἴας ἐν τοῖς ὁρωμένοις οὐδὲ περὶ ταῦτα τὴν πλάνην ἐπισκοπεῖν, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἐκεῖνα ἃ μάλιστά τις ἂν λόγῳ λάβοι καὶ εἴδη ἂν ἡγήσαιτο εἶναι.

axioms and theorems of the higher theory (of forms) as background assumptions in the Deductions (of the second part of the dialogue)..."[217] And yet we have also seen that Rickless does not make any qualitative distinction between multiple forms of largeness that arise in the TLA nor does he make the distinction between the one of the first hypothesis and that of the second hypothesis which we have used as the basis of our resolution of the TLA.

On a broad reading of Pelletier & Zalta's 'friendly amendment' to Plato's theory of forms we can see that they do indeed have a basis for distinguishing the many large objects in the TLA from the form of largeness on the grounds that the objects exemplify but do not encode largeness[218]. In other words, the objects are large because of something else, namely, the form of largeness, and accordingly they are not large because of any aspect of their own nature, they are large because of something else. Our two authors categorise these large objects as real objects on that basis but they categorise the largeness which causes them to be large as an ideal object. They say that the objects (real objects) 'exemplify' properties while the forms (ideal objects) 'encode' the properties. They take two particular examples of forms;

> The first example could be used to develop a 'thin' conception of Plato's Forms—the nature of such entities is constituted by a *single* property. However, this object would not give a satisfactory explanation of the fact that Forms have a more complex nature. For example, The Form of Justice contains virtue as part of its nature. So, in what follows, we hope to show that ideal objects analogous to the second example have many of the features that Plato attributed to Forms. Using this example as a guide, here is a general definition of what it is to be a Form of *G* (for any property *G*): *x* is a Form of *G* iff *x* is an ideal object that encodes all and only the properties entailed by *G*.[219]

If we read their 'second example' as corresponding to the largeness of the second hypothesis we do indeed find quite a good correspondence between the above reading of forms and our understanding of what is happening in the transition from the first to the second hypothesis. The largeness corresponding to the one of the second hypothesis has a number of characteristics; it is a whole with parts, it contains being and it therefore *is*, it is characterised as 'different' and we also find that it enters into other relations too. The one of the first hypothesis, on the other hand, is just one, exhibits no other characteristics whatsoever and enters into no relations whatsoever not even with itself. And so we may argue that this one of H1 corresponds to their thin conception of forms whose nature is constituted by a single property. Such ideal objects as this are problematic as we saw in our analysis of the first hypothesis and its self-refuting conclusions. Yet we have argued that

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[217] Rickless, p, 108 (bracketed text mine)
[218] Pelletier & Zalta, pp 175-177
[219] Pelletier & Zalta, p 177

such ideal objects are required for a rationalisation of the concept of forms presented by Plato in the *Parmenides* and the resolution of the TLA via forms of this type.

Although Pelletier & Zalta develop a model for forms which may be aligned to the analysis in the first and second hypotheses of the *Parmenides,* they do not make use of the distinction between these two types of forms in resolving the problematic regress of the TLA. Instead they resort to the concept of self-participation and the associated falsification of non-identity to resolve the TLA but, as we have seen, self-participation is not a concept which is employed by Plato in this dialogue and indeed it is specifically ruled out by the argument in H2 that participation requires non-identity.

> So let's begin again. If one is, could it possibly be and not partake of being?
> It could not.
> In that case there would also be the being of the one, which is not the same as the one, or else it could not be the being of the one, nor could it, the one, partake of that...[220]

By this argument the one could not partake of being unless it were other than (non-identical to) being. Therefore partaking (participation) requires non-identity. Hence, as we have seen, the key concept of self-participation which Pelletier & Zalta invoke to resolve the TLA is not supported by the text of the dialogue itself. However, we will see below that their distinction between two kinds of forms may well afford a basis for resolving the TLA regress, but this is a basis which they do not actually explore.

We have shown that forms which correspond in nature to the one of H1 will cause the regress of the TLA to stop because forms of that nature do not enter into any relations and so the relation of sameness which is critical to developing the regress cannot operate and therefore cannot generate an unlimited number of forms. As such our approach uses the actual treatment of forms within the dialogue itself in order to resolve the TLA. This contrasts with the resolution of the TLA developed by Pelletier & Zalta which, despite their development of a conception of forms which allows them to be qualitatively distinct, relies upon self-participation and the falsification of non-identity for a resolution of the TLA and not upon their conception of forms. Accordingly, they present a solution which lacks textual support from the dialogue itself and they make little use of their promising model of forms in the resolution of the TLA. We argue, therefore, that our solution to the TLA is closer to the overall text of the dialogue and its stated intentions than is the Pelletier & Zalta solution.

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[220] 142b5-c1: ὅρα δὴ ἐξ ἀρχῆς. ἓν εἰ ἔστιν, ἆρα οἷόν τε αὐτὸ εἶναι μέν, οὐσίας δὲ μὴ μετέχειν;//
οὐχ οἷόν τε.//οὐκοῦν καὶ ἡ οὐσία τοῦ ἑνὸς εἴη ἂν οὐ ταὐτὸν οὖσα τῷ ἑνί: οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐκείνη ἦν ἐκείνου οὐσία, οὐδ' ἂν ἐκεῖνο, τὸ ἕν, ἐκείνης μετεῖχεν...

Meinwald's dual predication approach allows her to make a distinction between forms and the objects which partake of them. However, unlike Pelletier & Zalta and unlike our interpretation based upon H1 and H2, she has no basis for setting out a model based upon ideal objects whereby she can distinguish between types of forms. Her distinction between modes of predication aligns with the text of the dialogue insofar as self-predication corresponds to statements about the nature of things in themselves. Accordingly, largeness, unlike the large objects, is large, but not because of something other than itself, rather it is large on account of its own nature, i.e. *pros heauto*. This fact does indeed allow her to end the regress of the TLA but the question is whether it is done in the manner intended by Plato.

We have already noted a number of issues with Meinwald's approach to the resolution of the TLA. Firstly, on her own admission Plato does not make frequent and evident use of the two modes of predication in a manner which would provide significant textual support for her reading. Secondly, she makes no use of the analysis within the hypotheses themselves in order to resolve the TLA nor does she claim that this was Plato's intention. Accordingly, she offers no real basis for understanding the purpose served by the very extensive analysis within the hypotheses apart from treating it as a very elaborate exercise in the employment of the dual predication approach. Thirdly, she attaches no significance to the role of sameness in the development of the TLA and makes nothing of the fact that this relation recurs in H1 and H2. This occurrence of the relation of sameness in the first and second hypotheses opens up the question of when this relation operates and when it does not. We have shown that once we find circumstances where sameness does not operate the development of a regress can be undermined. Fourthly, if we turn to the text of the TLA itself we find that she offers no possible explanation as to why three forms of largeness are generated in the process of developing the argument. Accepting the fact that there is of course a degree of arbitrariness in relation to the number of iterations taken in establishing the regress, our interpretation does nevertheless offer a plausible explanation as to why the argument concludes having generated three forms of largeness. Finally, as we turn to consider forms themselves in this section, we can see that Meinwald's predication based reading in considering a linguistic phenomenon, does not give adequate significance to the underlying ontology. As Pelletier & Zalta point out;

> If there are two modes of predication, then a Platonist could plausibly argue that there are two corresponding kinds of participation, since modes of predication are, in some sense, the linguistic mirror of participation. As noted in §2, Meinwald fails to consider this consequence of distinguishing modes of predication.[221]

[221] Pelletier & Zalta, ibid, p 171.

In consequence of this failure Meinwald, as we have said, makes little use of the arguments of the hypotheses in resolving the TLA and this is the major distinction between our approach and hers. We use the distinctions between forms as established in the hypotheses to resolve the TLA whereas Meinwald pays little attention to the hypotheses and resolves the TLA through predication based considerations alone.

Rickless' analysis of the TLA and of the general treatment of forms within the entire dialogue does not afford him any basis for distinguishing between different kinds of forms or indeed between forms and manifest properties. Accordingly, he departs from his favoured Gill & Ryan translation which he uses throughout the book and translates the word *idea* at 132a as 'form' in the sentence which reads;

> ...whenever some number of things seem to you to be large, perhaps there seems to be some one form [*idea*], the same as you look at them all, and from that you conclude that the large is one.[222] *(The controversial word is in brackets)*

Rickless justifies this in his footnote as follows;

> Gill and Ryan translate *idea* here as 'character.' In general, as Gill and Ryan acknowledge, Plato uses the terms *eidos* and *idea* interchangeably to refer to forms (1996, 129 n. 8). But here, they say, the word *idea* refers not to the form, largeness itself, but to "the common [immanent] character Socrates takes various things to have, if they all seem to be large (cf. 'the likeness we have,' contrasted with 'likeness itself,' at 130b)" (1996, 133 n. 10). I don't myself believe that Plato countenances any such immanent characters, at least not when such characters are thought of as distinct from the forms to which they are supposed to correspond.[223]

In opting for this translation and its associated interpretation of the dialogue Rickless characterises his approach to forms in general, an approach whereby he wishes to regard them as capable of being numerically distinct but not qualitatively so. Although he refers above to the earlier 130b extract he does not afford it the emphasis given by Gill as referred to previously. The extract as quoted earlier reads;

> So tell me: do you yourself distinguish in this way certain forms themselves that are separate, apart from the things that, in turn, have a share in these forms? And do you think

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[222] 132a2-4; ὅταν πόλλ' ἄττα μεγάλα σοι δόξῃ εἶναι, μία τις ἴσως δοκεῖ ἰδέα ἡ αὐτὴ εἶναι ἐπὶ πάντα ἰδόντι, ὅθεν ἓν τὸ μέγα ἡγῇ εἶναι.

[223] Rickless, p 65, n5

> that there is likeness itself apart from the likeness that we have, and indeed one and many and everything else you have just heard about from Zeno?[224]

Gill distinguishes two concepts of largeness here. She formulates this by saying; "forms are separate not only from their participants but also from the immanent character they explain (e.g. likeness we have)"[225]. In choosing not to consider the distinction made at this point (130b) and in translating *idea* as form at 132a3, Rickless closes off any possibility of ending the regress by making a qualitative distinction between the immanent property and the form itself or between the actual forms of largeness that are generated in the TLA regress. We may indeed accept his point that there is no need to regard 'the likeness that we have' as an immanent character in the way that Gill regards it. However, he surely owes us some explanation as to what distinction is being made in the above extract between 'the likeness we have', on the one hand and 'likeness itself' on the other and the significance of the stated extension of this distinction to the one and the many.

He does invoke the work of Dancy[226] in support of his refusal to entertain a distinction here. Dancy's contention is based, however, upon the consideration of a passage from the *Phaedo* where a similar phraseology occurs as 'the tallness in us' at 102d7 is contrasted with 'the tallness itself' at 102d6 and 'the opposite itself in us' is contrasted with 'the opposite itself in nature' at 103b5. He maintains that "...Socrates does not tell us that there is a third layer of entities between the Forms and mundane objects; indeed what he says leaves no room for such a layer."[227] Rickless invokes the argument used by Dancy in the case of the *Phaedo* to justify reading the *Parmenides* 130b1-5 extract just quoted as making no distinction between 'the likeness we have' and 'likeness itself'. Given that Dancy does not analyse the *Parmenides* at all in this 2004 book and places his assertions about the *Phaedo* firmly within the context of that dialogue alone without any attempt to generalise beyond that, it is surely unsafe for Rickless to place much reliance upon this particular argument by Dancy. The *Parmenides* distinction at 130b is much more explicit in making its contrast between the two kinds of likenesses than is the *Phaedo* in making a distinction between the two kind of tallness. In the latter case Dancy argues persuasively that no distinction is intended at all, but this hardly constitutes a basis whereby Rickless can claim that there is such a distinction in the *Parmenides*.

We should also note that even if we decide not to read the 130b extract as making a distinction which anticipates the later contrast between the one of H1 and the one of H2, we have already

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[224] 130b1-5; καί μοι εἰπέ, αὐτὸς σὺ οὕτω διῄρησαι ὡς λέγεις, χωρὶς μὲν εἴδη αὐτὰ ἄττα, χωρὶς δὲ τὰ τούτων αὖ μετέχοντα; καί τί σοι δοκεῖ εἶναι αὐτὴ ὁμοιότης χωρὶς ἧς ἡμεῖς ὁμοιότητος ἔχομεν, καὶ ἓν δὴ καὶ πολλὰ καὶ πάντα ὅσα νυνδὴ Ζήνωνος ἤκουες;

[225] Gill and Ryan; *Plato; Parmenides*, 1996, p 37

[226] Dancy, R.M., 2004. *Plato's Introduction of Forms,* Cambridge University Press. pp 308-310

[227] Dancy, ibid, p 310

offered an argument in our previous chapter in favour of the qualitative distinction between these two ones. Accordingly, we have argued that the hypotheses establish a qualitative distinction between forms, a distinction which Rickless explicitly denies. We may see this from Rickless' reading of H2 in which, as we have noted, Parmenides proves firstly that the existent one is unlimited in multiplicity and then that the one itself is unlimited in multiplicity. Rickless does not accept a distinction between these two ones but he does of course recognise that the proof of the multiplicity of the one occurs twice in H2. His explanation for this repetition is as follows;

> ***D2A5*** *(143c1–144e7)* is one of the few places in the *Parmenides* where Parmenides insists on arguing for a result he takes himself to have already established. The conclusion of D2A5 ("if the one is, then the one is infinitely many") is identical to the conclusion of ***D2A3*** *(142d9–143a3)*. What explains the redundancy? The most likely hypothesis is that Plato is showing off by providing an argument that, besides leading him to a previously derived conclusion, also brings out his own construction of the number series in a way that reveals the set of numbers to be infinite.[228] *(Stephanus numbers added for clarity. The designations* ***D2A3*** *and* ***D2A3*** *are Rickless' way of identifying the relevant sections of the hypotheses.)*

There is of course no reason to believe that Plato was not 'showing off' but surely the more plausible reading, which also assists in the resolution of the TLA, is that H2 does indeed refer to two ones which are capable of being distinguished qualitatively and that both of these are shown in separate arguments to be unlimited in multiplicity.[229]

If we now return to our discussion of the earlier 130b extract from part one we can see that once we extend the distinction about likeness to the one we arrive at a wording involving two ones which, mirroring the formulations used for likeness, read as follows: 'the one that we have' and 'the one itself'. This distinction between the two ones is obviously entirely reminiscent of the distinction between the one of the second hypothesis (corresponding to 'the one among us') and the one of the first hypothesis (corresponding to 'the one itself'). Hence we are faced with good textual evidence that this early 130b reference is anticipating the later concept of two ones which we have generalised as two kinds of forms and which Pelletier & Zalta capture as their first and second

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[228] Rickless, ibid, p 148

[229] Meinwald (p 112) does indeed acknowledge that there are two proofs here reflecting "a contrast between *auto to hen* and *to hen on* (however that is to be drawn)". Her phrase "however that is to be drawn" indicates that although Meinwald is aware of these two ones she cannot incorporate the distinction into her analysis of the dialogue. She claims on pp 108 and 109 that there are textual issues associated with distinguishing these two ones in this section of H2 but she does not say what the textual issues are nor are such issues evident from the variants listed in Burnet's edition of the Oxford Greek text. We have already discussed this issue and Scolnicov's comments thereon in our previous chapter when we considered the relationship between the one of H1 and the one of H2.

examples, instances which are equivalent to their 'thin' and 'more complex' forms respectively. Rickless' interpretation of the dialogue does not facilitate the recognition of these distinctions.

Conclusion

This most famous *aporia* in the first part of *Parmenides*, the so-called 'third-large argument' (an argument that became even more famous and notorious when, in Aristotle's hands, it turned into 'the third man argument'), presents a formidable problem that, unless Plato has the resources to resolve it, requires, on all accounts, major revisions, if not a wholesale jettisoning, of the theory of forms. We have argued, however (in this and the previous chapter), that Plato does indeed have these resources and that he develops and presents them in the first and second hypotheses of the second part of the dialogue. If our argument is successful, it establishes precisely how, on a vital issue, the first and second part of this great dialogue are related: the first part articulates a number of *aporiai* about the theory of forms; the second part develops materials sufficient (though not necessary) for resolving them and, thus, salvaging the theory. We have thus, in effect, completed the major task of our project by making such a case and we have also positioned our own account of the third-large argument against some major interpretations in more recent literature. Obviously, our account is at odds with those (like Vlastos) who argue that the TLA necessitates major revisions in, if not wholesale jettisoning, of the theory of forms. But it is also at odds with those (like Meinwald and Pelletier & Zalta) who, although they share our view that this *aporia* can be answered and the theory of forms salvaged, do not show where, in this dialogue, Plato gives us the materials for doing so: in Meinwalds's case the materials for the resolution are not present in the second part of the dialogue; in Pelletier & Zalta's case, materials are present that are incompatible with their reading.

Chapter Four
Plotinus and the One – was it the wrong one?

Introduction

Having completed our first three chapters we have seen that the first part of the *Parmenides* presents a series of issues in relation to the proper understanding of forms as envisaged by Socrates. We have also seen that Parmenides responds to these issues in relation to forms by introducing the very complex second part of the dialogue with its eight intricate arguments, called hypotheses, whose relationship to the opening *aporiai* is not immediately obvious. We have given an explanation of the puzzling nature of the first of these eight hypotheses and its relationship to the second and have argued that this conjunction presents us with a particular understanding of unity or the one which, when generalised, can help us refine our understanding of forms. This refined understanding of forms on the basis of the one of the first hypothesis, taken in conjunction with its progression into the second hypothesis, has enabled us to revisit one of the *aporiai* of the first part of the dialogue and resolve a problematic regress which is presented there. Accordingly, we have been able to establish a connection between the arguments of the eight hypotheses and the *aporiai* of the first part of the dialogue insofar as those aporetic arguments can be developed to a satisfactory resolution once they are supplemented by the arguments and conclusions of the later hypotheses. We have also positioned our own reading with respect to some contemporary commentators and have defended our reading on the basis that it is more closely aligned with the actual text of the dialogue itself and its associated structure and interrelation. Accordingly, we have, at this stage, completed the task we set ourselves at the outset whereby we undertook to establish a case for the argumentative unity of the dialogue in the sense described above.

At this stage in our consideration of the *Parmenides* we certainly have a clear view of the difficulties which this dialogue presents and we have some sense of a possible direction in which their resolution may lie. Among the key issues that merit further discussion are the status of the one of the first hypothesis and the relationship between the one and being. Since the one of the first hypothesis is a one that does not partake of being any discussion of the relation between one and being must, in the process, also elucidate the nature of the one that does not partake of being. So we have an issue here which may enable us to conclude this analysis of the *Parmenides* with some worthwhile reflections. The question of the relationship between the one and being and the priority or lack of priority associated therewith is a consideration which arises inevitably from our overall discussion and interpretation of the *Parmenides* and although our basic objective in analysing the dialogue has now been accomplished in the last two chapters it would add to the

comprehensiveness of our work here if we were to explore this prioritisation issue further and consider some arguments associated therewith.

We will find that Aristotle took a particular stance on the relation of the one with being that puts him at variance with our reading of the *Parmenides* and with a very influential reading of the dialogue that was adopted in late antiquity by Plotinus. Therefore, since this whole matter involves a controversy which goes back to Aristotle and the early Academy and crystallises much later in the ontological assertions of Plotinus, we are presented with two further opportunities. In the first place, we can review these well documented arguments of Plotinus on the nature of the one and the relationship between the one and being, and assess the degree to which they are in harmony with what is contained in the *Parmenides* or may be deduced therefrom. Thus we will be able to use the arguments of Plotinus to explore this issue of the relation of the one to being and the extent to which any conclusions on this matter are a natural outcome of a particular reading of this dialogue. Secondly, we will be in a position, on account of our consideration of the status and priority of the one, to reassess Plotinus' hugely influential assertion of the supremacy of the one, within the context of our own reading of the *Parmenides,* and consider whether this is a mere innovation on his part, or a total misreading of this dialogue, or a justifiable and defensible interpretation of Plato's work. In assessing the latter option we will need to take some additional passages from the *Parmenides* into consideration.

The ancient world

We have shown that the distinctness of the one from being is central to the first two hypotheses of the *Parmenides* and that the crucial abstraction step in the second hypothesis relies upon the fact that these two are not the same. However, we have not explored any other aspects of the relationship between one and being apart from showing that the first and second hypotheses argue for their distinctness and rely upon this conclusion for the applicability of these hypotheses to the *aporiai* of the first part of the dialogue. This leaves us with the question of their relative priority, a concept best understood here in the sense expressed by Aristotle and attributed by him to Plato:

> Some things, then, are called prior and posterior in this [latter] sense; but others in virtue of their nature and substance, namely all things which can exist apart from other things, whereas other things cannot exist without them. This distinction was used by Plato.[230]

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[230] *Metaphysics*, 1019a, 1-4; τὰ μὲν δὴ οὕτω λέγεται πρότερα καὶ ὕστερα, τὰ δὲ κατὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐσίαν, ὅσα ἐνδέχεται εἶναι ἄνευ ἄλλων, ἐκεῖνα δὲ ἄνευ ἐκείνων μή· ᾗ διαιρέσει ἐχρήσατο Πλάτων. O'Meara in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus,* pages 68-72 discusses priority in Plotinus in the context of this Aristotle passage.

So, in this context, the question is whether the one depends upon being or being depends upon the one or whether their distinctness involves no relative priority. There was a controversy over these issues in the ancient world, with Aristotle asserting that if there is a distinction between one and being it is based upon different senses of the same concept and certainly does not involve any relative priority. In this he was, it seems, opposed by Plato's successor Speusippus and by Platonists who held that the one and being were distinct and, perhaps, that the one had a priority over being in the sense described above. And Plotinus, six hundred years after Speusippus, famously asserted the priority of the one over being and installed the one as the supreme first principle in his ontological scheme. We have defended a reading of the *Parmenides* whereby Plato asserts such a distinction in the opening of the second hypothesis. However, Cornford makes an interesting suggestion in his analysis of the ending of the first hypothesis when he refers to the so-called 'gymnastic' that constitutes the eight hypotheses of the *Parmenides* and suggests;

> Plato could not explain everything at once... The gymnastic is designed for the students of the Academy. They are expected to compare the arguments of each hypothesis with those of the others and to find out for themselves the distinctions that must be drawn – in fact to go through the very process attempted in the present commentary.[231]

Cornford, of course, does not envisage that the students would apply the hypotheses of part two to the *aporiai* of part one, as he does not accept that there is any such direct connection. However, his suggestion as to how this dialogue should be approached is surely plausible and may well correspond with some of the activity of the ancient Academy. This might cause us to wonder whether the ancient world was in a better position to understand the *Parmenides* than we are. They were closer to its author and some of them, Aristotle included, were Plato's students in the Academy so we might expect that they had an insider's knowledge. However, this expectation will prove to be without foundation; and yet an exploration of the ancient sources will prove fruitful just the same, especially in the case of the ancient understanding of the one of the first hypothesis, which turns out to have been just as challenging for Plato's successors as for modern commentators.

Plato's immediate successor was his own nephew Speusippus who is reported[232] to have produced an extensive written corpus of which 'barely a line survives'. For evidence of his treatment of the One, our closest source is Aristotle who never quotes him directly and is quite opposed to the views of Speusippus on this topic. Nevertheless, by evaluating the relevant pejorative references in Aristotle, Allen concludes that;

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[231] Cornford: *Plato and Parmenides*, (1939), p 130

[232] For discussion see Dillon; *The Heirs of Plato*, OUP 2003, p 34. Also p 39 for his report that, 'barely a line of it survives'.

> Speusippus... may indeed have supposed that there is a One beyond Being and that it is a first principle or *arche*. If this is so the foundations of Neo-Platonism lie deeper than the Hermetists or Philo or Albinus and the Middle Academy or Nicomachus and the Neopythagoreans: they lie in the Early Academy, in the first generation of Platonic epigony.[233]

Dillon is in broad agreement with this claim and he uses further references in much later authors to develop a more detailed understanding of Speusippus' views. Citing a possible reference to Speusippus in Iamblichus and an explicit reference to Speusippus in Proclus' commentary on the *Parmenides,* he concludes that;

> In the passage [perhaps from Speusippus] which he [Proclus] quotes, what we observe is that "the ancients" first describe the One "in itself" as being very much the One of the First Hypothesis. When it becomes apparent that from such a One nothing else whatever can arise, they then adduce another entity with all the opposite characteristics, and from the action of the One on that they derive the essential structure of the universe. The disturbing, but it seems to me unavoidable, conclusion that one must draw from this is that Speusippus not only adopted a "metaphysical" interpretation of (at least) the first and second hypotheses of the *Parmenides*, but took the subject of the second to be the Indefinite Dyad - or rather, to be a portrayal of the interaction of the One with the Dyad to generate, first, Number, and ultimately the whole ordered universe.[234]

So we have possible evidence as to how Plato's immediate successor may have read the first and second hypotheses of the *Parmenides* and this certainly does not involve discarding the one of H1 as the mere subject of a reductio. In our own analysis we have had recourse to the one of H1 to resolve the *aporia* generated by the TLA, but there is evidence that Speusippus may have gone further and installed the one of H1 as a fundamental element in an ontology to which he was committed, and probably regarded Plato himself as committed. He also seems to invoke the one of H2 in the further development of that ontology, a step that is effectively forced upon him by the fact that he makes the one of H1 his first principle. Having taken such a step, his ontology involves a first principle that does not enter into any relations whatsoever and, as such, nothing can ever arise from it, for it would then have a relationship with whatever had arisen. So he does need something else to

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[233] Allen, *Plato's Parmenides,* Yale 1997, p 221.

[234] Dillon: *Speusippus and the Ontological Interpretation of the Parmenides*, Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium Platonicum Pragense, OIKOYMENE 2005, p 300.
Dillon, in this article, also points out the perils of assuming that we understand Speusippus' philosophy because we have the testimony of one of his detractors, Aristotle: "One of the notorious 'facts' about Speusippus' metaphysics derived from the tendentious testimony of Aristotle is that he abandoned the Platonic forms (or rather, form-numbers) in favour of mathematical numbers, whereas Xenocrates conflated mathematical numbers with form-numbers: but I would maintain that these Aristotelian testimonies have to be taken with many a grain of salt, as constituting, at the least, gross oversimplifications of the positions of both Speusippus and Xenocrates." Dillon, Ibid, pp 296/7.

account for multiplicity, and according to Dillon's account of the matter, he invokes the one of H2 for this purpose. This may well have been precisely what Speusippus did and he may well have relied upon the *Parmenides* to support his ontology, but how did he justify this interpretation of the dialogue? Perhaps he derived it from Plato himself through their interaction in the Academy, but what arguments were used to support such a set of conclusions and are they a defensible reading of the *Parmenides*?

We know that Aristotle had a problem with the very basis of such ontology and is driven to assert, perhaps contra Speusippus or the *Parmenides* or both, that one and being are the same and so there cannot be a one that is distinct from being, "...a One beyond Being and that it is a first principle or arche.";

> Now if Being and Unity are the same, *i.e.* a single nature, in the sense that they are associated as principle and cause are and not as being denoted by the same definition (although it makes no difference but rather helps our argument if we understand them in the same sense), since "one man" and "man" and "existent man" and "man" are the same thing, *i.e.* the duplication in the statement "he is a man and an *existent* man" gives no fresh meaning - clearly the concepts of humanity and existence are not dissociated in respect of either coming to be or ceasing to be, and similarly in the case of the term "one", so that obviously the additional term in these phrases has the same significance, and Unity is nothing distinct from Being; and further if the substance of each thing is one in no accidental sense and similarly is, of its very nature, something which is...[235]

It is clear that certain people are making a distinction between one and being, a distinction which Aristotle does not wish to make[236]. Evidence from elsewhere in the *Metaphysics* indicates that Aristotle may be concerned here about views put forward by the Platonists and, from what we have heard about his own contemporary, Speusippus, the immediate successor of Plato may well have been the prime target of Aristotle's counterargument above. In the next generation the threat to Aristotle's position receded somewhat since Xenocrates, the next head of the Academy, seems not to have followed Speusippus in this respect. Hence Dillon says:

> It is notable, in connection with the nature of the first principle, that Xenocrates (whether tacitly or otherwise-we have no means of knowing) has rejected the radical position of Speusippus, and identified his Monad firmly as an Intellect *(nous).* Whether this is in

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[235] Aristotle, *Metaphysics.* IV, 2, 1003 b 22-33; transl. H. Tredennick. (using the term 'Unity' where THE ONE' would more exactly reflect the Greek); εἰ δὴ τὸ ὂν καὶ τὸ ἓν ταὐτὸν καὶ μία φύσις τῷ ἀκολουθεῖν ἀλλήλοις ὥσπερ ἀρχὴ καὶ αἴτιον, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς ἑνὶ λόγῳ δηλούμενα [διαφέρει δὲ οὐθὲν οὐδ' ἂν ὁμοίως ὑπολάβωμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸ ἔργου μᾶλλον]· ταὐτὸ γὰρ εἷς ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ὢν ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ οὐχ ἕτερόν τι δηλοῖ κατὰ τὴν λέξιν ἐπαναδιπλούμενον τὸ εἷς ἄνθρωπος καὶ εἷς ὢν ἄνθρωπος [δῆλον δ' ὅτι οὐ χωρίζεται οὔτ' ἐπὶ γενέσεως οὔτ' ἐπὶ φθορᾶς], ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἑνός, ὥστε φανερὸν ὅτι ἡ πρόσθεσις ἐν τούτοις ταὐτὸ δηλοῖ, καὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον τὸ ἓν παρὰ τὸ ὄν, ἕτι δ' ἡ ἑκάστου οὐσία ἕν ἐστιν οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὅπερ ὄν τι·

[236] See also *Metaphysics*. III, 4, x, 1001a, 18-23 and also 100b1 "...all things are one i.e. Being" quoting Parmenides.

> response to criticisms by Aristotle, or simply the result of his own analysis of the Platonic data, we have again no means of knowing, but the result is that, for later Platonism, there is little difference observable between the first principle of Platonism and that of Aristotle as set out in *Metaphysics* Λ-the 'Unmoved Mover', an Intellect thinking itself.[237]

Xenocrates is said to have known Plato personally and to have travelled with him to Sicily as did Speusippus. Aristotle spent some twenty years at the Academy. Yet, in spite of these close associations with the author of the *Parmenides* and, presumably, an awareness of that dialogue, we find significantly differing views on the nature of the one and the eventual prevalence of a view of "...a transcendent world in which mind dominates and of which Oneness, however important, is only an aspect, next to the sensible world."[238]

If we wish to evaluate the arguments on either side of this one/being debate we do of course have the argument from Aristotle against affording such a distinct and special status to the one but we do not have Speusippus' own argument in favour of such ontology. Dillon refers to Speusippus' "doctrine of the first principle" as "...the most original and ultimately the most influential..." of his views but he also comments that it "...did not come into its own again (and even then on rather different premises) until the time of Plotinus."[239] If, as seems likely, Speusippus derived this original and influential view from an ontological reading of the *Parmenides* then we are left with the question of the influences upon Plotinus. If he was asserting an ontological reading of this dialogue, was he following in a tradition which favoured such a reading? If he was interpreting the dialogue along such lines, what arguments did he provide to support such a reading? We are interested in these arguments because they are not available to us in the case of Speusippus, but more importantly, because they concern the relationship of distinction and priority of one with respect to being, a relationship we wish to explore further within the context of the *Parmenides* and our interpretation thereof.

Plotinus' Sources

Plotinus wrote his philosophical works in Rome nearly six hundred years after the death of Speusippus. As a Greek speaker from Egypt he was very familiar with the Platonic corpus but there is no evidence whatsoever that he had encountered the works of Speusippus and they are never mentioned either by the man himself or his biographer Porphyry. Yet, as Dillon points out, Plotinus presents us with a doctrine of the one that is very reminiscent of the first principle said to have been enunciated by Speusippus. Because Plotinus is commonly referred to as the founder of neo-

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[237] Dillon 2003, p 107

[238] P.A.Meijer, *Plotinus on the Good or the One (Enneads VI, 9): An Analytical Commentary*, (Amsterdam Classical Monographs, 1.) J. C. Gieben, 1992. P 11 - speaking of Xenocrates.

[239] Dillon 2003, page, 88

Platonism the concept of the one that we find in his works has been referred to as the 'neo-Platonic One', hence the title of E.R. Dodds seminal paper of 1928 *The Parmenides of Plato and the origin of the neo-Platonic "One"*[240], in which he asks how Plotinus arrived at such a concept of the one in the first place. He explains Plotinus' concept of the one by stating:

> But the Plotinian doctrine of an undifferenced (sic) ground of all existence, transcending not only Matter but Mind, creative without will or causality, unknowable save in the *unio mystica*, having no character save the character of being a ground - this is the part of Plotinus' system which has at all times impressed itself most deeply on his readers. It is also - and very surprisingly, I think - the part which historians have found most difficulty in accounting for.[241]

Dodds sets about accounting for this one and, in the process, he rules out oriental sources and a number of sources in the Western tradition after Plato, which are alleged to hold such an understanding of the one but, according to Dodds, actually subscribe to a supreme principle that partakes of multiplicity and is akin to intellect (*nous)*.[242] He eventually arrives at the following conclusion:

> Think of a principle of unity which so completely transcends all plurality that it refuses every predicate, even that of existence; which is neither in motion nor at rest, neither in time nor in space; of which we can say nothing, not even that it is identical with itself or different from other things: and side by side with this, a second principle of unity, containing the seeds of all the contraries - a principle which, if we once grant it existence, proceeds to pluralize itself indefinitely in a universe of existent unities. If for the moment we leave fragments out of account and consider only the extant works of Greek philosophers before the age of Plotinus, there is one passage, and so far as I know one passage only, where these thoughts receive connected expression - namely, the first and second 'hypotheses' in the second part of Plato's *Parmenides*.[243]

In support of his contention that Plato's *Parmenides* is the primary source of Plotinus' understanding of the one he proceeds to quote eight passages from the first hypothesis and five passages from the second hypothesis, and in each case he lists a corresponding passage in Plotinus where the language and concepts closely parallel the Platonic extract. Based upon a passage from Simplicius, Dodds then proceeds to argue that there is evidence that such an interpretation of the *Parmenides* was espoused by the Neo-Pythagorean Moderatus of Gades in the first century A.D.[244] Moderatus' works were available to Plotinus but, according to his biographer, Porphyry, who had read Moderatus,

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[240] E.R. Dodds; The Parmenides of Plato and the origin of the neo-Platonic "One", *Classical Quarterly* 12 (1928)
[241] Dodds, ibid, p 131
[242] Dodds, ibid, p 132
[243] Dodds, ibid, p 132
[244] Dodds, ibid, p 136

Plotinus' works were far more accurate and he cites Longinus as sharing such an evaluation.[245] Dodds goes on to trace this concept of the one even further back in time, to Eudorus in 25 B.C. who, in turn, attributes it to the Pythagoreans. However, Dodds too regards the ultimate source of such a doctrine as Speusippus;

> It seems to me that with Speusippus we are already well started on the road to Neoplatonism; and nobody has yet alleged that Plato's nephew was anything but a 'true Greek.'
> To say that the *Enneads* were not the starting-point of Neoplatonism but its intellectual culmination is no disparagement of Plotinus' originality.[246]

Scholarship concerning the influences upon Plotinus, the extent of his reliance upon Plato, his fidelity to Plato, his level of originality and his reliance upon mystical experience for his doctrines is all very complex and beset with controversy. The precise nature of the views held by Plotinus' predecessors must always be a matter of informed conjecture and surmise, but there is a fair measure of agreement that we have, in the person of Plotinus, an interpreter of the *Parmenides* who is prepared to afford a significant status to the one of H1. We will also find that he offers arguments which support that interpretation and lead to additional conclusions associated with such a reading of the dialogue. This affords us an opportunity to consider the way in which Plotinus deals with the one of the first hypothesis and its relationship to the one of H2, in his writings, and to evaluate his arguments and their more general ontological conclusions in the light of our own analysis.

The works of Plotinus

The Plotinian corpus is very extensive, running to some three hundred and fifty thousand words, divided into six books called *Enneads,* each with nine subdivisions. Accordingly, it would be far beyond the scope of this work to analyse the entire corpus in relation to the one of H1. We have seen that Dodds quotes eight passages from the first hypothesis and five passages from the second hypothesis, and in each case he lists a corresponding passage in Plotinus where the language and concepts closely parallel the *Parmenides*. Jackson carried out a similar analysis confined to the first hypothesis in which he quoted eleven passages from the *Parmenides* and forty one from the *Enneads* in which the wording and concepts match those of the dialogue[247]. Jackson lists these parallels and states;

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[245] Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, chapters 20 and 21.
[246] Dodds, ibid, p 140
[247] Jackson, Belford Darrell, Plotinus and the Parmenides, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Volume 5, Number 4, October 1967, pp. 318-320

> I believe that it is useful to list these parallels. There are many more than Dodds listed in his article. They show that Plotinus had considerable knowledge of the *Parmenides* and used its language.[248]

This conclusion is similar to Dodds' but the evidence here is more extensive. These analyses by Dodds and Jackson provide us with strong evidence[249] that Plotinus was familiar with the *Parmenides* and drew upon its contents in order to formulate his own doctrines. We are aware that he has a concept of the one which aligns with an understanding that may go back to Speusippus, a doctrine that was opposed by Aristotle and Xenocrates. Dodds describes Plotinus' one as "... a principle of unity which so completely transcends all plurality that it refuses every predicate, even that of existence; which is neither in motion nor at rest, neither in time nor in space; of which we can say nothing, not even that it is identical with itself or different from other things..."[250] This means that he does not regard the one of the first hypothesis as the mere subject of a reductio, rather he retains such a one, along with all of its strange characteristics including non-participation in being, as an element in his philosophical system. Clearly this constitutes a particular interpretation of the *Parmenides,* but in the case of Plotinus, we will be able to consider the precise arguments whereby he defends such an interpretation and assess the use which he makes of this one of H1 in developing his philosophic doctrines. We will then be able to evaluate Plotinus' treatment of the one of H1 on the basis of our own analysis.

However, we need to note that when it comes to Platonic interpretation, Plotinus does not stop at reading the one of H1 along Speusippian lines. Indeed one particularly challenging aspect of Plotinus' interpretation of the pure one of the *Parmenides* is that he speaks of it interchangeably with The Good of *Republic* Book VI. Since The Good is not even mentioned in the *Parmenides,* any connection between these two concepts and their associated dialogues would need to be established by a review of the relevant arguments, as there is no immediately obvious thematic connection. It is on this issue that Cornford has the greatest difficulty with the Neo-Platonists both ancient and contemporary, asserting that;

> The Neoplatonists make the further assumption that the Good of the *Republic* is the supreme god of Plato's theology, superior - to the divine *nous*, which they locate in Hyp. II. Nothing approaching satisfactory evidence for this equation can be found in Plato's works and it is hard-perhaps impossible-to reconcile with the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*. It may be added that Aristotle, if anyone, must have understood the *Parmenides* correctly; and to his

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[248] Jackson, ibid, p 318

[249] As a measure of the controversial nature of any assertions in this area we may note that O'Brien refers to Dodds' assertion of an ultimately Platonic source for Plotinus' concept of the one as 'not altogether convincing'. O'Brien, *The Essential Plotinus*, Hackett, 1964, p 15.

[250] Dodds, ibid, p 132

> far from mystical temperament it would have seemed the worst sort of nonsense to say of the supreme God what Plato does say of the One, that he cannot have any sort of being and nothing true can be said about him.[251]

We know indeed that Aristotle was opposed to the distinction between the one and being which Plotinus' later reading of the first hypothesis asserts. But even on this issue we note that Aristotle never specifically states that Plato is the source of this distinction and any evidence we have points to a dispute with Speusippus, and not Plato and his *Parmenides,* as the motivation for Aristotle's counterargument. If this is the case then Speusippus was reading the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* in a manner later followed by Plotinus, while Aristotle and then Xenocrates read this work in a different way. However, there is no direct evidence that either Plato or Speusippus were aligning the one of H1 with 'the Good beyond being' of the Republic,[252]nor do we ever find Aristotle opposing such an equation. We do however have evidence that Speusippus is under attack from Aristotle on account of depriving the first principle of goodness and beauty[253] and this is indeed a possible refutation of the characterless one of H1 when installed as a first principle. But as Cornford points out above, we never find Aristotle opposing the alignment of the good with the one, an alignment he would surely have found problematic. On this same issue Gerson comments;

> One reason why Plotinus blithely conflates the Form of the Good and his own primary *arche* is his belief that Plato himself identified the former with the subject of the first hypothesis of the second part of the P*armenides,* namely, an ineffable "one" having neither essence nor any other predicate (see V.1.8.23-5[254]). The exact interpretation of Plato's meaning in the second part of that desperately difficult dialogue is to put it mildly a matter of considerable dispute. Nevertheless, there is very little to be said for the identification of the subject of the first hypothesis with the Form of the Good. I do not wish thus so cavalierly to dismiss an entire tradition's interpretation of Plato. I wish merely to set it aside, for to say that Plotinus was inclined to identify the Form of the Good and "the one" of the first hypothesis of the second part of the *Parmenides* is ancillary to the analysis of his own arguments for his own principle.[255]

We shall take Gerson's advice here and leave aside Plotinus' conflation of The One with The Good and numerous other assertions that he makes about the one including his equation of the second hypothesis with intellect (*Nous*) and, apparently, the third hypothesis with soul. We should also note

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[251] Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, p 133

[252] On this issue see Meijer, chapter five.

[253] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII, 7, 1072b, 31-33

[254] References to Plotinus' works are from the Loeb edition of the *Enneads* translated by Armstrong though we will occasionally adjust this translation. Roman numerals refer to the specific *Ennead,* of which there are six; other numbers refer, in order, to tractate (there are nine in each Ennead), chapter within the tractate, and line number within that chapter.

[255] Gerson, Lloyd P; *Plotinus, The Arguments of the Philosophers*, Routledge , 1994, p 19.

Gerson's suggestion that this one/good issue is secondary to the analysis of Plotinus' own arguments for his own principle.

There is no doubt that Plotinus, the key figure in Neo-Platonism, took the *Parmenides* very seriously and presented certain arguments based upon particular parts of that dialogue; arguments which we propose to compare with our own approach in this thesis. We should therefore consider Plotinus' general approach to the Platonic corpus and we should note, in the first instance, that he claims no originality whatsoever. Indeed without ever having encountered the term 'neo-Platonic', he explicitly rejects the notion that his philosophy is anything new and he gives a precise overview of his own general approach with some interesting reflections upon the historical Parmenides and Plato's eponymous dialogue. It is to this extract from Plotinus that Gerson refers us in the above passage;

> And [it follows] that these statements of ours are not new; they do not belong to the present time, but were made long ago, not explicitly and what we have said in this discussion has been an interpretation of them relying on Plato's own writings for evidence that these views are ancient. And Parmenides also, before Plato, touched on a view like this, in that he identified Being and Intellect and that it was not among things perceived by the senses that he placed Being, when he said "Thinking and Being are the same". And he says that this Being is unmoved -though he does attach thinking to it- taking all bodily movement from it that it may remain always in the same state, and likening it to "the mass of a sphere", because it holds all things in its circumference and because its thinking is not external, but in itself . But when he said it was one, in his own works, he was open to criticism because this one of his was discovered to be many. But Parmenides in Plato speaks more accurately, and distinguishes from each other the first One, which is more properly called One, and the second which he calls "One-Many" and the third, "One and Many ". In this way he too agrees with the doctrine of the three natures.[256]

We note his contention that he is no innovator, although the doctrines he elaborates are not explicit, but require interpretation supported by textual evidence from Plato's works. The specific 'statements' in the passage above are drawn from Plato's second and sixth epistles, the *Timaeus* and the *Republic* and these are used to support this 'doctrine of three natures', which is not, however, evident in those precise terms in the works of Plato. Plotinus also refers to the poem composed by

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[256] Plotinus: *Ennead*, V, 1, 8, 10-27: Armstrong translation from the Loeb edition, 1984: Καὶ εἶναι τοὺς λόγους τούσδε μὴ καινοὺς μηδὲ νῦν, ἀλλὰ πάλαι μὲν εἰρῆσθαι μὴ ἀναπεπταμένως, τοὺς δὲ νῦν λόγους ἐξηγητὰς ἐκείνων γεγονέναι μαρτυρίοις πιστωσαμένους τὰς δόξας ταύτας παλαιὰς εἶναι τοῖς αὐτοῦ τοῦ Πλάτωνος γράμμασιν. Ἥπτετο μὲν οὖν καὶ Παρμενίδης πρότερον τῆς τοιαύτης δόξης καθόσον εἰς ταὐτὸ συνῆγεν ὂν καὶ νοῦν, καὶ τὸ ὂν οὐκ ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς ἐτίθετο «τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστί τε καὶ εἶναι λέγων. Καὶ ἀκίνητον δὲ λέγει τοῦτο—καίτοι προστιθεὶς τὸ νοεῖν—σωματικὴν πᾶσαν κίνησιν ἐξαίρων ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μένῃ ὡσαύτως, καὶ ὄγκῳ σφαίρας ἀπεικάζων, ὅτι πάντα ἔχει περιειλημμένα καὶ ὅτι τὸ νοεῖν οὐκ ἔξω, ἀλλ' ἐν ἑαυτῷ. Ἓν δὲ λέγων ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ συγγράμμασιν αἰτίαν εἶχεν ὡς τοῦ ἑνὸς τούτου πολλὰ εὑρισκομένου. Ὁ δὲ παρὰ Πλάτωνι Παρμενίδης ἀκριβέστερον λέγων διαιρεῖ ἀπ' ἀλλήλων τὸ πρῶτον ἕν, ὃ κυριώτερον ἕν, καὶ δεύτερον ἓν πολλὰ λέγων, καὶ τρίτον ἓν καὶ πολλά. Καὶ σύμφωνος οὕτως καὶ αὐτός ἐστι ταῖς φύσεσι ταῖς τρισίν.

the historical Parmenides on the theme of being and the one. The assertion that the one of the historical Parmenides, as described in his poem, is in fact many is in accordance with the text of Plato's *Sophist*[257]where this 'sphere' reference from Parmenides' poem is also included just as it is in the extract above. A sphere is obviously a whole with many parts and, as such, it partakes of multiplicity and is not purely one. Accordingly, in the above extract Plotinus effectively aligns the one from the poem of the historical Parmenides, properly understood, with the one of the second hypothesis and refers to another 'first one' that is more properly called One, and this more proper One is of course, for Plotinus, the one itself, the one of H1.

Hadot[258] contends that this exploration of philosophic issues which begins with 'doctrines' and seeks to support them even by 'the most forced exegesis' was a characteristic of an approach to philosophy prevalent in late antiquity such as that exemplified here by Plotinus. Yet this very apologia itself is evidence that his reading of Plato was meeting with some opposition and that he was being accused of innovations that departed from more traditional readings. Indeed Meijer, referring to the above Plotinus extract, asserts that;

> In my paraphrase: 'This entire approach is not new, not presented now for the first time, but it was already said long ago, by Plato and his predecessors beit (*sic*) not explicitly'. For establishing the early date Plotinus appeals to the writings of Plato himself. Especially his remark that 'it is not now for the first time' makes it clear that apparently in Plotinus' days the system and the special place of the One was considered as brand new and offensive. The emphasis laid on the separate place of the One in the system manifests itself in Plotinus' observation that in Parmenides (*sic*) the One was more properly one...[259]

If Meijer is right and Plotinus was accused of innovative interpretations of Plato by his own contemporaries then Gerson is in agreement with those disapproving contemporaries when he says:

> However, though Plotinus seems to have thought that he was following Plato in the *Parmenides* when speaking of the One, I do not think that he interpreted the dialogue correctly, at least with regard to what Plato was doing in the desperately difficult second part.[260]

Since we have begun to come to terms with some aspects of the 'desperately difficult second part' of the *Parmenides* we are in a position to investigate the veracity of Plotinus' claim that he is faithful to Plato's dialogue. Meijer contends that Plotinus' interpretation of Plato was controversial even

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[257] 244e
[258] Hadot: *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Blackwell 1996, p 74, quoting Thurot.
[259] Meijer, P.A.; *Plotinus on the Good or the One (Enneads VI,9)*, Gieben, 1992, p 22
[260] Gerson, Lloyd P; *Plotinus, The Arguments of the Philosophers*, Routledge , 1994, p231/2, note 5.

among his contemporaries because of the way in which he read the *Parmenides* and especially because of the views which he held about the One as a consequence of such a reading. We have presented an argument in this thesis based upon the connection between the TLA in part one of the dialogue and the first and second hypotheses of the second part. It is central to our case here that we have 'salvaged' the one of H1 from being dismissed as the fallacious subject of a reductio and we have marshalled our arguments in support of the retention of the one of H1 as a viable philosophic concept. We have also shown how our conclusions in relation to the one of H1 and the one of H2 can be applied to the TLA in order to resolve its problematical regress.

Hence our main interest when we come to Plotinus revolves around the arguments whereby he supports his own interpretation of the first and second hypotheses and his further conclusions in relation to the priority of the One over being; his understanding of the relationship between the first and second hypotheses and their associated ones; and his employment of the first two hypotheses for the purposes of resolving any of the issues raised in the first part of the dialogue. Such analysis of Plotinus' arguments will also give us the opportunity to assess his own assertion that he is not an innovator but a faithful exegete of Plato who justifies his conclusions by reference to the Platonic texts. It will also position our own interpretation of the dialogue in relation to this more ancient reading and will enable us to establish whether or not the Plotinian reading is a defensible interpretation of the dialogue.

Now on the question of Plotinian exegesis, we have just quoted Gerson's contention that Plotinus did not interpret the *Parmenides* correctly, and indeed he refers to a 1992 article by Gurtler in support of this claim. Gurtler, for his part, does not regard the doctrines of the *Parmenides* as entirely Platonic in the first place and he attempts to make the case that Plotinus is correcting some of the doctrines of the *Parmenides,* doctrines which are in conflict with his own Platonic position. Gurtler then interprets much of Plotinus' VI 4-5 in terms of this defence of Platonism against the *Parmenides*. However, both Gerson and Gurtler concur in the view that the Plotinian One is not the same as the one of H1 regardless of what Plotinus himself believed and Gurtler cites Jackson's work in support of this claim;

> B. D. Jackson, "Plotinus and the *Parmenides,*" points out more accurately the parallel Plotinus draws between his three Hypostases and the first three hypotheses of the *Parmenides,* indicating that the borrowed vocabulary is deliberately and radically changed in meaning in the Plotinian context. He does not give an account of Plotinus' reasons for these

changes, nor indicate whether or not Plotinus was aware of the original meaning and issues of the text.[261]

The 'three Hypostases' referred to are The One, Intellect (*Nous)* and Soul and we are concerned here with the first of these, The One, which Plotinus aligned with the one of the first hypothesis. However, we should first note that, contrary to Gurtler's assertion, Jackson never actually accuses Plotinus of *radically changing* the meaning of the *Parmenides* but he does say, on three occasions, that Plotinus 'goes beyond' the *Parmenides*. We should also note that both Gerson and Gurtler accept Plotinus as an exegete who is undoubtedly carrying forward his work in interpreting this dialogue, is quoting it verbatim in places, but in their view, is interpreting it incorrectly. Jackson is "...not concerned with whether Plotinus' interpretation is correct..."[262] although he does make the point that it "goes beyond anything that can be found in the *Parmenides*". However, exegesis that does not, in some way, go beyond the text in question is surely not exegesis at all, and if we regard Cornford's speculation about the activity of the Academy as plausible we then should expect just that. Plotinus too says that Plato "...left us to investigate and discover if we claim to be worthy of our title [of Platonists]"[263]. At this stage we should analyse Plotinus' exegesis for ourselves based upon the criteria we have set out.

The source of oneness

Jackson has provided us with an extensive list of cross references between the *Parmenides* and the writings of Plotinus but such analysis does not, of itself, explain the actual arguments whereby Plotinus elaborates these passages from Plato in developing his own philosophy. In spite of the assistance available from the textual analysis of Dodds and Jackson we will select for argumentative analysis a passage from Plotinus which is not referred to by Dodds and is only mentioned in a footnote[264] by Jackson in his discussion of the second hypothesis. In chapter 13 of VI.6 Plotinus conducts an inquiry into the origin of the concept of oneness which he develops into a comprehensive elucidation of the nature of the One.

We will step through his analysis, section by section, and once we are clear on the development of the argument and its conclusions we will note the extent to which it parallels the *Parmenides* and constitutes an exegesis thereof as it establishes the existence firstly of the one of H2, then of the one

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[261] Gurtler, G. M., Plotinus and the Platonic Parmenides. *International Philosophical Quarterly* 32 (4), (1992), p444, note 3.

[262] Jackson, ibid, p 316

[263] V.8.4, 52-54: καὶ ὁ Πλάτων κατιδών φησιν· οὐδ' ἥτις ἐστὶν ἄλλη ἐν ἄλλῳ, ὅπως δέ, εἴασε ζητεῖν καὶ ἀνευρίσκειν, εἴπερ ἄξιοι τῆς προσηγορίας φαμὲν εἶναι. Cited by Gatti in this context in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus,* p 21.

[264] Jackson, ibid, p 323, note 32

of H1 which is, for its part, shown to have priority over being. We will not undertake a substantial defence of any of the arguments advanced by Plotinus but we will highlight the crucial steps that he takes in developing each argument and will point out his reliance upon the *Parmenides* throughout. Detailed consideration of this passage will enable us to see how Plotinus employs concepts and arguments from the *Parmenides* to establish the existence of the one of H2, and the priority of the one of H1 over being. We will divide the overall argument of the chapter into ten sub-arguments and will then show how these cohere in the single purpose of refuting an objection about the nature of oneness with which this chapter opens. In so doing we will find that Plotinus defends a doctrine which that objection is seeking to undermine and we will see that he has already committed himself in a previous chapter to the understanding of oneness which he is defending in chapter 13.

The appreciation of the exact nature of the opening objection will prove crucial to our overall understanding of Plotinus' purpose in this chapter. However, it is best to discuss the nature of the objection in more detail only after we have fully described his response to that objection and noted his reliance upon the *Parmenides* for that purpose. As we go through this passage we will find an initial vagueness about what is meant by the one or oneness. The two terms will be almost interchangeable at first and any relation to the ones of H1 and H2 of the *Parmenides* will be unclear. As the argument proceeds, however, Plotinus will establish the precise nature of 'a one' and will conclude by formulating the nature of this 'one' in terms of the hypotheses of the *Parmenides*.

The passage from VI.6.13 begins as follows:

> How could it be reasonable to suppose that the thought of the One originated from what underlies it, which is a man or some other living thing, or even a stone, in the realm of sense, since what appears is one thing -the man - and the One is another and not the same?[265]

Plotinus is evidently responding to an objection, perhaps from a Stoic source, whereby the concept of the One is said to originate from individual objects amenable to sense perception such as a man or a stone. According to such an objection we would not be justified in claiming, as Plato or Plotinus might claim, that it is on account of the existence of the One that a man is 'one man'. This objection claims instead that the entire process works the other way around; because there is one man and he is perceived as such, we have developed the concept of the one. Plotinus' immediate response to this objection is embarked on above and we can see that it begins by making the point that the man

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[265] VI.6.13, 1-5: Armstrong translation, Loeb edition: Τὸ δὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου γενέσθαι τὴν νόησιν τοῦ ἑνός, τοῦ ὑποκειμένου καὶ τοῦ ἐν αἰσθήσει ἀνθρώπου ὄντος ἢ ἄλλου ὁτουοῦν ζῴου ἢ καὶ λίθου, πῶς ἂν εἴη εὔλογον, ἄλλου μὲν ὄντος τοῦ φανέντος—τοῦ ἀνθρώπου—ἄλλου δὲ καὶ οὐ ταὐτοῦ ὄντος τοῦ ἕν;

is a manifest entity while the one, by itself, is other than that manifest entity. Accordingly, they are not the same. He then develops this point further as follows;

> Otherwise the mind would not predicate "one" in the case of a thing which is not man.[266]

In other words, the One can be discussed and predicated independently of any particular sensible entity such as, for example, a particular man. Accordingly, the predication of oneness by the mind is not restricted to any particular entities, and the fact that the mind conducts predication in this unrestricted manner constitutes part of his argument as to why the concept of the one cannot originate in sensible particulars. Because if the One were the same as any manifest particular, such as a man, the mind could not then predicate unity universally of all other manifest particulars. So we now have the conclusions that the One is universally predicable of any sensible particulars and is not the same as any sensible particulars for they are manifest and it is other than them. This corresponds to the principle of non-identity (NI) that we used in our discussion of the TLA and we saw that the *Parmenides* insists upon such a principle and contains arguments in support thereof. Plotinus' own argument above is very terse but given the Platonic background of his entire argument it is not surprising that he takes certain conclusions as already established in the works of Plato. We may remind ourselves of the extract from H2 that we used in the previous chapter, as an indication of the arguments used by Plato in support of his assertion of the non-identity of whatever partakes with whatever is partaken of;

> "So let's begin again. If one is, could it possibly be and not partake of being?"
> "It could not."
> "In that case there would also be the being of the one, which is not the same as the one, or else it could not be the being of the one, nor could it, the one, partake of that..."[267]

This extract encapsulates the non-identity principle whereby, in this example, since the one partakes of being, being is not the same as the one and must therefore be non-identical with the one otherwise participation would be impossible. A particular application of this principle is captured in Plotinus' assertion above that "...what appears is one thing -the man - and the one is another and not the same." In general terms this constitutes an application of the non-identity principle, and once it is established it is further developed as follows;

> And then, just as in the case of "right" and the like the mind was not changed without any cause, but because it saw a different position it said "here", so in this case it is because it

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[266] Ibib, lines 5-6; Armstrong translation – 'reason' substituted by 'the mind'; Οὐ γὰρ ἂν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μὴ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἓν ἡ διάνοια κατηγοροῖ.

[267] 142b5-c1: ὅρα δὴ ἐξ ἀρχῆς. ἓν εἰ ἔστιν, ἆρα οἷόν τε αὐτὸ εἶναι μέν, οὐσίας δὲ μὴ μετέχειν;// οὐχ οἷόν τε.//οὐκοῦν καὶ ἡ οὐσία τοῦ ἑνὸς εἴη ἂν οὐ ταὐτὸν οὖσα τῷ ἑνί: οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐκείνη ἦν ἐκείνου οὐσία, οὐδ' ἂν ἐκεῖνο, τὸ ἕν, ἐκείνης μετεῖχεν...

> sees something that it says "one"; for it is not reporting an empty way of being affected and saying "one" about nothing.[268]

The conclusions already established are now developed further through the assertion that the mind must, in general, see something and then assert that it is one, and this assertion that it is one is stating a particular characteristic of what is seen. What is seen is, for its part, not nothing: in other words, whatever is said to be one has an existence in its own right independent of the one, just as there must first *be* a different location before 'right' can be predicated of that location, i.e. the location must exist before you can say anything about it. While the previous passage established that the one has an existence apart from its instantiations this extract asserts that things other than one are things in their own right – they are not nothing. This fundamental division between the one and 'things other than one' is utterly basic to the *Parmenides*[269]. Oneness is asserted about these things, but what does that assertion mean? Plotinus considers this question next;

> For it is certainly not saying that the thing is alone and there is no other thing; for in the "no other thing" it is saying another "one". And then the "other" and the "different" come later; for if the mind does not rest on the one it will not say "other" or "different", and when it says "alone" it says "one alone"; so that it says the "one" before the "alone".[270]

Here we establish that, by stating that a manifest particular is one we are not merely saying that there is no other thing present and that the object is therefore alone. Even by saying 'no other thing' we are saying that there is not another *one* different from or other than this particular *one*. So oneness does not describe the relation or lack of relation of something to other somethings, rather it is the basis and pre-requisite for any such relations. Therefore 'other' or 'different' follow or come 'later' than the one because without the one there cannot be 'other' or 'different'. And so we arrive at a statement of which we should take note, that "... if the mind does not rest on the one it will not say 'other' or 'different'". Let us recapitulate the steps of the argument whereby we reached this conclusion.

<u>The non-identity of the one with its instantiations (lines 1-6);</u>

The notion of the one does not originate in the particulars that underlie it

> Because the particulars are manifest and the one is other than them
> AND

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[268] Ibid lines 6-9: Armstrong translation – 'reason' substituted by 'the mind' and 'moved' substituted by 'changed'; Ἔπειτα, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ δεξιοῦ καὶ τῶν τοιούτων οὐ μάτην κινουμένη, ἀλλ' ὁρῶσα θέσιν διάφορον ἔλεγε τὸ ὠδί, οὐτωσί τι ἐνταῦθα ὁρῶσα λέγει ἕν· οὐ γὰρ δὴ κενὸν πάθημα καὶ ἐπὶ μηδενὶ τὸ ἓν λέγει.

[269] H3; 157b (end) and H4; 159b (end).

[270] Ibid lines 9 – 14: Armstrong translation – 'reason' substituted by 'the mind': Οὐ γὰρ δὴ ὅτι μόνον καὶ οὐκ ἄλλο· καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῷ <u>«καὶ οὐκ ἄλλο»</u> ἄλλο ἓν λέγει. Ἔπειτα τὸ ἄλλο καὶ τὸ ἕτερον ὕστερον· μὴ γὰρ ἐρείσασα πρὸς ἓν οὔτε ἄλλο ἐρεῖ ἡ διάνοια οὔτε ἕτερον, τό τε <u>«μόνον»</u> ὅταν λέγῃ, ἓν μόνον λέγει· ὥστε τὸ ἓν λέγει πρὸ τοῦ <u>«μόνον»</u>.

Since it is other, the one is not the same as any manifest particular
Because if the one were the same as any manifest particular the mind could not predicate the one universally of all other manifest particulars

The priority of the predication of oneness over any other predication (lines 6-14);

One is always said about something; it is never said about nothing.
But saying that something is one does not simply mean that the 'something' is on its own with 'no other thing present'
Because other (or different) can only be said once there is one
So oneness is the basis of and pre-requisite for such relations
Therefore the one must be first, before other or different
For if the mind does not rest on the one it will not say other or different
So the mind needs the one to say other or different or 'alone'

Up to this point we have established that the mind needs the one in order to refer to things because these things must first be said to be one before they can be *said* to be anything else such as 'other' or 'different' or 'alone'. The argument so far does indeed give a priority to the one but it is a priority of predication whereby the predication of oneness must precede the predication of 'other' or 'different' or 'alone'. The predication of one of these three must obviously precede any subsequent predication so that the target of the predication may have a distinct identity as one thing that is other than or different from anything else. Such priority is, however, not an ontological priority in the sense described above by Aristotle but it is a step in the development of the argument towards that stronger sense of priority.

The existence of the one and its priority

Plotinus then develops the argument further to establish the prevalence of the one in all processes where the mind refers to anything and he begins to move beyond conclusions about predication to conclusions about existence;

> And then what speaks is one before it says "one" of something else, and that about which it speaks, before anyone speaks or thinks about it, is one, for it is either one or more than one and many; and if many, one must exist before it. For also when it says "multitude" it says "more than one"...[271]

[271] Ibid lines 14-18: Ἔπειτα τὸ λέγον, πρὶν εἰπεῖν περὶ ἄλλου «ἕν», ἐστὶν ἕν, καὶ περὶ οὗ λέγει, πρὶν εἰπεῖν ἢ νοῆσαί τινα περὶ αὐτοῦ, ἐστὶν ἕν· ἢ γὰρ ἓν ἢ πλείω ἑνὸς καὶ πολλά· καὶ εἰ πολλά, ἀνάγκη προϋπάρχειν ἕν. Ἐπεὶ καὶ ὅταν πλῆθος λέγῃ πλείω ἑνὸς λέγει·

Whatever speaks is, of course, one speaker and whatever is thought of or spoken of is either one or many. However, it is also argued that mind says or thinks 'one' about something that is already one before the mind says that it is one. And if it is many then the one must exist before this multiplicity for many means 'more than one'. This is an important step as it is going beyond the assertion that oneness must be predicated before anything else can be predicated, to a stronger ontological assertion. With this stronger claim we no longer have mere priority of predicative sequence as in the last extract, a priority whereby the one must be predicated before anything else can be predicated. Instead we have an existential priority whereby multiplicity is ontologically dependent upon the one.

The argument in support of this begins with the assertion that anything the mind approaches is either one or many - this is the way the manifest world is structured - it may be regarded as a simple fact, although, as we shall see, it is argued for in the third hypothesis of the *Parmenides*. This connection to the third hypothesis of the *Parmenides* is very significant and it will be explained in more detail below. It is, we argue, the source of Plotinus' assertion that 'many' means 'more than one'. Accordingly, even the existence of multiplicity depends upon the one because 'many' means 'more than one'. On this basis he deduces a stronger assertion in relation to the pre-existence of the one contained in the phrase "...and if many, one must exist before it..."[272] With this phrase Plotinus departs from his use of the verb to be and its variants and suddenly uses a verb which unambiguously means to 'pre-exist' or 'exist before'. So quite apart from any predication, and indeed prior to any predication of multiplicity, anything upon which the mind fixes is already either one or many, and in the case of the many the one must *exist* first because something is only many by reference to the one. Hence we have greater clarity as to how Plotinus' argument unfolds. Although mental activity and predication are involved in his argument the conclusions are now becoming ontological and not purely predicational as is evidenced by the introduction of a verb which makes an unambiguously existential assertion about the pre-existence of the one. We may summarise this latter sub-argument as follows;

<u>The ontological priority of the one over the many (lines 14-18)</u>
Whatever speaks is already one before it speaks
Whatever the mind considers must already be one or many
Many means more than one
So many needs the one in order to be many
So the one must exist before the many (can exist)
So the one has an ontological priority over the many

[272] The phrase is καὶ εἰ πολλά, ἀνάγκη προϋπάρχειν ἕν as quoted in the extract above – the verb to pre-exist is προϋπάρχειν

We will see, when we consider the third hypothesis, that the priority of the one, in this sense, is reliant upon the definition of many as 'more than one' because whatever is more than something is reliant upon that something to be what it itself is. Such priority of the one over the many is one of the conclusions of the third hypothesis of the *Parmenides* and the argument whereby it is established here, through the interdependent nature of one and many, aligns with what we shall find in the dialogue when we consider the relevant extracts. We note a continued vagueness about the precise nature of the one here and whether it corresponds to the one of H1 or of H2, but as our conclusions about it accumulate its nature will become clearer. The understanding of what it means to be multiple and the role of the one therein is developed further in the next extract;

> ... and it discerns an army as many men armed and brought together into one order, and does not allow what is a multitude to be a multitude; the mind which gives the "one" which the multitude does not have makes it clear [that it is not only a multitude], or, by keenly observing the "one" which results from its order, gathers the nature of the many into one; for the one is not falsely predicated here anymore than it is of a house which is one from many stones; though the "one" of the house is more one. If then it is more one in the continuous and [still) more one in the indivisible, it is clearly because the one is a particular nature which has existence.[273]

Here we have further existential conclusions employing two of Plotinus' favourite examples from the manifest realm; an army and a house. The mind, on discerning an army which is by nature multiple as it is a collection of individual soldiers, does not allow this multiplicity to remain multiple but it assigns to the multiplicity something that the multiplicity does not have by its own nature, namely the one, and as a result the multiplicity of soldiers becomes *one* army. Mind does this by 'keenly observing' the one, something that the senses cannot do but the mind can. But mind can only observe what is actually there so this oneness is not a 'false predication' or as Meijer[274] puts it "This unity is not an optical illusion... ."

Furthermore, Plotinus regards a house as being 'more one' than an army insofar as it is continuous while the parts of the army remain discrete. No one would argue that the unity of the house is a mere illusion and insist that it is really just a multitude of stones. Plotinus thus concludes that the one, because it can be more a feature of one thing than it is of another, must be something that has

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[273] VI,6,13, 18-27; Armstrong's translation with his word 'reason' changed to 'mind' and 'thinks' changed to 'discerns' and using 'keenly observing' to replace 'seeing' (Armstrong omits the adverb); Ἐπεὶ καὶ ὅταν πλῆθος λέγῃ πλείω ἑνὸς λέγει· καὶ στρατὸν πολλοὺς ὡπλισμένους καὶ εἰς ἓν συντεταγμένους νοεῖ, καὶ πλῆθος ὂν οὐκ ἐᾷ πλῆθος εἶναι· ἡ διάνοια δῆλόν που καὶ ἐνταῦθα ποιεῖ ἡ διδοῦσα τὸ ἕν, ὃ μὴ ἔχει τὸ πλῆθος, ἢ ὀξέως τὸ ἓν τὸ ἐκ τῆς τάξεως ἰδοῦσα τὴν τοῦ πολλοῦ φύσιν συνήγαγεν εἰς ἕν· οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδ' ἐνταῦθα τὸ ἓν ψεύδεται, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐπὶ οἰκίας τὸ ἐκ πολλῶν λίθων ἕν· μᾶλλον μέντοι τὸ ἓν ἐπ' οἰκίας. Εἰ οὖν μᾶλλον ἐπὶ τοῦ συνεχοῦς καὶ μᾶλλον ἐπὶ τοῦ μὴ μεριστοῦ, δῆλον ὅτι ὄντος τινὸς φύσεως τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ ὑφεστώσης.

[274] Meijer, ibid p 91.

a particular nature and actually exists. In asserting this he uses a different word from the verb to 'pre-exist' that he used before, but this new word again unambiguously asserts the existence of the one. He establishes this existence of the one on the basis that these multiplicities such as armies and houses are somehow one; they are one because of something they themselves do not have, something that is other than these multiplicities, something that the mind can keenly observe but the senses cannot, namely the one. The mind then predicates this oneness of the army or house, not falsely, but because it is there already and what is predicated has a nature and exists. We have now progressed to a very strong assertion of the fact that the one exists, has a nature and is responsible for the oneness of things that are not, by nature, one. In summary we may write;

<u>The one exists and has a nature (Lines 18-27)</u>

Manifest multiplicities are seen by the mind as one

They are not one by their own nature but the mind discerns the oneness

Mind then predicates that oneness, and degrees thereof, of those multiplicities

Therefore this is true predication of a one that is actually present

Therefore this one exists and has a nature

The idea that things that are multiple by nature become one because of the one and would have remained entirely multiple were it not for the one will give us an important connection to the third hypothesis of the *Parmenides* when we come to consider Plotinus' sources for his analysis here. Plotinus seems to be moving very quickly at this point in the argument but he may be assuming a familiarity with the argument of the third hypothesis and may be taking many of the conclusions contained in Plato's dialogue as already established.

The pre-existence of the one is affirmed and then further developed on the basis of the notion of degrees of oneness that he has invoked in the extract above;

> For it is not possible for there to be a "more" in non-existents, but just as when we predicate essence of each individual sense-object, and also predicate it of the intelligibles, we predicate it more appropriately of the intelligibles, putting the "more" and the "more appropriately" in the realm of real beings, and say that there is more being in the category of essence, even sensible essence, than in the other genera, in the same way also we see that the one, which differs in respect of more [and less] also in the sense-objects, is also more and more appropriately in the intelligibles - and in all these ways it must be affirmed that there is a reference to one.[275]

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[275] Lines 27-36: Οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε ἐν τοῖς μὴ οὖσι τὸ μᾶλλον εἶναι, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τὴν οὐσίαν κατηγοροῦντες καθ' ἑκάστου τῶν αἰσθητῶν, κατηγοροῦντες δὲ καὶ κατὰ τῶν νοητῶν κυριώτερον κατὰ τῶν νοητῶν τὴν κατηγορίαν ποιούμεθα ἐν τοῖς οὖσι τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ κυριώτερον τιθέντες, καὶ τὸ ὂν μᾶλλον ἐν οὐσίᾳ καὶ αἰσθητῇ ἢ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις γένεσιν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἓν μᾶλλον καὶ κυριώτερον ἔν τε τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς αὐτοῖς διάφορον κατὰ τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς ὁρῶντες εἶναι—κατὰ πάντας τοὺς τρόπους εἰς ἀναφορὰν μέντοι ἑνὸς εἶναι φατέον.

The opening words simply affirm that unless the one exists it is not possible for things to be more one and less one. The argument then goes on to attribute even more oneness to what are called intelligibles, i.e. things that are known only by intellect (*nous)*; things such as movement itself, being or oneness. He refers to these intelligibles as belonging to the category of 'real beings' and he says that there is unity to a greater extent in the intelligibles than there is among sensible manifest entities. This is the nature of the relationship of sensibles and intelligibles to the one; they are all, to a certain extent, one. And so they all have a relationship to the one which is not therefore non-existent as there cannot be relationship to what does not exist. Although the previous sub-argument relied upon the third hypothesis it is not easy to identify an argument in the *Parmenides* that relies upon this latter concept of degrees of unity in order to establish conclusions about the one. Here Plotinus is resorting to an argument not used by Plato in order to establish doctrines that are undoubtedly Platonic.

The next sub-argument proceeds to the perception of oneness, how we know that there is oneness and the consequences for the one of such epistemological analysis;

> But just as essence and being is intelligible and not perceptible, even if the perceptible participates in it, in this way also the one might be seen in the perceptible by participation, but the mind grasps it as intelligible and does so intellectually; so that it discerns one thing, which it does not see, from another; so it knew it before. But if it knew it before as being this particular thing, it is the same as being. And when it says 'something', it says as well that there is one; just as when it says "some" in the dual, it says that there are two; and when in the plural, that there are many.[276]

Oneness is, in a sense, seen in those sense objects in which it is instantiated insofar as we can tell by looking at them whether they are one or many, but the mind apprehends a oneness that is not amenable to sense perception. How can it do this if, as we agreed at the very start, the notion of one does not originate in the manifest objects? Mind must have known one prior to the seeing. And if it was known before, the one must exist and so must anything that partakes of it. Therefore, in this sense, saying that there is foreknowledge of it implies asserting its pre-existence.

The final point, in the last sentence, establishes that even when mind seems not to be dealing in number at all but uses the word 'something' or 'both' or 'some' it is nevertheless referring to one, two and many, respectively, so it cannot escape referring to the one because two and many depend upon the one. This brings the operation of oneness into the conduct of all speech for all speech

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[276]Lines 36-43: Ὥσπερ δὲ ἡ οὐσία καὶ τὸ εἶναι νοητὸν καὶ οὐκ αἰσθητόν ἐστι, κἂν μετέχῃ τὸ αἰσθητὸν αὐτῶν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἓν περὶ αἰσθητὸν μὲν ἂν κατὰ μετοχὴν θεωροῖτο, νοητὸν μέντοι καὶ νοητῶς ἡ διάνοια αὐτὸ λαμβάνει· ὥστε ἀπ' ἄλλου ἄλλο νοεῖ, ὃ οὐχ ὁρᾷ· προῄδει ἄρα· εἰ δὲ προῄδει ὂν τόδε τι, ταὐτὸν τῷ ὄν. Καὶ ὅταν τι, ἓν αὖ λέγει· ὥσπερ ὅταν τινέ, δύο· καὶ ὅταν τινάς, πολλούς.

employs the terms referred to. Accordingly, this assertion anticipates a possible objection to the prevalence of the one in all speech from someone who might assert that not all verbal constructions contain the words 'one', 'two' and 'many'[277], whereas no one would deny that all verbs, nouns and pronouns are either singular or plural or, in the case of the Greek language, dual.

As lines 27 to 43 above are the basis of some important conclusions in the next section we summarise these lines as follows;

<u>Degrees of oneness imply that whatever exists has a relation to the one (Lines 27-36)</u>
There are degrees of oneness
There cannot be degrees of that which does not exist
All existent entities exhibit degrees of oneness
Degree must be relative to something
Therefore all existent entities relate to the one
BUT
<u>There is foreknowledge of the one (Lines 36 to 41)</u>
The mind sees the manifest unity
And grasps the one although the one cannot be seen
The origin of the concept of the one is not the seeing of the manifest entities (already established)
Yet the mind discerns the one from the manifest entities
Therefore the mind must have known the one before seeing the entities
But if it was known before it must exist
So the foreknowledge is the same as pre-existence
FINALLY
<u>The one is involved in all speech (lines 41-43)</u>
When the mind refers to things without using numbers
One, two and many are implied in any case
Therefore mind cannot refer to things without using one, two or many.

This latter conclusion begins the final phase of the argument;

> If, then, it is not possible to think anything without the one or the two or some number,[278]

We have now established, in the preceding sub-arguments; the non-identity of the one with its instantiations, the priority of the predication of the one over all other predications, the ontological dependence of the many upon the one, that the one exists and has its own nature, that whatever

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[277] This argument about the implied reference to the one and more than one when using pronouns also occurs in the *Sophist* at 237d, where Parmenides' prohibition on reference to non-being is under discussion.
[278] See next footnote for reference and translation

exists has a relationship to the one, that there is foreknowledge of the one, and that it is involved in the formulation of all structured speech. Plotinus now proceeds to argue, on the basis of these conclusions, that we must also admit something else about the nature of the one;

> If, then, it is not possible to think anything without the one or the two or some other number, how is it possible for that not to exist without which it is not possible to think or speak? For it is impossible to say that something does not exist of which, since it does not exist, you cannot think or say anything at all. But that which is needed everywhere for the coming into existence of every thought and statement must exist before statement and thinking: for this is how it can be brought to contribute to their coming into existence.[279]

Here we have an argument whereby our earlier conclusions in relation to the one are made the basis of a further conclusion which makes a connection between the existence of the one and the operation of speech and thought. We note that, in contrast to the terseness of some of the earlier arguments and conclusions, this point is made more elaborately and at greater length. The nub of the argument may however be summarised quite succinctly as stating that since the one is a pre-requisite for speech and thought, and since speech and thought exist, the one must therefore exist. The structure of this argument is highly reminiscent of a conclusion presented in part one of the *Parmenides* as a summary of the consequences of the multiple *aporiai* in relation to the concept of forms as understood by Socrates. That conclusion is formulated as follows:

> ...but if someone, in view of all we have just said and other such objections, actually refuses to admit that there are forms of things that are, and will not delineate some single form of each, he will have nothing to which his mind can turn, as he does not admit that a characteristic of each of the things that are is always the same, and in this way he utterly destroys the ability to engage in discourse.[280]

As with Plotinus' argument we may summarise Parmenides as asserting that if someone does not admit that there are forms he will be deprived of the ability to direct the mind or engage in discourse. The contrapositive of such an argument is that if we *can,* in fact, direct the mind (i.e. think) and we *can* actually engage in discourse (dialectic), we may therefore conclude that forms must be supposed to exist. The structure of Plotinus' argument mirrors this Parmenidean argument insofar as it connects the existence of the one to the possibility of speech and thought in the same

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[279] Ibid, lines 43-49: Armstrong translation, substituting 'be there' by 'exist' because this is how the verb προϋπάρχειν was translated at line 18; Εἰ τοίνυν μηδέ τι νοῆσαι ἔστιν ἄνευ τοῦ ἓν ἢ τοῦ δύο ἤ τινος ἀριθμοῦ, πῶς οἷόν τε ἄνευ οὗ οὐχ οἷόν τέ τι νοῆσαι ἢ εἰπεῖν μὴ εἶναι; Οὗ γὰρ μὴ ὄντος μηδ' ὁτιοῦν δυνατὸν νοῆσαι ἢ εἰπεῖν, λέγειν μὴ εἶναι ἀδύνατον. Ἀλλ' οὗ χρεία πανταχοῦ πρὸς παντὸς νοήματος ἢ λόγου γένεσιν, προϋπάρχειν δεῖ καὶ λόγου καὶ νοήσεως· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν πρὸς τὴν τούτων γένεσιν παραλαμβάνοιτο.

[280] 135b5-c2; ἀλλὰ μέντοι, εἶπεν ὁ Παρμενίδης, εἴ γέ τις δή, ὦ Σώκρατες, αὖ μὴ ἐάσει εἴδη τῶν ὄντων εἶναι, εἰς πάντα τὰ νυνδὴ καὶ ἄλλα τοιαῦτα ἀποβλέψας, μηδέ τι ὁριεῖται εἶδος ἑνὸς ἑκάστου, οὐδὲ ὅποι τρέψει τὴν διάνοιαν ἕξει, μὴ ἐῶν ἰδέαν τῶν ὄντων ἑκάστου τὴν αὐτὴν ἀεὶ εἶναι, καὶ οὕτως τὴν τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δύναμιν παντάπασι διαφθερεῖ.

way the dialogue relates their possibility to the existence of forms. The striking parallels between these two passages are explored in more detail below. We may attempt to capture Plotinus' reasoning in this sub-argument as follows;

The existence of speech and thought prove the existence of the one (Lines 43 to 49)

Whatever the mind considers is either one or more than one
The one exists before whatever is more than one
If there is neither one nor more than one the mind can consider nothing
Unless the mind can consider, there can be no speech or thought
Therefore; without the one it is impossible to speak or to think[281]
Therefore we cannot assert that the one does not exist

And, in general, since speaking and thinking do, in point of fact, take place
Since the one must exist before there can be speaking or thinking
The existence of the one cannot be denied
Because its existence is what brings about the speaking and the thinking

We will explore the parallels between Parmenides' argument from the first part of the dialogue and Plotinus' argument in lines 43 to 49 in a later section. We should first follow the remainder of the argument to its conclusion, and note how the overall question of priority is dealt with, and how the precise nature of this 'one' or oneness is explained on the basis of Plotinus' understanding of the *Parmenides*.

A focus upon priority

In this very significant chapter of VI.6, Plotinus has so far presented a series of eight arguments establishing the nature of the one as non-identical with its instantiations, the predicational priority of the one, the ontological priority of the one over the many, the conclusion that it exists and has a nature, the conclusion that all things relate to it, that there must be foreknowledge of it, that the one is involved in all speech and thought, and that the manifest possibility of speech and thought renders the existence of the one undeniable. Now although the predicational priority of the one has been asserted already, the ontological priority, although asserted in the case of the many, has not yet been specifically developed as part of the general argument. This is now dealt with by relying upon some of the previous conclusions from the earlier sub-arguments of the chapter to establish a further conclusion about the dependence of things upon the one;

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[281] There is an evident aspect of self-refutation in Plotinus' argument and in the passage from the *Parmenides* that we have quoted as its parallel. We will not explore this aspect of the two arguments here.

> But if it is needed for the existence of each and every essence--for there is nothing which is which is not one--it would also exist before essence and as generating essence.[282]

We should represent this argument formally as follows, incorporating some of the earlier conclusions into our overall summary;

<u>The one is prior to any other essence and generates that essence (lines 50-51)</u>
Anything that is is one but is other than 'the one'
Nothing can be said to be what it is unless it is first said to be one
Whatever is one is not one because of itself; it is one because of the one
Therefore whatever is, requires the one in order to be what it particularly is

If we designate 'what it particularly is' as its 'essence' we conclude that
The one must exist before essence since
There is no particular essence without the one
Therefore the one generates essence

The use of the words 'each and every' in the context of 'essence' in this extract indicates that Plotinus is referring to something that can vary from entity to entity. Accordingly, he is referring to the particular being associated with man or house or army; to the essence of man in particular; its substance (Armstrong's preferred translation of the word οὐσία). The basis of the argument is that each and every essence must be *one* essence or not be an essence at all. The earlier conclusion that the one is needed so that anything at all can *be* one is being applied in this argument to essence in order to establish that essence, for its part, depends upon the one in order to be one essence. The crucial development of this argument here lies in the conclusion that "there is nothing that is not one". Accordingly, if there is to be an essence of anything, it must be one essence or not be an essence at all. This is implied by the earlier conclusions but Plotinus then takes a further step and concludes that this dependence of each essence upon the one implies firstly that the one exists before essence and secondly that it generates essence. The pre-existence has already been part of the argument but here it is specifically applied to essence and this leads to the conclusion that the one is ontologically prior to any particular essence. The further assertion that the one actually generates that essence is best understood in the context of Aristotle's definition of priority as cited earlier:

> Some things, then, are called prior and posterior in this [latter] sense; but others in virtue of their nature and substance, namely all things which can exist apart from other things, whereas other things cannot exist without them. This distinction was used by Plato.[283]

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[282] Ibid, lines 50-51; Armstrong translation substituting 'substance' by 'essence' accepting the argument by Meijer, p 107, note 308; Εἰ δὲ καὶ εἰς οὐσίας ἑκάστης ὑπόστασιν—οὐδὲν γὰρ ὄν, ὃ μὴ ἕν—καὶ πρὸ οὐσίας ἂν εἴη καὶ γεννῶν τὴν οὐσίαν.

[283] *Metaphysics*, 1019a, 1-4; τὰ μὲν δὴ οὕτω λέγεται πρότερα καὶ ὕστερα, τὰ δὲ κατὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐσίαν, ὅσα ἐνδέχεται εἶναι ἄνευ ἄλλων, ἐκεῖνα δὲ ἄνευ ἐκείνων μή· ᾗ διαιρέσει ἐχρήσατο Πλάτων.

We may understand Plotinus' use of the word 'generate', in this context, as indicating that if an essence cannot be what it is (namely *one* essence) without the one, then the one must exist first before that essence can be what it is, in order that the particular essence can 'come into being' (an alternative translation of the Greek word for 'generate') since it must come into being as *one* essence and it depends upon the one to be *one* essence. So just as an object must exist before its shadow and may be said to bring the shadow into being, so also may the one be said to bring a particular essence into being and be the generator of that essence in this particular sense. Hence we have a priority of the one over any other essence.

Up to this point the consideration of priority has certainly been involved in the overall argument of chapter 13. We have noted that the predicational priority of the one is established as is the ontological priority of the one over the many. But in the last Plotinus extract we have the actual dependence of all essences upon the one in order to be what they are, namely *one* essence. If we are to express this in Aristotle's terminology as quoted above we might say that the one can exist without the other things but the other things cannot exist without the one. Plotinus takes this particular understanding of priority a step further and states that the one *generates* the other things in the sense that they depend upon the one for their coming into being as *one* essence because they could not have come into being as one essence without the one and if they had not come into being as one essence they could not have come into being at all

The earlier part of the argument in chapter 13 has certainly established the pre-existence of the one and so the conclusion of ontological dependence drawn above is undoubtedly implied by the earlier conclusions. However, it is only in the above extract that the ontological dependence is formally asserted on the basis that every essence must come into being as one essence and it depends upon the pre-existence of the one in order to come into being as one essence and therefore the one must be prior to and productive of every other essence.

This is a definite conclusion about one of the issues we said that we wanted to investigate further in this chapter; the relationship between the one and being and whether this involves priority or mere distinctness. Plotinus has now established, by arguments that rely in considerable measure on the *Parmenides,* that the oneness of anything is prior to the being of anything, and that the distinct being of anything (which he calls its essence) depends upon the one to be what it is, and, in this sense, that distinct being or essence is generated by the one. However, as we noted earlier, it is still not entirely clear how we should understand the use of the terms one and oneness here given the background of their very precise use in the *Parmenides*. We are aware that the one has at least two

different senses and even though we have established many aspects of the existence priority and dependence upon the one, it is still not entirely clear which one we are referring to. Plotinus deals with this issue next.

Which one?

We know from the *Parmenides* that the one may be used in different senses, so we really need to know whether Plotinus is referring here to the pure one of H1 or the existent one of H2, or indeed whether he is relying upon the *Parmenides* at all for his understanding of the one in this chapter[284]. The next extract puts such a question beyond all doubt;

> For this reason also it is one-being, but not first being and then one; for in that which was being and also one there would be many; but being is not present in the one except in the sense that it might make it by inclining to its generation.[285]

So the one that Plotinus has been considering in the argument so far is now revealed as what Armstrong translates as 'one-being' and we recognise this as the description of the one of H2 in the *Parmenides*; the one itself, the one of H1, participating in being. So the one that is prior to and productive of each distinct essence is the existent one of H2, a one that is a whole with two parts; one and being. However, we are still left with a further prioritisation question about the relationship between the oneness and the being of this 'one-being'; this one of H2. We have established that this 'one-being' is prior to the other essences or the particular beings of anything else and we now need to consider the relative priority of its two parts; the one part and the being part. This relative priority is not made clear by Parmenides in the opening section of H2 when he first introduces the concept of the existent one but Plotinus' argument above enables us to clarify this now.

Plotinus deals with this prioritisation issue in the extract we have just quoted. He first considers whether the *being* of the 'one-being' could be first and could become one subsequently. Now we have already considered Plotinus' treatment of the priority of the 'one-being' over every essence and we now need to consider the relative priority of the one itself with respect to being in which the one itself participates. If we place being in the same category as any other essence we may then allow any conclusions that have been reached regarding essence to apply also to being. We have concluded that any essence must exist as *one* essence and that it relies upon the one so that it can be one essence. Therefore, if being is to be first it must be there as one essence, as one-being, and as it has two parts, one and being, it must therefore be multiple and not a one that is entirely devoid

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[284] For a similar issue relating to the precise meaning of 'the one' in the context of the opening lines of VI.9.1 see Meijer, ibid, pages 68-69 and Appendix III to chapter one.

[285] Ibid, lines 51-54; Διὸ καὶ ἓν ὄν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ὄν, εἶτα ἕν· ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῷ ὂν καὶ ἓν πολλὰ ἂν εἴη, ἐν δὲ τῷ ἓν οὐκ ἔνι τὸ ὄν, εἰ μὴ καὶ ποιήσειεν αὐτὸ προσνεῦσαν αὐτοῦ τῇ γενέσει.

of multiplicity. But according to the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, the one itself does not partake of the being or, as Plotinus phrases it here, being is not present in the one. Accordingly, he rules out the possibility that being can be prior but he does so, not on the basis of the priority of the one over essence but on the basis that the presence of being in the one would render the one multiple. This multiplicity would be a whole with parts and would therefore be one whole and we would still have to account for the oneness of that whole. Therefore we need a one that does not partake of being and so Plotinus invokes such a concept from the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* and states that "being is not present in the one". At this point he is no longer merely referring to the existent one of H2, a one that partakes of multiplicity as it is a whole with parts, rather he has now introduced the strictly non-multiple one of H1 and he is now in a position to consider the priority of the one over being in terms of the relation between the one of H1 and the one of H2. These Platonic concepts are invoked here and Plotinus either assumes that their relevance has been established via Plato's dialogue or has already been established by earlier arguments within his own works; indeed we will quote a passage below, from earlier in this same tractate, which he could well rely upon for this assertion about the absence of being from the one itself.

In any case, if we say that simply 'being is first' we have not yet established any priority in relation to the two parts of the 'one-being' that we are attempting to consider. For every particular essence must be one essence and it depends upon the one to be one essence and likewise 'being' must, by this same argument, always be 'one-being'. Therefore, if we assert that being is first and it then becomes 'one-being' we are ignoring the conclusion that being can only exist as 'one-being' and so we are stating (absurdly) that 'one-being' is first and then it becomes one on account of the one. Plotinus recognises that this 'one-being' just like the one of H2 is a whole with parts and is one in the sense that any whole is one, i.e. it is one because of the one. So there must be a one that is prior to this 'one-being', a one on account of which the 'one-being' is one, but this 'other' one cannot itself partake of being and as it is devoid of being it will correspond to the one of H1; a one that does not partake of being. So we find that Plotinus' argument here establishes the supreme ontological priority of the one of H1, the one itself of Plato's dialogue, the one that he himself refers to as "...the first One, which is more properly called One..."[286] We may summarise this latter argument as follows;

<u>The supreme ontological priority of the one itself, the one of H1 (lines 51-54)</u>

We have established the priority of 'one-being'

'One-being' is a whole with parts and it is one

[286] See V.1.8, 10-27 as quoted earlier.

The being of 'one-being' cannot be prior to 'one-being'
Because it needs the one in order to be one essence
Therefore the one that does not partake of being is prior
The one that does not partake of being is the one of H1
Therefore supreme ontological priority belongs to the one of H1

The final extract quoted leads us to conclude that Plotinus is referring to the one of H2 in the development of his argument in relation to the pre-existence and ontological priority of the one and then proceeds to show that the one itself, the one of H1, is, in turn, prior even to this existent one of H2. Such a conclusion is consistent with a distinction between the two ones that he draws throughout his works, and so we find this assertion also in the extract from V.1.8 that we quoted above and also in an earlier chapter of this same *Ennead* (VI.6) where he says that;

> ...but I mean not that One which we say is "beyond being" but this other one which is predicated of each individual Form.[287]

Here he makes a distinction between a one that does not partake of being and one that is predicated of anything that is said to be one, a distinction which we have noted in the last quoted extract from VI.6.13. So even if other essences are one on account of the existent one of H2, a one that partakes of being and is multiple, this one of H2 is only one because of the one of H1, so the ultimate source of the oneness of whatever partakes of oneness is the pure one of H1, the strictly non-multiple one that does not partake of being. Even Being itself relies upon this one in order to be what it is, a single essence called Being.

Why is Plotinus presenting this argument?

Our appreciation of Plotinus' reliance upon the *Parmenides* in developing the series of arguments in VI.6.13 will be greatly assisted if we assess the reasons why he is presenting the argument in the first place. In order to understand the motivation behind the argument we should revisit the issue with which he begins this chapter and consider it in more detail. So we should remind ourselves that this entire argument was embarked upon to deal with a particular objection to a position to which Plotinus, as we shall see, has already committed himself in chapter 5 of this tractate. The objection is as follows:

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[287] VI.6.5, 29-38; Armstrong translation; λέγω δὲ οὐ τὸ ἓν ἐκεῖνο, ὃ δὴ ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ὄντος φαμέν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἓν ὃ κατηγορεῖται τῶν εἰδῶν ἑκάστου.

> How could it be reasonable to suppose that the thought of the one originated from what underlies it, which is a man or some other living thing, or even a stone, in the realm of sense...?[288]

We will see below precisely how Plotinus, as you would expect from a Platonist, has already committed himself to the view that there can be one man only because of the existence of the one. The question above is a response to someone who is asserting that the entire process works the other way around and that the notion of the one arises from the fact that there are 'ones', or unities, in the physical world. Whoever makes such a claim is saying that man does not require anything other than the fact of being man to make him one man; there is no need of something called 'the one', a one that is other than man in order that man can be one man. Once he is, he is one, or more generally, to be is to be one and therefore one and being are the same. The contemporary source for such an opposing argument may well have been Stoic, but once we analyse this opening objection as we have done we are strongly reminded of Aristotle's equation of one with being in the passage from the *Metaphysics* we quoted earlier. We should remind ourselves of the exact words of Aristotle:

> ...since "one man" and "man" and "existent man" and "man" are the same thing, *i.e.* the duplication in the statement "he is a man and an *existent* man" gives no fresh meaning...[289]

The first point that Plotinus makes is that 'man' and 'one man' are *not* the same, for man is perceptible and one is not perceptible and is therefore other than what is perceptible. Having taken this first and fundamental step, he is in a position to refute this attack upon his own Platonic position, a position based upon the *Parmenides* and developed in his own work. He is refuting an assertion that man does not need anything other than itself in order to be one or, as Aristotle phrases it, man is not one accidentally;

> ...the substance of each thing is one in no accidental sense...[290]

Plotinus does not accept this assertion and in order to understand the basis of his objection we should note that he defines this term 'accidentally' in a very precise manner elsewhere when he says:

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[288] VI.6.13, 1-5: Armstrong translation, Loeb edition: Τὸ δὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου γενέσθαι τὴν νόησιν τοῦ ἑνός, τοῦ ὑποκειμένου καὶ τοῦ ἐν αἰσθήσει ἀνθρώπου ὄντος ἢ ἄλλου ὁτουοῦν ζῴου ἢ καὶ λίθου, πῶς ἂν εἴη εὔλογον...

[289] *Metaphysics*, 1003b, 26-27: ταὐτὸ γὰρ εἷς ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ὢν ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ οὐχ ἕτερόν τι δηλοῖ κατὰ τὴν λέξιν ἐπαναδιπλούμενον τὸ εἷς ἄνθρωπος καὶ εἷς ὢν ἄνθρωπος

[290] , 1003b, 32-33: ἔτι δ' ἡ ἑκάστου οὐσία ἕν ἐστιν οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, There is an issue here in relation to the different significance of the word οὐσία in the *Parmenides*, Plotinus and in Aristotle. However, the outcome of such a consideration does not materially affect the central issue under discussion above, for the basic issue lies at the level of the underlying ontology rather than the semantics.

> By 'accidentally one' I mean that which is not one by being the one itself, but from another.[291]

And although he does not use the term 'accidental' in his initial response to this opposing viewpoint in VI.6.13, Plotinus certainly goes on to establish that man is *not* one on account of itself but on account of something other, namely the one, and this doctrine is certainly denied by the opponent who claims that the concept of one originates in the single entity itself, be it man or anything else, and so there is no 'outside' source of oneness. Plotinus is saying that the oneness is accidental whereas the opponent and Aristotle, are saying that it is not. But the implications of the opponent's argument go much further than the technicalities of whether the property of oneness is present accidentally or by the very nature of the thing itself. If this opposing viewpoint prevails and man is one on account of what man is, and does not need anything other than man in order to be one, then the one of the *Parmenides*, the one on account of which anything that is one is one, is no longer needed for the purpose envisaged by Plotinus based upon his own reading of the *Parmenides*. That such an Aristotelian viewpoint is a concern for Plotinus is confirmed once we refer back to an earlier chapter in this same tractate where there is striking evidence, from Plotinus' phraseology, that he is responding to the very point made by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* 1003b above. The extract is from chapter 5 and it reads as follows;

> So that, if "one" applies to each individual thing and "one man" is not the same as "man", but the "one" is other than the "man" and the "one" is common and belongs to all the other individual things, the "one" would be prior to "man" and all the other individual things, so that man and each of the others might succeed in being one. And so it is prior to movement, since movement also is one thing, and prior to being, so that being itself may succeed in being one; but I mean not that One which we say is "beyond being" but this other one which is predicated of each individual Form.[292]

We can see that this argument begins, as did the argument we have been analysing, with the consideration of manifest entities and it takes the example of man. Since each man must be one man and since the one is other than man, the one must be prior to man in order for man to be one. He then extends the argument to movement, asserting that since movement is one, the one must be prior to movement so that movement can be one. And since being is one, the one must be prior to being so that being may be one. We can see that the relationship of being to the one and their

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[291] VI.1.26, 36-37: Λέγω δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, ὃ τῷ μὴ αὐτὸ ἕν, ἀλλὰ παρ' ἄλλου. Armstrong translation with his word 'incidentally' changed to 'accidentally' to correspond with the Aristotle translation above.

[292] VI.6.5, 29-38; Armstrong translation; Ὥστε, εἰ περὶ ἕκαστον τὸ ἓν καὶ οὐ ταὐτὸν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ «εἷς ἄνθρωπος», ἀλλ' ἕτερον τὸ ἓν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ κοινὸν τὸ ἓν καὶ ἐφ' ἑκάστου τῶν ἄλλων, πρότερον ἂν εἴη τὸ ἓν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἑκάστου τῶν ἄλλων, ἵνα καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν ἄλλων τύχῃ ἕκαστον τοῦ ἓν εἶναι. Καὶ πρὸ κινήσεως τοίνυν, εἴπερ καὶ ἡ κίνησις ἕν, καὶ πρὸ τοῦ ὄντος, ἵνακαὶ αὐτὸ τοῦ ἓν εἶναι τύχῃ· λέγω δὲ οὐ τὸ ἓν ἐκεῖνο, ὃ δὴ ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ὄντος φαμέν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἓν ὃ κατηγορεῖται τῶν εἰδῶν ἑκάστου.

relative priority is expressed quite clearly here, in contrast to the terse treatment at the end of VI.6.13, and Plotinus may well be assuming in chapter 13 that the point made in chapter 5 has already been established.

If he wishes to defend his chapter 5 conclusion that "...the 'one' is prior to 'man' and all the other individual things, so that man and each of the others might succeed in being one..."[293] he will need to refute his chapter 13 opponent by establishing that the one does indeed exist independently of things that are one, and those things are one on account of that independently existing one. Plotinus obviously recognises the fact that this opposing argument is not presenting some trivial objection to his *Parmenides*-based understanding of the one. He appreciates that it entirely dismantles his own ontology, an ontology in which the one is prior to all else, and so he marshals a very elaborate and far reaching argument in response to it. Although the sequencing of the Plotinus' tractates themselves was altered by Porphyry, the chapter sequences within each tractate are just as Plotinus wrote them. Accordingly, the extract from VI.6.5 quoted above shows a clear awareness of the threat to his own doctrines presented by the assertion that one and being are the same, and it presents a succinct argument in response. The argument in the extract from chapter 5 is primarily ontological and seems to rely upon the concept of common properties as formulated in the *Theaetetus*[294] and the concept of the two ones from the *Parmenides*.

Plotinus obviously does not regard the one/being issue as settled finally by this argument in chapter 5. And so we have further evidence for the seriousness of the one/being issue in the fact that it recurs later in the same tractate, in the chapter we have been analysing, and becomes the subject of a much more elaborate response. From the commonality of wording between the Plotinus extract above and the Aristotle passage from the *Metaphysics* we may conclude that Plotinus' prime motivation in VI.6.13 is carried over from chapter 5 to deal with an objection that originates in the understanding, formulated by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics,* of the relationship between one and being. The Platonic position on this is captured in the *Parmenides* and so Plotinus has recourse to this dialogue as the basis for his refutation of this opposing position.

We have seen that he relies upon the first two hypotheses of the *Parmenides* and their associated ones in order to formulate his final conclusion about priority in VI.6.13. In our analysis of the argument we have also pointed out his reliance upon a section of the argument from part one of the dialogue and upon the third hypothesis. We have seen that Plotinus is revisiting a controversy over the relation between one and being and their relative priority that goes back to Aristotle and

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[293] VI.6.5, 32-34: Greek text above.
[294] *Theaetetus*, 185c10-d1 where 'the one' is specifically mentioned.

perhaps to Speusippus. In response to the Aristotelian position he defends the distinctness of the one from being, establishes the pre-existence, foreknowledge and ontological priority of the existent one over any other essence and thus derives the priority of the one itself, the one of H1 over the existent one, the one of H2. Such utilisation of the first two hypotheses accords with his reading of the *Parmenides* and we have seen how he applies such a reading in both VI.6.5 and 13 to defend his own position on the distinctness and priority of the one in the context of the ancient one/being controversy. Because we have pointed out that he relies upon a section of the argument in part one of the dialogue and upon the third hypothesis we should explain how he does this. In this way we will be able to show that Plotinus' doctrine of the ontological supremacy of the One itself, the one of H1, is plausible and may be defended based upon arguments in Plato's *Parmenides* and conclusions derivable therefrom.

Plotinus' use of part one of the *Parmenides*?

We know that the first part of the *Parmenides* presents a series of *aporiai* in relation to forms, among which is the TLA. However, having done so, it proceeds to formulate a more general concern and it is this more general concern which leads to the demonstration of 'the exercise' which is represented by the eight hypotheses of part two of the dialogue. The eight hypotheses are not presented with the stated intention of resolving the TLA or any of the other *aporiai* of part one, nor does Parmenides ever explicitly refer back to any of those *aporiai*. In fact, having taken the young Socrates through this extensive series of *aporiai* in relation to his concept of forms and leaving the young man at last with nothing to say, Parmenides sums up their predicament as follows;

> ...but if someone, in view of all we have just said and other such objections, actually refuses to admit that there are forms of things that are, and will not delineate some single form of each, he will have nothing to which his mind can turn, as he does not admit that a characteristic of each of the things that are is always the same, and in this way he utterly destroys the ability to engage in discourse.[295]

Parmenides is concluding here that anyone who does not accept the existence of forms will be deprived of the ability to engage in coherent mental activity because such activity requires the mind to turn to some distinct, single referent. As a consequence of this denial, the ability to engage in discourse or dialectic (an alternative translation of the same word) will also be undone. It is of course reasonable to assert that in the absence of any distinct mental referent the process of framing sentences and developing philosophical arguments will be impossible. So if acceptance of the

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[295] 135b5-c2; ἀλλὰ μέντοι, εἶπεν ὁ Παρμενίδης, εἴ γέ τις δή, ὦ Σώκρατες, αὖ μὴ ἐάσει εἴδη τῶν ὄντων εἶναι, εἰς πάντα τὰ νυνδὴ καὶ ἄλλα τοιαῦτα ἀποβλέψας, μηδέ τι ὁριεῖται εἶδος ἑνὸς ἑκάστου, οὐδὲ ὅποι τρέψει τὴν διάνοιαν ἕξει, μὴ ἐῶν ἰδέαν τῶν ὄντων ἑκάστου τὴν αὐτὴν ἀεὶ εἶναι, καὶ οὕτως τὴν τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δύναμιν παντάπασι διαφθερεῖ.

existence of forms is required for the conduct of directed mental activity and of discourse then anyone who refuses to admit forms will, of course, be disabled from both activities. But the reason why they are unable to engage in the directed mental activity is that, according to Parmenides, "...they do not admit that a characteristic of each of the things that are is always the same..." and so the argument may be summarised as follows;

If you deny forms
You also deny that "...a characteristic of each of the things that are is always the same..."
And so the mind has nothing (no single thing) to turn to
Therefore directed mental activity is impossible
Therefore discourse or dialectic are not possible

The occurrence of this argument in the dialogue is quite dramatic, arising as it does after the presentation of all of the *aporiai, aporiai* which lead inexorably in the direction of a refusal to admit the existence of forms because none of the assaults upon the theory of forms have been successfully defended. The consequences of such a refusal are very starkly and succinctly presented: refuse to admit forms and you deny sameness of characteristic to things, and you are therefore unable to turn your mind to anything, and so you are unable even to speak or think.

However, the contrapositive of this particular argument would state that if there is in fact an ability to speak and to think, this is because there is also acceptance of sameness of characteristic of things, with a consequent ability to turn the mind to particular things, and this, in turn, is due to an admission that there are actually forms. Now if we return to one of the later sub-arguments whereby Plotinus establishes the existence of the one, we will recall that the ability to speak and to think featured in the conclusion of his argument just as it does in Parmenides' argument just quoted. Plotinus writes;

> ...how is it possible for that not to exist without which it is not possible to think or speak? For it is impossible to say that something does not exist of which, since it does not exist, you cannot think or say anything at all. But that which is needed everywhere for the coming into existence of every thought and statement must exist before statement and thinking: for this is how it can be brought to contribute to their coming into existence.[296]

So, as we have seen, the argument of Plotinus connects the ability to speak and to think with the existence of the one and establishes the prior and independent existence of the one on the basis of an analysis of speech and thought and the undisputed fact of their existence. Thus the argument in

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[296] Ibid, lines 43-49: Armstrong translation substituting 'be there' by 'exist' because this is how the verb προϋπάρχειν was translated at line 18; ... πῶς οἷόν τε ἄνευ οὗ οὐχ οἷόν τέ τι νοῆσαι ἢ εἰπεῖν μὴ εἶναι; Οὗ γὰρ μὴ ὄντος μηδ' ὁτιοῦν δυνατὸν νοῆσαι ἢ εἰπεῖν, λέγειν μὴ εἶναι ἀδύνατον. Ἀλλ' οὗ χρεία πανταχοῦ πρὸς παντὸς νοήματος ἢ λόγου γένεσιν, προϋπάρχειν δεῖ καὶ λόγου καὶ νοήσεως· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν πρὸς τὴν τούτων γένεσιν παραλαμβάνοιτο.

Plotinus connects the existence of the one with the existence of speech and thought, while the argument in the dialogue connects their existence with the existence of forms. We can simplify Parmenides' argument down to the simple assertion that the refusal to accept forms leads to the inability to speak or to think. So the contrapositive of this asserts that if there is the ability to speak and to think there must be forms. We need not rely upon the assumption that the one should be regarded as a form in order to establish a connection between the argument in the *Parmenides* and that in Plotinus' chapter 13. However, we may note at this stage that Plotinus actually argues in VI.6.14, the chapter that follows the one we have analysed, that this is indeed the case. He concludes that;

> As therefore a thing is great by the presence of greatness, so it is one by the presence of one, and two by the presence of dyad, and the rest in the same way.[297]

Armstrong comments on this passage that "He is treating numbers simply as a particular kind of Forms with the same objective reality and causative power as other forms."[298]

Regardless of whether or not the one is a form, Plotinus' argument in lines 43 to 49 can be simplified to state that since there is thought and speech the one must exist, and in this formulation we can see that his argument so closely mirrors the contrapositive of the argument in the first part of the dialogue that he is very likely to have been inspired by the Platonic source. If this is the case, there is more substantial reliance upon the *Parmenides* here than mere textual analysis would reveal and such reliance goes far beyond the ones of the first and second hypotheses. It appears that Plotinus has considered the argument whereby Parmenides links the operation of thought and speech with the acceptance of forms, has used the arguments of his own chapter 13 to establish the cogency of such a connection and has used this connection, in turn, as a key element in establishing the existence of the One. So we can see that there is a strong case that Plotinus bases his concluding argument for the existence of the One and the dependence of thought and speech thereon, upon the contrapositive of a corresponding argument in the first part of the *Parmenides*.

We wished to show in this chapter that Plotinus' understanding of the One was defensible, was based upon legitimate exegesis of the *Parmenides* and employed an interpretation of the dialogue which supported our own reading thereof. His reliance upon the first two hypotheses of the second part is unquestionable, but this particular example of his recourse to an issue raised in the first part of the dialogue and his transformation of the formulation of that issue into a further argument in

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[297] VI.6.14,40-42: Armstrong translation; Ὡς οὖν μέγα μεγέθους παρουσίᾳ, οὕτω καὶ ἓν ἑνὸς καὶ δύο δυάδος καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὡσαύτως.
[298] Armstrong, Plotinus, *Enneads*, Loeb edition, Volume VII, p 54-55, note 1.

relation to the nature of the One, points to the conclusion that Plotinus is reading the dialogue as a unity in which the hypotheses resolve the earlier *aporiai*, and the issues in the first part are so worded as to indicate the direction of their own resolution. Another significant aspect of the argument in chapter 13 is the role of the One in relation to things that are not one. We have pointed out that this is a theme of the third hypothesis (H3) of the *Parmenides,* so we should examine the relevant section of that hypothesis now and show how Plotinus relies upon it in this chapter. This will provide us with further evidence of his recourse to the *Parmenides* for an understanding of the relationship between the one and everything else and an additional basis for asserting its ontological priority.

The third hypothesis

In the third hypothesis Parmenides discusses the consequences for 'things other than one' if there is a one. This has also been a theme of Plotinus' 6.6.13 passage throughout because, from the very outset, the question of how a 'man' or anything else comes to be one 'man' or one 'anything else' has been under scrutiny. In considering what the one does to things other than one and how they would fare without it, the exploration in H3 overlaps with that of 6.6.13 and we shall now argue that Plotinus capitalises upon that overlap. This is formulated in H3 as;

> Shall we state what the effect is on things other than one, if one is?[299]

We can see that it is unambiguously envisaged that this hypothesis will explore the consequences for things other than one, if one is. And indeed the opening words of the hypothesis give an additional emphasis by saying the same thing in a different way;

> But if one is, what characteristics apply to the others? Should we investigate this?"[300]

We have noted that Plotinus regards the one as having the same functionality as a form, insofar as the one is 'that on account of which things that are not one by their own nature, become one'. Plotinus seems to take this function of the one for granted as he develops the argument in VI.6.13 and we have indicated that he may rely upon the third hypothesis to support this assumption. We have now seen that this hypothesis proposes to consider the effect of the one on 'things other than one'; this concept of 'things other than one' is first defined in H3 as follows;

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[299] 157b7-8; λέγωμεν δή, ἓν εἰ ἔστι, τἆλλα τοῦ ἑνὸς τί χρὴ πεπονθέναι;

[300] 157b5-6; τί δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις προσήκοι ἂν πάσχειν, ἓν εἰ ἔστιν, ἆρα οὐ σκεπτέον;

> "But whatever is other than the one would presumably be many, for if things other than one were neither one nor more than one, they would be nothing."[301]

Plotinus has actually relied upon this effective definition of many as 'other than one' in line 18 of this chapter when he refers to mental assertion and states that "...For also when it says "multitude" it says "more than one"...;[302] and he relies upon this definition again in line 21 when he refers to "the 'one' which the multitude does not have". It follows from this definition that anything other than one is, by nature, a multiplicity and so when the third hypothesis is considering the consequences of the existence (or non-existence) of the one for things other than one, it is actually considering the consequences for multiplicities because 'other than one' means 'multiple'. The H3 argument will explore this issue by considering what it would be like if the one were absent from a multiplicity. Accordingly, we are asked to consider a multiplicity which is devoid of the one. In considering this 'one-less' multiplicity Parmenides asks;

> "What of this? If we tried, in the mind, to take away as little as we could from such multiplicities, mustn't that which is taken away be a multiplicity and not one; if in fact it does not share in the one?"[303]

This is saying that without the one there would only be multiplicity and nothing would be one for it is only on account of the one that anything is one. Indeed in this last quotation we see an interesting counterpart to the process, in the mind (τῇ διανοίᾳ), which was introduced in the context of H2 to consider the one in isolation from the being of which it partakes. In the above extract the same phrase (τῇ διανοίᾳ - 'in the mind') is repeated but in this hypothesis we have separated the one from the entities in which it is instantiated, entities which were each one because of participation in the one but always remain as multiplicities in the absence of the one. We are then asked to consider what happens to such a multiplicity once the one is removed.

For instance, we have seen in the TLA that we have a multiplicity in the form of our 'many large things'. These large things constitute a whole as we can see from the fact that we can survey all of the large things together as one. There is also *one* particular characteristic that is the same in each *one* of the large things, namely largeness. Hence, in order to formulate the TLA, we rely upon the fact that all of the large objects together form a whole which is *one* whole, and upon the fact that

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[301] *Parm*, 158b1-2; Τὰ δ' ἕτερα τοῦ ἑνὸς πολλά που ἂν εἴη· εἰ γὰρ μήτε ἓν μήτε ἑνὸς πλείω εἴη τἆλλα τοῦ ἑνός, οὐδὲν ἂν εἴη.

[302] Ibid lines 18: Ἐπεὶ καὶ ὅταν πλῆθος λέγῃ πλείω ἑνὸς λέγει·

[303] *Parm*, 158c2-4; εἰ ἐθέλοιμεν τῇ διανοίᾳ τῶν τοιούτων ἀφελεῖν ὡς οἷοί τέ ἐσμεν ὅτι ὀλίγιστον, οὐκ ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸ ἀφαιρεθὲν ἐκεῖνο, εἴπερ τοῦ ἑνὸς μὴ μετέχοι, πλῆθος εἶναι καὶ οὐχ ἕν; - this extract is from the third hypothesis.

each large object is *one* part of that whole. So the structure upon which the TLA is based is entirely dependent upon the one. The above H3 extract may therefore be summarised as follows;

If a multiplicity does not share in the one
Then any portion will not share in the one
Therefore that portion will be another multiplicity and not one
No matter how little we take

This means that if we are to construct the basic pre-requisites that are considered in the TLA we need a number of objects each of which is one object and they must be capable of being viewed as one whole. Based upon the argument above, such a structure is impossible in the absence of the one for the multiplicity of objects will always remain multiple in the absence of the one. However, once the effect of the one is introduced into the argument of H3 the outcome is as follows;

> However, once each part becomes one part, they then acquire limit with respect to one another and relative to the whole, and so does the whole towards the parts.[304]

So the one brings the 'limit' or distinctness without which the TLA or any other argument cannot develop. The step in the TLA wherein the objects are all surveyed together involves looking at a single whole, a unity, of which each object is one part. Although this whole is a multiplicity (of large things) we view it as *one* whole. H3 argues that the whole and each of the parts is one due to communion with the one and without the one they would be undefined multiplicities incapable of attaining any definition or distinctness. It has established this by asking us to consider a 'one-less' multiplicity – a strange mental construct which, as in H2, is considered with the mind (τῇ διανοίᾳ). So limit and distinctness do not belong to any multiplicity in virtue of its own nature, rather it is the one that brings these characteristics to the multiplicities which, of their own nature, do not possess distinctness. So Parmenides concludes that;

> Now as things other than one are seemingly a communion of themselves and the one, it follows that something different arises within themselves that furnishes a limit relative to one another. However, by themselves their own nature is unlimited.[305]

On this basis we may contend that, at a completely fundamental level, the very development of the TLA requires the operation of the one because, without 'communion' with the one, the whole will not possess limit or distinctness with respect to the large things which are its parts nor will they themselves be distinct either from one another or from the whole. In H3 we view matters from the

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[304] *Parm,* 158c7-d1; καὶ μὴν ἐπειδάν γε ἓν ἕκαστον μόριον μόριον γένηται, πέρας ἤδη ἔχει πρὸς ἄλληλα καὶ πρὸς τὸ ὅλον, καὶ τὸ ὅλον πρὸς τὰ μόρια.

[305] 158d3-6; τοῖς ἄλλοις δὴ τοῦ ἑνὸς συμβαίνει ἐκ μὲν τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ ἐξ ἑαυτῶν κοινωνησάντων, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἕτερόν τι γίγνεσθαι ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, ὃ δὴ πέρας παρέσχε πρὸς ἄλληλα: ἡ δ' ἑαυτῶν φύσις καθ' ἑαυτὰ ἀπειρίαν.

point of view of things other than one, things such as the large objects of the TLA, and we see the extent of their dependence upon the one. The H3 argument has established the dependence of things other than one upon the one in order to be one, and in order to have limit or distinctness, for it has shown that in the absence of the one anything other than the one would be an unlimited multiplicity.

It appears that Plotinus uses the contrapositive of this H3 argument in order to establish the existence of the one in lines 18 to 27 in our chapter 13. He does this by arguing that since we accept that multiplicities partake of oneness insofar as they are distinct and constitute wholes we must therefore accept the existence of that which brings the wholeness and distinctness namely the one. In other words, since we implicitly rely upon the concepts of wholeness and distinctness in formulating all of the arguments we are considering, we cannot deny the existence of that which is responsible for that wholeness and distinctness, namely the one. Accordingly, Plotinus relies upon the contrapositive of the argument of the third hypothesis when, at VI.6.13, lines 18 to 27 he argues;

<u>The one exists and has a nature (Lines 18-27)</u>

Manifest multiplicities are seen by the mind as one
They are not one by their own nature but the mind discerns the oneness
Mind then predicates that oneness, and degrees thereof, of those multiplicities
Therefore this is true predication of a one that is actually present
Therefore this one exists and has a nature

Plotinus' reference at line 21 to "...the one that the multitude does not have..."[306] gives us our connection to H3 where it is said that the multiplicity, by its own nature, does not have oneness or limit and that the oneness and limit comes through communion with the one. We also have the phrase "...observing the 'one' which results from its order..."[307], a phrase that attributes the order and wholeness of the entity to the one and not to the things themselves. So we can see that Plotinus is relying upon the definition of multiplicity in the third hypothesis and the contrapositive of part[308] of the overall argument there in order to establish the existence of the one.

Again in lines 50 to 51 we have a reliance upon the H3 argument for the assertion that;

> But if it is needed for the existence of each and every essence--for there is nothing which is which is not one--it would also exist before essence and as generating essence.[309]

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[306] Ibid, line 21; τὸ ἕν, ὃ μὴ ἔχει τὸ πλῆθος

[307] Ibid, line 22, τὸ ἓν τὸ ἐκ τῆς τάξεως ἰδοῦσα

[308] The section of the third hypothesis that he relies upon runs from 157b6-158b4. The entire hypothesis runs from 157b6-159b1.

[309] Ibid, lines 50-51; Armstrong translation substituting 'substance' by 'essence' accepting the argument by Meijer, p 107, note 308; Εἰ δὲ καὶ εἰς οὐσίας ἑκάστης ὑπόστασιν—οὐδὲν γὰρ ὄν, ὃ μὴ ἕν—καὶ πρὸ οὐσίας ἂν εἴη καὶ γεννῶν τὴν οὐσίαν.

We now know that this dependence of everything upon the one to be what it is, namely one thing, is established in H3 by imagining what it would be like if the one were absent[310]. We have seen that whatever possesses limit and determinacy depends upon communion with the one for this limit and determinacy. Without the one, a part cannot be one part and therefore cannot be a part at all, and a whole cannot be one whole and therefore cannot be a whole at all. This, for Plotinus, is the basis of his conclusion that the one is 'needed' for the existence of every essence, because every essence must be one essence or, as Plotinus puts it, 'there is nothing which is not one'. This in turn establishes the priority of the one and the dependence of everything upon the one. We can now see that these conclusions are firmly rooted in the reasoning of the third hypothesis of the *Parmenides* whereby limit and distinctness do not belong to multiplicities by their own nature, but due to communion with the one.

Of course we are still left with the question of whether it is the one of H1 or the one of H2 that is responsible for bringing this limit or distinctness. But we have seen that, for Plotinus, it is the one of H2 that brings this limit and distinctness to these multiplicities, for he says that this is the one that is 'predicated of objects'[311]. This one of H2 is, as we have seen, an existent one, a whole with parts, one whole that is itself one on account of the one of H1. But the one of H1 does not have parts as it is strictly devoid of multiplicity and accordingly it does not partake of being. As we have noted, Plotinus does not clarify which of the ones is at work in the argument of chapter 13 until the very end of the chapter. However, when he does so he relies upon conclusions established in the first two hypotheses of the *Parmenides* which, taken in conjunction with the third hypothesis and the part one argument on speech and thought, enable him to establish the existence and ontological priority of the 'one-being' and then deduce the supreme ontological priority of the one itself, the strictly non-multiple one of H1.

Summary of Plotinus' possible Platonic sources in VI.6.13

Our detailed analysis of Plotinus' argument has now disclosed two significant additional instances of his reliance upon the *Parmenides* in responding to the objection raised in VI.6.13. We have broken this entire argument into a number of subsections and it would be useful to tabulate these now and summarise the overall use of Platonic sources.

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[310] Meijer notes a similar argument in the first section of VI.6.9 but he does not make the connection to the reasoning of the third hypothesis. Meijer, Ibid, p 69.

[311] See VI.6.5 as quoted above.

	Sub-argument in VI.6.13	Parallel argument in the *Parmenides* or elsewhere
1	The non-identity of the one with its instantiations (lines 1-6)	142b5-c1 at the start of H2 establishing that participation requires non-identity, cited in chapter 3 of this thesis.
2	The priority of the predication of oneness over any other predication (lines 6-14)	The *Parmenides* does not deal specifically with priority of predication. But the priority of oneness over otherness is part of the argument of H3 (157b6-159b1) because otherness aligns to limit and to distinctness as discussed in H3.
3	The ontological priority of the one over the many (lines 14-18)	Establishes the priority of the one over the many on the basis of the definition of many as other than one at 158b2-3 in H3.
4	The one exists and has a nature (Lines 18-27)	Relies upon the third hypothesis (157b6-159b1) as described above to establish the dependence of whatever is one upon the one in order to be one. The contrapositive establishes the existence of the one.
5	Degrees of oneness imply that the one must exist (Lines 27-36)	Based upon H3 as it relies upon the fact that the 'oneless' multiplicities depend upon the one. But the *Parmenides* does not refer to degrees of oneness. This sub-argument is therefore a Plotinian development of a Platonic argument.
6	There is foreknowledge of the one (Lines 36 to 41)	Reminiscent of the 'equality proof' in *Phaedo* (72e-77a) but the *Parmenides* does not contain a formal epistemological argument of this kind.
7	The one is involved in all speech (lines 41-43)	Prepares for the next sub-argument and deals with a possible objection. Uses an argument from *Sophist* 237d.
8	The existence of speech and thought prove the existence of the one (Lines 43 to 49)	Relies upon the contrapositive of the argument in the *Parmenides* at 135b5-c2 where the acceptance of forms is connected to the operation of speech and thought.
9	The one is prior to any other essence and generates that essence (lines 50-51)	Develops the H3 argument to assert that since there is nothing that is not one everything depends upon the one to be what it is and, in this sense, the one generates every essence.
10	The supreme ontological priority of the one itself, the one of H1 (lines 51-54)	Relies upon the understanding of the one of H1 and of H2 in order to establish the supreme ontological priority of the one itself, the one of H1.

The detailed summaries of the sub-arguments are in the Appendix to this chapter.

We can see from the above analysis of the 10 sub-divisions of VI.6.13 that Plotinus, for the most part, relies very directly upon the *Parmenides*, sometimes upon other dialogues and sometimes develops arguments of his own using the Platonic constructions as his basis. This summary establishes that, in this chapter, Plotinus is not merely referring to the text of the *Parmenides* in support of his doctrines about the One. Jackson and Dodds have made the case, primarily in relation

to H1 and H2 that "... Plotinus had considerable knowledge of the *Parmenides* and used its language."[312] However, we have established that he is actually employing the precise arguments and formulations of the dialogue itself and adapting them, in a defensible manner, to develop further arguments to develop and defend his own understanding of the One against the assertion that it is the same as being and an inseparable accompaniment of everything.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to develop our understanding of the nature of the one of H1, explore the issue of the relation between one and being in the context of the *Parmenides*, evaluate the arguments of Plotinus on this issue and his use of the *Parmenides* for that purpose, and assess the overall defensibility of Plotinus' concept of the One as a supreme principle with ontological priority over all else. We have traced the origins of this controversy over the relation between one and being back to Aristotle and Speusippus and we have explained where Plotinus, some six hundred years later, stands on the same issue. We have carried out a detailed analysis of Plotinus' VI.6.13 and we have seen that it begins by presenting an objection to the concept of the one and its priority as held by Plotinus, an objection that aligns with Aristotle's viewpoint on *Metaphysics*, Γ, 2. We have shown how Plotinus refutes this objection and, in the process, uses arguments which are based upon the *Parmenides*, other Platonic sources and his own adaptations thereof, in order to establish the distinctness of the one from being, the pre-existence, foreknowledge and ontological priority of the existent one over any other essence, and the priority of the one itself, the one of H1 over the existent one, the one of H2. We have also seen how this conclusion about the supreme ontological priority of the One is established by a different argument in an earlier chapter of this same tractate (VI.6.5) again relying upon the *Parmenides* as the basis of its reasoning.

Plotinus, elsewhere in his writings, equates the one of H1 with the 'Good beyond being' of the *Republic* and equates the existent one of H2 with intellect (*nous)* and also finds a basis for soul in H3 of Plato's *Parmenides*. However, in the two passages we have selected we do not encounter any of these complications and so we have no need to account for them here. The arguments in these two chapters whereby he arrives at his conclusions about the nature and priority of the one are based upon a reading of the *Parmenides* which aligns with our own reading in this thesis in several respects, and go beyond our reading in several more. In 'salvaging' the one of H1 from being dismissed as the mere subject of a reductio we have found ourselves in agreement with Plotinus' reliance upon such a one as part of an overall ontology. We have argued in our interpretation of the TLA that there are most likely to be two legitimate iterations of that argument; the first yielding a

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[312] Jackson, ibid, p 318

largeness that corresponds to the one of H2, a largeness that is responsible for the largeness of the large objects; the second yielding largeness itself, a 'thin form' that is responsible for the largeness of the largeness whereby the objects are large. This too is in agreement with Plotinus' treatment of oneness in chapter 13 where we found that the one of H2, a one that he refers to as 'one-being', exists and has a nature of its own and is responsible for the oneness of whatever is one. This 'one-being' is, in turn, one on account of 'the one itself', a one that does not partake of being, a one that corresponds to the one of H1. This one of H1 is ontologically prior to 'one-being' which, in turn, depends upon the one of H1 so that it can be '*one*-being'. By a similar argument we could maintain that the first form of largeness that arises on our reading of the first iteration of the TLA, the largeness whereby the large objects are large, is ontologically dependent upon the 'thin form' of largeness, the largeness that corresponds to the one of H1.

This comparison of out treatment of the TLA with Plotinus' analysis of oneness in VI.6.13 shows that our reading is capable of further development in ontological terms based upon arguments that feature in the *Parmenides* itself. This comparison also establishes that Plotinus can derive his concept of 'the one beyond being' from arguments that are based upon a reading of Plato's *Parmenides*, a reading whereby the dialogue is accepted as serious ontology advocating a position to which Plato himself is committed. Such a reading, although it is far from universal among modern critics, is nevertheless adopted by Rickless and by Meinwald. Both of these modern commentators find serious metaphysical intent in the dialogue and neither of them feels the need to interpret the dialogue primarily in terms of some adversity between Plato and the historical Parmenides as many other modern critics do. Plotinus is not different in this respect from Rickless and Meinwald insofar as (per V.1.8.) he regards Plato's dialogue as reflecting a position to which Plato is committed and he regards its content as a well-reasoned metaphysics that establishes the ontological priority of the One itself over being and, derivatively, over all else. He also defends this position against assertions to the contrary. In the light of this finding we may discount Gerson's claim that;

> However, though Plotinus seems to have thought that he was following Plato in the *Parmenides* when speaking of the One, I do not think that he interpreted the dialogue correctly, at least with regard to what Plato was doing in the desperately difficult second part.[313]

We reject this criticism on the grounds that we now have good evidence from our analysis of VI.6.13 that Plotinus is meticulous in his fidelity to Plato's dialogue and although he does engage in a further

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[313] Gerson, Lloyd P; *Plotinus, The Arguments of the Philosophers*, Routledge, 1994, pp 231/2, note 5.

development of the bare Platonic arguments he is no different in this respect from Rickless and Meinwald in his acceptance of the integrity and coherence of this dialogue. Indeed in the case of these latter two commentators we find Rickless levelling the same accusation against Meinwald as Gerson levels against Plotinus; the charge of misunderstanding the *Parmenides*. Whether we agree with Plotinus' interpretation or not is a separate issue but, on our evidence, he certainly deserves inclusion among the pantheon of serious commentators on Plato – though of course, like many others but unlike most modern scholars, he uses Plato's works as the basis on which to establish his own philosophy.

We have also seen that Jackson's claim that "... Plotinus had considerable knowledge of the *Parmenides* and used its language..."[314] is quite an understatement. We have been able to present evidence of connections between Plotinus' work and Plato's dialogue that go beyond mere doctrinal and terminological borrowings and extend into a serious appreciation of Plato's arguments and an extension and adaptation of those arguments to develop a comprehensive metaphysics. From V.1.8 we are aware that Plotinus regards his own writings as based upon the works of Plato and the ancients, but he is fully aware that what he himself writes "...in this discussion has been an interpretation of them..." and is "... not explicitly..." what those ancient authors actually said. Accordingly, Hadot's generalisation about 'forced exegesis'[315] is surely unfair in this particular case in the light of our analysis. For we certainly could not accept that Plotinus' recourse to the *Parmenides* in VI.6.13 is forced or strained in view of the fact that he is answering an objection about the source and origin of oneness that can be traced back to Aristotle and the ancient Academy, and he is doing so in terms of arguments formulated by Aristotle and is relying upon arguments from the *Parmenides* that respond to such formulations in their own terms.

We have now defended the argumentative philosophic unity of the *Parmenides* from two directions. Firstly, we have shown in chapters two and three, through an analysis of the arguments of the dialogue itself, that the one of H1 is a defensible philosophic concept that should not be discarded as the mere subject of a reductio but is capable of being employed in dealing with problems and issues in philosophy. We have proved this by demonstrating the use of the one of H1 to resolve the problematic regress that occurs in the TLA in the first part of the dialogue. In so doing we have also showed an argumentative connection between the aporetic first part of the dialogue and the complex hypotheses of the second part, insofar as the latter are capable of resolving the former. Secondly, we have, in this chapter, shown that one great philosopher, Plotinus, has adopted a similar

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[314] Jackson, ibid, p 318.
[315] Hadot, ibid, p 74, quoting Thurot.

interpretation of the *Parmenides* to our own. However, based upon this interpretation of the dialogue Plotinus has developed ontological conclusions about the primacy of the One itself and the relation between the One and being. These additional conclusions whereby Plotinus develops his highly influential concept of what Meijer calls the SuperOne, are also based upon a very detailed recourse to arguments from the first three hypotheses of the *Parmenides* and a particular difficulty that is formulated in the first part of the dialogue. This shows that Plotinus' metaphysics, to the extent that we have analysed it in this chapter, originates in an exegesis of Plato's *Parmenides* that is no less legitimate than that of Rickless, Meinwald or our own. In all of this we have been faithful to a notion well formulated by Cornford that;

> The gymnastic is designed for the students of the Academy. They are expected to compare the arguments of each hypothesis with those of the others and to find out for themselves the distinctions that must be drawn – in fact to go through the very process attempted in the present commentary.[316]

Or in the words of Plotinus himself;

> "...left us to investigate and discover if we claim to be worthy of our title [of Platonists]"[317].

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[316] Cornford: *Plato and Parmenides*, (1939), p 130

[317] V.8.4, 52-54: καὶ ὁ Πλάτων κατιδών φησιν· οὐδ' ἥτις ἐστὶν ἄλλη ἐν ἄλλῳ, ὅπως δέ, εἴασε ζητεῖν καὶ ἀνευρίσκειν, εἴπερ ἄξιοι τῆς προσηγορίας φαμὲν εἶναι. Cited by Gatti in this context in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus,* p 21.

Appendix

Summary of the ten subdivisions of Plotinus VI.6.13

1/ The non-identity of the one with its instantiations (lines 1-6);

- The notion of the one does not originate in the particulars that underlie it
  - Because the particulars are manifest and the one is other than them

AND

- Since it is other, the one is not the same as any manifest particular
  - Because if the one were the same as any manifest particular the mind could not predicate the one universally of all other manifest particulars

2/ The priority of the predication of oneness over any other predication (lines 6-14);

One is always said about something; it is never said about nothing.

But saying that something is one does not simply mean that the 'something' is on its own with 'no other thing present'

Because other (or different) can only be said once there is one

So oneness is the basis of and pre-requisite for all relation

Therefore the one must be first, before other or different

For if the mind does not rest on the one it will not say other or different

So the mind needs the one to say other or different or 'alone'

3/ The ontological priority of the one over the many (lines 14-18)

Whatever speaks is already one before it speaks

Whatever the mind considers must already be one or many

Many means more than one

So many needs the one in order to be many

So the one must exist before the many (can exist)

So the one has an ontological priority over the many

4/ The one exists and has a nature (Lines 18-27)

Manifest multiplicities are seen by the mind as one

They are not one by their own nature but the mind discerns the oneness

Mind then predicates that oneness, and degrees thereof, of those multiplicities

Therefore this is true predication of a one that is actually present

Therefore this one exists and has a nature

5/ Degrees of oneness imply all must relate to the one (Lines 27-36)

There are degrees of oneness

There cannot be degrees of that which does not exist

All existent entities exhibit degrees of oneness

Degree must be relative to something

Therefore all existent entities relate to the one

6/ There is foreknowledge of the one (Lines 36 to 41)

The mind sees the manifest unity

And grasps the one although the one cannot be seen

The origin of the concept of the one is not the seeing of the manifest entities (already established)

Yet the mind discerns the one from the manifest entities

Therefore the mind must have known the one before seeing the entities

But if it was known before it must exist

So the foreknowledge is the same as pre-existence.

7/ The one is involved in all speech (lines 41-43)

When the mind refers to things without using numbers

One, two and many are implied in any case

Therefore mind cannot refer to things without using one, two or many

8/ The existence of speech and thought prove the existence of the one (Lines 43 to 49)

Whatever the mind considers is either one or more than one

The one exists before whatever is more than one

If there is neither one nor more than one the mind can consider nothing

Unless the mind can consider, there can be no speech or thought

Therefore; without the one it is impossible to speak or to think

Therefore we cannot assert that the one does not exist

And in general since speaking and thinking do, in point of fact, take place

Since the one must exist before there can be speaking or thinking

The existence of the one cannot be denied

Because its existence is what brings about the speaking and the thinking

9/ The one is prior to any other essence and generates that essence (lines 50-51)

Anything that is, is one but is other than 'the one'

Nothing can be said to be what it is unless it is first said to be one

Whatever is one is not one because of itself; it is one because of the one

Therefore whatever is, requires the one in order to be what it particularly is

If we designate 'what it particularly is' as its 'essence' we conclude that

The one must exist before essence since

There is no particular essence without the one

Therefore the one generates essence

10/ <u>The supreme ontological priority of the one itself, the one of H1 (lines 51-54)</u>

We have established the priority of 'one-being'

'One-being' is a whole with parts and it is one

The being of 'one-being' cannot be prior to 'one-being'

Because it needs the one in order to be one essence

Therefore the one that does not partake of being is prior

The one that does not partake of being is the one of H1

Therefore supreme ontological priority belongs to the one of H1

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The argumentative unity of Plato's *Parmenides*; Introduction

PhD thesis: David Horan, 2014

The purpose of this thesis is to make the case that Plato's dialogue *Parmenides* constitutes an argumentative unity whereby certain philosophic difficulties presented in the first part of the dialogue are resolved by the series of eight arguments that constitute the second part of the dialogue. In order to accomplish this objective we shall first explain, in general terms, the nature and overall structure of the dialogue and the complexities and interpretational possibilities it presents. Having described this we will be able to explain why the reading of the dialogue which we propose to establish and defend may not be universally accepted and indeed is often opposed quite strenuously. Once we describe the content and structure of the *Parmenides,* and the complexity and the difficulty of the dialogue has become evident we will explain why, in spite of the fact that most interpreters accept that the dialogue falls into two distinct parts, they do not at all agree on the nature or existence of any relationship between those two parts and we will also explain that the dialogue is not written in such a way as to make such a relationship obvious.

We will also show that the complexity of the second part of the dialogue in particular is such that it lends itself to a great variety of interpretations, some negative and dismissive, others positive in varying degrees. There is a consequent need to present a basis for our interpretation of the second part of the dialogue with its eight complicated arguments, beset with apparent contradictions and absurdities, whereby we may defend its integrity and reasonableness. We will thus be enabled to respond to some of the more cogent interpretations to the contrary. Such a defence of the coherence of the arguments in the second part of the dialogue will be central to our overall objective of using the second part of the dialogue to resolve the difficulties crystallised in the first part of the dialogue.

Accordingly we shall select the first of the eight subsections of the second part (commonly referred to as 'the first hypothesis') and the transition from that first subsection into the second subsection ('the second hypothesis'), both of which are addressed to the concept of unity ('the one'), and present an overall interpretation and analysis thereof. This analysis of a subset of the opening material in part two will establish a basis for an interpretation of that second part whereby it presents serious, coherent and defensible philosophic arguments and concepts. We will then be in a position to show how such defensible and coherent arguments may be applied to the resolution of the difficulties or aporiai raised in the first part of the dialogue. To this end we will select just one of those opening aporiai, explain some recent approaches to its resolution and argue that these modern interpreters do not make significant use of the second part of the dialogue for such resolution. This is the famous regress typically referred to as 'the third-man argument' (TLA). We will then present our own resolution of this particular aporia, a resolution that does indeed rely upon the arguments and concepts of the second part of the dialogue and, in doing so, we will have provided evidence in support of our contention that there is an actual argumentative connection between the first and second parts of the dialogue. Having made the case that the second part of the dialogue presents coherent, defensible arguments that may be taken seriously, and having demonstrated that the first and second parts of the dialogue constitute an argumentative unity we shall have completed our primary objective of asserting the argumentative unity of the *Parmenides*.

Finally we shall use our own interpretation of the dialogue as a basis for revisiting the so called NeoPlatonic interpretation of the *Parmenides* particularly as exemplified by Plotinus. We will give an account of some of the ancient controversies surrounding the key issues dealt with by the dialogue and will place the Plotinian reading thereof in that context. We shall then argue that Plotinus reading of the *Parmenides* is, as he claims, a well-argued exegesis sharing many aspects of our own interpretation as presented in this thesis. The next four subsections of this introduction outline the content of the four chapters of this thesis.