What's in a Name? Limits in Parmenides' Sequentialism*

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Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)
W. Whitman, *Song of Myself, 51*

Last night, within a benevolent dream,
Being let me know: 'Truly,
I am but one of your arguments'.
N. Cagnone, *Parmenides Remastered*

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Introduction

Recently, two contributions have highlighted the importance of the notions of limit and boundary within the history of ancient philosophy, namely Fronterotta (2023) and Fermani (2022). Fronterotta's work focuses on Parmenides, and in particular on the concepts of constraint and chain, while Fermani addresses the notion of boundary in general, though not specifically in relation to the Eleatic. In this paper, my intention is to build on the results of these two studies, concerning the importance of limits and boundaries for the history of ancient philosophy and their applicability to the study of Parmenides, in order to draw my own considerations on the Eleatic's poem.

In particular, the problem I would like to address, is the one that could be considered preponderant within the debate on Parmenides, namely the problem of the relationship between the two parts of his poem. It is in fact well known that the περὶ φύσεως,[1] after the proem, is divided into a περὶ ἀληθείας section, on truth, and a περὶ δοξῶν, on opinions: this is specified both in the proem[2] and in the connecting verses between the two parts.[3] What, however, these parts indicate, i.e. which fragments are to be assigned to which part, is far from certain – as the numerous studies by Cordero (e.g. 2019b) followed and extended by Conte (2023) show. Moreover, it is equally well known that the delineation of a concept such as τὸ ἐόν – whereby what is truly is eternal and total, i.e. perfect[4] – is difficult to reconcile with the acceptance of the world's imperfect and transient phenomena that are exposed in the second part. These considerations are by now well known to Parmenidean scholars, especially after the studies of the last decade, but it is worth remembering, in this regard, that it is the Epicurean Colotes – mediated through the lens of Plutarch – who offers us the first example of a Parmenides who goes

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[1] This is the traditional title, transmitted by Theophrastus in Diogenes Laertius (VIII 55), Sextus Empiricus (*M.* VII 111), and Simplicius (*in Ph.* 38.4). It is worth noting, however, that Porphyry (*Antr.* 323) cites Parmenides' writing as Φυσικόν, while Proclus (*in Tim.* I 13.15) refers to the poem as Περὶ τῶν ὄντως ὄντων, Plutarch (*Amat.* 756e11) as Κοσμογονία and the Byzantine lexicon/encyclopaedia *Suda* (π 675) as Φυσιολογία.

[2] Cf. DK 28 B 1.28–30: χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι / ἠμὲν ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ / ἠδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθής ("You must learn everything: / and of truth well rounded the solid heart / and of mortals the opinions, in which no certainty is true").

[3] Cf. DK 28 B 8.50–52: ἐν τῷ σοι παύω πιστὸν λόγον ἠδὲ νόημα / ἀμφὶς ἀληθείης· δόξας δ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε βροτείας / μάνθανε κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλὸν ἀκούων ("With this for you I put an end to the certain reasoning and thinking / about truth; opinions, from here, mortal / learn, the deceitful order of my words listening").

[4] With this, I attempt to summarise the attributes we find in B 8: ἀγένητον, ἀνώλεθρον (8.3); οὖλον, μουνογενές, ἀτρεμές, οὐδ' ἀτέλεστον (8.4); ἔν συνεχές (8.5); οὐδὲ διαίρετον, ὁμοῖον (8.22); ἔμπλεον (8.24); ἀκίνητον (8.26 and 38); ἄναρχον, ἄπαυστον (8.27); τωὐτόν κτλ. (8.29); ἔμπεδον (8.30); ἐπιδεές (8.33); ἄσυλον (8.48); ἶσον (8.49). In the fragment, however, the argumentative sections concern ingenerability, indivisibility, immobility and completeness: the other attributes paraphrase and further reinforce these four main concepts. It may be noted, then, that the sections on immobility (8.26–30a) and completeness (8.30b–32 and 41–49) depend in their argumentation on those on ingenerability (8.6b–15 and 19–21) and indivisibility (8.22–25), respectively. One could conclude, then, that the two primary and fundamental attributes of what-is are precisely eternity and totality. This is what I mean by defining what-is as perfect: it lacks nothing diachronically, in that it resides in an eternal present, and it lacks nothing synchronically, in that there are no heterogeneities or discrepancies within it.

mad and, with his theories, wants to destroy all things.[5] This interpretation, whereby the Eleatic negation of becoming causes the things of the world to be paradoxically immobile or non-existent, was predominant until the 20th century and finds a worthy representative in Nietzsche's suggestive words:

> *Nur in den verblaßtesten, abgezogensten Allgemeinheiten, in den leeren Hülsen der unbestimmtesten Worte soll jetzt die Wahrheit wie in einem Gehäuse aus Spinnefäden, wohnen: und neben einer solchen "Wahrheit" sitzt nun der Philosoph, ebenfalls blutlos wie eine Abstraktion und rings in Formeln eingesponnen. Die Spinne will doch das Blut ihrer Opfer; aber der parmenideische Philosoph haßt gerade das Blut seiner Opfer, das Blut der von ihm geopferten Empirie.*[6]

As a result, the second section of the poem has long been devalued because it contains a cosmology and cosmogony in the Ionian style. The fundamental question, as already stated, is this: why would Parmenides expound a theory that what-is is eternal, complete, whole and immobile (cf. DK 28 B 8) and then insert an account of the phenomena of the world in total disagreement with the ontological notions just stated?[7] In this paper, an attempt will be made to provide an answer, albeit a cautious and provisional one, to some fundamental problems closely related to the latter question. In order to do so, an analysis will be proposed, starting also from ancient *testimonia*, of two groups of verses: in §1 we will deal with DK 28 B 8.53–61 and B 9, concerning the Parmenidean conception of the cosmos; in §2 we will analyze B 16, which deals with the problems of perception and knowledge, and some fragments concerning the Parmenidean use of the category

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[5] This account, certainly to be evaluated with a critical eye, corresponds to Plutarch (*Adv. Col.* 13, 1114C–D): ταῦτα συκοφαντῶν ἐκ τῆς φωνῆς ὁ Κωλώτης καὶ τῷ ῥήματι διώκων οὐ τῷ πράγματι τὸν λόγον ἁπλῶς φησι πάντ' ἀναιρεῖν τῷ ἓν ὂν ὑποτίθεσθαι Παρμενίδην ("Colotes, posing as the sycophant with regard to the linguistic expression of these things, and accusing the discourse for form, not content, simply says that Parmenides, in assuming that what-is is one, destroys all things"). The *topos* of the Eleatic's madness, not explicitly mentioned here but implied, obviously goes back to Arist. *GC* 325a16–23: Οἱ μὲν οὖν οὕτως καὶ διὰ ταύτας τὰς αἰτίας ἀπεφήναντο περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας· ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν λόγων δοκεῖ ταῦτα συμβαίνειν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν πραγμάτων μανίᾳ παραπλήσιον εἶναι τὸ δοξάζειν οὕτως· οὐδένα γὰρ τῶν μαινομένων ἐξεστάναι τοσοῦτον ὥστε τὸ πῦρ ἓν εἶναι δοκεῖν καὶ τὸν κρύσταλλον, ἀλλὰ μόνον τὰ καλὰ καὶ τὰ φαινόμενα διὰ συνήθειαν, ταῦτ' ἐνίοις διὰ τὴν μανίαν οὐθὲν δοκεῖ διαφέρειν ("In this way and for these reasons they give an account of truth, because it seems that, in relation to arguments, these things follow. But in relation to objects, to hold such opinions is almost madness. For none of those who are mad are such as to think that fire and ice are one, but only <that such are> the beautiful things and those things that appear so out of habit: these things do not seem to differ because of madness").

[6] "Only in the faintest and most abstract generalities, in the empty shells of the most indefinite words, should truth now reside, as in a cobweb envelope. And next to that 'truth' now sits the philosopher, also as bloodless as an abstraction, and shrouded all around by formulas. Of course, the spider wants the blood of its victims; but the Parmenidean philosopher despises exactly the blood of his victims, the blood of the empiricism he sacrifices" (Nietzsche 2017 [1873]: 39).

[7] If Diels (1899: 4 f.) considered the second part to be a pure dialectical "gymnasium", characterised in a serious way for ironic purposes (1897: 100) – anticipating to a certain extent Mourelatos' considerations (2008) –, Burnet (1892: 197–206) believed it to be a self-criticism for the previous Pythagorean direction, placing himself not far from Nietzsche's (2017 [1873]: 36f.) idea that Parmenides' cosmology was a rejected product of his youth. Zeller (1892: 584), for his part, spoke of this section influentially as the best possible attempt to explain the world, once the metaphysical canons of truth had been delineated.

of ὄνομα. This will allow, in §3, to consider a particular interpretation of τὸ ἐόν, namely that of what-is as 'totality', in relation to the aporias it has recently raised among experts. All this will allow some final considerations to be drawn.

1. DK 28 B 8.53-61 and B 9

Our main source for these verses is Simplicius (*in Ph.* 179.20–182.6), who comments on the passage in Aristotle's *Physics* (*Ph.* 188a19–27) in which the Stagirite explains how the early thinkers set contraries (*Ph.* 188a19 – τἀναντία) as the principles of their systems. The Cilician, who does not miss the Aristotelian inclusion of Parmenides in the number of these thinkers, comments: "those who say that what-is is one and immovable, like Parmenides, also make contraries the principles of natural things" (Simp. *in Ph.* 179.30–32: καὶ γὰρ οἱ ἓν τὸ ὂν καὶ ἀκίνητον λέγοντες, ὥσπερ Παρμενίδης, οὗτοι τῶν φυσικῶν ἐναντίας ποιοῦσι τὰς ἀρχάς), adding that the Eleatic makes hot and cold (θερμὸν καὶ ψυχρὸν) its principles, in the section of the work "on opinion" (πρὸς δόξαν).[8] In this passage, Simplicius annexes two sequences of verses, which he declares to come after those "on truth" in the order in which he quotes them: B 8.53–59 (*in Ph.* 180.1–7, for us *apparati gratiā* Simpl. I) and B 9 (*in Ph.* 180.9–12).

The first of these two groups of verses is quoted in two other passages, both from Simplicius' commentary: *in Ph.* 30.23–31.2 (for us Simpl. II) and 38.30–39, 9 (for us Simpl. III). The first passage, which is part of the commentary on Arist. *Ph.* 184b15: ἀννάγκη (...) μίαν εἶναι τὴν ἀρχὴν ἢ πλείους ("necessarily the principle must be one or more than one") quotes the same Parmenidean verses, explaining them similarly to the previous one. This, however, has the interest of adding a famous prose interpolation, which Simplicius defines as "a small passage" (*in Ph.* 31.3 – ῥησείδιον) located in the middle of the verses as if it were Parmenides' (μεταξὺ τῶν ἐπῶν (...) ὡς αὐτοῦ Παρμενίδου).[9] The text of the interpolation reads: ἐπὶ τῷδέ ἐστι τὸ ἀραιὸν καὶ τὸ θερμὸν καὶ τὸ φάος καὶ τὸ μαλθακὸν καὶ τὸ κοῦφον, ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ πυκνῷ ὠνόμασται τὸ ψυχρὸν καὶ ὁ ζόφος καὶ σκληρὸν καὶ βαρύ· ταῦτα γὰρ ἀπεκρίθη ἑκατέρως ἑκάτερα ("concerning the former, the rare is also the warm and the light and the soft and the nimble; as for the dense, it was called cold and dark and hard and heavy. These things were distinguished in each of the two ways"). Whoever this interpolation is, two points become clear that Parmenides' fragments already suggest: (1) there are two principles, contrary to each other, that serve as the material cause, in Aristotelian terms, of all things; (2) these principles, starting with the

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[8] Conte (2024: 176) translates "*against* opinion."

[9] These words have been seen by some as proof that Parmenides had also written in prose: the *Suda* (π 675 – καταλογάδην) already interpreted the πεζῇ of the Eleatic host in Pl. *Sph.* 237a6 in this way. It is known, however, how this adverb can refer to oral speech without musical accompaniment (cf. Soph. fr. 16: καὶ πεζὰ φορμικτά ["both without and with lyre"]).

opposition fire/night (πῦρ/νύξ),[10] have various names depending on whether one wants to emphasize one of their characteristics or of their instantiations.[11]

The last passage in which Simplicius cites the text under examination (*in Ph.* 38, 30–39, 9) presents a slightly larger group of verses (B 8.50–61), which guarantees that they belong to the fragment B 8 since a pair of hexameters hinge on the famous citation of B 8.1–52 in Simp. *in Ph.* 145 f. This passage represents a rather interesting case of debate among commentators. It concerns the next sentence in Aristotle's treatment of the previous one (*Ph.* 184b15 f.): εἰ μίαν, ἤτοι ἀκίνητον, ὥς φησι Παρμενίδης καὶ Μελίσσος, ἢ κινουμένην ("whether it is one – *scil.* the principle –, or is motionless, as Parmenides and Melissus say, or mobile").[12] In this regard, Simplicius dwells on Alexander's Aristotelian interpretation. For the latter commentator, it was peculiar that the Stagirite had chosen to include Parmenides and Melissus among the philosophers of the principle: if for the Eleatics everything is one, in fact, there should be no ἀρχή. Simplicius retorts that this doubt is unworthy of Aristotle's greatness of mind (*in Ph.* 38.3 – μεγαλόνοια), and that the philosopher rather charitably (εὐγνωμόνως) chose to consider the Eleatics for their method of enquiry, common to the philosophers who had spoken of a principle. The core of the interpretative clash, however, is played out in reference to Alex.Aphr. *in Metaph.* 31.12 f. (= DK 28 A 7). In this passage Alexander is commenting on Arist. *Metaph.* 984b3: πλὴν εἴ ἄρα Παρμενίδης ("with the exception of Parmenides"): according to Aristotle, here, Parmenides was the first to introduce an efficient cause – with the exception of Hesiod, who, however, is a poet-theologian and not a physicist.[13] In this respect, Simplicius' two objections (*in Ph.* 38.18–33) are:

(1) Alexander wrote that Parmenides "according to the opinion of the many, explained himself in relation to the birth of phenomena by constituting two principles" (κατὰ δόξαν δὲ τῶν πολλῶν εἰς τὸ γένεσιν ἀποδοῦναι τῶν φαινομένων δύο ποιῶν τὰς ἀρχάς). Simplicius objects that the expression κατὰ δόξαν is ambiguous: if by that Alexander had wanted to express himself as Parmenides wished, i.e. by calling 'opinable' the sensible, he would have been right, but if he thinks – as is likely – that those speeches, namely those in the second part of the poem, are completely false, then he is wrong (Simp. *in Ph.* 38.24–28: εἰ (...) εἰἐξεδέξατο, ὡς ὁ Παρμενίδης βούλεται δοξαστὸν τὸ αἰσθητὸν καλῶν, εὖ ἂν ἔχοι· εἰ δὲ ψευδεῖς πάντῃ τοὺς λόγους οἴεται ἐκείνους (...) οὐ καλῶς οἴεται). The interest of this diatribe is that it reflects and anticipates the more recent scholarly debate on the Eleatic and in particular on the second part of the poem – historically considered incoherent and problematic by some, valid and coherent by others. In this regard, Simplicius is very clear: Parmenides "calls this discourse questionable and

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[10] Parmenides could perhaps consider these not as the principles themselves but as their σήματα (B 8.55), i.e. as signs of a more general opposition between light and darkness – as opposed, therefore, to the σήματα of B 8.2, which are the proofs of the general characters of what-is.

[11] I borrow this idea from Conte (2024: 182).

[12] It is worth noting Menn's opinion (2022: 162 n. 115) that the lemma to which Simplicius really refers could be the entire first period.

[13] Cf. Mansfeld's considerations in this regard (1980: 46–54).

deceptive not insofar as it is simply false, but insofar as it has fallen from the noetic truth to the sensible that appears and seems" (*in Ph.* 39.10 f. = DK 28 A 34b: δοξαστὸν οὖν καὶ ἀπατηλὸν τοῦτον καλεῖ τὸν λόγον οὐχ ὡς ψευδῆ ἁπλῶς, ἀλλ' ὡς ἀπὸ τῆς νοητῆς ἀληθείας εἰς τὸ φαινόμενον καὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν ἐκπεπτωκότα).[14]

(2) The second point of contention, which again represents a (more than) *vexata quaestio*, is how to identify the causes, in the Aristotelian sense, of Parmenidean cosmology. In this regard, it is possible to trace this outline:

Parmenidean αἰτίαι	Efficient cause	Material cause
Aristotle (*Metaph.* A 4)	Eros	Earth and Fire
Alexander (*in Metaph.* 31)	Fire	Earth
Simplicius (*in Ph.* 38)	The *daimon*	Night and fire[15]

Fig. 1

It is well known that Aristotle calls earth (γῆ) the Parmenidean principle opposed to fire[16] and that he seems to regard Eros as the revolutionary efficient cause of the Eleatic.[17] Simplicius (*in Ph.* 39.12–19), on the other hand, believes that the efficient cause is the feminine δαίμων mentioned in B 12, and reproaches Alexander with having made fire the latter cause, and earth the material one.[18]

It is therefore possible at this point to read the texts of the two fragments cited by Simplicius, *in Ph.* 180 (B 8.53–59 = I and B 9), 30 (B 8.53–59 = II), 39 (B 8.53–61 = III):

DK 28 B 8.53–61

μορφὰς γὰρ κατέθεντο δύο γνώμας ὀνομάζειν·
τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεών ἐστιν, ἐν ᾧ πεπλανημένοι εἰσίν,

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[14] This is what Palmer (2020) calls the *aspectual interpretation* of the ancients, cf. e.g. Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1114D (= DK 28 A 34a).

[15] In Simp. *in Ph.* 25.15 f. (= A 34c) we find fire and earth, in my opinion, to echo the Aristotelian systematisation: it is in fact immediately said "or rather light and darkness" (ἤ μάλλον φῶς καὶ σκότος).

[16] The position of McKirahan (2023: 66) can be shared here: "Aristotle here is making no attempt at a historical reconstruction of Parmenides' ideas but is searching among his predecessors' doctrines for ideas or views that have some relevance to his present purposes (...). Most noticeable here is that Aristotle reads his own theory of the four simple bodies (fire, air, water and earth) into what Parmenides says." If, in fact, three times the Stagirite speaks of the earth as an element of Parmenidean cosmology (*Ph.* 188a20–22; *Metaph.* 984b5–8; *GC* 330b13–15), in two further passages he also equates fire, or heat, with what is, and earth, or cold, with what is not (*Metaph.* 986b33–987a2; *GC* 318b6–7).

[17] Cf. Arist. *Metaph.* 984a23–30, and DK 28 B 13.

[18] Simplicius' reconstruction is akin to Aët. II 7.1 MR (= *Dox. Gr.* 335 = DK 28 A 37). It should be noted, on the other hand, that the same reconstruction of Alexander is found in D.L. IX 21 (= A 1); Hippol. *Haer.* I 11 (= A 23); Clem.Al. *Protr.* V 64 (= A 33), where Clement defines θεοί the two elements of Parmenides; Cic. *Acad.* II 37, 118 (= A 35c); Macrob. *S. Sc.* I 14, 20 (= A 45a), where earth and fire are said to be constitutive of the soul.

ἀντία δ' ἐκρίναντο δέμας καὶ σήματ' ἔθεντο. 55
χωρὶς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, τῇ μὲν φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ,
ἤπιον ὄν, μέγ' {ἀραιὸν} ἐλαφρόν, ἑαυτῷ πάντοσε ταὐτόν,
τῷ δ' ἑτέρῳ μὴ ταὐτόν· ἀτὰρ κἀκεῖνο κατ' αὐτό
ἀντία νύκτ' ἀδαῆ, πυκινὸν δέμας ἐμβριθές τε.
τόν σοι ἐγὼ διάκοσμον ἐοικότα πάντα φατίζω, 60
ὡς οὐ μή ποτέ τίς σε βροτῶν γνώμη παρελάσσῃ.

Forms they arranged, in fact, two, to appoint judgements:
of these not one is necessary, in that they have lost their way:
contrary they judged them by appearance and placed signs
separated from each other: on the one hand, the ethereal flame,
which is tenuous, very light, in every part identical to itself,
to the other, however, not identical; and yet that thing in itself
contrary, the dark night, dense and heavy.
To you I expound an entirely plausible order,
so that some judgment of mortals may never mislead you.

|| **53** γνώμας Simpl. (I **F**^{ac}, III), edd. pll. : γνώμαις Simpl. (I **DEF**^{pc}, II), rec. Scaliger, Fülleborn, Brandis, Preller-Ritter, Gallop : γνωμῃς Karsten, rec. Mullach || **55** ἀντία Simpl. (I, II **F**, III), edd. pll. ἐναντία Simpl. (II **DE**) : ταντία D-K coll. B8.59, rec. Tarán, Untersteiner | δ' ἐκρίναντο Simpl., edd. δ' ἔκριναν τό Calvo || **56** τῇ Simpl. (I **EF**, II, III), edd. τὴν Simpl. (I **D**), rec. Calvo || **57** ἤπιον ὄν, μέγ' {ἀραιὸν} ἐλαφρόν D-K, edd. pll. : ἤ- ὄ- μ- ἀραιὸν ἐλαφρόν Simpl. : ἤ- ὄ- μ- ἀραιὸν {ἐλαφρόν} Scaliger, Fülleborn, Brandis, Mullach, Conche : ἤ- ἐόν μ- ἀραιὸν {ἐλαφρόν} Karsten : λεπτὸν ἀραιὸν ἐλαφρόν Preller-Ritter : ἤ- ἀργὸν ἐλαφρόν Calvo | totum versum crucibus concl. Cerri || **59** ἀντία scripsi collato 28 B 8,55 : τἀντία Simpl., edd. | νύκτ' ' ἀδαῆ Simpl. (II **DE**, III **DEEa**), edd. νυκτάδα ἣ Simpl. (I **F**, II **F**, III **F**), rec. Fülleborn, quo recepto νυκτάδα ἤδε Scaliger : νύκτα δ' ἀδαῆ Simpl. (I **DE**) || **60** διάκοσμον Simpl., edd. : διὰ κόσμον Scal. || **61** γνώμη Simpl., edd. pll. : γνώμῃ Stein, rec. Coxon, O' Brien, Gemini Marciano

DK 28 B 9

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

But since all things light and night can be said,
and they <are said so> according to their[19] forces on the one and the other,
everything is equally full of light and dark night,
equivalent to each other, since with neither there is nothing.[20]

|| **1** ὀνόμασται **F**^{pc} : ὠνόμασται **DEF**^{ac} || **2** τὰ om. **E**

A few brief textual notes are necessary:

(1) B 8.53 has always been the subject of various syntactical constructions:[21] personally, I think the most plausible rendering sees γνῶμαι as the judgments, i.e. opinions, impressions that mortals want to name – just as γνώμη is a judgment of mortals in B 8.61 –, and μορφάς as the forms they have placed to name their judgments.[22] Although some interpreters have rightly noted how τίθημι γνώμας, while not corresponding precisely to the present diction, can mean 'to decide', my reconstruction, with a substantially equivalent translation result, seems to me more respectful of the απὸ κοινοῦ that possibly invests the central δύο, signalling the presence of two forms and two judgements at the same time.

(2) I associate myself with those who understand μίαν οὐ as οὐδεμίαν: mortals posited two forms, of which it is not necessary to pose even one.[23] Other proposals seem to me textually wasteful, or incoherent: on what basis is it possible to choose one of the two forms as necessary in opposition to the other, when for Parmenides himself they are equivalent (B 9.4 ἴσων)?[24]

As for the content, what can be deduced from the two fragments is that mortals have placed two linguistic forms, corresponding to as many cosmological elements, to name the judgements resulting from the fundamental opposition of departure, namely that of the pair of contrary opposites alternately known as fire/night and light/darkness. The result – already noted by critics – is that the entire universe, once these two fundamen-

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[19] That is, the forces of light and night.

[20] Others understand the latter hemistich as "nothing does not partake of both", e.g. Cerri (1999: 155), Casertano (2009: 88), Costa (2024: 209). The doubt here is whether μηδέν can stand for 'nothingness' as in B 8.10: the alternative is obviously the more basic meaning of 'nothing'. In this regard, Givone (1995: 24–29) gives the notion of 'nothingness' as established for the Eleatic, while Franchi (2018) admits oscillations in this still embryonic Parmenidean conception.

[21] See at least Woodbury (1986), as well as the translations of individual Parmenidean editors.

[22] On the name μορφή, it is interesting to note that it could indicate not only the linguistic forms given by mortals to their opinions. Indeed, in contexts such as Ps.-Arist. *MXG* 975b22 οὐδὲν κωλύει μίαν τινὰ οὖσαν τὸ πᾶν μορφήν, ὡς καὶ ὁ Ἀναξίμανδρος καὶ ὁἈναξιμένης λέγουσιν, ὁ μὲν ὕδωρ (...) ὁ δε (...) ἀέρα ("nothing forbids that one form is the whole, as even Anaximander and Anaximenes say, this the water (...) the other the air") and 976b25 εἰς μίαν μορφὴν συγκριθῇ ("being united in one form"), the term μορφή is directly associated with air and water understood as cosmological elements, as well as with their union. Therefore, μορφαί could refer precisely to the elements, i.e., for Parmenides, fire and night. Note, finally, an occurrence of the term with a nuance close to that of 'referent' in Aesch. *Prom.* 209 f. θέμις / καὶ γαῖα, πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφὴ μία ("Themis and Gea, one form of many names").

[23] Thus is μία ου in Ar. *Th.* 549 f.; Pl. *R.* 423a, X. *An.* 5.6.12; cf. LSJ *s.v.* 1d and Ferrari (2010: 67 n. 41), Cornford (1933: 108 f.), Untersteiner (1958: 151).

[24] But *contra*, for example, Sedley (1999: 123 f.).

tal elements have been assumed, is composed of them. This is confirmed by fragment B 9, which characterises light and night as having δυνάμεις that act on everything, to the point that everything could be called by these two names – as suggested by ὀνομάσται (B 9.1), a verbal adjective with potential value.[25] The interest of the term δύναμις in this context is high. It arises with the sense of 'physical strength', which is well understood in Hom. *Il.* VIII 294 f.: οὐ μέν τοι ὅση δύναμίς γε πάρεστι / παύομαι ("I will not restrain myself as long as I have strength"); XXII 20: ἦ σ' ἂν τισαίμην, εἴ μοι δύναμίς γε παρείη ("I would avenge you, if strength were enough for me") and in homologous cases (Hom. *Il.* XXIII 890 f.; *Od.* II 62, Hes. *Th.* 420 κτλ.). A physical force, this, present in each in a predetermined quantity: Hom. *Il.* XIII 787: πὰρ δύναμιν δ' οὐκ ἔστι καὶ ἐσσύμενον πολεμίζειν ("beyond one's own strength it is impossible even for the impetuous to fight") – coinciding, therefore, with what a hero *can*. The term then also indicates political and economic strength, slipping towards a more concrete notion of *power*: this is the case in Sol. fr. 5.3 W.[2]: οἳ δ' εἶχον δύναμιν καὶ χρήμασιν ἦσαν ἀγητοί ("those who had power and were in sight because of their riches"); Thgn. 33: καὶ ἄνδανε τοῖσ' ὧν μεγάλη δύναμις ("and seeks to please those who have great power"), and equivalents (Pi. *O.* I 103 f.; B. I 60 f. κτλ.). But what is of more interest here is the further meaning the term takes on, first attested in DK 24 B 4: τῆς μὲν ὑγιείας εἶναι συνεκτικὴν τὴν ἰσονομίαν τῶν δυνάμεων, ὑγροῦ, ξηροῦ, ψυχροῦ, θερμοῦ, πικροῦ, γλυκέος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ("what maintains health is the balance of forces: wet dry, cold hot, bitter and the others"). It is immediately noticeable that here the δυνάμεις are pairs of contraries corresponding to elements or forces of nature, similarly to Parmenides B 9. In Parmenides, therefore, light and darkness can be thought of as something akin to forces that act and as such form the things of the world.

It may be useful, at this point, to quote the fragments B 10 and 11, that speak respectively of a "heaven that holds everything" (B 10.5 – οὐρανὸν ἀμφὶς ἔχοντα) and of an "extreme Olympus" (B 11.2 f. – ὄλυμπος / ἔσχατος), certainly to be identified.[26] In B 12, moreover, the cosmos turns out to consist of crowns (στέφανοι): the outermost ones filled with fire and night, the innermost ones filled with fire only. They have as their outer limit the aforementioned 'extreme Olympus' and at their centre that δαίμων which acts as the efficient cause of the cosmos' movement.[27] She "first devised Eros" (B 13), possibly

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[25] It seems to me that this grammatical interpretation is less costly than an ametric perfect as suggested by the Simplician codices, whose copyists repeatedly show that they are not expert metricists. Cf., for the verbal adjective, Hom. *Od.* XIX 260: ᾤχετ' ἐποψόμενος Κακοΐλιον οὐκ ὀνομαστήν ("he went off to see the Ev-Ilion, unnameable;" identical instances in XX 597, XXIII 19), Thgn. 23: πάντας δὲ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ὀνομαστός ("among all notable men"). The value is obviously concurrent with that, also possible, of past participle.

[26] Cf. in this regard Cerri (1999: 264).

[27] Cf. in this respect the interesting testimony of Aët. II 7 MR (= *Dox. Gr.* 335 = DK 28 A 37a), according to which in this system of στέφανοι the two most solid are the outermost, made "like a wall" (τείχους δίκην), and the innermost, which is the cause of the changes and which Parmenides also calls "divinity that governs and holds the keys" (δαίμων κυβερνῆτις καὶ κληδοῦχος), "Justice" (δίκη) and "Necessity" (ἀνάγκη). There is an echo of all this in Cic. *Nat. D.* I 11.28 (= A 37b). In general, a study dedicated to the Parmenidean accounts of Aëtius could be of interest; similar researches – of which there are a few specular cases, but dedicated to Heraclitus for

as a means of bringing humans of different genders together (cf. B 12.5 f.). Thus, one could schematise the Parmenidean world in a similar way:

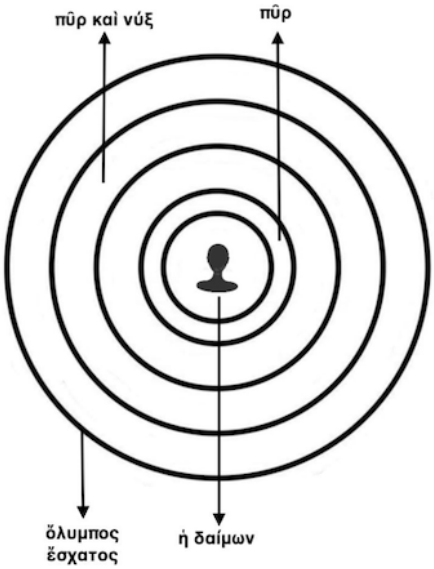

Fig. 2

At this point, the question remains as to how we humans interact with such a cosmos from a Parmenidean perspective.

2. DK 28 B 16

In the first part of one of his masterpieces, *Metaphysics* Γ, Aristotle more or less follows this line of argument:

(1) There must be a single science of what-is and the attributes that pertain to it; 'what-is', in fact, is said in many ways but in relation to a single nature;

(2) Science is about what is first, but what is first with respect to what-is is substance, so this particular science – which is philosophy – must deal with the principles and caus-

example, such as Bergamo (2022) – could enrich the framework of studies on the reception of the Eleatic, which has been positively growing in recent years (cf. Licciardi 2017; Helmig 2022; Volpe 2022; Motta-Kurfess 2024).

es of substances. Since substances and entities are made up of opposites (Arist. *Metaph.* 1004a9 – τἀντικείμενα), it is also necessary for the philosopher to know what opposites are, and of how many kinds;[28]

(3) the philosopher therefore has the task of investigating the surest principles of every entity and substance (Arist. *Metaph.* 1005b9 – αἱ βεβαιόταται ἀρχαί): for the Stagirite, this is in particular the principle whereby it is impossible for "the same to belong and not to belong together to the same, at the same time and in the same respect" (Arist. *Metaph.* 1005b19 f. – τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ ἅμα ὑπάρχειν τε καὶ μὴ ὑπάρχειν ἀδύνατον τῷ αὐτῷ καί κατὰ τὸ αὐτό). This is indemonstrable except in a refutative manner, i.e. on condition that the opponent wants to say even one word – confirming the principle;

(4) If, on the other hand, the contradictory propositions (Arist. *Metaph.* 1007b20 – αἱ ἀντιφάσεις) were true together and in the same respect, all things would be one, as Anaxagoras wants, and of each thing it would be possible both to affirm and deny the same thing, as Protagoras wants. But it is clear that one thing cannot be, for example, good and not good (indeed people do not, out of uncertainty about good, go and throw themselves into wells, cf. Arist. *Metaph.* 1008b15–17).

Arriving at this point in the argument (Arist. *Metaph.* 1009a23), Aristotle explains that the ancients came to believe that contradictions and contraries (*Metaph.* 1009a24 – ἀντιφάσεις καὶ τἀναντία) exist together because contraries are generated by the same thing – not realising that this occurs in potency, not in act. Furthermore (*Metaph.* 1009b13 ff.), they held that knowledge[29] and sensation are the same and correspond to the same alteration,[30] which means that a sensory experience would be a form of knowledge.[31] Now, this is unacceptable not so much for Aristotle, by his own devices: for the Stagirite it seems in fact unquestionable that sensation is true, at least that which is proper to each

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[28] Cf. Arist. *Cat.* 10.

[29] The Greek reads: διὰ τὸ ὑπολαμβάνειν φρόνησιν μὲν τὴν αἴσθησιν, ταύτην δ' εἶναι ἀλλοίωσιν. The use of φρόνησις is not the technical one of 'wisdom' in a practical sense: in the *Metaphysics* the term has the broader and more generic value of 'knowledge' or 'understanding'. This is evident both here and in the two other occurrences of the term besides this passage, namely 982b4 and 1078b16: in the former φρόνησις denotes that kind of knowledge addressed to the fundamental investigations of philosophy – the phases of the moon, the phenomena of the stars and the origins of the universe –, in the latter φρόνησις is in an endiadic nexus with ἐπιστήμη, in a context quite similar to the present one, where it is discussed how the Forms were proposed as a solution for the problems that arose from the radical becoming of the Heracliteans. Therefore, I have chosen to translate 'knowledge' here.

[30] Cf. Arist. *DA* 416b33–35: ἡ δ' αἴσθησις ἐν τῷ κινεῖσθαί τε καὶ πάσχειν συμβαίνει, καθάπερ εἴρηται· δοκεῖ γὰρ ἀλλοίωσις τις εἶναι ("the sensation lies in moving and undergoing, as has been said: it seems to be in fact some alteration").

[31] Exactly as Aristotle states in the incipit of *DA* 426a22–24: δοκεῖ δὲ καὶ τὸ νοεῖν τὸ φρονεῖν ὥσπερ αἰσθάνεσθαι (...) καὶ οἵ γε ἀρχαῖοι τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι ταὐτὸν εἶναί φησιν ("It also seems that thinking and understanding are like perceiving (...). The ancients say that understanding and perceiving are the same thing"). In this regard, Aristotle calls in Empedocles and Homer, and then reiterates how for the ancients thinking (νοεῖν), perceiving (αἰσθάνεσθαι) and understanding (φρονεῖν) are all something corporeal, and all function by associations of the like with the like (τὸ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον) – a theme indeed present in Greek culture from its origins, albeit not in a physiological sense: cf. Hom. *Od.* XVII 218: ὡς αἰεὶ τὸν ὁμοῖον ἄγει θεὸς τὸν ὁμοῖον. The problem noted by Aristotle, rather, is that no predecessor questioned, in formulating these doctrines, the causes of being in error (*DA* 427b1 – περὶ τοῦ ἠπατῆσθαι), i.e. the condition in which the soul spends the most time.

sense organ, since he establishes a distinction between αἴσθησις and φαντασία. This is stated a little further on, in *Metaph.* 1010b1 ff.: οὐδ' {εἰ} ἡ αἴσθησις {μὴ} ψευδὴς τοῦ γε ἰδίου ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἡ φαντασία οὐ ταὐτὸν τῇ αἰσθήσει ("and sensation is not false with respect to its own, but imagination is not the same thing as sensation"), as well as in *DA* 428a1–3, 5 f., 12–14: ἔστιν ἡ φαντασία καθ' ἣν λέγομεν φάντασμά τι ἡμῖν γίγνεσθαι (...) ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἔστιν αἴσθησις, δῆλον ἐκ τῶνδε (...) αἱ μὲν ἀληθεῖς ἀεί, αἱ δὲ φαντασίαι γίνονται αἱ πλείους ψευδεῖς ("imagination is that in relation to which we say that an image has arisen within us (...) That <it> is not the sensation, is clear from this (...) <sensations> are always true, but imaginations arise mostly false"). The problem of the ancients thus seems to be that, lacking a systematic difference between αἴσθησις and φαντασία, i.e. between sensation and mental representation contemporary or subsequent to it, have ended up believing that what appears to the senses is true *sic et simpliciter* (*Metaph.* 1009b14: τὸ φαινόμενον κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀληθὲς εἶναί φασιν) and have remained chained (*Metaph.* 1009b17 – ἔνοχοι) to this opinion.

For ancient thinkers, therefore, sensation – understood as a contingent physiological condition of the human being – determines knowledge, with the absurd consequence that two opposing sensations would correspond to two valid ways of reasoning, thus generating a contradiction. Aristotle here cites Parmenides himself as an example, and in particular fragment B 16 (*Metaph.* 1009b22 ff.).[32] In addition to the Eleatic, Empedocles, Anaxagoras and Homer are also called into question, with stark words: the ultimate and most drastic effect of their doctrines is that, if they were right, no one would want to dedicate themselves to philosophy anymore, because the search for truth would become like a search for things that fly.[33]

The other testimony in our possession is that of Theophrastus, in the incipit of the longest fragment that has come down to us of his *Physical Opinions*, known as *De Sensu* (περὶ αἰσθέσεως), *De Sensibus* (περὶ αἰσθήσεων) or *De Sensu et Sensibilibus* (περὶ αἰσθήσεως καὶ αἰσθητῶν).[34] He begins his exposition (Thphr. *Sens.* 1 = *Dox. Gr.* 499 =

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[32] As a result, the text of the fragment is also reported by the two Aristotelian commentators Alexander of Aphrodisias (*in Metaph.* 306.29 f., 35 f.) and Asclepius (*in Metaph.* 277.19 f.), that I quote in the apparatus.

[33] This need to save a minimum stability of things in order to guarantee the very possibility of understanding each other and thus of doing philosophy is quite akin, albeit with different solutions, to that felt in Plato's *Parmenides*, in the dialogical interlude between the first part and the γυμνασία, specifically 135b9–c2: μὴ ἐῶν ἰδέαν τῶν ὄντων ἑκάστου τὴν αὐτὴν ἀεί εἶναι (...) τὴν τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δύναμιν παντάπασι διαφερεῖ ("Not allowing there to be the same idea of each of the entities (...) They will completely destroy the possibility of making dialogue"). In this regard, it may be interesting to note that Aristotle, in the passage under consideration, follows up these "synchronic" destroyers of philosophy, i.e. those who believe that at a certain moment one can say of *x* both *y* and ¬y, with the "diachronic" destroyers of philosophy, i.e. the "Heraclitisers." For them everything is constantly changing and therefore nothing can be said that is true, which is why it is better to keep silent as in the case of Cratylus. This argument, however, offers only minimal justification for their extremism (*Metaph.* 1010a15 ff.); in this regard, reference to *Theaetetetus* 152c–d arises spontaneously, where Protagoras' secret doctrine is presented as an astute take on the Heraclitean flux theory.

[34] The ambiguity between the first two nouns is reflected in the manuscript *Laurentianus* **F**, which has the plural at the beginning and the singular at the end. The other manuscript, the *Parisinus* **P**, instead restricts itself to the plural, as does Diogenes Laertius (V 52). As for the third variant of the title known to us, namely *De Sensu et Sensibilibus*, Diels (1879: 114 n. 1) attributed to Schneider (a philologist active in the late 18th and early 19th

DK 28 A 46) by recalling the already mentioned principle (cf. *supra* n. 31) of knowledge through the similar, upheld for the Eresian by Parmenides, Empedocles and Plato, to contrast it with the competing principle of knowledge through the different, of which Anaxagoras and Heraclitus are examples. In *Sens.* 3, Theophrastus directly addresses the case of the Eleatic with the words: Παρμενίδης μὲν γὰρ ὅλως οὐδὲν ἀφώρικεν ἀλλὰ μόνον ὅτι δυοῖν ὄντοιν στοιχείοιν κατὰ τὸ ὑπερβάλλον ἐστὶν ἡ γνῶσις. ἐὰν γὰρ ὑπεραίρῃ τὸ θερμὸν ἢ τὸ ψυχρόν, ἄλλην γίνεσθαι τὴν διάνοιαν, βελτίω δὲ καὶ καθαρωτέραν τὴν διὰ τὸ θερμόν· οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ ταύτην δεῖσθαί τινος συμμετρίας ("Parmenides in general did not specify anything, but only that, in relation to the two elements, knowledge is constituted according to the prevailing. For, depending on whether heat or cold prevails, thought becomes another, and the thought caused by heat is better and purer. And certainly this also does not lack proportion"). Immediately afterwards, B 16 is quoted, which Theophrastus comments on, giving us the following information:

(1) As Aristotle already explained, it is reiterated that for the Eleatic, perceiving (αἰσθάνεσθαι) and understanding (φρονεῖν) are the same thing;

(2) Parmenides failed to explain what might happen if the elements entered the mixture in equal quantities, for example whether the capacity for understanding could still exist;

(3) According to the Eleatic, as proof of this theory at once physiological and gnoseological, the corpse would not perceive light, heat and sound because it lacks fire: it, on the other hand, could perceive cold and silence.

In the light of the broad context of his quotations, it is therefore possible to read DK 28 B 16:

> ὡς γὰρ ἑκάστοτ᾽ ἔχει κρᾶσιν μελέων πολυπλάγκτων,
> τὼς νόος ἀνθρώποισι παρέστηκεν· τὸ γὰρ αὐτό
> ἔστιν ὅπερ φρονέει μελέων φύσις ἀνθρώποισιν
> καὶ πᾶσιν καὶ παντί· τὸ γὰρ πλέον ἐστὶ νόημα.
>
> As indeed <everyone> from time to time has the mixture of wandering limbs,
> so thought is given to humans. The same thing,[35] in fact,
> is for humans what the nature of the limbs encompasses,
> for each and every one. The major is indeed the thought.

century) the proposal of the corresponding Greek title περὶ αἰσθήσεως καὶ αἰσθητῶν and stated in this regard: "ipse Theophrastus si fragmento suum titulum dare voluisset, περὶ αἰσθήσεως καὶ αἰσθητῶν haud dubie scripsisset. Nam haec est libelli partitio" ("Theophrastus himself, if he had wanted to give his fragment a title, would undoubtedly have written περὶ αἰσθήσεως καὶ αἰσθητῶν. Indeed, this is the partition of the booklet"). A deliberate assonance with the Aristotelian work of the same name is clear here.

[35] That is, the same thing with respect to thought, equal to it. Compared to the alternative translation "it is the same thing to think for humans: the nature of the limbs" (e.g. Tor 2017: 176; Casertano 2009: 92), it seems to me that this is, with entirely similar outcomes, syntactically more plausible.

1 ἑκάστοτ' Arist. **EJ**, Thphr. : ἕκαστος Arist. **E**^{2}, Alex. : ἑκάστῳ Ar. **A**^{b} : ἕκαστον Ascl. | ἔχει Arist. **A**^{b} J, Alex., Ascl. : ἔχη Arist. **E** : ἔχειν Thphr. | κρᾶσιν Ar., Thphr., Alex. : om. Ascl. : κράσις Stephanus, Kirk : κρῆσιν Coxon, Sassi | πολυπλάγκτων Thphr. : πολυκάμπτων Ar., Alex., Ascl. || **2** παρέστηκε(ν) Thphr., edd. pl. : παρίσταται Ar., Alex., Ascl., prob. Passa

With regard to the text, it is necessary to briefly explain a few choices:

(1) The reading ἑκάστοτε favours a conception of Parmenidean gnoseology whereby a human has a certain arrangement of his parts depending on the situation, and is therefore to be preferred to ἕκαστος. Although the latter variant has the advantage of providing a direct justification for the accusative κρᾶσιν,[36] the subject could certainly have been in the verses immediately preceding the fragment: I do not think, therefore, that there is any point in printing ἑκάσστῳ (...) κρᾶσις with Stephanus (1573: 46).

(2) I agree with those scholars for whom πολυπλάγκτων is preferable to πολυκάμπτων, since it is more consistent with the lexicon of wandering that pervades Parmenides' poem (e.g. B 6.5 – πλάζονται;[37] B 6.6 – πλακτὸν νόον; B 8.54 – πεπλανημένοι).[38]

With regard to the content of the text, it has already been noted by interpreters that a theory of mixing is enunciated here with a simultaneously physiological, perceptual and cognitive scope.[39] The wandering limbs are the two fundamental parts of the body that

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[36] Coxon (2009: 95) prints κρῆσιν, in Ionic, consistent with his general attempt to restore Parmenides' dialect in the fragments, in which he is followed by some scholars (e.g. Sassi 2016: 459).

[37] In this regard, it should be pointed out that the Simplician manuscripts agree in the reading πλάττονται, which cannot be original: however, scholars are divided between those who believe that it represents an atticization of πλάσσονται (from πλάσσομαι, 'I imagine', 'I invent') – such as O'Brien-Frère (1987: 25), Cordero (2004: 126), Cerri (1999: 151), Laks-Most (2016: 41) – and those who hold, as did Manuzio-Torresano (1526: 25r.), that it is a mere mistake for πλάζονται (= I am astray, I am lost) – e.g. Karsten (1835: 32), Mullach (1860: 119), Conche (1996: 100), Sider (1985: 363-5), Coxon-McKirahan (2009: 59), Graham (2010: 215), Ferrari (2010: 47 n. 15). Diels (1897: 72s.) proposes a compromise solution, i.e. to print πλάττονται, stating that the original form would be πλάσσομαι, but understood as an Italic variant of πλάζομαι: the translation thus reads «einherschwanken». Diels' arguments – which convinced Zafiropulo (1950: 134), Untersteiner (1958: 135), Tarán (1965: 54), Gallop (1984: 61), Heitsch (1991: 23), Reale (1998: 49), Gemelli Marciano (2009: 17) – are, however, not probative: the philologist relied on a testimony of this possible exchange -ζω / – σσω in the Doric dialect of Tarentum (*An. Ox.* 1.62 Cramer), for which there is no confirmation in Elea, and hypothesised that this feature was common to Italic dialects in general. Passa (2009: 104–110) returned to the subject, proposing in turn to print πλάσσονται in the sense of 'to wander', but not accepting Diels' motives: the linguist, in fact, hypothesised that for πλάσσω there was a mechanism of analogy set in motion by the aorist, as in the case of τάσσω. The latter verb, in fact, forms the present from the theme *ταγ and a semivocalic infix (*ταγ-i-ω), so the expected outcome would have been τάζω: it is likely, therefore, that the aorist form ἔταξα influenced the present by analogy. For Passa, therefore, πλάσσω would also be an analogical outcome of *πλαγ-i-ω. Whether one accepts Passa's arguments or the Aldean emendation, the meaning of 'wandering' therefore remains, in my opinion, beyond doubt.

[38] The theme is certainly not foreign to Greek thought: cf. B. 11.35: γνῶμαι πολύπλαγκτοι βροτῶν ("the wandering thoughts of mortals"); DK 31 B 20.1–5: βροτέων μελέων ὄγκος (...) πλάζεται ἄνδιχ' ἕκαστα ("the mass of mortal limbs (...) err, each separate"); Soph. *Ant.* 615: ἁ (...) πολύπλαγκτος ἐλλπίς ("the errant hope").

[39] Cf. e.g. Tor (2015: 9–14), Sassi (2016: 461 f.), but also Conte (2024: 188 f.), for whom this theory of sensation and knowledge has a 'superior' characterisation, i.e. it is aimed at conceiving the ultimate foundation of all phenomena.

reflect and act as instantiations of the two fundamental elements of the cosmos, namely light/fire and night, which become hot and cold in the human: perception, i.e. the understanding of what is around us, takes place according to the element that is predominant from time to time, and to how much it outweighs the other[40]. In this way, the sense of 'greater' expressed by the final τὸ πλέον[41] does not differ substantially from the sense of 'full' proposed by various interpreters: there is certainly a mixture of elements, in which the one most present in a given situation constitutes thought not *sic et simpliciter*, but rather according to how much it prevails over the other – which therefore has a value, albeit lesser.[42]

In this context, it might come as a surprise that the term φύσις, traditionally translated as 'nature', appears in the expression ὅπερ φρονέει μελέων φύσις ('that which the nature of the limbs understands'). What is not actually meant here is a substance of the limbs, or their singular compositions. Walter Cavini[43] has pointed out that the first occurrence of the term is in *Od*. X 304 f., when Odysseus tells that Hermes gave him the μῶλυ as an antidote to Circe's poisons, explaining: μοι φύσιν αὐτοῦ ἔδειξε / ῥίζῃ μὲν μέλαν ἔσκε, γάλακτι δὲ εἴκελον ἄνθος ("to me he showed the nature of it – *scil*. the antidote -, / the root was black, but like milk the flower"). The term φύσις could thus indicate the result of the union of contraries: a black root and a white flower in the *Odyssey*, a warm part and a cold part in the fragment under examination. It is interesting at this point to note the perfect specularity, in B 16, of the expressions κρᾶσιν μελέων (v. 1) and μελέων φύσις (v. 3), which occupy the same metrical position and, quite plausibly, indicate – with a lexical *variatio* combined with hyperbaton – the same concept: the nature of the human limbs is a given mixture of the two cosmic elements, light/fire and night.[44]

The consequence of this mechanism, which within the Parmenidean world outlined above causes us to perceive and know the world, is that, inevitably, we give names to the

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[40] Cf. in this regard the final part of the above-mentioned testimony of Theophrastus, who states that according to Parmenides a corpse neither feels nor sees because only the cold is now present in it, as well as Aët. V 30.4 MR (= *Dox. Gr.* 433 = DK 28 A 46a) Π. γῆρας γίνεσθαι παρὰ τὴν τοῦ θερμοῦ ὑπόλειψιν ('<Parmenides says> that old age comes from the decrease of heat') and Tert. *De anim*. 43.2 (= A 46b): somnum (...) Empedocles et Parmenidem refrigerationem ("Empedocles and Parmenides <define> sleep a cooling").

[41] Thus, e.g., Zeller (1892: 579), Calogero (1932: 47 n.), Albertelli (1939: 155; 1958: 279), Cerri (1999: 281), Ferrari (2010: 37), Sassi (2016: 460), for whom πλέον is the Ionic-epic form of the neuter of πλείων, πλεῖον: 'the greater', 'the preponder', cf. Hom. *Od*. V 673: ἦ ὅ γε τῶν πλεόνων Λυκίων ἀπὸ θυμὸν ἕλοιτο ("or kill the most of the Lycians"), Thgn. 1286 f.: νικήσας γὰρ ἔχεις τὸ πλέον ἐξοπίσω / ἀλλά σ' ἐγὼ τρώσω φεύγοντά με ("you have won and are ahead for the future, but if you flee I will injure you") and homologous cases (Hdt. IX 70; Pl. *R*. 343d, 349b). For others, e.g. Bollack (1957: 68), Untersteiner (1958: 167), Mansfeld (1964: 189-193), Laks (1990: 17f.), Tor (2017: 176), Conte (2024: 188), it is instead the Ionic form of the neuter of πλέως, πλέα, πλέων: 'full', as in DK 28 B 9.3 (cf. *supra*, §2) and similarly 8.24: πᾶν δ' ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος ("but everything is full of what-is").

[42] In a similar direction seems to go Casertano (1978: 31, 2009: 92), who renders τὸ πλέον as 'the whole', understood as the whole of the two parts; I could find, however, no occurrences of the term with this meaning. I believe that this reading may also represent a compromise for those who mantain that hot only recognises hot and cold – cold.

[43] *Per litteram*, in his introductory lecture on Aristotle's *Physics* given at the University of Bologna in March 2024.

[44] Interesting, in this respect, is that the first occurrence of the term κρᾶσις – and last before Parmenides – is in Sappho (fr. 148.2 N.: ὀ πλοῦτος ἄνευ ἀρέτας οὐκ ἀσίνης πάροικος, / ἀ δ' ἀμφοτέρων κρᾶσις †εὐδαιμονίας

things around us: so indicate B 19.3: τοῖς δ' ὄνομ' ἄνθροποι κατέθεντ' ἐπίσημον ("to each – *scil.* of existing things *katá doxan* – humans have assigned a name as a mark"), as well as the already seen B 8.53 and the following sequence, B 8.38–40.[45]

τῷ πάντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται,[46]
ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ,
γίγνεσθαί τε καὶ ὄλλυσθαι, εἶναί τε καὶ οὐχί,
καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διά τε χρόα φανὸν ἀμείβειν.

This (*scil.* what-is) all things as its name shall have[47]
which mortals arranged, convinced that they were true,
that they were born and died, they were and not,
they changed location and the light skin colour mutated.

|| **38** τῷ πάντ' ὄνομ ' ἔσται Simpl. (*In Ph.* 87,1 **F**), edd. pll. post D-K : τῷ πᾶν τοὔνομ' ἔσται Simpl. (*In Ph.* 87,1 **D**) : τῷ πάντ' ὀνόμασται Simpl. (*In Ph.* 146,11 **DE**, *In Ph.* 87,1 **E**), rec. Gallop, Graham, prob. Palmer : τῷ πάντ' ὠνόμασται Simpl. (*In Ph.* 146,11 **F**)

In all three passages the same phraseology recurs: παντ' ὄνομ(α) (...) κατέθεντο (8.38 f.), μορφάς κατέθεντο (...) ὀνομάζειν (8.53), πάντ' ὄνομ(α) (...) κατέθεντο (19.3). The content of these texts is of fundamental importance because it seems to suggest, apart from the cosmic and gnoseological system outlined, that Parmenides intended to correct and transcend the use of the verb 'to be' made by humans, due to their pragmatic need to name the things that surround them on the basis of the initial opposition between light and night:[48] Costa's (2024: 211 f.) recent considerations go in this direction.[49] In the face

ἔχει τὸ ἄκρον† ["wealth without virtue is a neighbour not harmless, but the mixture of both has the culmination of happiness"]). The verse in question is, however, partly between *cruces* and generally suspect on metrical and phraseological grounds (cf. Neri 2021: 828).

[45] The first verse (8.38), partially quoted here, has an entirely alternative wording in Plat. *Tht.* 180e1, discussed, for example, by Primavesi (2008). Cornford (1938) included this verse in the final fragment, considering it to be further Parmenidean material. But for the general problems of the entire text section containing these verses (8.34–41), often suspected of being out of place, cf. Calogero (1936: 177 n. 2), Ebert (1989: 121–138), Palmer (2009: 352–354), Ferrari (2010: 33–37), Condello (2016: 507 f.).

[46] Codices provide *variæ lectiones*. If, as in B 9.1, it is difficult to think of a perfect, because it would not have the augment, here it is also difficult to think of ὀνομάσται as a verbal adjective: I prefer, therefore, to read ὄνομ' ἔσται with most editors.

[47] Tor (2023: 264) also intends similarly.

[48] This would be the "initial mistake" that Reinhardt mentioned (1916: 81 f.).

[49] Di Iulio's (2021) distinction between a referential semantics in the first part of the poem and a Fregean semantics in the second is interesting in this regard. Cf. also Fronterotta's considerations (2022: 15 f.).

of criticism of the human habit of naming things and considering them to exist,[50] however, it is possible to argue that Parmenides does not feel the need to deny the existence of phenomena,[51] but rather to introduce a higher level of reality. This corresponds to τὸ ἐόν, i.e. what-is or that which is, in a perfect, total, necessary manner,[52] whose characteristics are expounded by the fragments περὶ ἀλήθειας. In this respect, it may be assumed that Parmenides distinguishes three modes of being:

Parmenidean expression	*Meaning*	*Referent*
πάμπαν εἶναι (B 8.11)	To be completely	That which is, τὸ ἐόν[53]
δοκίμως εἶναι (B 1.32)[54]	To be verisimilarly, credibly	The things that appear in the world, τὰ δοκοῦντα
μὴ εἶναι (B 2)	Not to be	That which is not, τὸ μὴ ἐόν, nothingness, τὸ μηδέν

Fig. 3

It is therefore necessary, at this point, to ask what the Eleatic meant by the expression τὸ ἐον, and to better explore what relationship the latter has with τὰ δοκοῦντα.

3. Compatibility issues

To realise the amount of interpretations that have been given of τὸ ἐόν, one need only read the notes dedicated to the Eleatic by Reale (1967: 292–319), Palmer's encyclopaedic entry (2020) and Tor's *status quaestionis* (2017: 277–308). Generally speaking, the main division is between monist interpreters, who are themselves generous or *stricto sensu*,

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[50] "To give a thing a 'substantive' name is to recognise it as a substance" (Cornford 1933: 110).

[51] *Contra*, most recently, Wedin (2014: 148).

[52] In this regard, I would cite both the modal interpretation of Palmer (2009, 2020), for whom the distinction ἐόν/δοκοῦντα is of the necessary/contingent type, and the interpretation of Tor (2017: 304–308), who is critical of the former on textual grounds (2017: 294 f.) and who prefers to speak of the being of τὸ ἐόν as being *truely*, rather than necessarily. This true being is not, however, to be superimposed on Kahn's interpretation (1969, 2003, 2009), according to which the 'veridical' use of the verb 'to be' indicates in Parmenides not a different level of reality, but the occurrence of one thing in the world. For a development, in current linguistic studies, of the Kahnian hypothesis of the copula as the unifying pole of the verb 'to be', cf. Moro (2010).

[53] In this sense, it is necessary not to take ἐόν and εἶναι as synonyms: this has indeed been suggested, in a different key, by Colli (2003: 224); cf. also Gilson (1948: 22).

[54] I consider this to be the most satisfactory reading of the Parmenidean use of δοκίμως, which I have dealt with in a different work.

and pluralists. The *vexata quaestio*, which is by now rather well known, could be summarized in principle, and without claiming to be exhaustive, with this outline, in which an attempt has also been made to report the interpretations that some scholars have given of the Parmenidean use of εἶναι and to give a minimal account of the ancients' opinions:

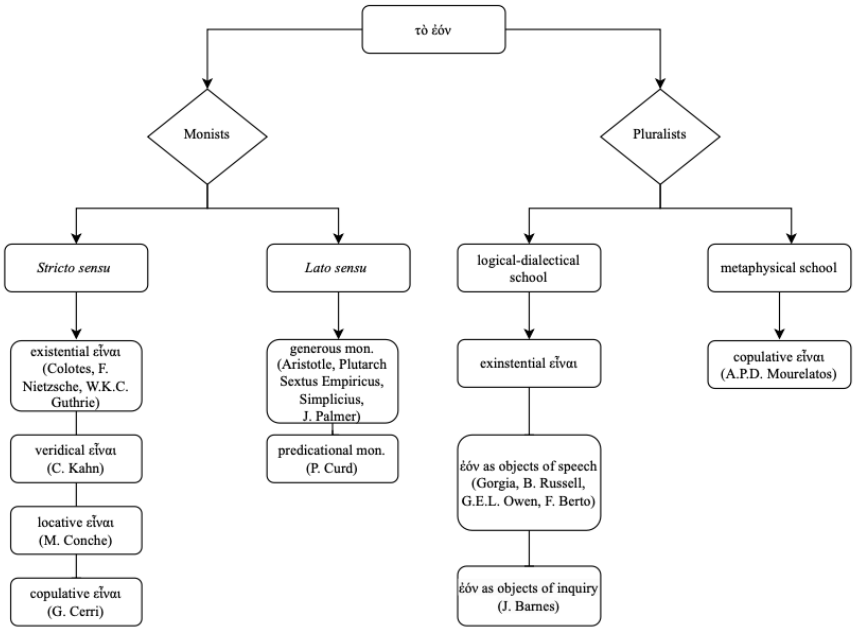

Fig. 4

There are, in this framework, various connections: both Cerri (1999) and Curd (1998) are linked, albeit with different outcomes, to Mourelatos (1970), who in turn recognises the inspiration towards Calogero's (1932) theses of "copulative being".[55] On the other hand, the interpretive intervention of Barnes (1979, 1982) has the merit of having corrected the inconsistencies of those who wanted to see in Parmenides (especially B 2 and B 3) the first philosopher who declared the existence of all the objects of discourse, thus falling into the paradox of negative existentials.[56] Barnes, however, does not address the challenge that has recently been called 'compatibilism,' namely that of coherently linking the part of the poem on truth and being to the cosmological part.

This problem, fundamental and already alluded to in the introduction to the paper, has in my opinion this possible, but not problem-free, solution. Parmenides understood

[55] Recently, Alcocer Urueta (2023) has returned to a Calogerian interpretation, with different results.
[56] Vision still influential in Berto (2010: 9 f.).

by τὸ ἐόν the totality of the cosmos, i.e. the universe taken in its entirety: this is the interpretation of Casertano (1978), who continued and deepened the Popperian image of a de-metaphysicalised Parmenides.[57] This interpretation actually had a twofold positive effect. Firstly, it rehabilitated the image of the Eleatic as a physicist with methodological and logical-scientific content. Cordero (2019b) and Conte (2023: 153–200), in a similar vein, have argued against the identification of the δόξαι with Parmenidean physics and cosmology, which are also decisively rehabilitated by Pulpito (2020) through the category of 'perspective transition'. In recent years, moreover, studies on the Parmenides scientist, rather than reality denier, have flourished: here we can think of Rossetti's recent work (2020a, 2020b, 2022, 2023). Secondly, this interpretation has also made it possible to make progress on the first part of the poem: light and night would be a manifestation of τὸ ἐόν, as we can read in Ferro (2020),[58] and a mereological interpretation would assume relevance whereby the relationship between ἐόν and ἐόντα would be a relationship of the type all/parts, as suggested by Di Girolamo (2016) and, indirectly, by Seregni's (2019) category of "uni-multiplicity".[59]

In the light of these studies, one could therefore speak, in my opinion, of a Parmenidean sequentialism, in the terms in which Varzi (2001: 95–134) speaks of a "harder" sequentialism, with monistic outcomes. In other words, Parmenides' world would consist of a continuous series of sequences, i.e. successive and different states, of the same substratum. A similar interpretation to the latter is that of Sisko-Weiss (2015), noteworthy for reinserting Parmenides into the number of naturalist philosophers who sought the material ἀρχή of the world: this, for the Eleatic, would be the ἐόν understood as the sum of light and night. This school of thought, however, still fails to address the objections raised to it, in particular, by Tor (2017: 290–292) and Mogyoródy (2020:92–98)– which I will try to address here.

These objections fall into two macro-categories that correspond to other fundamental questions, which refer to the characterisation of τὸ ἐόν along B 8.1–50:

(1) *Spatial immobility*: how can what-is be immovable, yet at the same time consist of moving parts, i.e. light and darkness?

(2) *Qualitative immutability*: how can what-is be undifferentiated, yet at the same time made up of qualitatively different parts?

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[57] See, for example, Popper (1973: 152). The philosopher says incisively (Popper 1973: 152): "if the second part, the way of Opinion, constitutes a cosmology, then the first part must also be one."

[58] Schwalb (1953: 60 f.) moved on similar ground, speaking, in relation to Parmenides, of being as a unity of opposites, i.e. light and dark.

[59] Cf. Detienne (1967: 199): "Dans un autre langage et sur un plan de pensée différent, l'Être de Parménide répond au même problème que le *Chronos* des Orphiques: comment concilier l'Un et le Multiple." It is also interesting that for the French philosopher, the truth of Parmenides was like a link between the traditional, revelatory truth of the sages and the rational truth.

In fact, both questions could be seen as two sides of the same coin, namely the general question of *indivisibility*: how can what-is be indivisible, but at the same time have parts?

In this regard, I think it is necessary to mention two passages where a tension is felt – to borrow this category from Tor (2023) – between the language of the Eleatic and what he is describing:

B 4
λεῦσσε δ' ὅμως ἀπεόντα νόωι παρεόντα βεβαίως-
οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ ἐὸν τοῦ ἐόντος ἔχεσθαι
οὔτε σκιδνάμενον πάντῃ πάντως κατὰ κόσμον
οὔτε συνιστάμενον.

You still see distant things as firmly close to thought[60]
Indeed, you will not be able to tear what-is from joining together with what-is,
nor that it is scattered everywhere and altogether throughout the cosmos,
nor that it is conjoined.

B 8.24 f.
(...) πᾶν δ' ἔμπλεόν ἐστι ἐόντος.
τῷ ξυνεχὲς πᾶν ἐστιν· ἐὸν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει.

(*scil.* what-is) all full is of what-is.
So everything is continuous: what-is, indeed, to what-is clings.

Apart from a substantial set of arguments that make τὸ ἐόν something unique, unrepeatable, alone and unaccompanied by anything neither similar nor different, it is rather complex to understand how τὸ ἐόν can (1) cling to and be joined to τὸ ἐόν (B 4 and 8.25) and (2) be full of τὸ ἐόν (B 8.24). I think the only inferable solution, to the best of my understanding of these texts, is that Parmenides could call τὸ ἐόν both (1) the whole and (2) the parts that constitute the whole. Since there is, by definition, nothing that is not within what-is, it can be said that the term 'what-is' is extended by synecdoche to all its parts, i.e. the δοκοῦντα, which are all but non-existent. Similarly, if I look at a chair, I cannot say that there is no world there: of course, this does not mean that the chair corresponds to the world, but only that where the chair is, there is also the world, in one of its parts. In other words: if I point to some flames within a fire, there is the fire there

[60] I prefer to render λεῦσσε with 'see' since this recalls the already Homeric value of λεῦσσω, i.e. that of looking at something shining or looking from afar (cf. Snell 1963: 22), but some scholars choose translations such as 'consider' (e.g. Reale 1998: 47); moreover, along with most translators, I believe that νόῳ refers to παρεόντα, but I point out that editors such as Untersteiner (1958: 133) or Coxon (2009: 61) connect it to λεῦσσε, giving translations such as "considers in the mind that...": in these renderings, therefore, we opt for values of both λεῦσσω and νόος closer to the semantic field of reflection.

too; if I point to a table within the ἐόν, there is the ἐόν there too. In this regard, it can be reminded that this use of synecdoche, far from being a perfect tool for a philosophical treatise, is coherent with the actual genre of Parmenides, namely poetry.

Here, then, I would like to keep my initial promise of using the category of limit, by proposing another example: between me and the table on which I am studying, I suppose for Parmenides there would be no limit. Clearly, this is not to say that Parmenides would not be able to distinguish me from the table: as much as the Eleatic famously expressed himself in poetic and less rigorous terms than we would like, I believe that he was also capable of "not jumping into the well," to quote *Metaph*. 1008b16. I suppose there would be no real limit because, when one touches a table, or anything else, something that is is clutching at something that is. If we judged the world only by the presence of something that is or something that is not, we would se that we ourselves and everything around us have precisely the common characteristic of being: thus, being seems to have no limit[61]. This existence or being belongs to us for a certain time since we are the transient parts of a single entity, i.e. the totality, whose existence is instead eternal and whose boundaries are the only true limits that an Eleatic philosophy can recognize, since they enclose the whole within and nothingness outside. The existence enjoyed by the totality is therefore *true* existence, i.e. necessary and eternal, precisely because it is guaranteed by a continuous and indestructible succession, synchronic and diachronic (B 4), of the transient existences of the parts, which therefore do not coincide with nothingness.[62] In this sense, going back to the "qualitative" question (2), τὸ ἐόν is undifferentiated because within it nothing changes with respect to the only property that characterizes it, namely being:[63] it is the further qualities of the individual parts that change.

In what sense, on the other hand, is what-is immobile, despite being made up of moving parts (1)? I believe that an answer, albeit tentative and cautious, can be given starting from the proem of the poem. Although there are many interpretations,[64] one could draw as a fundamental element that the κοῦρος had the opportunity to pass through that door which, with Kerényi (1944: 39), could be defined as a kind of door of time, or rather of time and space, placed at the crossroads of the paths of night and day. If we too, then, tried to look at the universe from outside with the goddess, we would see the result of the system of concentric crowns, i.e. – out of metaphor – a sphere. The sphere, τὸ ἐόν, is motionless because it is all that is: it would, in fact, have nowhere to move. Here too, there-

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[61] In this respect, I understand the verb 'to be' in a "trivial" way: it is our simple being here, that is, being able to experience the presence of things around us through our senses and, in turn, being able to be seen, heard, touched. Cf. also Fronterotta (2022: 9 n. 13).

[62] In this sense, although the totality enjoys a different being than the parts – which could open up its rather problematic configuration as ἕν – it could be said that the whole needs the parts just as the parts need the whole, in a manner akin to Paci's (1957: 65) claim that "what Truth says is necessary to what opinion says and vice versa."

[63] A similar insight is present in De Rijk (1983), who, however, does not recognize a difference between the εἶναι of totality and the εἶναι of things, running into the problem that the being of any object could also be eternal.

[64] Of the long series, of which Ricci (2020) offers an effective *status quaestionis*, I would like to point out the recent interpretation by Bernabé (2013) and the even more recent observations, from a philosophical-archaeological perspective, by Castro (2023).

fore, reference can be made to the category of limit: the "extreme Olympus" (cf. *supra*, §1) is that which, to recall Aetius' words, encloses the cosmos "like a wall" (τείχους δίκην), representing its last part and leaving no possibility of translation to the sphere of the whole. So, I suppose, this extreme olympus is the very limit of Parmenides' sequentialism. Within the sphere, the movements of light and fire create all the objects of experience, ready for our perception. But this sphere is just like a human body that, while accomodating all sorts of movement within it, cannot go anywhere and lays still.

In light of these considerations, it is now possible to draw some final remarks.

Conclusions

In this paper, an attempt has been made to put forward a hypothesis on the problem of the compatibility between what-is, the perfect and eternal entity presented in the first part of Parmenides' poem, and the objects of the world of which we have a cosmological and cosmogonic account, whatever its position in the text. In order to do so, we first studied fragments B 8.53–61 and B 9 (§1), which together with other fragments and *testimonia* give a quite precise image of the Parmenidean world. This is made up of concentric spheres filled with light/fire and night, which, coming together, form us and the objects around us thanks to the power of efficient cause of the δαίμων placed at the centre of the cosmos.[65] Further on (§2), we have seen with fragment B 16, and from its witnesses, how for the Eleatic a theory applies, at the same time for perception and knowledge, whereby the human being, formed by the two fundamental elements, recognizes by virtue of the preponderant one, and by how preponderant it is, the things that surround him. On the basis of this process, we give names to things. In this regard, I would add here that the widely held notion that in Parmenides "being and thought correspond" in the sense that "everything that is thought is and everything that is is thought," often retrospectively researched in B 3 and B 8.34–38, finds in my opinion a more concrete testimony precisely in B 16. This fragment is, moreover, taken by Aristotle himself as an example of a dangerous openness to contradiction: in fact, according to the Parmenidean theory, two different humans could judge of *x*, because of their internal mixtures of elements, both *y* and not *y*, both being right.

After proposing to distinguish three modes of being in the thought of the Eleatic, we come to §3, where, starting from the interpretation considered most satisfactory of τὸ ἐόν, i.e. that which sees it as the Whole, or the totality of phenomena seen as a unity, we attempted to answer the two main aporias raised by critics regarding this interpretation, namely that of the compatibility between the motionless Whole and the mobile parts and between the undifferentiated Whole and the differentiated parts. In this regard, it

[65] One might ask, in this regard and in the light of §3, whether the "ultimate Olympus", the last heaven of this cosmos, which holds everything within itself, is itself immobile. It, on the other hand, is compelled by ἀνάγνκη "to hold the boundaries of the stars" (B 10.6 f.), and – if we identify the cosmos with the ἐόν – it is held by bonds and chains (B 8.26 and 30 f.).

was first noted how the name ἐόν is sometimes translated, by synecdoche, to its parts as well; attempts were then made to respond to the aporias, also referring to the category of 'limit'. In brief, if we try to put limits between objects based on where we see or not see existence, we will obtain one eternally existing item, the cosmos - ἐόν, completely made of temporally existing parts and whose only limit is the 'extreme olympus'. This item, coinciding with our space-time, will be homogeneous in relation to the characteristic of being, immobile because it has no other place to go. In light of these considerations, Parmenides' verses could therefore contain a dual exposition of our universe, seen from the outside with the λόγος of truth, from the inside with the διάκοσμος of phenomena[66]. What was not done in this paper, however, is the investigation of further, important themes of Parmenides' thought, which were difficult to include, but can be argued to be coherent with these results.[67]

Lastly, one might recall a passage (Simpl. *in Ph.* 558.11 ff.) in which Simplicius wonders how it is possible that Parmenides, having distinguished between a unitary and imperceptible being on the one hand and the sensible dimension of humans on the other, did not think of calling the latter 'what is'. The doubt is shareable, and for this we must try to grasp to the full the will that moved such a philosophy. Between the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., in fact, a thinker wondered whether, beyond our life made up of beliefs exposed to becoming, something could be found that only *was*, without changing: an unshakeable certainty, a firm truth not subject to time. All we can say about this quest is that it was successful because it took the right road – one of solitude. If the boy achieved the vision of truth, then, it could perhaps be because even a Goddess recognised that, despite everything, this was his greatest desire (B 1.1). However, I would like to propose a further view here: only if we do not focus on the arrangement of Parmenides' poem, i.e. revelation-truth-cosmology, but rather on the process that the Eleatic as a human being had to follow in his life, i.e. the reverse process – which necessarily goes from the study of the phenomena of the world, to the unification of these in the totality, to revelation to others – then we can gain an insight into the truly scientific and philosophical path of this man. I therefore believe I can recall the words of Šestov (2011 [1938]: 88): "On the side of reason and knowledge, there where constraint ends, the chained Parmenides, having participated in the mystery of the eternal being who always commands, will again conquer primordial freedom and will speak not as a man constrained by truth, but as a being endowed with power."

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[66] In this sense, the διάκοσμος takes on both a positive value (cf. e.g. Macé 2019) and a negative one (as Warren 2007 seems to suggest: 100 f.): this ordering is in fact both correct, because it perfectly exposes the cosmos, and deceptive, because it starts from the unnecessary distinction (οὐ χρέων – B 8.54) between two elements.

[67] I did not address problems such as that of the νοεῖν, for which there are positions closer to the one outlined above (Fronterotta 2016) and radically different conceptions (e.g. Leszl 1981 and Marcinkowska-Rosół 2010, among them similar, or Robbiano 2011). The question of (a)temporality in the poem has not been quoted (for which cf. Pulpito 2005 and, recently, the philological contribution of Berruecos Frank 2024), nor that of the number of ways of research and of the meaning of the fragment B 6 (for which cf. Bernays 1850, Nehamas 1981, Cordero 1984 and 2019a), or the ways of B 2.

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What's in a Name? Limits in Parmenides' Sequentialism

In this paper, the problem of compatibility between the two parts of the poem by Parmenides of Elea is addressed. This is done on the basis of a number of fragments from the poem – B 8, 9, 12, 16 and others – and a study of their ancient *testimonia*. In this way, the Parmenidean conception of the world and of human perceptive and gnoseological activity within it is reconstructed. Furthermore, starting from textual clues that show a certain need to go beyond this view of the world, an attempt has been made to argue how τὸ ἐόν can be understood as the All, i.e. as the universe, but seen in its unity. In order to do so, a tempative answer was proposed, using the philosophical category of limit, to recent aporias raised by interpreters.

KEYWORDS

Parmenides, what-is, cosmology, compatibility, sequentialism, limit