

Chapter 1 : Parmenides (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Parmenides claimed that there is no truth in the opinions of the mortals. Genesis-and-destruction, as Parmenides emphasizes, is a false opinion, because to be means to be completely, once and for all.

Written by Parmenides of Elea, ca. Along that way I was led. On that way the wise steeds carried me, drawing my car, and maidens showed the way. And the axle, glowing in the socket of my chariot gave forth a sound as of a pipe, for it was urged round by the whirling wheels at each end when the daughters of the Sun, hastened to bring me into the light, they removed their veils from their faces as we left the abode of Night. There we see the gates of the ways of Night and Day, fitted above with a lintel and below with a threshold of stone. The Gates are high in the air, are closed by mighty doors, and the Goddess of Justice, whose vengeance is stern, retains the keys that fit them. The maidens flattered her with gentle words and skilfully persuaded her to lift the bolted bars from the gates. Then, the doors were thrown open, and they revealed a wide opening, when their bronze hinges swung backwards in their sockets, which were fastened with rivets and nails. Straight through the gates, on that broad way, did the maidens guide the horses and the chariot and the goddess greeted me kindly, and took my right hand in hers as she uttered these words: Welcome, noble youth, that comes to my abode on this chariot that is tended by immortal charioteers! It is no ill fortune, but justice and right that has sent you forth to travel on this way, which lies far indeed from the beaten track of men! To be on this way means that you should learn all things: But none the less you shall learn of these conventional things also since you must also scrutinize how it was inevitable that men came to believe in seeming convention rather than unshakable truth as you go through all things on your journey. The Truth Come now, and preserve my story as you have heard it. I will tell you the only two ways to think there are. The first, namely, that Being is, and that it is impossible for Being not to be. That is the way of conviction, for truth is its companion. The other way, namely, that Being is not, and that it is not necessary for Being to be, - this way, I tell you, is a wholly untrustworthy way. For you cannot know non-Being - that is impossible - and nor can you utter it. For it is the same thing that can be thought of and that can be. It is the same to me from what place I begin, for to there I shall come back again. It is necessary to say and to think Being; for Being is, and it is not possible for non-Being to be. This I order you to ponder. I shall start my exposition you with the true way of seeking, and then go on to the conventional way which mortals, knowing nothing, wander two-headed along with a helplessness in their breasts that steers their wandering mind. Along this way they journey deaf and blind, bewildered, indecisive herds, for whom both Being and non-Being are judged the same and yet not the same. For them the path turns back on itself. For this shall never be: After this only a single way is left: To this way there are very many signs that what-is is uncreated and indestructible, alone, complete, immovable, and without end. It was not once nor will it some day be, since it is it is now, all together, single, and continuous. For what birth will you seek for Being? How and from where could it have grown? I will not permit you to say or think that Being came-into-being from non-Being, for it is impossible to say or think that Being is not. For what necessity would have stirred Being to grow later or earlier, if it began out of nothing? Thus, Being must either be completely or not at all. Nor will the force of evidence ever point to anything come-to-be from nothing and to be besides Being. For this reason, Justice does not permit Being to come-to-be or to perish by loosening her shackles but holds Being fast. The decision on these matters depends on this: And since it has been decided, as was necessary, to leave one way unthought and nameless as it was no real way and the other IS and is true, how could Being ever be in the future? How could Being have come to be in the past? For if it came into being in the past, or it is going to be in the future, then it IS not undivided in the now. Thus coming-to-be is extinguished and destruction is unheard of. Nor can Being be divided, since it is everywhere all alike. Nor is there more of Being here and less of Being there, which would prevent it from being continuous and coherent, but all is full of Being. Therefore it is all continuous, for Being is everywhere in contact with Being. Unchanging within the limits of in the mighty chains, BEING IS without beginning or end; since coming-into-being and passing-away have been banished, driven away by true conviction. It stands continuous and fixed in its place. For mighty Necessity holds Being, within the bonds of the limit which

encircles Being. Since it is not right for Being to be incomplete; for if Being was lacking, it would lack everything. It is the same thing that can be thought of and can be. For without Being, you will not find thinking. For nothing else IS or will be besides Being since Fate has shackled it to be whole and unchanging. Which is why it has been named all things, that mortals have established, convinced that they are true: But since Being has an outer limit, it is complete, well-rounded from every side, like a perfect sphere, everywhere equally far from the middle, for Being cannot be greater in one place and smaller in another. For there is no non-Being, which could prevent Being from reaching out in all directions equally, and nor is Being such that there could be more of it here and less of it there, since it all inviolably IS. Everywhere equal to itself, since it meets its limits equally in all directions. Such, changeless, is that for which as a whole the name is Being. The Convention Here shall I end my trustworthy speech and thoughts about the truth. Henceforth you will learn the opinions of mortals, as you give ear to the deceptive ordering of my words. Mortals have settled their minds to speak of two forms, one of which they should have left out, and that is where they go astray from the truth. They have assigned an opposite substance to each thing, and marks distinct from one another. To one thing they allot the fire of heaven, light, thin, in every direction the same as itself, but not the same as the other thing. The other substance is opposed to it, dark night, a compact and heavy body. Of these I tell you the whole arrangement as it seems to men, in order that no mortal may surpass thee in knowledge. Now that all things have been named light and night; and the things which belong to the power of each have been assigned to these things and to those, everything is full at once of light and dark night, - both equal, since neither is the same as the other. And you shalt learn likewise of the wandering deeds of the round-faced moon, and of her origin. You shall know, too, the heavens that surround us, whence they arose, and how Necessity took them and bound them to hold the limits of the stars. How the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the sky that is common to all, and the Milky Way, and the outermost Olympus, and the burning might of the stars arose. The narrower rings in the sky are filled with unmixed fire, and the rings surrounding them are filled with night, and in the midst of these rushes their portion of fire. In the midst of these circles is the divinity that directs the course of all things; for she rules over all painful birth and all begetting, driving the female to the embrace of the male, and the male to embrace the female. First of all the gods she conceived Eros. Shining by night with borrowed light, wandering round the earth. Always straining her eyes to the beams of the sun. And the Earth is rooted-in-water. For what at any time the mixture of the much-wandering body is, so is thought present to humans. For that same thing, which thinks in humans, namely the constitution of their limbs, is the same for each and every one; for what preponderates in them is thought. On the right boys; on the left girls. When woman and man mix the seeds of Love, a force is formed in the veins from the different bloods. If it preserves the proper proportion, it produces well-built bodies. For if, when the seeds are mixed, the strength of each blood are in conflict, they do not constitute a unity in the body formed by mixture, then cruelly they will torment the nascent sex with double seed. In time men think they will grow up and pass away. To each of these things, men have assigned a fixed name. This way conveyed I came. For coursers crowned With wise renown advanced my speeding heart Along " outstretching far my quickening cart. Fair maidens led the way. From out its shaft The axle sent a whining cry abaft, Hot " burning under constant friction, bright Within fast flickering hubs. Right there stand Twin lofty gates dividing the way of Night From Day. A lintel and sill of stony might Encase them strong on either side, while doors Of massive sweep and sway fill up with force Their heavenly frame. And painful Justice holds, With pain " dispensing woe, both locking bolts. But gently urging maidens urged their way With softened words, and quick She thrust away For them the bolt " bars from the guarded gate. Its doors then forced a yawning chasm great, Unfolding giant wings attached with pins Of brass in two " way hinges. Squealing dins The air with plaintive moans, as doors fixed fast With rows of riveted bolts wheel lazily past. Through open gates swift maidens reined my horse And car to trace their high celestial course. A gracious goddess kindly welcomed me With open arms and hospitality. My right hand softly she entwined with hers And spake to me in song this gentle verse: I welcome you Today! Still yet There is one thing you must not soon forget How needs must seem those things which seem-to Far-penetrating all reality. These are the only ways A thinking man should seek: One claims quite free That Being Is, and is not not-to-be!

Chapter 2 : Parmenides, Stage 1

Parmenides' thought could not be further removed from that of Heraclitus in that Parmenides claimed nothing moved, change was an impossibility, and that human sense perception could not be relied upon for an apprehension of Truth.

He is best known for discussing the concept of being. What exists and what does not exist, and what can we say about it? He was opposed to the writings of Heraclitus, who believed that the elements of the world are constantly changing into one another, instead putting forth that there is only one thing that exists and that is reality itself. He is famous for his use of deductive logic the practice of figuring out what conclusions logically follow from a statement and for his view of the senses as deceptive. Like Heraclitus, Parmenides was an aristocrat. Parmenides discusses what he calls the Way of Truth and the Way of Opinion. The only thing we can talk about is that which exists, and all we can say of it is that it exists. Parmenides believed that whatever we can think of must have existence. Because we can think of reality, but cannot think of unreality, reality exists and unreality does not exist. In this way, he maintains philosophical positions based on a rational process of logical deduction that which follows from an initial statement. The reason people make mistakes, following the Way of Opinion rather than the Way of Truth, is that they think things are true based on what they experience. While practical, he sees the senses as untrustworthy for understanding the truth. Parmenides believed that what is could never not have been. This is because something that exists could not have come from something that does not exist. Likewise, something which exists cannot become nonexistent. In this way, he understood the world to be eternal. As such, he denies the possibility of the world having been created cosmogony. He also denies the possibility of change. In this way, Parmenides comes to understand that there is but one truth: Reality cannot be divided into separate things, like elements, because how can reality be more than one thing? Anaximenes, the Milesian philosopher, believed air to be the fundamental principle of the world and that change was accounted for through the rarefaction and condensation of air into the other elements earth, water, fire. But Parmenides denies the possibility that something could become finer or dense, because how could something be more or less of itself? What is, is, no more no less. Change is an illusion, the Way of Opinion obtained through the senses. He felt the senses can help us to be successful in life, they simply cannot provide us with knowledge of the ultimate truth of reality. His use of deductive reasoning would continue in the thoughts of his student Zeno and his famous paradoxes.

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In the following passage, Parmenides poetically relates to a reader how all is One and that there is, indeed, a way which is and a way which is not, and to believe otherwise is simply to believe wrongly about the nature of the universe. As nothing can come from nothing, and 'being' is indestructible.

A Greek philosopher who lived between the second half of the sixth century bce and the first half of the fifth century bce, Parmenides was born in and lived in Elea, an Ionic colony on the coast of Campania, in an area then inhabited by the Lucani, who called the city Velia. He was a pupil of Xenophanes as well as a Pythagorean. Charged with the governance of the city, he gave Elea a long-lasting constitution regarded as the principal reason for its power. He also founded a philosophical school, which was monist and has become known historically as the Eleatic school. His closest followers were Zeno and Melissus. Parmenides wrote a long poem in hexameters titled *On Nature*, a difficult text even for his contemporaries. The work was lost in the early Middle Ages, and about twenty fragments of around to verses survive. Thus modern interpretation of his work is even more controversial. Parmenidean doctrine denies the real existence of diversity and change and asserts the unity of being. This doctrine has been regarded from time to time as the foundation of metaphysics, of logic, and of the theory of predication and as the methodology of scientific research based upon the principle of correspondence, that is, of "invariance. The doctrine is presented in the proem as the "revelation" of a goddess, in fact of the Goddess, probably Persephone, the titular goddess of the celebrated mystery cult of Demeter at Elea. Parmenides tells of a fantastic journey in a horse-drawn chariot, guided by the Heliades, the daughters of Helios, the Sun, who guide it to the Gate of Night and Day. When they reach there, they ask the gatekeeper, Dike, Justice, to open up and allow their charge to pass through. The poet thus manages to enter into the presence of the Goddess, who welcomes him and invites him to listen to her explain both "the unshakeable heart of well-rounded Truth" and "the opinions of mortals, in which there is no certainty at all" In terms of the conventions particular to archaic Greece, the image of the chariot in the proem is a clear metaphor for poetry, often guided by the Muses, who steer the poet in the "right" direction. For Parmenides the chariot symbolizes poetic wisdom, sophia, encompassing as it does the tension regarding the Truth and the absolute poetic skill necessary to express this. The route here is "the way of the goddess," which takes the "wise man" in the direction of the "Ultimate Truth. The motif of the gate is made still more complex because it is a specific gate that had always played a central part in the sphere of myth and cosmology, that is, the Gate of Day and Night, also called the Gate of the Sun, and is identified with the Gate of Hades. It towered in the extreme west, far from the region inhabited by humankind. Beyond this, just as in Parmenides, yawned the abyss, in Greek berethron, chaos, chasma, in other words the world of the dead, the realm of Hades and Persephone, the god and goddess of the netherworld, but also, according to Hesiod, the cosmic location in which were gathered the first principles of everything, the "roots," the "sources," the "limits," that is, the elements of matter. After the proem, throughout the poem every abstract concept, every natural entity is represented in divine terms. Physical law becomes Justice Dike or Themis, the goddess of justice regarded by the Greeks as older and with greater authority than Dike, or Necessity Ananke, the goddess of Homer and Hesiod, who ruled over the most powerful gods, or Moira Fate, the ancient goddess of birth, life, and death. The abstract luminance was Truth Aletheia, the epic goddess of truthfulness. Being itself was represented in the likeness of an imprisoned god in shackles, a obvious allusion to Prometheus in chains. In Parmenides, in complete form, the unique union that was to be characteristic of subsequent Greek cultural development is evident, a synthesis of absolute intellectual rationalism and the religious symbolism of the polytheistic tradition. The astronomical section of the poem, following in the footsteps of Anaximander, sets out a map of the heavens in the form of spherical concentric bands on which individual stars were set out. These, or at least some of these, were clearly divine in form. The outer surface, the farthest away, including all the bands in order nearest to the earth, which was located in the center, was called in lay terms ouranos, "heaven," but also theologically Olympus eschatos, "the final Olympus. In the center band, perhaps the heaven of Hesperus-Lucifer, correctly identified by Parmenides as one and the same star, is "the goddess who controls

all things," especially regarding sexual congress, the source of life, thus a supreme goddess, probably Aphrodite. Eros also plays an important role. It is clear that the doctrine of divine intelligence and astral influences has already made its appearance. There is no doubt that the pantheon of Parmenides is predominantly feminine. In particular the two principal divinities, the inspired revelatrix of the poem and the omnipotent one in the center of the heavens, are goddesses. Being, in Greek, Eon, single unchanging matter, which has no space in which to move, is neuter gender. The masculine, theologically speaking, is of marginal importance. This causes a difficulty of interpretation that is impossible to resolve because of the scarcity of available information. Some see the survival or reemergence in Parmenides of an ancient pre-Greek Mediterranean religion with a matriarchal basis Untersteiner,

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1. *Life and Writings.* The dramatic occasion of Plato's dialogue, *Parmenides*, is a fictionalized visit to Athens by the eminent Parmenides and his younger associate, Zeno, to attend the festival of the Great Panathenaea.

This article uses material from the Wikipedia article Parmenides , that was deleted or is being discussed for deletion, which is released under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3. He was the founder of the Eleatic school of philosophy. The single known work of Parmenides is a poem , *On Nature*, which has survived only in fragmentary form. In this poem, Parmenides describes two views of reality. In "the way of truth" a part of the poem , he explains how reality coined as "what-is" is one, change is impossible, and existence is timeless, uniform, necessary, and unchanging. He was descended from a wealthy and illustrious family. However, according to Sir William Smith , in *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* [8] Others content themselves with reckoning Parmenides as well as Zeno as belonging to the Pythagorean school, or with speaking of a Parmenidean life, in the same way as a Pythagorean life is spoken of; and even the censorious Timon allows Parmenides to have been a high-minded man; while Plato speaks of him with veneration, and Aristotle and others give him an unqualified preference over the rest of the Eleatics. Of his life in Elea, it was said that he had written the laws of the city. On the former path we convince ourselves that the existent neither has come into being, nor is perishable, and is entirely of one sort, without change and limit, neither past nor future, entirely included in the present. For it is as impossible that it can become and grow out of the existent, as that it could do so out of the non-existent; since the latter, non-existence, is absolutely inconceivable, and the former cannot precede itself; and every coming into existence presupposes a non-existence. By similar arguments divisibility, motion or change, as also infinity, are shut out from the absolutely existent, and the latter is represented as shut up in itself, so that it may be compared to a well-rounded ball; while thought is appropriated to it as its only positive definition. Thought and that which is thought of Object coinciding; the corresponding passages of Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and others, which authenticate this view of his theory. *On Nature* Parmenides is one of the most significant of the pre-Socratic philosophers. Approximately verses of the poem remain today from a probable eight hundred verses. Parmenides attempted to distinguish between the unity of nature and its variety, insisting in the *Way of Truth* upon the reality of its unity, which is therefore the object of knowledge, and upon the unreality of its variety, which is therefore the object, not of knowledge, but of opinion. In the *Way of Opinion* he propounded a theory of the world of seeming and its development, pointing out, however, that, in accordance with the principles already laid down, these cosmological speculations do not pretend to anything more than mere appearance. Proem In the proem, Parmenides is the journey of the poet, escorted by maidens "the daughters of the Sun made haste to escort me, having left the halls of Night for the light" , [15] from the ordinary daytime world to a strange destination, outside our human paths. The goddess resides in a well-known mythological space: Its essential character is that here all opposites are undivided, or one. The *Way of Truth* File: Under the "way of truth," Parmenides stated that there are two ways of inquiry: He said that the latter argument is never feasible because there is no thing that can not be: For never shall this prevail, that things that are not are. In ancient Greek, which, like many languages in the world, does not always require the presence of a subject for a verb, "is" functions as a grammatically complete sentence. Much debate has been focused on where and what the subject is. Since existence is an immediately intuited fact, non-existence is the wrong path because a thing cannot disappear, just as something cannot originate from nothing. In such mystical experience unio mystica , however, the distinction between subject and object disappears along with the distinctions between objects, in addition to the fact that if nothing cannot be, it cannot be the object of thought either: Thinking and the thought that it is are the same; for you will not find thinking apart from what is, in relation to which it is uttered. B 3 It is necessary to speak and to think what is; for being is, but nothing is not. Existence is necessarily eternal. That which truly is [x], has always been [x], and was never becoming [x]; that which is becoming [x] was never nothing Not-[x] , but will never actually be. Parmenides was not struggling to formulate the laws of conservation of mass and conservation of energy ; he was struggling with the

metaphysics of change, which is still a relevant philosophical topic today. Moreover, he argued that movement was impossible because it requires moving into "the void", and Parmenides identified "the void" with nothing, and therefore by definition it does not exist. That which does exist is The Parmenidean One, which is timeless, uniform, and unchanging: How could what is perish? How could it have come to be? For if it came into being, it is not; nor is it if ever it is going to be. Thus coming into being is extinguished, and destruction unknown. Thus [it] must either be completely or not at all. Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike; nor is there any more or less of it in one place which might prevent it from holding together, but all is full of what is. B 5 Perception vs. Logos Parmenides claimed that there is no truth in the opinions of the mortals. Genesis-and-destruction, as Parmenides emphasizes, is a false opinion, because to be means to be completely, once and for all. What exists can in no way not exist. For this view, that That Which Is Not exists, can never predominate. You must debar your thought from this way of search, nor let ordinary experience in its variety force you along this way, namely, that of allowing the eye, sightless as it is, and the ear, full of sound, and the tongue, to rule; but you must judge by means of the Reason Logos the much-contested proof which is expounded by me. The structure of the cosmos is a fundamental binary principle that governs the manifestations of all the particulars: The mortals lay down and decided well to name two forms i. For Parmenides says that there are circular bands wound round one upon the other, one made of the rare, the other of the dense; and others between these mixed of light and darkness. What surrounds them all is solid like a wall. Beneath it is a fiery band, and what is in the very middle of them all is solid, around which again is a fiery band. The most central of the mixed bands is for them all the origin and cause of motion and becoming, which he also calls steering goddess and keyholder and Justice and Necessity. The air has been separated off from the earth, vapourized by its more violent condensation, and the sun and the circle of the Milky Way are exhalations of fire. The moon is a mixture of both earth and fire. The aether lies around above all else, and beneath it is ranged that fiery part which we call heaven, beneath which are the regions around the earth. Under the Way of Opinion, Parmenides set out a contrasting but more conventional view of the world, thereby becoming an early exponent of the duality of appearance and reality. For him and his pupils, the phenomena of movement and change are simply appearances of a changeless, eternal reality. This interpretation could settle because of various wrong translations of the fragments. For example, it is not at all clear that Parmenides refuted that which we call perception. Welcome, youth, who come attended by immortal charioteers and mares which bear you on your journey to our dwelling. For it is no evil fate that has set you to travel on this road, far from the beaten paths of men, but right and justice. It is meet that you learn all things "both the unshakable heart of well-rounded truth and the opinions of mortals in which there is not true belief. It has been claimed that previous scholars placed too little emphasis on the apocalyptic context in which Parmenides frames his revelation. The obscurity and fragmentary state of the text, however, renders almost every claim that can be made about Parmenides extremely contentious, and the traditional interpretation has by no means been abandoned. Even Plato himself, in the Sophist, refers to the work of "our Father Parmenides" as something to be taken very seriously and treated with respect. In the Parmenides, the Eleatic philosopher, which may well be Parmenides himself, and Socrates argue about dialectic. In the Theaetetus, Socrates says that Parmenides alone among the wise Protagoras, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Epicharmus, and Homer denied that everything is change and motion. The Italian philosopher Emanuele Severino has founded his extended philosophical investigations on the words of Parmenides. His philosophy is sometimes called Neo Parmenideism, and can be understood as an attempt to build a bridge between the poem on truth and the poem on opinion. Influence on the development of science Parmenides made the ontological argument against nothingness, essentially denying the possible existence of a void. Aristotle himself reasoned, in opposition to atomism, that in a complete vacuum, motion would encounter no resistance, and "no one could say why a thing once set in motion should stop anywhere; for why should it stop here rather than here? So that a thing will either be at rest or must be moved ad infinitum, unless something more powerful get in its way. In his critique of this idea, Karl Popper called Einstein "Parmenides". So what was really new in Parmenides was his axiomatic-deductive method, which Leucippus and Democritus turned into a hypothetical-deductive method, and thus made part of scientific methodology. In, Argentine novelist Cesar Aira published Parmenides, in which Parmenides is a

wealthy bureaucrat that hires a young, poor poet to ghost write a book that will cover the whole of nature. Early on in their relationship, the poet writes a line sample for Parmenides to evaluate and nothing else. It is never clear whether Parmenides read those lines, and in the ten years in which wealthy man and ghost writer get together to talk about the project no more lines are ever written. Simplicius , Physics, Parmenides was already a very old man, white-haired but of distinguished appearance " he was about Studies in Greek Philosophy presented to Gregory Vlastos. Harvard Studies in Classical Philology. American Philological Association, ; see also Lawrence C. Chin, "Xenophanes and Parmenides". Guthrie , A History of Greek Philosophy: David Sedley, "Parmenides," in E. In the next generation he remained the senior voice of Eleaticism, perceived as champion of the One against the Many. His One was defended by Zeno of Elea and Melissus, while those who wished to vindicate cosmic plurality and change felt obliged to respond to his challenge. Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Leucippus and Democritus framed their theories in terms which conceded as much as possible to his rejections of literal generation and annihilation and of division. The World of Parmenides: Essays on the Presocratic Enlightenment. The World as Modus Cogitandi". Issue 1, October Being, Bounds and Logic. Austin, Scott , Parmenides and the History of Dialectic: The Presocratic Philosophers Two Volumes. Routledge and Kegan Paul. The Thesis of Parmenides. Heidegger, Martin, Parmenides trans. Explores the Parmenidean dialectic and its application to modern science.

Parmenides discusses what he calls the Way of Truth and the Way of Opinion. The foundation of the Way of Truth is that "it is." Parmenides realized that while many things are doubtful, no one can doubt that reality exists.

There is no becoming of what did not already exist, there is no unbecoming of what does exist. Raven, Cambridge University Press, , p. Irvine, must then say what a "field" is, and that raises most of the kinds of questions that he thinks have, by this, been dispensed with. See "Paradoxes of the Ether. Parmenides said, "For you could not know that which is not that is impossible nor utter it; for the same thing can be thought as can be [the same thing exists for thinking as for being] That which can be spoken and thought must be; for it is possible for it, but not for nothing, to be; that is what I bid you ponder" [The Presocratic Philosophers, G. Raven, Cambridge University Press, , pp. The short answer is thus that beings exist rather than nothing because there cannot be nothing. The argument that Parmenides offers is that for us to think about something or talk about something, there must be something. But nothing, by definition, is not something. Therefore, we cannot think about it or talk about it, and should not. Now, there is a sense in which Parmenides must be quite wrong. There are impossible objects that we can conceive and talk about quite easily, like square circles or imaginary numbers. People believe many impossible things, such as that there are honest politicians. He is not really trying I hope to get us to stop thinking about talking about "not being" -- he is doing that himself -- but he wants us to understand that the concept of "not being" is self-contradictory and so cannot represent anything in reality. We got something like this in 20th Century philosophy, when the Logical Positivists wanted to deny the existence of metaphysics and ethics with the argument that metaphysical and ethical statements were without meaning a knock-off from Hume -- even though they were making such statements themselves, apparently with the expectation that we would grasp the meaning of what they were talking about. What they were really denying was that there was a ground of verification for the existence of the objects of metaphysical or ethical concepts. They seem to have overlooked the requirement that, to verify or falsify anything, we must know, i. The amount of confusion involved in such claims is remarkable for what should have been an advanced period in the history of philosophy. Historically, people have wanted to say, starting with Plato, that Parmenides was simply confusing the existential with the predicative uses of "is," so that when we say something like, "Parmenides was not a Californian," we are not talking about not being, only asserting that a particular predicate Californian does not belong to a particular subject Parmenides. However, this is not the way Parmenides talks. His examples are not of predication. His entire argument begins with the concept of "not being" and is a critique of that concept, that we think about it as though it refers to something, even though, by definition, it cannot. We might also think that the whole business is rather silly. We sometimes talk about "nothing" in the sense of things that are not very important or memorable, but we rarely have literal discourse about Not Being. But the issue is far from silly, and the conclusions of Parmenides are today part of one of the fundamental principles of modern physics. Since Parmenides did not believe that not being could exist, then Being could not become Not Being and Not Being could not become Being. Ex nihilo, nihil fit, "Out of nothing comes nothing," was the way this would be expressed in Mediaeval Latin. In physics, the equivalent of this are "conservation" laws, beginning with the Conservation of Mass, that mass cannot be created or destroyed. Subsequently we got the "Conservation of Energy," and then Einstein combined them, so that mass can turn into energy, and energy mass, but neither can be lost absolutely. The Conservation of Mass or Energy was a scientific hypothesis to be tested over time. It has continually passed all tests, but we might also wonder about its origin. As Karl Popper would say, it began as a conjecture. But with Parmenides it was a little bit more than a conjecture. It was an argument and a critique of the concept of Not Being. Matter cannot become nothing, because something cannot become nothing, nor nothing something. There is one area where predication becomes an issue in the theory of Parmenides. In the world, things seem to come into being and pass out of being. For a while, Prussia is there, and then it is gone. For a while, the Beatles are there; then they are gone. The parrot in the Monty Python skit has "ceased to be. He therefore says, "So coming into being is extinguished and perishing unimaginable" [Fragment 8], and this presumably must apply to every kind of

thing. Now, although it does not trouble Parmenides, this looks to be contradicted by experience and common sense. The element that survives from Parmenides is that in this generation and corruption, the substances do not become nothing, they always become something else. Electrons and protons can become neutrons. Electrons and positrons can become energy, etc. Many physicists may now think of the truly "underlying" thing as energy, but then energy itself always takes some particular form. Electrons and positrons do not just become "energy" in general. They mutually annihilate to become electromagnetic radiation, because the reaction is mediated by the electromagnetic force. That radiation can then hit something and excite an electron to higher energy level in an atom. I have argued that the thing that truly underlies all these transformations is just space itself, but we need not consider that now. One kind of thing can turn into another, but things cannot simply become nothing, or arise permanently out of nothing there is some fudging on this in quantum mechanics -- only things with no real mass or energy can permanently arise out of the vacuum. Where this question becomes acute is with respect to our own existence. We face the possibility of becoming nothing at death. In one sense, we already know that this will not happen. We die, but our body remains. It may be preserved, decay, or be cremated, but its substance survives as a corpse, mummy, ash, etc. But this rather misses the point. The sort of existence that is to us our existence is not simply the body; it is our consciousness. We are conscious beings; and our existence, in so far as we are aware of our existence and enjoy it, is a conscious existence. We can conceive and imagine existing without this body, this kind of body, or indeed any body -- and Hume says, if it is conceivable, then it is possible. Human beings do not become nothing, but they cease to be human beings. We die and our body ceases to be that of a human being. Perhaps our consciousness goes with it. If that is the case, however, then at death we will, in terms of any existence that is significant to us, truly and literally become nothing. Historically, this has consistently struck people as peculiar. It involves a metaphysical proposition that our "true" existence, and the true substance involved with our existence, is material. Matter survives, but consciousness does not. The elements of this were the most starkly stated by Descartes, who allowed that both matter and mind were separate substances. The difficulties this dualism created for him are well known. Indeed, consciousness actually does seem to disappear every day, as we sleep -- Socrates himself complacently considered the possibility that death was an endless deep sleep. We would not know this from Descartes, who never considers how a substance that essentially thinks, the soul, can cease thinking every night in deep sleep -- a problem discerned by John Locke. Most people do not fear sleep, however, because they expect to wake up. If the analogy holds, we would not fear death, because we would simply expect to wake up. The expression Socrates uses, that "So, personally and individually, we are faced with the Void, with Not Being, with Nothingness at death. Yet this returns us to the precise thing, or non-thing, against which the original argument of Parmenides was directed. Not Being, the impossible object, is precisely what we will become and experience. There therefore seems to have been some kind of mistake. There then are, broadly speaking, two ways to fix this up: Behaviorists and similar reductionists go in that direction. Our conscious existence is some kind of illusion, misconception, or superstition. This sort of thing has been popular with philosophers but incomprehensible to nearly everyone else. Given the failure of his theory of the substantial soul, Materialism won by default. Searle himself seems to fall into this camp. Their views, however, are indeed naive and uncritical. It is hard to know how any informed scholar in philosophy could subscribe to Materialism after going through the development of philosophy in Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. Indeed, the contemporary attitude began as a version of Hume, who was a Skeptic and so tried to suspend judgment in all genuinely metaphysical matters. This approach was continued by the Positivists, who refused to worry about even the simplest metaphysical doctrines, like Realism -- the proposition that scientific knowledge actually refers to an existing world. We still see an attempt to follow this approach in someone like the physicist Stephen Hawking. In philosophy proper, however, a studied Skepticism or Positivism seems to have given way to a careless attitude that, as the alternatives are absurd and probably only believed by contemptible religious fundamentalists, Materialism is simply true in some obvious and intuitive way. There have been no real breakthroughs in thought with this. It is simply fallout from the general nihilism and carelessness that has overtaken modern academia in general. Meanwhile, ironically, it is matter itself that has fallen apart in several very profound ways. First of all, the materialist used to be comforted by the evident

solidity, and hence reality, of matter. Johnson refutes Berkeley by kicking the table or something. Yet now the physicists have delivered up atoms that, but for a few subatomic particles, are empty space. Indeed, although this is rarely stated openly and flatly, atoms are entirely empty place, since the fundamental subatomic particles quarks and leptons are "Dirac Point Particles" which have no extension. This means that all that actually fills space are fields, and there is no agreement in physics about what a field is with different versions in Relativity and Quantum Mechanics.

Chapter 6 : Parmenides - Wikipedia

(6) On it Parmenides is to learn first the truth about all things, and then how the contrasted appearances are able to penetrate all in a way that makes them so readily acceptable to human cognition. (7) The contrast is clear between truth and appearance.

Early life[edit] Parmenides was born in the Greek colony of Elea now Ascea , which, according to Herodotus , [5] had been founded shortly before BC. He was descended from a wealthy and illustrious family. Of his life in Elea, it was said that he had written the laws of the city. On the former reason is our guide; on the latter the eye that does not catch the object and re-echoing hearing. On the former path we convince ourselves that the existent neither has come into being, nor is perishable, and is entirely of one sort, without change and limit, neither past nor future, entirely included in the present. For it is as impossible that it can become and grow out of the existent, as that it could do so out of the non-existent; since the latter, non-existence, is absolutely inconceivable, and the former cannot precede itself; and every coming into existence presupposes a non-existence. By similar arguments divisibility, motion or change, as also infinity, are shut out from the absolutely existent, and the latter is represented as shut up in itself, so that it may be compared to a well-rounded ball; while thought is appropriated to it as its only positive definition. Thought and that which is thought of Object coinciding; the corresponding passages of Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and others, which authenticate this view of his theory. Approximately verses remain today from an original total that was probably near Parmenides attempted to distinguish between the unity of nature and its variety, insisting in the Way of Truth upon the reality of its unity, which is therefore the object of knowledge, and upon the unreality of its variety, which is therefore the object, not of knowledge, but of opinion. In the Way of Opinion he propounded a theory of the world of seeming and its development, pointing out, however, that, in accordance with the principles already laid down, these cosmological speculations do not pretend to anything more than mere appearance. Proem[edit] In the proem, Parmenides describes the journey of the poet, escorted by maidens "the daughters of the Sun made haste to escort me, having left the halls of Night for the light" , [20] from the ordinary daytime world to a strange destination, outside our human paths. The goddess resides in a well-known mythological space: Its essential character is that here all opposites are undivided, or one. The Way of Truth[edit] Parmenides. Detail from The School of Athens by Raphael. The section known as "the way of truth" discusses that which is real and contrasts with the argument in the section called "the way of opinion," which discusses that which is illusory. Under the "way of truth," Parmenides stated that there are two ways of inquiry: He said that the latter argument is never feasible because there is no thing that can not be: In ancient Greek, which, like many languages in the world, does not always require the presence of a subject for a verb, "is" functions as a grammatically complete sentence. Much debate has been focused on where and what the subject is. Since existence is an immediately intuited fact, non-existence is the wrong path because a thing cannot disappear, just as something cannot originate from nothing. In such mystical experience unio mystica , however, the distinction between subject and object disappears along with the distinctions between objects, in addition to the fact that if nothing cannot be, it cannot be the object of thought either: Thinking and the thought that it is are the same; for you will not find thinking apart from what is, in relation to which it is uttered. B 3 It is necessary to speak and to think what is; for being is, but nothing is not. Existence is necessarily eternal. That which truly is [x], has always been [x], and was never becoming [x]; that which is becoming [x] was never nothing Not-[x] , but will never actually be. Parmenides was not struggling to formulate the laws of conservation of mass and conservation of energy ; he was struggling with the metaphysics of change, which is still a relevant philosophical topic today. Moreover, he argued that movement was impossible because it requires moving into " the void ", and Parmenides identified "the void" with nothing, and therefore by definition it does not exist. That which does exist is The Parmenidean One, which is timeless, uniform, and unchanging: How could what is perish? How could it have come to be? For if it came into being, it is not; nor is it if ever it is going to be. Thus coming into being is extinguished, and destruction unknown. Thus [it] must either be completely or not at all. Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike; nor is there

any more or less of it in one place which might prevent it from holding together, but all is full of what is. B 5 Perception vs. Logos[edit] Parmenides claimed that there is no truth in the opinions of the mortals. Genesis-and-destruction, as Parmenides emphasizes, is a false opinion, because to be means to be completely, once and for all. What exists can in no way not exist. For this view, that That Which Is Not exists, can never predominate. You must debar your thought from this way of search, nor let ordinary experience in its variety force you along this way, namely, that of allowing the eye, sightless as it is, and the ear, full of sound, and the tongue, to rule; but you must judge by means of the Reason Logos the much-contested proof which is expounded by me. The structure of the cosmos is a fundamental binary principle that governs the manifestations of all the particulars: The mortals lay down and decided well to name two forms i. For Parmenides says that there are circular bands wound round one upon the other, one made of the rare, the other of the dense; and others between these mixed of light and darkness. What surrounds them all is solid like a wall. Beneath it is a fiery band, and what is in the very middle of them all is solid, around which again is a fiery band. The most central of the mixed bands is for them all the origin and cause of motion and becoming, which he also calls steering goddess and keyholder and Justice and Necessity. The air has been separated off from the earth, vapourized by its more violent condensation, and the sun and the circle of the Milky Way are exhalations of fire. The moon is a mixture of both earth and fire. The aether lies around above all else, and beneath it is ranged that fiery part which we call heaven , beneath which are the regions around the earth. Under the Way of Opinion, Parmenides set out a contrasting but more conventional view of the world, thereby becoming an early exponent of the duality of appearance and reality. For him and his pupils, the phenomena of movement and change are simply appearances of a changeless, eternal reality. This interpretation could settle because of various wrong translations of the fragments. For example, it is not at all clear that Parmenides refuted that which we call perception. Welcome, youth, who come attended by immortal charioteers and mares which bear you on your journey to our dwelling. For it is no evil fate that has set you to travel on this road, far from the beaten paths of men, but right and justice. It is meet that you learn all things " both the unshakable heart of well-rounded truth and the opinions of mortals in which there is not true belief. It has been claimed that previous scholars placed too little emphasis on the apocalyptic context in which Parmenides frames his revelation. The obscurity and fragmentary state of the text, however, renders almost every claim that can be made about Parmenides extremely contentious, and the traditional interpretation has by no means been abandoned. Even Plato himself, in the Sophist , refers to the work of "our Father Parmenides" as something to be taken very seriously and treated with respect. In the Parmenides , the Eleatic philosopher, which may well be Parmenides himself, and Socrates argue about dialectic. In the Theaetetus , Socrates says that Parmenides alone among the wise Protagoras , Heraclitus , Empedocles , Epicharmus , and Homer denied that everything is change and motion. The Italian philosopher Emanuele Severino has founded his extended philosophical investigations on the words of Parmenides. His philosophy is sometimes called Neo Parmenideism, and can be understood as an attempt to build a bridge between the poem on truth and the poem on opinion. Influence on the development of science[edit] Parmenides made the ontological argument against nothingness, essentially denying the possible existence of a void. Aristotle himself reasoned, in opposition to atomism, that in a complete vacuum, motion would encounter no resistance, and "no one could say why a thing once set in motion should stop anywhere; for why should it stop here rather than here? So that a thing will either be at rest or must be moved ad infinitum, unless something more powerful get in its way. In his critique of this idea, Karl Popper called Einstein "Parmenides". So what was really new in Parmenides was his axiomatic-deductive method, which Leucippus and Democritus turned into a hypothetical-deductive method, and thus made part of scientific methodology.

Chapter 7 : What is Parmenides' Being: explanation of a philosophical enigma

Parmenides states his famous theory of truth, according to which reality of an object can be judged based on the phenomenon that it is, and that it is not. There is nothing in-between existence and non-existence.

On the right hand boys, on the left hand girls. For each of these men has determined a name as a distinguishing mark. When male and female mingle seed of Venus in the form [the body] of one, the excellence from the two different bloods, if it preserves harmony, fashions a well-formed body; but if when the seed is mingled the excellencies fight against each other [Page] and do not unite into one, they will distress the sex that is coming into existence, as the twofold seed is mingled in the body of the unfortunate woman. With this there are fineness and heat and light and softness and brightness; and with the dense are classed cold and darkness and hardness and weight, for these are separated the ones on one side, the others on the other. I almost forgot, Theodoros, that there were others who asserted opinions the very opposite of these: Feeling ashamed before Melissos and the rest who assert that the all is one being, for fear we should examine the matter somewhat crudely, I am even more ashamed in view of the fact that Parmenides is one of them. Parmenides seems to me, in the words of Homer, a man to be revered and at the same time feared. For when I was a mere youth and he a very old man, I conversed with him, and he seemed to me to have an exceedingly wonderful depth of mind. I fear lest we may not understand what he said, and that we may fail still more to understand his thoughts in saying it; and, what is most important, I fear lest the question before us should fail to receive due consideration. You understand then that it is really impossible to speak of not-being or to say anything about it or to conceive it by itself, but it is inconceivable, not to be spoken of or mentioned, and irrational. Accordingly the unity itself in relation to itself is as follows: Having in itself neither greatness nor littleness, it could not be exceeded by itself nor could it exceed itself, but being equal it would be equal to itself. It does not exist, means absolutely that it does not exist anywhere in any way, nor does not-being have any share at all in being. Accordingly not-being could not exist, nor in any other way could it have a share in being. Reference to the stories which Hesiod and Parmenides told about the gods. Line is quoted. The first principle must be one, unmoved, as Parmenides and Melissos say,. To those proceeding after this impossible manner things seem to be one, and it is not difficult to refute them from their own statements. For both of them reason in a fallacious manner, both Parmenides and Melissos; for they make false assumptions, and at the same time their course of reasoning is not logical. And the same sort of arguments are used by Parmenides, although he has some others of his own, and the refutation consists in showing both that he makes mistakes of fact and that he does not draw his conclusions correctly. He makes a mistake in assuming that being is to be spoken of absolutely, speaking of it thus many times; and he draws the false conclusion that, in case only whites are considered, white meaning one thing, none the less there are many whites and not one; since neither in the succession of things nor, in the argument will whiteness be one. For what is predicated of white will not be the same as what is predicated of the object which is white, and nothing except white will be separated from the object; since there is no other ground of separation except the fact that the white is different from the object in which the white exists. But Parmenides had not yet arrived at the knowledge of this. Parmenides also makes heat [Page] and cold first principles; and he calls them fire and earth. Wherefore we must regard Parmenides as a more acute thinker than Melissos, for the latter says that the infinite is the all, but the former asserts that the all is limited, equally distant from the centre [on every side]. Parmenides says that the two exist, both being and not beingâ€”i. None of those who have affirmed that the all is one have, it happens, seen the nature of such a cause clearly, except, perhaps, Parmenides, and he in so far as he sometimes asserts that there is not one cause alone, but two causes. For Parmenides seemed to lay hold of a unity according to reason, and Melissos according to matter; wherefore the former says it is limited, the latter that it is unlimited. Xenophanes first taught the unity of things Parmenides is said to have been his pupil , but he did not make anything clear, nor did he seem to get at the nature of either finiteness or infinity, but, looking up into the broad heavens, he said, the unity is god. These, as we said, are to be dismissed from the present investigation, two of them entirely as being somewhat more crude, Xenophanes and Melissos; but Parmenides seems to

speak in some places with greater care. For believing that not-being does not exist in addition to being, of necessity he thinks that being is one and that there is nothing else,. There is nothing different from being, so that it is necessary to agree with the reasoning of Parmenides that all things are one, and that this is being. And succeeding him Parmenides, son of Pyres, the Eleaticâ€”Theophrastos adds the name of Xenophanesâ€”followed both ways. For in declaring that the all is eternal, and in attempting to explain the genesis of things, he expresses different opinions according to the two standpoints: Parmenides, son of Pyres, the Eleatic, was a pupil of Xenophanes, yet he did not accept his doctrines. He was the first to declare that the earth is spheroidal and situated in the middle of the universe. He said that there are two elements, fire and earth; the one has the office of demiurge, the other that of matter. Men first arose from mud; heat and cold are the elements of which all things are composed. He holds that intelligence and life are the same, as Theophrastos records in his book on physics, where he put down the opinions of almost everybody. He said that philosophy has a twofold office, to understand both the truth and also what [Page] men believe. Theophrastos says that Parmenides was the first to call the heavens a universe and the earth spheroidal. Parmenides does not make any definite statements as to sensation, except that knowledge is in proportion to the excess of one of the two elements. Intelligence varies as the heat or the cold is in excess, and it is better and purer by reason of heat; but nevertheless it has need of a certain symmetry. But it is evident that he believes sensation to take place by the presence of some quality in contrast with its opposite, where he says that a corpse does not perceive light and heat and sound by reason of the absence of fire, but that it perceives cold and silence and the similar contrasted qualities, and in general that being as a whole has a certain knowledge. So in his statements he seems to do away with what is difficult by leaving it out. That which is outside of being is not-being, not-being is nothing, accordingly being is one. Parmenides supposes that the all is one and eternal, and without beginning and spheroidal in form; but even he does not escape the opinion of the many, for he speaks of fire and earth as first principles of the all, of earth as matter, and of fire as agent and cause, and he says that the earth will come to an end, but in what way he does not say. He says that the all is eternal, and not generated, and spherical, and homogeneous, not having place in itself, and unmoved, and limited. Parmenides the Eleatic, the companion of Xenophanes, both laid claim to his opinions, and at the same time took the opposite standpoint. For he declared the all to be eternal and immovable according to the real state of the case; for it is alone, existing alone, immovable and without beginning v. He says that if anything exists besides being, this is not-being, but not-being does not exist at all. So there is left the being that has no beginning; and he says that the earth was formed by the precipitation of dense air. Parmenides, the son of Pyres, himself also of the Eleatic school, said that the first principle of all things is the infinite. Parmenides, the Eleatic, son of Pyrrhes, was a companion of Xenophanes, and in his first book the doctrines agree with those of his master; for here that verse occurs: He said that the cause of all things is not earth alone, as his master said, but also fire. The world is immovable and limited, and spheroidal in form. Parmenides and Melissos did away with generation and destruction, because they thought that the all is unmoved. All things are controlled by necessity; this is fated, it is justice and forethought, and the producer of the world. The world is one. It is without beginning and eternal and indestructible. The aether stands highest of all and surrounding all, and beneath this is ranged the fiery element which we call the heavens, and beneath this are the things of earth. The revolving vault highest above the earth is the heavens. The heavens are of a fiery nature. The stars are masses of fire. He ranks the morning star, which he considers the same as the evening star, first in the aether; and after this the sun, and beneath this the stars in the fiery vault which he calls the heavens. Stars are fed from the exhalations of the earth. The sun is of a fiery nature. The sun and the moon are separated from the milky way, the one from the thinner mixture, which is hot, the other from the denser, which is cold. The moon is of a fiery nature. The moon is of the same size as the sun, and derives its light, from it. The moon appears dark because darkness is mingled with its fiery nature, whence he calls it the star that shines with a false light. The mixture of dense and thin gives its milk-like appearance to the milky way. Parmenides first defined the inhabited parts of the earth by the two tropical zones. Because the earth is equally distant on all sides from other bodies, and so, rests in an equilibrium, not having any reason for swaying one way rather than another; on this account it only shakes and does not move from its place. The soul is of a fiery nature. The reason is in

the whole breast. Life and intelligence are the same thing, nor could there be any living being entirely without reason. Sensations arise part by part according to the symmetry of [Page] the pores, each particular object of sense being adapted to each sense organ. Desire is produced by lack of nourishment. Parmenides holds the opposite opinion; males are produced in the northern part, for this shares the greater density; and females in the southern part by reason of its rarefied state. Some descend from the right side to the right parts of the womb, others from the left to the left parts of the womb; but if they cross in the descent females are born. When the child comes from the right side of the womb, it resembles the father; when it comes from the left side, the mother. Old age attends the failure of heat.

Chapter 8 : Parmenides quotes - Individual Differences Research Labs

Parmenides 93 Copy quote The only roads of enquiry there are to think of: one, that it is and that it is not possible for it not to be, this is the path of persuasion (for truth is its companion); the other, that it is not and that it must not be - this I say to you is a path wholly unknowable.

Info to Readers click to show or hide "Modern Ontologists" contains a table with links to the pages on the most important philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries who have written on ontology. Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Vol. I Greek Philosophy to Plato, , Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, , p. In the Annotated Bibliography see the links at the end of the page I list the main critical editions from the first printed edition of to present days and the translations in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish, and I give a selection of recent studies on Parmenides; in future, a section will be dedicated to an examination of some critical variants of the Greek text, with particular attention to corrections to the Diels-Kranz abbreviated DK edition of the *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Complete references of the texts cited are given in the Annotated Bibliography. Parmenides flourished in Elea, a Greek colony on the west coast of Italy, south of the Gulf of Salerno. The colony had been founded about B. At any rate, some fifty years after the foundation of the colony, a philosophical poem composed by Parmenides handed down the first recorded Western attempt to account for the universe in terms of being, instead of through the Ionian way of change and growth. This poem of Parmenides had far-reaching effects on subsequent philosophic development, as is amply attested in later Greek writings. It continued to be read for about a thousand years, and its tenets were discussed penetratingly by thinkers of the stature of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. Its influence on the thought of lesser figures is apparent. By the time the last copy of the complete poem had disappeared it had been quoted so abundantly by other writers that the sections and verses copied allow the general structure of the poem to be reestablished and permit the characteristic tenets attributed in tradition to Parmenides to be studied in the fragments themselves. The poem had three parts, which formed a unified whole. The fragments that remain show how the second part followed in express sequence upon the first, and the third in express sequence upon the second. The first part was an introduction or proem, the second dealt with being, and the third with the way things appear to men. The composition fits into a recognized literary genre of the time. There Parmenides is warmly welcomed by a goddess into her home. The tenses used by Parmenides in the proem indicate clearly enough that he was describing a journey made regularly, quite as a philosopher repeatedly journeys into the regions of his thought. The road traveled is characterized as "far away from the wandering of men. Things are considered to appear to men in a way radically different from what the truth about them reveals. In this framework the second section of the poem intends to explain the truth, while the third section will explain how things are able to appear to men in a way different from the truth about them. The proem envisages truth as something unwavering, something firm and stable. Appearance -- the ordinary thinking of mortals -- is in this manner sharply contrasted with the inspired teaching of the goddess. One is that it is and that for it not to be is impossible. This is the way that follows truth. The other is that it is not and that for it not to be is of necessity. This path offers no possibility whatever for inquiry, since non-being cannot possibly be known or expressed Fr. The fragment accepted as third then gives the reason in a rather cryptic statement that translated word for word reads "For the same thing is to think and to be" Fr. These assertions maintain that being follows upon or accompanies truth. Truth, as envisaged in the proem, is accordingly to be given in terms of being. The stability or firmness required by the proem is here couched in the necessity involved by being. Being necessarily excludes non-being. No stronger type of stability could be found. This necessity is seen extended to everything that can be thought of or expressed. All that remains outside it is non-being, which likewise involves its own impossibility and in consequence is a path of inquiry that cannot even be entered. The basic reason given in the fragment is that non-being cannot possibly be known or expressed. If the third fragment followed immediately, it would confirm this reason with a positive statement: So understood it appeals to an immediate evidence, namely, that whatever is known is known as a being. If you try to represent non-being you find it impossible. But can it be regarded as an immediate evidence? Is it not rather part of a conclusion that being is

a whole and is identified with all things, including thought? If that is its meaning, should not the fragment be located later in the poem, and not at the beginning of the second section? Located immediately after Fragment 2, it should express a basic evidence that shows why the path of non-being cannot even be entered. This evidence is the immediate experience that whatever is thought of is necessarily thought of and expressed in terms of being. In consequence the alleged path of non-being cannot offer any possibility for inquiry. However, mortals do in fact travel a path different from that of truth. It is readily observable. It seems to wander back and forth between being and non-being. It seems to assess them as the same yet not the same Fr. Ordinary custom is regarded as urging men toward it. Yet it as well as the path of non-being is forbidden to Parmenides. Instead, he is told by the goddess to judge by reason logos the controversial argument given in her words Fr. The way of being is then sketched Fr. It shows that what exists cannot be engendered or destroyed and that it cannot change or be subject to differentiation, for any of these would require the presence of non-being. Being is accordingly whole and entire, held firmly within its limits, neither more nor less in any direction. For it all things will be a name or, in regard to it all things are named, 9 "whatever mortals have established believing that they are true, that they come to be and perish, that they are and are not, that they change in place and vary through range of bright color" Fr. What is the notion of being that is offered under this rather difficult phrasing? It is something that necessarily excludes non-being from its range, and on the other hand includes everything that is or exists. Any distinction between "is" and "exists" is bound to prove futile in this context. There are only two sides to the division. One is utter nothingness, and cannot even be thought of. All else, whether expressed in terms of being or in terms of existence, falls on the other side. But precisely what is it that is or exists? In most cases no subject at all is expressed in the Greek. In those cases in which it is expressed, the participial or infinitive form of the verb "to be" is used. Nothing other than being seems envisaged as the subject. The question accordingly returns to the original formulation: What is the notion of being that is intended in the phrases of Parmenides? Modern views differ widely. This indicates plainly that Parmenides is seeing no distinction in fact between being and the subject that is or exists. They are regarded by him as one and the same. He writes as though this is a matter of immediate intuition. If this analysis of the beginning of the section on being is correct, Parmenides is immediately intuiting being as something necessarily different from non-being. It is a matter of just looking and seeing. You see at once that you think in terms of being, and cannot think or express non-being. Under intense philosophical scrutiny, being seems intuited after the manner in which the ordinary mortal considers himself to be intuiting color or extension or movement. But precisely what is this being that is so intuited? Is it something corporeal or something incorporeal, something ideal or something real? The historical background against which Parmenides did his thinking would tend to limit it to the corporeal and the real. The Ionian as well as the Pythagorean thought which Parmenides could be expected to have absorbed as he grew up could hardly have directed his attention to anything beyond the visible and extended world. It was that world that his predecessors had been striving to understand and explain. It is that world that Parmenides expressly endeavors to understand and explain in the final section of his poem. He offers, it is true, an unexpected and utterly original explanation of it. But nothing else in all the poem seems indicated as the object of his study. In the setting in which Parmenides thought and wrote, anything other than the visible and tangible universe would seem incongruous as a subject for philosophizing. In the composition of the poem, moreover, the poem envisages Parmenides as located in a world of change and highly differentiated objects, and using them as a means to rise to light. The starting point of the philosophical journey seems in this way to be represented as a world of plurality and change, a world already known in the opinions of mortals but now to be explained from the viewpoint of truth. Princeton University Press, pp. Yale University Press, , pp. Anton and George L. State University of New York Press, , pp. A coverage of the topic at about the same time may be found in Mourelatos, pp. Nijhoff, , pp. In solidarity with poem, Charles H. Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. His one poem, whose first half largely survives, opens with the allegory of an intellectual journey by which Parmenides has succeeded in standing back from the empirical world. He learns, from the mouth of an unnamed goddess, a dramatically new perspective on being. The Way of Truth is the earliest known passage of sustained argument in Western philosophy.

Chapter 9 : Parmenides: The Eleatic School

Distinguishing speeches and ways, I was able to conclude that the speeches of Parmenides are two: that on Truth, revealed by the Goddess to Parmenides (fragments from 2 to 8,50), and that on Opinions, submitted by the Goddess to Parmenides as misleading (fragments from 8,50 to 19).

It is certain that his hometown was Elea Latin: Velia – a Greek settlement along the Tyrrhenian coast of the Appenine Peninsula, just south of the Bay of Salerno, now located in the modern municipality comune of Ascea, Italy. Herodotus reports that members of the Phocaeen tribe established this settlement ca. When exactly Parmenides was born is far more controversial. Neither account is clearly convincing in-itself, and scholars are divided on their reliability and veracity. The reliability of this account is esteemed for its historical focus as opposed to any philosophical agenda of these authors. The later birthdate B. However, Plato is also known for including other entirely fictitious, clearly anachronistic yet precise details in his dialogues. Plato is not necessarily a reliable historical source. This is first indicated by the evident notoriety he gained for contributions to his community. Several sources attest that he established a set of laws for Elea, which remained in effect and sworn to for centuries after his death Coxon Test. Finally, if Parmenides really was a personal teacher of Zeno of Elea B. Ultimately, however, when and where Parmenides died is entirely unattested. No copy of the original work has survived, in any part. Instead, scholars have collected purported quotations or testimonia from a number of ancient authors and attempted to reconstruct the poem by arranging these fragments according to internal and external testimonia evidence. The result is a rather fragmentary text, constituted by approximately dactylic-hexameter lines some are only partial lines, or even only one word. This reconstructed arrangement has then been traditionally divided into three distinct parts: The linear order of the three main extant sections is certain, and the assignment of particular fragments and internal lines to each section is generally well-supported. However, it must be admitted that confidence in the connectedness, completeness, and internal ordering of the fragments in each section decreases significantly as one proceeds through the poem linearly: Furthermore, many philological difficulties persist throughout the reconstruction. There are conflicting transmissions regarding which Greek word to read, variant punctuation possibilities, concerns surrounding adequate translation, ambiguities in the poetical form, and so forth. This is due entirely to Sextus Empiricus, who quoted Lines of the Proem C1 as a whole and explicitly reported that they began the poem Coxon Test. Not only are the bulk of these lines 1. In short, modern scholars would have no idea the Proem ever existed were it not for Sextus. Nevertheless, there is some controversy regarding the proper ending of the Proem. In contrast, Sextus continued his block quotation of the Proem after line 1. The vast majority of interpreters have followed both these moves. However, there may be good reasons to challenge this reconstruction compare Bicknell ; Kurfess , The Proem opens mid-action, with a first-person account of an unnamed youth generally taken to be Parmenides himself traveling along a divine path to meet a didactic also unnamed goddess. The youth describes himself riding in a chariot with fire-blazing wheels turning on pipe-whistling axles, which seems to be traversing the heavens. The chariot is drawn by mares, steered by the Daughters of the Sun the Heliades , who began their journey at the House of Night. The party eventually arrives at two tightly-locked, bronze-fitted gates – the Gates of Night and Day. However, it would seem that any chariot journey directed by sun goddesses is best understood as following the ecliptic path of the sun and Day also, that of the moon and Night. The journey would then continue following the ecliptic pathway upwards across the heavens to apogee, and then descend towards sunset in the West. At some point along this route over the Earth they would collect their mortal charge. Following this circular path, the troupe would eventually arrive back in the underworld at the Gates of Night and Day. Not only are these gates traditionally located immediately in front of the House of Night, but the mention of the chasm that lies beyond them is an apt poetical description of the completely dark House of Night. It also suggests a possible identification of the anonymous spokes-goddess – Night compare Palmer The rest of the poem consists of a narration from the perspective of the unnamed goddess, who begins by offering a programmatic outline of what she will teach and what the youth must learn 1. The suspicion that these lines might help shed light on the crucial

relationship between Reality and Opinion is well-warranted. However, there are numerous possible readings both in the Greek transmission and in the English translation and selecting a translation for these lines requires extensive philological considerations, as well as an interpretative lens in which to understand the overall poem—the lines themselves are simply too ambiguous to make any determination. Thus, it is quite difficult to offer a translation or summary here that does not strongly favor one interpretation of Parmenides over another. The following is an imperfect attempt at doing so, while remaining as interpretatively uncommitted as possible. Commentators have tended to understand these lines in several general ways. Another common view is that Parmenides might be telling the youth he will learn counterfactually how the opinions of mortals or the objects of such opinions would or could have been correct even though they were not and are not now. Alternatively, Parmenides might be pointing to some distinct, third thing for the youth to learn, beyond just Reality and Opinion. This third thing could be, but is not limited to, the relationship between the two sections, which does not seem to have been explicitly outlined in the poem at least, not in the extant fragments. In any case, these lines are probably best dealt with once one already has settled upon an interpretative stance for the overall poem given the rest of the evidence. In any case, due to the overall relative completeness of the section and its clearly novel philosophical content—as opposed to the more mythical and cosmological content found in the other sections—these lines have received far more attention from philosophically-minded readers, in both ancient and modern times. Here, the goddess seems to warn the youth from following the path which holds being and not-being or becoming and not-becoming to be both the same and not the same. Scholars are divided as to what the exact meaning of this relationship is supposed to be, leading to numerous mutually exclusive interpretative models. Does Parmenides really mean to make an identity claim between the two—that thinking really is numerically one and the same as being, and vice-versa? Or, is it that there is some shared property -ies between the two? Most commonly, Parmenides has been understood here as anticipating Russellian concerns with language and how meaning and reference must be coextensive with, and even preceded by, ontology. This line of reasoning can be readily advanced to deny any sort of change at all. Opinion has traditionally been estimated to be far longer than the previous two sections combined. This degree of precision is highly speculative, to say the least. The reason Opinion has been estimated to be so much larger is due to the fragmentary nature of the section only 44 verses, largely disjointed or incomplete, are attested and the apparently wide array of different topics treated—which would seem to require a great deal of exposition to properly flesh-out. The belief that Opinion would have required a lengthy explication in order to adequately address its myriad of disparate topics may be overstated. As Kurfess has recently argued, there is nothing in the testimonia indicating any significant additional content belonging to the Opinion beyond that which is explicitly mentioned in the extant fragments. Thus, though Opinion would still be far longer than the quite limited sampling that has been transmitted, it need not have been anywhere near as extensive as has been traditionally supposed, or all that much longer than Reality. Regardless of its original length, the incompleteness of this section allows for substantially less confidence regarding its arrangement and even less clarity concerning the overall meaning of the section. As a result, the assignment of certain fragments to this section has faced more opposition compare Cordero for a recent example. Nevertheless, the internal evidence and testimonia provide good reasons to accept the traditional assignment of fragments to this section, as well as their general arrangement. The range of content in this section includes: Admittedly, the Greek is ambiguous about what exactly it is not right for mortals to do. It is common amongst scholars to read these passages as claiming it is either wrong for mortals to name both Light and Night, or that naming just one of these opposites is wrong and the other acceptable. This reading tends to suggest that Parmenides is either denying the existence of the duality completely, or accepting that only one of them properly exists. The same holds if only Night is named. Thus, it would not seem appropriate to name only one of these forms. This problem is only doubled if both forms are named. Thus, it would seem that mortals should not name either form, and thus both Light and Night are denied as proper objects of thought. This universal denigration is first introduced at C 8. If this is truly a concluding passage, the apparently disparate content of Opinion is unified as a treatment of mortal errors in naming, which the section uncontroversially began with. For the narrowest rings became filled with unmixed fire, The outer ones with night, along which spews forth a

portion of flame. And in the middle of these is a goddess, who governs all things. For in every way she engenders hateful birth and intercourse Sending female to mix with male, and again in turn, male to mix with the more feminine. This is clearly the case with respect to C , as the governing goddess is explicitly said to direct male-female intercourse in C This is then followed by a more intuitive cosmogony, suffused with traditional mythopoetical elements Opinion “a world full of generation, perishing, motion, and so forth. It is uncontroversial that Reality is positively endorsed, and it is equally clear that Opinion is negatively presented in relation to Aletheia. However, there is significant uncertainty regarding the ultimate status of Opinion, with questions remaining such as whether it is supposed to have any value at all and, if so, what sort of value. While most passages in the poem are consistent with a completely worthless Opinion, they do not necessitate that valuation; even the most obvious denigrations of Opinion itself or mortals and their views are not entirely clear regarding the exact type or extent of its failings. Even more troubling, there are two passages which might suggest some degree of positive value for Opinion—however, the lines are notoriously difficult to understand. Thus, it is helpful to examine more closely the passages where the relationship between the sections is most directly treated. However, it does not necessarily follow from these lines that Opinion is entirely false or valueless. At most, all that seems entailed here is a comparative lack of epistemic certainty in relation to Reality. Accepting that it is the content of Opinion that is deceptive, one of the most difficult interpretative questions regarding Opinion remains. Is the extent of the deception supposed to apply to: Mortal beliefs are also unequivocally derided in between these bookends to Reality, though in slightly different terms. C 5 not only claims mortal views are in error, it identifies the source of their error—confusing being and non-being. Nevertheless, this may not be the entire story. Furthermore, there is at least some textual evidence that might be understood to suggest Opinion should not be treated as negatively as the passages considered so far would suggest. As noted in the summary of the Proem above, there are two particularly difficult lines C 1. At most, these lines could only soften the negative treatment of mortal views. Only one further extant passage remains which might offer some reason to think Opinion maintains some positive value, and this is the passage most commonly appealed to for this purpose. Since mortals are incorrect in their accounts, the particular account offered in Opinion is representative of such accounts, and is presented didactically—as an example of the sorts of accounts that should not be accepted. If the youth can learn to recognize what is fundamentally mistaken in this representative account Opinion , any alternative or derivative account offered by mortals which includes the same fundamental errors can be recognized and resisted. Given all of this, it is undeniable that Opinion is lacking in comparison to Aletheia, and certainly treated negatively in comparison. It should also be taken as well-founded that the Opinion is epistemically inferior.