Images and Experience: At the Roots of Parmenides' *Aletheia*

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Jonathan Barnes, an intelligent reader and also one of the keenest 'hunters' for logical arguments in the texts of the Presocratics, has openly expressed his displeasure with the fact that Parmenides wrote poetry—and bad poetry, at that.

> It is hard to excuse Parmenides' choice of verse as a medium for his philosophy. The exigencies of metre and poetical style regularly produce an almost impenetrable obscurity; and the difficulty of understanding his thought is not lightened by any literary joy: the case presents no adjunct to the Muse's diadem.
> (Barnes 1982, 155)

There is an interesting similarity between this modern interpreter's reaction to the poetry of Parmenides and Aristotle's reaction to an equally enigmatic text: the cosmological poetry of Empedocles. Aristotle, too, expresses his displeasure in no uncertain terms. In his opinion those who have nothing to say but would like to create the impression of having something to say will write poetry and use all sorts of obscurities and circumlocutions (*Rhetoric* 1407a35 = DK 31A25). His assessment is that the best way to extract some solid meaning from the text of Empedocles is to interpret it on the basis not of Empedocles' own 'stammering' expression but of what from a philosophical point of view he had really intended to say (*Metaphysics* 985a4).

This same golden rule is applied, again and again, to the interpretation of Parmenides. Ever since classical antiquity the proem, or introduction to his poem, has by and large been brushed aside and dismissed. In fact this proem would not even have survived at all, were it not for the fact that a later commentator happened to interpret it as a philosophical allegory: in doing so, he managed to 'normalize' it and make it philosophically acceptable. The standard procedure for historians of philosophy is not to begin with the proem and take it as their starting point for interpreting the rest of Parmenides' poem. On the contrary, the tendency has been to adopt the reverse procedure of first attempting to extract supposedly logical arguments from the so-called *Aletheia* (the central part of Parmenides' poem devoted to his teaching about the nature of truth or reality); then trying to analyze these arguments; and next, almost as an afterthought, offering a few brief comments about the problematic nature of the proem.[1]

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[1] A few remarks about the underpinnings of this explanatory model are called for here, not only because it crops up repeatedly in the literature on Parmenides (cf. recently Hermann 2004, 163ff.) but also because it is so often accepted uncritically without justification. Its linchpin is the argument from *diaphonia* or disagreement: because interpreters are unable to agree on the meaning of the proem, one

But since the end of the 19th century a line of interpretation has also persisted that accords the proem a greater significance. And curiously it was Hermann Diels who pointed out this second route, in the introduction to his edition of Parmenides which was published in 1897. Diels had a keen eye and above all had read Wilhelm Radloff's book *Aus Sibirien* (Leipzig, 1884; 2nd edn. 1893), which was for a long time regarded as a classic in the literature on shamanism. Diels immediately connected the ecstatic journeys of Siberian shamans with the journey of Parmenides and also with other ecstatic experiences described in classical literature such as those of Aristeas, Empedocles, and Phormio. I say 'curiously' because Diels happened to be one of the most rigid adherents of the view that Parmenides was a pure logician. So he was quick to dismiss this line of interpretation as soon as he had offered a brief glimpse of it. Parmenides had definitely not had any ecstatic experience but had simply presented a clumsy imitation of one because 'the single factor that differentiates him from this whole Orphic, Pythagorean, ecstatic world is his rationalism—which will only allow mysticism to influence its outer form, never its internal content' (Diels 1897, 21, my trans.).

Even so, in the period after Diels the proem has repeatedly been interpreted as an ecstatic journey: as a *katabasis* or descent into the underworld.[2] Walter Burkert, in particular, published a fundamental article (1969) offering a detailed treatment of the proem and interpreting it in the light of local or Orphic-Pythagorean traditions that clearly point to the practices of incubation and *katabasis*. But there is still strong resistance among scholars to the idea that Parmenides, the founder of Western logic, was a mystic and came by his knowledge through a journey to the underworld and divine revelation—even though those were regarded in his time as the most direct way to wisdom and truth.[3]

This 'fear of the abyss' is evidenced especially in the repeated attempts to

should refrain from interpreting it and dismiss the whole thing as unclear. But the truth of the matter is that a state of *diaphonia* characterizes many other debates about issues in both ancient philosophy and classical philology—without this implying that any and all interpretations must necessarily be abandoned as invalid. Another rarely acknowledged cause for the lack of attention to the proem is deeply rooted prejudice against every explanation that leads into the realm of mysticism. And yet over the past thirty years the nature, the context, the methodologies, and the effects or consequences of mystical experience have all become crucial areas of research not only in the philosophy of religion but also in the scientific study of the brain (cf. Deikmann 1980, Stahl 1975, Katz 1992, Forman 1999, Austin 1999, 2006). Mysticism and rationality are not mutually exclusive; however, they lie on two different levels and must therefore be examined with different methods. The sceptical and even disparaging attitudes towards the possibility of archaic Greek sages having had mystical experiences stem from the tendency to approach the texts that describe such experiences by using concepts and categories that derive exclusively from analytical thought.

[2] Diels' own assumption, which a number of other scholars in his wake continued to accept, that Parmenides' journey is an ascent to heaven is certainly not correct. Cf., e.g., Mansfeld 1964 and, most recently, the full discussion and references in Kingsley 2002, 370-381.

[3] One may recall not only the famous case of Epimenides, who encountered *Dike* and *Aletheia* during his long sleep in a cave (DK 3B1), but also the *katabaseis* in the legend of Pythagoras as well as the legendary *katabaseis* of Minos, who paid a visit every nine years to his father Zeus in Zeus' own cave to receive instruction from him and be able to give laws to the Cretans on the basis of this instruction (Plato, *Minos* 319e; *Laws* 624b).

interpret the proem as a mere sequence of literary metaphors or an allegory. In 1930 Fränkel found what seemed a powerful argument to help strengthen this hypothesis: the image of the chariot was, in his view, a metaphor for poetic inspiration as we find it in Pindar.[4] We will see that this comparison rests on very weak foundations. Still, those who wish to deny Parmenides any mystical experience invoke Fränkel's hypothesis time and time again.[5] What is so crucially lacking here is, more than anything else, a clear definition of the category 'literary'.

As Andrew Ford (2002) has shown, our understanding of this category harks back in essence to a conception expressed clearly for the first time by Aristotle in the 4th century BC: namely that the poetic text is something to be viewed as an entity detached from its function and context, as a 'verbal artifact' that has its own internal justification and is subject to certain compositional rules. However, such an approach is simply not appropriate for earlier poetic texts until at least the late 5th century BC. This is because they were not composed as texts *per se* according to pre-existing rules of a canonized 'genre', but rather for a specific private or public occasion. In other words they cannot be separated fom the pragmatic context in which they were performed and for which they were composed. The shift in focus away from the meaning of a text as determined by its social, political, and religious function towards its form, which characterizes the Aristotelian theory of literature, led to a fundamental alteration of the criteria for interpreting archaic poetic texts. Literary criticism that relied on Aristotelian categories radically altered the approach to these texts, especially the ones regarded by Aristotle as 'philosophical', not just by disregarding their context and function but also by completely misunderstanding the deeper meaning of their peculiarly enigmatic form.[6]

In essence Aristotle adapted the concepts that initially had been developed for

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[4] Fränkel 1960 evidently assumes that Parmenides' poem is a 'purely' literary text in which the full range of archaic literary strategies is deployed. 'Besonders kommt es mir darauf an, den genauen Kontakt mit dem Wortlaut des Originaltextes so herzustellen, wie man es bei der Interpretation eines "reinen" Dichtertextes für selbstverständlich hält, dagegen bei einem streng philosophischen, sachgebundenen Text leicht versäumt' (157). Starting from this premise Fränkel applied the usual method of *Quellenforschung* to explain what seemed to him to be the common features shared by Pindar's and Parmenides' use of the image of a journey by chariot: both writers depended on the same original, to which Pindar adhered more closely (158).

[5] Cf. recently Cerri 1999, 96ff., who cites other passages in which the image appears, although without in any way changing the substance of the argument. Cf. also Laks 2003, 21n53, who claims 'une analyse complète du proème montrerait que le char, en particulier, relève de la tradition poétique'. My analysis will prove, on the contrary, that the image of the chariot in Parmenides' proem has its roots in religious tradition.

[6] Struck 2004, 64: 'Aristotle introduces new concerns to poetics and initiates an approach that centers not on the interpretation of obscure messages but on the analysis of a poem's constituent parts.' Struck distinguishes two types of ancient literary criticism: an 'analytical' approach, which views poetry as a *techne* with its own rules and peculiarities and interprets poetic texts with the help of concepts deriving from rhetoric; and an 'interpretative' one, whereby texts are bearers of a secret wisdom that needs to be brought into the light again (3n2). The latter represents the dominant form of literary criticism prior to Aristotle and is also the basis for the so-called allegorical interpretation of Homer and other poets throughout the whole of antiquity.

the study of rhetorical tactics in prose speeches, and gave prominence above all to the criterion of clarity (σαφήνεια). The central concept of *ainigma* (which refers to the hidden meaning of the text accessible only with difficulty) was viewed as a purely stylistic device that is to be condemned as a mistaken form of poetic speech and replaced with 'metaphor' (*Poetics* 1458a18ff.; see Struck 2004, 65ff.). The good poet expresses himself through metaphors, not through enigmas. Metaphor refers to a hidden meaning, but one that can be easily grasped. It is to be viewed as merely a kind of poetic embellishment that must not be allowed to transgress the bounds of clarity.[7]

> Once reduced to a question of style, the enigma can no longer serve as provocation to peek under the veil of language at the underlying structures of being. Rather it can only count as an obfuscation, a barrier between the audience and the poet's point. (Struck 2004, 65)

In short: when applying the categories of modern literary criticism, which derive from Aristotle, to the interpretation of Parmenides' poem one needs to be very conscious that one is failing to do justice to the complexity and the function of this text.[8]

Closely linked to the question of 'literariness' is the putative fictionality of Parmenides' proem, which also derives from the same Aristotelian interpretative model. The received view is that Parmenides as a poet and as a supposedly rational philosopher constructs 'fictions'.[9] The journey, the mares, the chariot, the

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[7] *Rhetoric* 1405a8: καὶ τὸ σαφὲς καὶ τὸ ἡδὺ καὶ τὸ ξενικὸν ἔχει μάλιστα ἡ μεταφορά. See Struck 2004, 65ff.

[8] This is especially clear in the interpretation offered by Fränkel, who with his influential 'metaphorical' and 'philosophical' exegesis of the proem succeeded for a long time in diverting scholars' attention from the function and meaning of important details contained inside it. Cf., e.g., with reference to the description of the wheels and the gate (161), 'In der folgenden Darstellung sind zwei Dinge mit einem grossen Aufwand an sinnlichen Elementen geschildert: die Schnelligkeit der Fahrt, und das Tor. Eine solche Ausstattung mit gegenständlichen Einzelzügen ist aber nichts anderes als die archaische Form der Hervorhebung und des Nachdrucks. Sie darf uns nicht dazu verführen, auch im übrigen ein materielles Bild der Reise zu postulieren.... Im Bild erscheinen nun dieselben Dinge in mehrfacher Brechung gleichsam vervielfältigt. Auch diese archaische Wiederholung bedeutsamer Angaben darf uns nicht beirren.' But the interpretation offered by Cerri 1999, 100 equally fails to do justice to the function of Parmenides' text. According to Cerri the poem is a simple text that is intended to be heard easily and read easily because it references familiar myths and images and is expressed in a conventional and standardized language. He thus seems to interpret Parmenides' proem as a purely literary construction that can be very simply understood: the chariot is poetic inspiration, the mares are the 'mares of thought' or 'dello slancio della mente verso il proprio scopo' (166), the man who 'knows' is the intelligent man who is well trained in science (170), the whistling tone that the wheels make is 'il suono aspro e fascinoso della poesia parmenidea' (102), the veil of the *Heliades* the darkness of night. The daughters of the sun, who remove their veils, 'immettono sulla strada sicura dell'analisi razionale' (103) as opposed to Hesiod's nocturnal Muses, 'che avviano alla tortuosità oscure dei miti teogonici', etc. The vividness and immediacy of Parmenides' images are entirely disregarded according to the terms of this rigid, metaphorical interpretation.

[9] A recent and very typical example of this approach is Morgan 2000, who considers the poem 'a series of nested fictions that draw attention to problems in the relationship of language and reality,

Daughters of the Sun, the Goddess, and her revelation are according to this view part of a 'literary creation' that derives from traditional epic and mythological patterns and aims at expressing so-called 'philosophical' ideas. This judgment relies on categories that are peculiar to modern literary criticism but are very far removed from the way archaic poets such as Parmenides, who claim to have received a divine revelation, perceive the composition and performance of their poems and conceive their role in the tradition and society in which they live.

Recent and important studies of oral poetry have shown that such poets, in archaic Greece as well as in other societies all over the world where poetry is transmitted orally, do not recognize any distinction between technical training or skill and the revelation they receive from gods or other superhuman entities. Usually they present themselves as inspired by them, or as receiving a revelation from them, but not as themselves composing their poems. This is not a 'literary convention' or a mere 'device' aimed at gaining credibility, but an accurate report of how they experience the encounter with their inner source of inspiration and knowledge, which lets their speech flow effortlessly into their consciousness and through their mouths when they compose and perform. Homer and Hesiod are good examples of this practice.[10] But similar cases are also to be found in other cultures. One of the most striking examples mentioned by Ruth Finnegan is the poet-seer Velema from Fiji: he was actually trained in the arts of singing and composition, but claimed that he did not himself compose his poems. They were given to him in trance or sleep by his ancestors, who themselves spoke through his mouth when he was performing.[11] How a poet can come to perceive his composition not as his own but as a gift from a divinity is suggested in a stimulating essay on Homeric poetry by Egbert Bakker. He traces the sources of this perception back to the fact that during their performances the consciousness of poets is 'propelled forward by the rhythmical movement of the language'.[12] The power of such speech is experienced as originating 'from a source that is neither opposed to the speaker's consciousness, nor identical to it' (Bakker 1997, 138):

> Rhythm, in other words, contributes to what might be called a dislocation of consciousness: the speech produced is not the present speaker's responsibility but something with which a remote authority is credited, an authority located beyond everyday experience and the source of immutable knowledge

problems of which the mythological framework is paradigmatic' (68). For a discussion of this book, cf. Gemelli Marciano 2006a.

[10] Cf. the famous words spoken by Phemios at *Odyssey* xxii 347f.: αὐτοδίδακτος δ' εἰμί, θεὸς δέ μοι ἐν φρεσὶν οἴμας / παντοίας ἐνέφυσεν. For Hesiod, see the account of 'initiation' by the Muses at *Theogony* 22-34.

[11] Finnegan 1992, 170ff. In the same spirit a Kirghiz bard, as recorded by Radloff, plays down the long practice and extensive familiarity with conventions that lie behind his arts by declaring: 'He [*sc.* God] gives me the word on my tongue without my having to seek it. I have learned none of my songs. Everything springs from my inner self.' Finnegan 1992, 193; cf. Bakker 1997, 137f.

[12] Bakker places special emphasis on the function of rhythm; but sounds and images, too, have this 'propelling' power.

and truth. (Bakker 1997, 136)

In other words, during composition and performance such poets experience 'contact' with the actual source of the stream of rhythms, sounds, and images that flow effortlessly through their mouths. This is not just a subjective 'impression', but a real experience whose authenticity is confirmed by its concrete results. Their claims to have received a revelation or to be inspired directly by divine beings are thus to be taken seriously. The interpretation of Parmenides' proem as an allegory, and of the whole poem as a philosophical theory expressed in poetic form, relies on the assumption that every literary text is a 'fiction' and thereby imports categories that are completely foreign to archaic Greek poetry.[13] It thus creates an artificial dichotomy between the poet and the religious dimension of his experience that uproots the poem from its traditional, cultural context. In order to approach Parmenides' text with any hope of understanding it we must give up our preconceptions about 'literariness' and 'fiction' and start to believe in what he says.

Another argument against the thesis that the proem is to be interpreted as an ecstatic journey lies in its connection with the rest of the poem. Kingsley 2003 has recently solved this problem, too, by linking the ecstatic experience of the proem with the goddess' teaching in the central *Aletheia* section of the poem so as to produce a single, coherent picture (see Gemelli Marciano 2006b). Parmenides' poem is, for Kingsley, neither a purely literary 'didactic' text nor a purely philosophical one. It is an esoteric poem that describes a mystical experience and above all aims through the power of language to induce this same experience in its listeners.

In what follows I develop this approach further and show that if Parmenides' poem is interpreted in this way his enigmatic language, his curious images, and also his so-called logical arguments take on a new meaning.[14] Parmenides' language is performative (it accomplishes what it says).[15] 'Alienation' and 'binding'

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[13] This assumption is very clear for example in Robbiano 2006 (esp. ch. 3), whose approach to the proem is heavily influenced by modern literary theories. From this perspective Parmenides as a living and experiential poet is totally displaced by the neutral, fictional 'I' (she speaks of the 'fiction of autobiography', 74f.) of 'narratological' interpretative models. Considering what has been said above, and the fact that Parmenides has composed and himself performed his poem, this approach involves a quite unnecessary *multiplicatio entium*. The same is true also for Morgan 2000, 68, 74.

[14] I formulated some of the observations contained in this article, concerning the divine epiphanies in the proem and the images in fr. DK 28B8, some years ago independently of Kingsley 1999 and 2003, while preparing my forthcoming edition of the Presocratics (Gemelli Marciano 2008). However, in Kingsley's books I have found the answers to questions and textual problems that have enabled me to organize my earlier unsystematic intuitions into a coherent picture.

[15] On this function of language in mystical texts, see Katz 1992, 8: 'Language creates, when used by the mystical adept...the operative process through which the essential epistemic channels that permit mystical forms of knowing and being are made accessible. ...what language as employed here seeks to accomplish is to effect transformation of awareness, thus enabling us to understand/experience that which presently transcends our understanding/experience.' Cf. also 10, referring to mantras: 'Mantras are not propositions, ostensive indicators, or referential signs. They operate under a cosmic law of sympathetic magic that includes the very structure of reality. *Om* does

are the most powerful means to remove listeners from the ordinary, everyday dimension and way of thinking and put them into a different state of consciousness. Images, repetitions, sequences of words and sounds, supposedly 'logical' arguments all contribute to this end and have a particular meaning and function that surpass conventional human language and ordinary syntactical and semantic relationships.

Here I will draw attention especially to the proem and to fragments 2 and 8. I refer to Kingsley 2002 and 2003 for treatment of the other fragments and the problems relating to them.

I. Images and words in the proem

I first tackle the images of the proem. As already mentioned, it has repeatedly been interpreted as a literary metaphor or allegory that has little to do with any actual mystical experience. But it can hardly be an allegory, chiefly because allegory was unknown in Parmenides' time as a recognized literary form of composition.[16]

The proem has been viewed as an allegory above all because of the tendency to take as one's starting point for the interpretation of Parmenides the so-called logical arguments—divorced from their context—in the second part of the *Aletheia*. The important point that has been neglected here is that the poem was intended not for reading but for recitation.[17] The listener did not know what followed the

not "say" something, does not "tell" something, but it does something... It [*sc.* the mantra] causes, necessarily and without further activity, desirable changes both in and for the one who recites the mantra, as well in the "nature of things" to which the mantra is directed.'

[16] This is an important point usually overlooked by both classical scholars and historians of philosophy because they automatically assume that our conception of allegory can be straightforwardly applied to the interpretation of ancient texts. But that is not the case, as has been demonstrated in the most recent studies of literary criticism in antiquity. See, e.g., Struck 2004, 3n1: 'Allegory [in the modern sense] has the disadvantage of invoking a genre of writing, not developed until the early medieval period, in which a writer personifies abstract ideas and encodes a formulaic, one-to-one correspondence between each character and some concept, abstract principle, or element of the physical world. This kind of allegory has only a little to do with the ancient tradition...ancient allegorism is a phenomenon of reading, not writing... Even as late as Eustathius, an ἀλληγορητής is an interpreter of allegories, not a writer of them.' In ancient times an αἶνος (from which the word αἴνιγμα was derived) was, instead, a form of encoded language pointing to a meaning that was hidden and was accessible to only a few people. But this encoded language was, precisely because of its esoteric character and because of its practical goal, not a mere 'poetic' allegory that set up fixed correspondences between images and meaning and that would have been easily comprehensible through the means of later 'literary criticism'. Every αἶνος was conceived for a particular occasion and acquired its meaning through reference to that occasion. On αἶνος and its socio-cultural context, see Ford 2002, 72-80.

[17] That is the usual mode of communication for poetic texts until the end of the fifth century and even later. This mode of communication naturally has important implications with regard to the impact of poems on their listeners and on the reciter himself: that impact in no way depends on the mere content alone, but also on rhythm and sound (I will have more to say about the latter shortly). The recitation of hexameter verse certainly presupposed control of breathing on the part of the reciter (otherwise the Homeric singers would not have been able to sing for long), which could have had important practical effects. In this connection classical scholars will no doubt be interested to follow the most recent research, still at an early stage, into the therapeutic effects of hexameter recitation on

proem; and it was by the proem alone that he was led to Parmenides' road, which 'lies beyond the path of humans'.

I have already given reasons above for concluding that neither are we justified in speaking here of 'metaphor', because this is a term that has been coloured by Aristotelian and post-Aristotelian concepts.

A. The image of the journey in the chariot

The proem is dominated by the image of travel in a chariot, which Fränkel and most modern commentators after him have explained as a metaphor for poetic inspiration. In this connection reference is repeatedly made to Pindar's *Olympian* 6.22ff. Pindar, too, accomplishes his journey in a chariot; in front of his chariot the gates of song are thrown open.

When one examines the context, however, it immediately emerges quite clearly that we are dealing only with a very superficial analogy and that the passages have nothing to do with one another. The Pindaric image (which, incidentally, only takes up a few verses) is closely connected with its encomiastic context, from which it is inseparable. Pindar's chariot is drawn by mules that are only able to find their way because they belong to the patron who is being celebrated for his victory at Olympia. The road travelled by Pindar flows into the genealogy of the house of Hagesias of Syracuse.[18] What is altogether absent from Pindar's image is precisely what is so characteristic in Parmenides' poetry: the attention to details and the particularly realistic coining of images.

In Parmenides the image of the journey in the chariot takes up 21 verses (DK 28B1.1-21) and occurs in a context that has little to do with mere poetic inspiration in the sense of some 'literary' artistic tool. In this connection I would like to point out that during Parmenides' time the image of the chariot is also found in the context of the cult of Apollo. From the 7th century BC onwards, Apollo is portrayed as riding on a winged chariot when he returns to Delos from the Hyper-

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the variability of the heart rate relative to particular breathing rhythms (Cyzarz et al. 2003). On the relationship between recitation and breathing control, cf. Stahl 1975, 200n25: 'breathing exercises are closely related to recitation. The breath control brought about by recitation may therefore be more important than what it is recited.' Cf. also Austin 1999, 68; 93ff.

[18] Fränkel 1960, 158 had seen this too, but he explained it as a detail lacking any significance for the whole. In his opinion both Pindar and Parmenides saw no distinction between word and thought or between speech and material objects, as was typical for the archaic period. So, for Fränkel, the path or journey that is about to be described must be explained as 'der Gang des parmenideischen Denkens', not as 'irgendein Weg, den man mit einem von Sonnentöchtern geleiteten wirklichen Wagen fahren könnte'. But in spite of his 'metaphorical' interpretation of Parmenides' experience Fränkel, like a number of other more recent interpreters, is reluctant to abandon entirely the thesis that Parmenides also had a genuine experience of being — even if only for the briefest instants (Fränkel 1962, 418: 'wohl aber gibt es gewichtige Argumente zu Gunsten unserer Annahme dass Parmenides die *unio mystica* mit dem wahren Sein persönlich erfahren hat'; 419: 'Nur für eine kurze Zeit, vielleicht nur für Augenblicke, wird Parmenides, als Okzidentale, die Entrückung jeweils erlebt haben; bald muss er wieder in die Niederungen der Scheinwelt zurückgesunken sein'). But neither Fränkel nor anyone else explains how he could have achieved this if he was being guided by the usual automatisms of thought (on which, see below).

boreans—the people who live in the furthest north, at the boundary between this world and the other world (*LIMC* II.2.270, Plate 1005).

But in Parmenides' proem there is an important additional indication that the image of the chariot is associated with a journey into the afterlife, into the underworld: the detail of the horses. It has always seemed strange to interpreters that they are mares. Now mares occur in a religious context only in one other significant passage:[19] the beginning of the *Hymn to Demeter*.[20] They are the immortal horses of Hades, who suddenly emerges out of the earth with his chariot to abduct Persephone by force. The mares at the beginning of Parmenides' poem are therefore no insignificant detail, because they evoke the scene of an abduction and a subsequent journey into the underworld.[21] In contrast to Persephone, however, who is abducted against her will, Parmenides willingly allows himself to be carried. There has always been speculation as to whether the mention of *thymos* in the first line applies to him or to the horses. It seems to me that two levels that cannot be separated from each other have been combined here. On the one hand we have the divine plan, namely, the abduction and the journey, which is evoked through the image of the mares; and on the other, the longing (*thymos*) of the chosen one who willingly co-operates with the divine plan.

B. 'Lucid dreaming'

It is striking that in the proem there is a great indeterminacy with regard to agents, time and place of action. By contrast, seemingly insignificant details are expounded at great length. All this creates the impression of a dream-like scene that is unfolding at the boundary between reality and dream.

In ancient literature this is a typical feature of dreams during incubation in which gods appear. Sometimes these dreams are not distinguished from waking experiences: the two levels collapse into each other.[22] A particularly illuminating example, contemporary with Parmenides, is Bellerophon's dream in Pindar's

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[19] Of course young female horses are also mentioned, in athletic contexts, participating in horse races as Parmenides' commentators note (Pindar, *Pythian* 2.8; Bacchylides 5.39, although in both cases they are called πῶλοι; Sophocles, *Electra* 705, 725, 735). But these are inadequate parallels because their contexts diverge considerably from the context in Parmenides' poem.

[20] v. 18. The *lectio difficilior*, the feminine form ἀθανάταις, which is replaced by the masculine form ἀθανάτοις (after Homer, *Iliad* xvi 154) in all manuscripts, has been preserved only in a Berlin papyrus (389 F, 11 Bernabé) that unfortunately quotes just a few verses from the hymn that the author of the papyrus text designates as 'Orphic'. Editors (with the exception of Cassola 1986) have adopted the second reading because the verse is repeated in v. 32 where the masculine form is found (although here we do not have the reading of the papyrus). This suggests there had already been a tendency to normalize the verse in antiquity. Richardson 1974 assumes that the reading could have replaced an older dative -ῇσι, which he regards as the correct reading (*ad loc.*, 151; cf. also 67). The two passages, in the *Hymn to Demeter* and in Parmenides, are mutually illuminating. See also Cerri 1999, 100n140.

[21] Also relevant to this abduction is the way that Aristeas, too, is abducted by Apollo and carried to the land of the Issedonians at the border with the Hyperboreans (Herodotus iv 13.1: φοιβόλαμπτος). Aristeas described this journey of his in his famous poem known as the *Arimaspeia*.

[22] On the occurrence of this feature in divine epiphanies, cf. Versnel 1987, 48-49.

thirteenth *Olympian* ode (63ff.). This is a dream experienced during incubation, as the listener eventually discovers. Bellerophon wishes to tame the horse Pegasus; Athena brings him a rein with a golden bit. So far Pindar has said nothing about the nature of the epiphany. But then comes the unexpected comment that all of a sudden the dream has given way to a true, visible apparition in the waking state (Pindar, *Olympian* 13, 67f.: ἐξ ὀνείρου δ᾽ αὐτίκα / ἦν ὕπαρ). Only now do we learn that the hero is sleeping and dreaming. Athena addresses Bellerophon with the dream formula and gives him the magical means to tame the horse (68f.: εὕδεις Αἰολίδα βασιλεῦ; / ἄγε φίλτρον τόδ᾽ ἵππειον δέκευ). He jumps up and sees the bit beside him. The reality of the dream vision is confirmed by the visible object (73f.: ἀνὰ δ᾽ ἔπαλτ᾽ ὀρθῶι ποδί. / παρκείμενον δὲ συλλαβὼν τέρας.).

Only after we have heard this narrative are we offered the explanation. On the recommendation of the seer Polyidos, Bellerophon had slept beside the altar of the goddess and had received the bit directly from her (76ff.: δεῖξέν τε Κοιρανίδαι πᾶσαν τελευ- / τὰν πράγματος, ὥς τ᾽ ἀνὰ βωμῶι θεᾶς / κοιτάξατο νύκτ᾽ ἀπὸ κεί- / νου χρήσιος). In other words, we are dealing with the experience of a dream received during incubation. What occurred is a dream but, at the same time, a real experience that has left a tangible sign behind. The identical situation recurs in the case of other historical figures who have had encounters with divinities while asleep and received exceptional powers and instruction from them. Epimenides slept for a long time in a cave, and law-givers such as Charondas of Locri (7th century) had also received their laws in a dream. In all these experiences, which can well be described as 'mystical', reality is inseparable from the dream. Another experience of the same kind, first recorded by Theopompus, belongs to the local tradition of Croton. The protagonist is Phormio, commander of the Crotoniates, who was wounded by one of the Dioscuri in the famous battle with Locri fought at Sagra (548 BC). As the wound failed to heal, Phormio consulted an oracle and was advised to go to Sparta: whoever was the first to invite him to dinner would be his healer. When Phormio arrived in Sparta on his chariot, a young man invited him and asked him the reason for his presence there. As soon as he had heard the oracle, he healed the wound with filings from his lance. When Phormio was about to get onto his chariot again, he realized he was touching the door of his house in Croton (δοκῶν ἀναβαίνειν ἐπὶ τὸ ἅρμα, τῆς θύρας αὐτοῦ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ ἐν Κρότωνι ἐπιλαμβάνεται, Theopompus, *FGrH* 115 F 329). The story, which just as in Pindar takes place in a twilight zone between reality and dream, very probably alludes— although this has been obscured by the *Suda's* summary—to a therapeutic incubation process. The journey by chariot to Sparta, as well as the subsequent encounter with one of the Dioscuri, has the character of a real experience that is further confirmed by the actual healing.

The particular reality of dreams in which contact with the gods takes place, and the keen sensations associated with them, are vividly described by Iamblichus in the third chapter of his work *On the Mysteries* where he discusses the subject of

mantic dreams. Especially significant for our purposes are the acoustic and opti-
cal signs: the buzzing that one hears when an intangible breath enfolds the
sleeper, the blinding light that makes the eyes close when the gods appear inside
it. The sleeper hears what the gods say and perceives what they do. In a height-
ened condition he is able to keep his eyes open and to move.[23] What Iamblichus
describes is the phenomenon described by modern psychology and brain science
as 'lucid dreaming' or a 'hypnagogic state' (cf. Mavromatis 1987), in which per-
ceptions become keener, space appears to expand, and an unusual state of well-
being ensues:

> When lucidity arrives, it can usher into the dream a host of
> other new and interesting qualities... Space expands as this
> positive affective tone [*sc.* an unmistakable sense of excite-
> ment and delight] blends into enhanced perceptions. The inten-
> sity of light also increases, and the dream scene takes on a
> richly beautiful luster. Lucidity, therefore, can be accompanied
> by unusual perceptual clarity, visual enrichment, and delight.[24]

Experimental research in this area has shown that typically such states occur at
the point of beginning to emerge out of sleep and just before waking completely.
Iamblichus, too, explicitly mentions this point and the dream of Bellerophon
would also appear to refer to the very same moment in time.[25]

This excursus about incubatory and mantic dreams is not without its signifi-
cance. First of all, it can be linked with a Velian tradition according to which Par-

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[23] Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 3.2: ἀλλ' ἤτοι τοῦ ὕπνου ἀπολιπόντος, ἀρχομένων ἄρτι
ἐγρηγορέναι, ἀκούειν πάρεστί τινος φωνῆς συντόμου περὶ τῶν πρακτέων ὑφηγουμένης, ἢ μεταξὺ
τοῦ ἐγρηγορέναι καὶ καθεύδειν ὄντων ἢ καὶ παντελῶς ἐγρηγορότων αἱ φωναὶ ἀκούονται. καὶ
ποτὲ μὲν *ἀναφὲς καὶ ἀσώματον πνεῦμα περιέχει κύκλωι τοὺς κατακειμένους, ὡς ὅρασιν μὲν
αὐτοῦ μὴ παρεῖναι, τὴν δ' ἄλλην συναίσθησιν καὶ παρακολούθησιν ὑπάρχειν, ῥοιζομένου τε ἐν
τῶι εἰσιέναι καὶ περικεχυμένου πανταχόθεν ἄνευ τινὸς ἐπαφῆς, θαυμαστὰ τε ἔργα
ἀπεργαζομένου πρὸς ἀπαλλαγὴν παθῶν ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος. ἄλλοτε δὲ φωτὸς ἐπιλάμψαντος
λαμπροῦ καὶ ἠρεμαίου κατέχεται μὲν ἡ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ὄψις καὶ συμμύει τε, ἀναπεπταμένη οὖσα
πρότερον·* αἱ δ' ἄλλαι αἰσθήσεις διεγηγερμέναι τυγχάνουσι, καὶ συναισθάνονται πῶς εἰς τὸ φῶς
οἱ θεοὶ ἐκφαίνονται, ὅσα τε λέγουσιν ἀκούουσι καὶ ὅσα δρῶσιν ἴσασι παρακολουθοῦσαι. Aelius
Aristides, *Orations* 48.31, narrates his meeting with Asclepius in a similar way: καὶ γὰρ οἷον
ἅπτεσθαι δοκεῖν ἦν καὶ *διαισθάνεσθαι* ὅτι αὐτὸς ἥκοι, καὶ *μέσως ἔχειν ὕπνου καὶ ἐγρηγόρσεως*
καὶ βούλεσθαι ἐκβλέπειν καὶ ἀγωνιᾶν μὴ προαπαλλαγείη, καὶ *ὦτα παραβεβληκέναι καὶ*
ἀκούειν, τὰ μὲν ὡς ὄναρ, τὰ δὲ ὡς ὕπαρ. He clearly states that this experience cannot be described in
human language, but that the initiated understand and know it (καὶ τίς ἀνθρώπων ταῦτά γ'
ἐνδείξασθαι λόγωι δυνατός; εἰ δέ τις τῶν τετελεσμένων ἐστίν, σύνοιδέν τε καὶ γνωρίζει).

[24] Austin 1999, 325. For basic treatments of this topic see Oswald 1962 and LaBerge 1985, who
have drawn on their own experiences as 'lucid dreamers', and Mavromatis 1987, who gives a general
overview of the study of such phenomena. Cf. also Green 1968 and Green-McCreery 1996.

[25] Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 3.2: ταῦτα δὴ οὖν τοσαῦτα ὄντα καὶ οὕτω διάφορα οὐδενὶ
τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων προσέοικεν· ἀλλ' ὅ τε ὕπνος καὶ ἡ κατοχὴ τῶν ὀμμάτων καὶ ἡ κάρωι προσεμ-
φερὴς κατάληψις καὶ ἡ μεταξὺ τοῦ ὕπνου τε καὶ τῆς ἐγρηγόρσεως κατάστασις καὶ ἡ ἄρτι
ἀνεγειρομένη ἢ ἡ παντελὴς ἐγρήγορσις πάντα θεῖά ἐστι καὶ πρὸς ὑποδοχὴν τῶν θεῶν ἐπιτήδεια,
ἀπ' αὐτῶν τε ἐπιπέμπεται τῶν θεῶν, μέρος τε τῆς θείας ἐπιφανείας καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα προηγεῖται. On
this state in other ancient authors, cf. Clarke 2001, 81ff.

menides was regarded as the founder of a guild of doctors who very probably practised therapeutic incubation.[26] Second, it sheds light on many peculiarities and unclarities in Parmenides' proem. Its description of a journey by chariot exhibits dreamlike features and possesses the same reality and luminosity as a dream experienced during incubation or, to use more modern language, a 'lucid dream'.

As already noted, the proem is characterized by an indeterminacy of subjects, objects and places, sudden flashes and puzzling allusions.[27] At the start everthing is vague: the horses, the goddess, her road and the girls, although they are all spoken of as if they were already familiar to the listener. The purpose of the journey, which is introduced without any preparation and in an enigmatic fashion, is also unexplained. This indeterminacy is quite typical in the case of a dream description and at the same time has an important function, as any reader of Parmenides can easily ascertain: it induces a sense of alienation and transports the listener into another, unfamiliar dimension.[28] The sequence of present and past tenses creates a disorientation that dissolves the dimension of time. This mixing of tenses (in which the enigmatic optative ἱκάνοι is particularly striking) signals the timelessness of a divine act which is represented as paradigmatic and removed from human time.[29] Here the threshold is crossed that makes the passage from the human into the divine world possible. From this point on, the listeners are led into another world.

Another striking peculiarity is the constant repetition of the verb 'carry' (φέρω) and other words belonging to the same semantic field. Diels and others had interpreted such repetitions as indicating a lack of poetic talent. However, as Kingsley has demonstrated specifically with regard to this and other examples in Parmenides, repetition is a well known method used in mystical texts for bringing about another state of consciousness.[30] As for the particular acts of being

[26] Burkert 1969; Musitelli 1980; Francotte 1985; Kingsley 1999 with further bibliography. The Velian inscriptions relating to this side of Parmenides have recently been re-edited and discussed by Vecchio 2003, 72-96 (nos. 20-24).

[27] Thus it is especially odd when one reads the following in, e.g., Hermann 2004, 152: 'Parmenides' central problem was *how to ensure the reliability of discourse*. Statements had to be defended against self-contradiction as well as against the misleading plausibility of vagueness—regardless, ultimately, of what said statements were about.' But of course Hermann allies himself with those who judge the proem superfluous.

[28] This point is also emphasised in a detailed analysis of the proem by Robbiano 2004 and 2006. However, Robbiano explains this feature only from the perspective of literary strategies and, just like most modern interpreters, ignores the practical context of the proem. The main reason for Parmenides' deviation from the poetic tradition he himself alludes to is to evoke the concrete effects of alienation. His aim is not a theoretical one (namely, to transpose traditional poetic *topoi* into a new 'philosophical' world view, as Laks 2003, 21 and others would have it), but to 'deconstruct' the usual patterns upon which his listeners have constructed their beliefs and expectations so as to prepare them to enter another world. See further on this point Kingsley 2003.

[29] Erler 2002, 90ff., who discusses this particular phenomenon in connection with epic texts but also cites our passage from Parmenides (94).

[30] Kingsley 1999, 118-121; 2002, 379f. For repetition as an efficacious device in magic spells,

drawn and carried: this is the main action to which the listener's attention must be directed so that he too can be drawn. Subjects and objects remain in the background and through their indeterminacy contribute to creating additional disorientation in the listener, to removing him even more from the familiar mechanisms of thought and perception, and to attracting him further.[31] The sequence of scenes is determined through associations and not through their temporal succession—a point that is also of great importance for interpreting the direction of the journey made by the Daughters of the Sun, as we will soon see. After a brief reference to the chariot and the girls in verse 5, Parmenides makes the chariot suddenly burst in on the scene at great speed. Immediately the listener's attention is directed to the wheels, and this is no coincidence. Throughout antiquity great power was attributed to whirling motion and the piercing sound of the magical wheel, the *iynx*.[32] Parmenides' wheels are certainly no *iynx*; but they behave in the same way. The acoustic and visual signs associated with his image of the wheel are meant to cause particular sensations: a piping tone is heard (realized through the quick succession of xi, sigma, iota, and upsilon sounds);[33] a rapid circular motion and blinding light are seen (v. 7 αἰθόμενος, in enjambement).[34] These are the signal for a change in the state of consciousness that makes it possible to see the goddesses. It is in this light that the Daughters of the Sun appear, just as they are about to leave the house of night for the light (εἰς φάος in enjambement suggests a sort of 'eruption of light' and represents the culmination of the epiphany). The interpretation of this passage has caused difficulties because it has traditionally been assumed that the action is a natural consequence of the events depicted in the first six verses of the proem: in other words, that the Daughters of the Sun only make their appearance after Parmenides is already on the road.[35] But this is not the case. The scene being evoked

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cf. also Versnel 2002, 130f.

[31] For the technique of enticement used in this passage, cf. Kingsley 2002, 371 and n90 (with further bibliography).

[32] On the *iunx*, and the power attributed to its sound and movement, cf. Johnston 1995, 180-187 with the relevant bibliography.

[33] v. 6: ἄξων δ᾽ ἐν χνοίηισιν ἵ⟨ει⟩ σύριγγος ἀυτήν.

[34] v. 7-8: **δοιοῖς** γὰρ ἐπείγετο δινωτοῖσιν / κύκλ**οις** ἀμφοτέρωθεν, ὅ**τε σπ**ερχοίατο **πέμπ**ειν, where the repetition of the **OI**-sound is associated with the image of the circle, and that of the **TE**- and **ΠE**-sounds with rapid movement.

[35] The problem is to know whether εἰς φάος goes with σπερχοίατο πέμπειν (v. 8) or with προλιποῦσαι. In the first case we would have a reference to the direction of Parmenides' own journey towards the light but, in the second, to the journey undertaken by the Daughters of the Sun from the night into the light when they come to fetch Parmenides. On the journey from night into light cf. *Hymn to Demeter* 337f. (see n38 below). Help in understanding the apparition of the Daughters of the Sun can be found in the *interpretatio Graeca* of an Egyptian Isis (Demeter) ritual as described by Herodotus (ii 122): namely, the account of the supposed ritual repetition of a *katabasis* by the Pharaoh Rhampsinit (Ramses II) to Demeter/Isis, as Herodotus allegedly heard it from the Egyptians. A specially chosen priest of the goddess has his eyes bound with a headband and is taken by the other priests to the road leading to the sanctuary of Demeter (ἐς ὁδὸν φέρουσαν ἐς ἱρὸν Δήμητρος), where he is left alone. At this point, two wolves appear and guide him to the sanctuary. After the *katabasis* ritual has taken place, the wolves then lead the priest from the sanctuary back to the place from where

here eludes all human temporal organization into 'before' and 'after', and is deliberately designed to hinder it. One particular sign of this is the optative form of the verb 'hasten', σπερχοίατο, which (like the corresponding optative ἱκάνοι in verse 1) has caused so many problems. But the very fact that Parmenides uses this optative mood, which seems so peculiar, helps to direct the listener's attention away from the temporal dimension. The insoluble puzzle posed by these tenses produces disorientation (where are we now? before the journey starts? in the middle of the journey? and if neither, where and when?). Because the action keeps moving forward so swiftly one is compelled, if one wants to follow it, to refrain from the usual instincts of thought which demand a temporal sequence, and to concentrate on the timeless reality being presented. The chariot guided by the Daughters of the Sun emerges 'now' from the night with its whirling, glowing wheels—where this 'now' is identical with 'always'. It is the epiphany of the goddesses, appearing in this dazzling light, that is important here. Thanks to the rapid succession of velar and liquid groups of sounds, of dentals and sibilants, it is possible to 'hear' how they unveil themselves before the author.[36] And this directness and luminosity of the manifestation are far from being a mere allegorical depiction. Buzzing and blinding light are also, according to Iamblichus' testimony, the signs that in mantic dreams accompany divine epiphanies.

The mention of the house of night in verse 9 *evokes* these epiphanies with equal directness. Through an abrupt 'there' (ἔνθα) we are suddenly brought in front of the gate, guarded by Justice, of the road of night and day. The vague localization of the place stands in stark contrast to the very intricate description of it, as is typical for a dream-like scenario. And as Burkert has explained in detail, Parmenides' description makes direct reference to the topography of the Hesiodic Tartarus. Here an important scene of persuasion takes place, which is experienced by the author as if from behind the scenes: the protagonists are now the Daughters of the Sun. First comes an allusion to the power of divine words, because the Daughters of the Sun do not just persuade: they entice the protectress of the gate 'with soft words'. It can be assumed from the use of the two 'cue' expressions παρφάμεναι and μαλακοῖσι λόγοισιν that these words of theirs act like, and indeed are, magical language. In Homer πάρφασις, the 'seductive talk' that takes even sensible men's *noos* away from them, is contained in the magic belt of Aphrodite.[37] And in the *Hymn to Demeter* Hermes is told to entice Hades using such 'gentle words' so that he can lead Persephone out of the darkness into the light.[38] In the following verses of the proem (16ff.) the direct effect upon Jus-

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he had started. Here we have a similar supernatural escort which comes from the underworld to fetch the 'chosen' one and bring him to the goddess.

[36] v. 10: **κράτων ἄπο χερσὶ καλύπτρας** suggests the rustling of the fabric, and the anagram **αος, ωσα** in the preceding half-verse (**εἰς φάος, ὡσάμεναι**) the withdrawal of the veil from the head that follows simultaneously with the appearance out of the night.

[37] *Iliad* xiv 214: ἔνθ' ἔνι μὲν φιλότης, ἐν δ' ἵμερος, ἐν δ' ὀαριστύς / πάρφασις, ἥ τ' ἔκλεψε νόον πύκα περ φρονεόντων. See Kingsley 2003, 130f. and 367 with bibliography.

[38] *Hymn to Demeter* 336ff.: ὄφρ' Ἀίδην **μαλακοῖσι παραιφάμενος ἐπέεσσιν** / ἁγνὴν

tice of these 'gentle words' spoken by the Daughters of the Sun can be felt, because the anagrammatic sound-sequence εωςωσειε in verse 17—together with its echoes and expansions—exhibits the structure of a magic formula, as does the other sequence ερο...αρηροτετηιρα that occurs in verse 20.[39]

After verse 17 comes the opening of the great gate to the chasm. This verse is an almost exact parallel to verse 10. In both places a transition between the domains of night and light is described. In both verses a hindrance is removed: there, the Daughters of the Sun push back the veil from their heads (ὠσάμεναι κράτων ἄπο χερσὶ καλύπτρας), and here Justice is persuaded to push back the bar from the gate (ὥς σφιν βαλανωτὸν ὀχῆα / ἀπτερέως ὥσειε πυλέων ἄπο). In both cases one is struck by the anagrammatic form (again with expansions) of certain sequences of sounds (verse 10 αοςωσα; verse 17 εωςωσειε), which signals a decisive turn in the action. In verse 10 the group of sounds marks the appearance of the Daughters of the Sun and their decisive departure from the house of night for the light; in verse 17 it indicates on the contrary their return with the *kouros*, Parmenides. So it is not surprising that in this cluster of verses (17-20) the same acoustic and optical markers recur that had already preceded the epiphany by the Daughters of the Sun: here too one can hear the whistling tone (created through the repetition of ξ/γξ/ι and ς- sounds),[40] and the creaking of the hinges (verse 20, see n39), and can see their circular motion (εἰλίξασαι). But instead of the light, a chasm opens up: the sense of a gaping emptiness that takes one's breath away is communicated here through repetition of the A-sound in verse 18.[41]

Then the chariot passes through the gate and the goddess unexpectedly and anonymously enters the stage. As Kingsley and Cerri have concluded independently of each other, the *thea* is Persephone. Although the fact that this goddess is simply referred to as *thea* (or *he theos*) in several inscriptions from her cult localities in Magna Graecia is not by itself absolutely decisive,[42] because other

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Περσεφόνειαν ἀπὸ ζόφου ἠερόεντος / ἐς φάος ἐξαγάγοι μετὰ δαίμονας. See Cerri 1999, 178, who points out the similarity of the two contexts but refrains from making any comment. In Pindar, *Pythian* 3.51 Cheiron teaches Asclepius to heal wounds with 'gentle magic spells (μαλακαῖς ἐπαοιδαῖς)'.

[39] v. 17: ἀπτερέως ὥσειε (cf. v. 16 ἐπιφραδέως, ὥς). v. 20: γόμφοις καὶ περόνησιν ἀρηρότε· τῆι ῥα δι' αὐτέων. For repetition with variations and expansions in magic spells, see Versnel 2002, 130ff. For such sequences of sounds (like the famous ἄσκι κατάσκι κτλ. that occurs repeatedly in magical texts and very probably has it origin in the first verse, ἔσκε κατὰ σκιερῶν ὀρέων, of a magic spell), that later became the incomprehensible *Ephesia grammata*, see Bernabé 2003 with relevant bibliography.

[40] v. 19 ἄξονας ἐν σύριγξιν ἀμοιβαδὸν εἰλίξασαι.

[41] v. χάσμ' ἀχανὲς ποίησαν ἀναπτάμεναι. This too contains a kind of anagram with expansion (χασμαχανες).

[42] Cf. *IG* XIV.630 from Locri (beginning of the 5th century BC): Οἰνιάδας καὶ Εὐκέλαδος καὶ Χείμαρ(ρ)ος ἀνέθηκαν τᾶι θεῶι. Lazzarini no. 195: Φρασιάδας ἀνέθηκε τᾶι θεῶι. Cf. also the *defixio* found near the temple of the chthonian goddess *Malophoros* (Demeter) at Selinus (first half of the 5th century BC), below n67. Demeter and Kore are also referred to respectively as θεός and θεὸς παῖς in two 6th-century BC inscriptions from Poseidonia (a city that had close relations with Velia up

goddesses too were named in the same way at their cult localities,[43] there are nevertheless clear indications that this identification is the correct one. Which other goddess could welcome the initiate into the underworld? Kingsley 1999, 93ff. and 243f. has referred to the image of the friendly reception of Herakles by the goddess of the underworld, as it is represented on a famous pelike and mentioned by Diodorus. The fact that the goddess tells the *kouros* that he has not been brought to her house by an 'evil fate' or μοῖρα κακή (which in the language of epic means simply death) is, also, an unambiguous sign that Parmenides finds himself in front of the goddess of the underworld to whom the dead are obliged to go.[44] Interestingly her appearance is accompanied neither by signs of light nor by signs of darkness. After Parmenides has passed the gate and the chasm, references to both realms cease and only reappear in the second part of the poem: in the description of the world of appearance or *doxa*. The world of the goddess lies outside the duality of light and darkness which characterizes the human realm.

II. *Peitho*

The road of the goddess that was mentioned at the start of the proem without its being futher defined ends here with the Queen of the Underworld who will show Parmenides the motionless heart of Truth, which easily persuades.[45] As Karsten 1835 in Diels 1897, 54 already noted, the motionless heart of truth is an unusual image. For that reason he preferred the *lectio facilior* of Plutarch, ἀτρεκές, which is closer to Homeric usage. But, as Diels 1897, 54 saw, ἀτρεμές is a typical sign of being (fr. 8.4) and entirely appropriate in this context. A motionless heart is the image of absolute rest, equivalent to death.

to the middle of the 5th century): Ardovino 1980, 50 τᾶς θεοῦ ἱαρόν ἠμι; Ardovino 1980, 53 τᾶς θεοῦ τ(ᾶ)ς παιδός ἠμι. On the cult of the two goddesses in Poseidonia, cf. also Hinz 1998, 174ff.

[43] This divine title is, however, only found rarely and refers as a rule to the most important goddess of the city: Lazzarini 1976, 75f. Cf. e.g. *IG* I 478 (= no. 29 Lazzarini) from the acropolis at Athens, middle of the 6th century BC; Jeffery 1990 (2nd edn.) 329 no. 7 (= no. 728 Lazzarini) from the Heraion of Samos, middle of the 6th century BC.

[44] Kingsley 1999, 61 and 240. Reference may be made in this connection to Persephone's role as the divinity who sends the dead to their rebirth, as she is represented in a Pindaric *threnos* (fr. 133 Snell-Maehler: οἶσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος / δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὕπερθεν ἅλιον κείνων ἐνάτωι ἔτει / ἀνδιδοῖ ψυχὰς πάλιν). Persephone is expected to behave in a similarly friendly way to the souls of initiates on the Orphic lamellae from Thurii, cf. II A1.6-7 Pugliese Carratelli (= Graf and Johnston no. 7) νῦν δ' ἱκέτι〈ς〉 ἥ〉κω πα〈ρ〉' ἀγνὴ〈ν〉 Φε〈ρ〉σεφόνεαν / ὥς με **πρόφ〈ρ〉ω〈ν〉** πέ〈μ〉ψη〈ι〉 ἕδρας ἐς εὐαγέω〈ν〉). Cf. also II A2.6-7 (= Graf and Johnston no. 6); and for πρόφρων here see Kingsley 2002, 373.

[45] The reading εὐπειθέος found in Sextus is by far to be preferred to Simplicius' εὐκυκλέος not only for linguistic reasons (εὐκυκλέος from εὐκυκλής would be a very strange form of the adjective for Parmenides, who uses εὔκυκλος instead in referring to the sphere: cf. B8.43 εὐκύκλου σφαίρης) as well as contextual ones (for the discussion of these points cf. Mourelatos 1974, 154f.), but especially because of its sound. Like Hesiod, Parmenides connects verses to each other in clusters through repetition of particular sounds. In verses 28-29 the leading sound is θε- (θέμις...πυθέσθαι...ἀληθείης), and dental and E-sounds also predominate throughout the whole verse 29 (ἠμὲν Ἀληθείης...ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ). εὐπειθέος fits very well into these phonetic patterns whereas εὐκυκλέος with its velar and Y-sounds breaks the harmony of the verse.

Truth persuades with ease precisely because it is expressed not through mere words but through words that realize themselves and bring about a direct experience: because these are experienced directly, they have a compelling power of persuasion. Yet no true *pistis* or conviction is contained in the *doxai* or opinions of humans because they are only words, an intellectual construction, a deceptive creation or κόσμος ἀπατηλός that does not correspond to any reality. They possess no power to persuade.

In fr. 2 *Peitho*, Persuasion, is introduced as Truth's companion. The road which 'IS', and which it is not possible for it not to be, belongs to her because she accompanies truth. This figure of Persuasion is not an abstract, lifeless personification of convincing speech as is usually maintained. *Peitho* is a cult goddess who often belongs in the train of Aphrodite in archaic literature and iconography (Buxton 1982, 31ff.). How forcefully and inexorably this goddess affects the mind of men is illustrated by a passage in Pindar (*Pythian* 4.213-218) where Aphrodite instructs Jason in erotic magic. She gives him the famous magic wheel and teaches him 'prayers and magic spells' so that he can take from Medeia her respect for her parents and so that desire for him 'might shake her under the whip of *Peitho*'. Here the influence of *Peitho* is directly linked with magic spells.[46]

If Parmenides' poem is seen as a poetic continuum in which images and sequences of words and sounds show the way, then it is possible to arrive at a better understanding of what the way of *Peitho* actually means.

III. Alienation and binding

Fr. 8 is a proof of the power of persuasion as it is manifested in the words of the goddess. It very plainly presents numerous causal conjunctions and adverbs (γάρ, οὕνεκεν, ἐπεί), which however serve more as means to apply coersion to the mind of the *kouros* than to introduce genuine 'philosophical explanations'.[47]

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[46] Pindar, *Pythian* 4.213-18: πότνια δ᾽ ὀξυτάτων βελέων / ποικίλαν ἴϋγγα τετράκναμον Οὐλυμπόθεν / ἐν ἀλύτωι ζεύξαισα κύκλωι / μαινάδ᾽ ὄρνιν Κυπρογένεια φέρεν / **πρῶτον ἀνθρώποισι λιτάς τ᾽ ἐπαοιδὰς / ἐκδιδάσκησεν** σοφὸν Αἰσονίδαν· / ὄφρα Μηδείας τοκέων ἀφέλοιτ᾽ αἰ- / δῶ, ποθεινὰ δ᾽ Ἑλλὰς αὐτάν / ἐν φρασὶ καιομέναν **δονέοι μάστιγι Πειθοῦς**. Cf. Johnston 1995, cited above, n32.

[47] Thus ἐπεί in v. 5 explains the fact that being neither was nor will be, on the grounds that it is 'now' in its completeness and its unity (οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἦν οὐδ᾽ ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἐστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν / ἓν συνεχές). But that is a tautological, dogmatic claim that is dependent on the 'true proof', i.e., on the presupposition that non-being does not exist. In v. 6 and 8 the function of γάρ is determined by the goddess' prohibition against saying or thinking that being comes into being from non-being (τίνα γὰρ γένναν διζήσεαι αὐτοῦ; / πῆι πόθεν αὐξηθέν; οὔτ᾽ ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐάσσω / φάσθαι σ᾽ οὐδὲ νοεῖν· οὐ γὰρ φατὸν οὐδὲ νοητὸν / ἐστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστι), which in turn refers back to the 'true proof' in B2.5-8. A prohibition based on the power of the 'true proof' also determines the behaviour of Justice in v. 13 (τοῦ εἵνεκεν: see below), as well as the thought in v. 20 (εἰ γὰρ ἔγεντ᾽, οὐκ ἔστ(ι)). When the function of the other explanatory particles that occur in fr. B8 is scrutinized, it can easily be seen that they do not introduce a real argument but represent either a dogmatic claim by the goddess (v. 22 ἐπεί, v. 25 τῶι, γάρ) or invoke 'true *pistis*': i.e., once again, the goddess' assertion that only being is and non-being does not exist. It has often been noted before that at the root of Parmenides' entire so-called argumentation lies only this dogmatic claim that is not set out in any detail (e.g., Owen 1960,

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The so-called line of argumentation works like a magical expedient that is meant to coerce and 'enchain' him and to forbid him to think of anything other than 'IS'. In this context it is necessary to recall again that Parmenides' text, like contemporary poetic texts, is intended not for reading but for oral performance in a given context. The goddess proceeds so quickly and speaks verses with such problematic syntax and so dense a web of sounds that the listener does not have time to reflect much on individual words or sentences—all the more so as the goddess displays a dogmatic certainty in the decision that is made: it has already been decided that there is only being and non-being does not exist, as she emphasizes.[48] It is not possible here to examine the complicated net of words and sounds in the various clusters of verses. But by looking at verses 1 to 49 one can easily see that the verb ἔστι repeatedly appears in its various forms (which also are reflected in certain sequences of sound),[49] and that in nearly every cluster of

14; Barnes 1982, 167; Curd 1998, 33f.). Yet modern commentators repeatedly strive to exonerate Parmenides from the charge of not having proven his statements in detail and attempt to fill the 'gaps' in the argument with their own speculations. But they can only do this by completely disregarding Parmenides' poetic text because, when the context is considered in which the goddess' speech is delivered, it can easily be seen that the claim that non-being does not exist because it cannot be thought or spoken does not need to be proven in detail. Parmenides finds himself, alive, at precisely the place that men call the realm of non-being, namely, absolute death. He can therefore establish for himself through his own practical experience that there is no non-being. Moreover, the goddess has introduced him to a divine world in which everything that is spoken and thought immediately comes about (Kingsley 2003, 71ff.). Thus her claim has its complete logic and justification and can justifiably be called a 'true *pistis*'. The most predominant feature in fr. 8 is the repeated use of the explanatory γάρ, which is often used in hymns to lay emphasis on a particular aspect of a god. Cf. Morand 2001, 60 and esp., for the function of these particles in Parmenides, Kingsley 2003, 175ff. ('he adores giving explanations. We adore him for it. There can be an immense security and sense of satisfaction in having things explained, and Parmenides loves to play with our expectations. He is so accommodating of our desire for clarity: so considerate in his willingness to make things plainer for us even when his explanations turn out to be jokes, even when they are more mystifying than anything he set out to explain and end up drawing us still deeper into a world impenetrable by our reasoning mind'). These same considerations are applied by Robbiano 2004, 65 to the proem: such particles introduce explanations that explain nothing, but rather provoke new questions ('By hearing something puzzling and then "for", "in fact" or "because", we expect the explanation for the puzzling remark. But we receive some explanation that, instead of satisfying our curiosity, creates even more questions').

[48] B8, 15-16 ἡ δὲ **κρίσις** περὶ τούτων ἐν τῶιδ᾽ **ἔστιν· / ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν. κέκριται** δ᾽ οὖν ὥσπερ ἀνάγκη. Cf. Kingsley 2003, 133ff.

[49] vv. 2-3 (ὡς **ἔστιν**...σήματ᾽ **ἔασι** / ἀγένητον **ἐὸν** καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν **ἐστιν**); v. 4 the sound sequence—εστ- in μουνογενές τε and ἀτέλεστον; v. 5 (οὐδέ ποτ᾽ **ἦν** οὐδ᾽ **ἔσται**, ἐπεὶ νῦν **ἐστιν**); v. 7 (οὔτ᾽ ἐκ **μὴ ἐόντος**); v. 10 (**ἐστὶν** ὅπως οὐκ **ἔστι**); v. 11 (χρεών **ἐστιν**); v. 12 (οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἐκ **μὴ ἐόντος**); vv. 15-16 (**ἔστιν / ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν**); v. 18 in chiastic formation, at the beginning and end of the verse (**ἐστὶν** ὁδός / ἐτήτυμον **εἶναι**) with the synonymous verb πέλειν that also appears in v. 19. v. 20 (**ἔστ**᾽ / **ἔσεσθαι**); v. 21 sound sequence -εσται (ἀπέσβεσται). In verses 22-25, which convey the image of completeness, the verb occurs especially frequently (οὐδὲ διαιρετόν **ἐστιν**, ἐπεὶ πᾶν **ἐστιν** ὁμοῖον); v. 24 (πᾶν δ᾽ ἔμπλεόν **ἐστιν ἐόντος**); v. 25 (πᾶν **ἐστιν· ἐὸν** γὰρ **ἐόντι** πελάζει). vv. 32-33 (τὸ **ἐὸν** θέμις **εἶναι· / ἔστι** γὰρ οὐκ ἐπιδευές, μὴ **ἐόν**); vv. 34-36 (**ἐστὶ** νοεῖν...**ἐστὶ** νόημα / ...ἄνευ τοῦ **ἐόντος**, ἐν ὧι πεφατισμένον **ἐστίν** / ...οὐδὲν γὰρ **ἔστιν** ἢ **ἔσται**); v. 37 (πάρεξ τοῦ **ἐόντος**), twice in v. 38 (**ἔμεναι**...ὄνομ᾽ **ἔσται**); vv. 39-40 (...**εἶναι** ἀληθῆ / ...**εἶναί** τε καὶ οὐχί); v. 42 (...τετελεσμένον **ἐστι**); v. 45 (...χρεών

verses certain sequences of words and sounds are repeated. This arrangement of words and sounds not only establishes a connection between the corresponding verses that reaches beyond the syntax but also creates a monotonous and distinctive rhythm that does not favor long deliberation and, on the contrary, hinders it.[50] Only when the respective arguments are separated from the continuum of sequences of sounds and words (which can only be done when one has a written text in front of one and the time to ponder it) is it possible to reflect on them. In an oral performance that cannot be done: the continuous flow of the goddess' words forbids it. Her intention is on the one hand to transport the *kouros* into an unfamiliar dimension and on the other hand to focus and fixate his attention on a single, fixed, motionless point: 'IS'.

A. Alienation

The technique of alienation that is used extensively in the proem also permeates the whole *aletheia* section. Its object is to deprive the *kouros* of any opportunity to reify his thoughts and be captured once again by the automatisms of perception and thought. We are dealing with a well known practice in meditation that is termed *de-automatization* in modern neuropsychology.[51] As Deikmann 1980 has noted, the attention of the subject is directed in this case more to the perception itself than to the thoughts that can arise from it.

> The percept receives intense attention while the use of attention for abstract categorization and thought is explicitly prohibited. Since automatization normally accomplishes the transfer of attention from a percept or action to abstract thought activity, the meditation procedure exerts a force in the reverse direction. (207)

Against this background the absence of a subject for the verb ἔστι, which has caused so many problems, can be explained. If the goddess had indicated the subject, the *kouros* would have begun to build a κόσμος ἀπατηλός upon it instead of concentrating on the act itself, on the ἔστι.[52]

In fr. 7 the goddess explicitly invites Parmenides to liberate himself from the automatisms of perception (not from perceptions *tout court*):

> and don't let much experienced habit force you / to guide a

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ἔστι); v. 46 (οὔτε γὰρ οὔκ ἐὸν ἔστι); v. 47 (...οὔτ᾽ ἐὸν ἔστιν ὅπως εἴη κεν ἐόντος); v. 48 (...ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν...).

[50] This is also highly characteristic of the later Orphic hymns: cf. Morand 2001, 68.

[51] Cf. Deikmann 1980. The concept of de-automatization was introduced by Gill-Brennan 1957 (as cited in Deikmann 1980, 206): 'De-automatisation is an undoing of the automatisations of apparatuses—both means and goal structures—directed toward the environment. De-automatisation is, as it were, a shake-up which can be followed by an advance or a retreat in the level of organization... Some manipulation of the attention directed toward the functioning of an apparatus is necessary if it is to be de-automatised.'

[52] In this context the 'big question' as to the meaning of ἔστι itself, which has occupied scholars for over half a century, loses its meaning because ἔστι is intended not so much as a verbal utterance but as an experience, a 'condition' of wholeness and completeness.

sightless eye and an echoing ear / and tongue along this way.[53]
He must use his eye, ear, and tongue consciously[54] without letting himself be
guided by ἔθος πολύπειρον, that is, by the usual automatisms, which are only
termed 'of much experience' by men who are incapable of judgement.[55]

The process of de-automatization is continued in fr. 8. The goddess starts not
by providing a summary of theses needing to be proved, but by stripping the
kouros without further ado of any point of orientation: being is unborn and inde-
structible. In this way the points of orientation that are familiar to humans are
instantly done away with: birth and death, beginning and end. In their place a pic-
ture of motionlessness and completeness is created that abolishes all division,
direction, differentiation. The goddess' first 'signs' deprive the *kouros* of all ear-
lier points of reference. In being, no direction can be recognized any more and
the temporal dimension is abolished: past and future no longer exist. Being is
νῦν, in a timeless present (if νῦν were understood as a point in time a division
would be introduced into being), entire, one, uninterrupted. In this context we
need to recall that the attributes μουνογενές and ἕν, which have been explained
by ancient and modern interpreters as signs of Parmenides' monism, cannot be
separated from the picture of completeness. Here being is conceived as one not in

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[53] B7.3-5 μηδέ σ᾽ ἔθος πολύπειρον ὁδὸν κάτα τήνδε βιάσθω / νωμᾶν ἄσκοπον ὄμμα καὶ
ἠχήεσσαν ἀκουήν / καὶ γλῶσσαν. Cf. Kingsley 2003, 118-125.

[54] This means that he has to concentrate on perception in itself, not on its objects; cf., on this pro-
cess in Zen meditation, Austin 1999, 100.

[55] Against this background it would be especially peculiar if the goddess shortly afterwards were
to request the *kouros* to judge her proof 'with reason', as is commonly claimed (κρῖναι δὲ λόγωι
πολύδηριν ἔλεγχον / ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα), because the usual human thought process is precisely what
she intends to prevent. Moreover, it is totally inconceivable against the background of the religious
attitudes of Parmenides' time that a goddess like the Queen of the Underworld would ask a human
(even if he happens to be a 'chosen' one) to judge her sayings. For this reason Kingsley's very simple
correction of of λόγωι to λόγου greatly recommends itself, especially because the identical alteration
of λόγου to λόγωι is a commonplace in manuscripts (cf., e.g., Empedocles, DK 31B35.2; Theophras-
tus, *On the senses* 67). It has, also, often been noted in the past that the translation 'judge by reason'
(κρῖναι δὲ λόγωι) is inappropriate because λόγος, both for Parmenides and for all other writers in his
time, means not 'reason' but 'speech': cf. Lesher 1994, 24; Dalfen 1994, 203n22; Curd 1998, 63n109
(on their attempt to interpret the word here in Parmenides as 'thought', cf. Kingsley 2003, 566). For a
detailed explanation of the passage see Kingsley 2003, 126ff. and 566-569, who translates as follows:
'but judge in favour of the highly contentious demonstration of the truth contained in these words as
spoken by me'. It should be observed, in addition, that λόγου ἔλεγχον along with μῦθος ὁδοῖο in v. 7
forms a kind of syntactical chiasmus that well suits Parmenides' style (for a similar construction cf.
B7.2 τῆσδ᾽ ἀφ᾽ ὁδοῦ / 3 ὁδὸν κατὰ τήνδε; B2.2 ὁδοί...διζήσιος / 4 Πειθοῦς...κέλευθος; B8.26
μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν / 31 πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν; B10.2-3 ἠελίοιο λαμπάδος ἔργ(α) / 4
ἔργα τε κύκλωπος...σελήνης; B16.1 κρᾶσιν μελέων / 3 μελέων φύσις). Incidentally, fr. B7 has had
a particularly problematic transmission. A plausible reconstruction of the text of v. 1 still eludes us
and several variants or errors are recorded for the remaining verses (v. 3 σ᾽ ἔθος Sextus: σε θεὸς Dio-
genes Laertius ix 22 BP¹FD: σεθεν P²Q; v. 5 πολύδηριν Diogenes Laertius: πολύπειρον Sextus; v. 6
μῦθος Simplicius, *Physics* 144.25: θυμὸς Sextus). λόγωι appears in both Sextus and Diogenes
because the text used by both of them derives from the same single tradition that mistakenly attributes
to Parmenides the view that knowledge is possible only through reason, not through the senses: see
Kingsley 2003, 136-139, 568-569.

a quantitative sense (as one single thing), but as a condition in which reality is sensed as a whole consistent with itself that experiences no division (ἕν, συνεχές). What is being evoked is a feeling of completeness that is widespread in mystical texts of all times and cultures (Deikmann 1980, 213f.; Austin 1999, 530ff.).

Another point that has always caused offence can also be explained against the background of this process of de-automatization. It has been often noted that the goddess, in spite of claiming that non-being does not exist and is inexpressible, characterizes being with the help of negative attributes. But as soon as one abandons the 'road of mortals' and judges such attributes instead against the background of this method as a whole, one can easily see that the goddess here is treading a 'via negationis' that is well known in ancient and modern mysticism.[56] Mystical, didactic texts often function with the help of this technique, which is designed to liberate the pupil from the usual way of thinking and from the automatisms of perception. Only after he has surrendered the expectations based on these automatisms is he able to open himself to an experience that he can neither control nor foresee. Here, language does not have a descriptive but an evocative function.[57]

B. Binding

The goddess' intention, then, at the beginning of fr. 8 is to liberate the *kouros* from his usual automatisms of perception and thought. But through her imperious, efficacious prohibitions she then goes on to block his thoughts and his tongue as well. She starts by forbidding him to say and to think that a being can come into being and grow out of non-being, because this is to be neither spoken nor thought (verses 7-8). The power of proof, i.e., the speech of the goddess, which has denied non-being all existence also has a direct influence on being in that it does not permit anything else to come into being out of non-being.[58] Every way out from being is now closed. At this point the image of chains, which plays such a large role in fr. 8, crops up for the first time. As a direct consequence of the force of the argument, Justice does not allow being either to come into being or to pass away but holds it in her 'fetters'.[59] The logical gap between the force of the argument and the action of Justice does not need to be bridged by philosophical speculations or by special explanations of the meaning of τοῦ εἵνεκεν.[60] Just

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[56] Cf. Forman 1999, 96ff. For an appealing scientific explanation of the *via negationis* in Zen Buddhism, in terms of modern brain research, cf. Austin 1999, 327ff.

[57] Cf. Forman 1999, 101: 'Language here does not serve a descriptive function but rather an evocative one: it is designed to help bring about a process of dropping one's pre-formations. It is intended to help bring him to a new state by deconstructing the old automatized perceptual patterns.'

[58] vv. 12-13: οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐφήσει πίστιος ἰσχύς / γίγνεσθαί τι παρ᾽ αὐτό.

[59] vv. 13-15: τοῦ εἵνεκεν οὔτε γενέσθαι / οὔτ᾽ ὄλλυσθαι ἀνῆκε Δίκη χαλάσασα πέδηισιν, / ἀλλ᾽ ἔχει.

[60] See, e.g., Heitsch 1974, 169f: 'In unserem Zusammenhang geben die Verse 7-13 weder Grund noch Zweck des mit τοῦ εἵνεκεν eingeleiteten Satzes an. Denn natürlich will Parmenides nicht sagen: "Weil Seiendes nicht entsteht, deshalb hält *Dike* es fest"; sondern sein Gedanke lautet: "Weil Seien-

as in the proem, here too Justice is subordinate to the power of the divine words: the true proof is for her an incontrovertible commandment that is to be directly obeyed. What Parmenides' unnamed goddess pronounces becomes reality directly. The decision has already been made: the first road of non-being, the unthinkable and unnamable path, has been dismissed:

> So it is that generation has been extinguished and of destruc-
> tion there is not a word to be heard (v. 21: τὼς γένεσις μὲν
> ἀπέσβεσται καὶ ἄπυστος ὄλεθρος).

Next comes the image of completeness in verses 22-25. It only occurs in its full form at verse 25 (τῶι ξυνεχὲς πᾶν ἐστιν· ἐὸν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει) but is already anticipated in the preceding three verses through a dense network of sounds, words and particles that are meant to convey this particular sense. Hence the monotonous repetition of negatives together with the accompanying sequence of I-E-O sounds in the first part of verses 22-24,[61] corresponding on the lexical level to the repetition of the verb ἔστιν and of sequences of words having the connotation of completeness.[62] On the syntactical level it is above all the 'chain' of causal particles (ἐπεί v. 22; τῶι, γάρ verse 25) that conveys the sense of fullness: these do not offer any real explanations (the claims introduced by them either entail each other reciprocally or refer tautologically to each other), but rather they create an impression of a dense compactness. Thus we are told that the cause of the absence of division in being is its homogeneity (verse 22: οὐδὲ διαιρετόν ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ὁμοῖον). Verses 23-24 repeat the same claims but using other words: there is in being no 'more' here and no 'less' there that could prevent it from holding together with itself, but all is full of being (οὐδέ τι τῆι μᾶλλον, τό κεν εἴργοι μιν συνέχεσθαι, / οὐδέ τι χειρότερον, πᾶν δ' ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος). In verse 25 this is given as the reason (τῶι) why everything is continuous, although in reality that is no explanation but just a repetition of the preceding statement. The situation is the same with the claim that being draws near to being, which is given as the reason (γάρ) for continuity. Expressed differently: being is continuous because it is an unbroken whole. The supposed explanations are therefore a series of tautologies.[63] But that is exactly what the

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des nicht entsteht, deshalb lässt sich auch sagen: *Dike* hält es fest." Mit anderen Worten: Der mit τοῦ εἵνεκεν eingeleitete Satz gibt in mythischer Form eine Zusammenfassung dessen, was in 7-13 gesagt ist.' Heitsch's interpretation is characterized by the typical exclusion of Parmenides' context that characterizes all philosophical interpretations. He simply omits the contextual framework in which Parmenides happens to find himself and does not take the words of the goddess seriously: according to him they are merely formulations of a philosophical content 'in mythical form'. However, nowhere in the text is some 'deshalb lässt sich auch sagen' presupposed, as Heitsch needs to assume in order for his interpretation to make sense. This supplement is superfluous because τοῦ εἵνεκεν is entirely appropriate if the goddess' words are taken 'literally'.

[61] v. 22: οὐδὲ διαιρετόν; v. 23: οὐδέ τι τῆι μᾶλλον; v. 24: οὐδέ τι χειρότερον.

[62] v. 22: πᾶν ἐστιν ὁμοῖον; v. 24: πᾶν δ' ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος.

[63] Modern commentators have sometimes noticed that Parmenides does not offer any real arguments here (cf., e.g., Mansfeld 1964, 98-99: 'die σήματα dieses Teils implizieren sich also in aller-hand Weisen wechselseitig'; also Curd 1998, 82; Rapp 1997, 135), but they have tried to presuppose

goddess means to convey: the image and the sense of a continuous whole that is complete in itself.

At this point the imagery of bonds naturally makes its reappearance (verse 26 αὐτὰρ ἀκίνητον **μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν**),[64] because the goddess herself has made these fetters stronger and stronger with her tautological explanations and her repetitions of images and sounds. It is striking that being, which lies in the bonds of great fetters, is depicted as without beginning and without end (ἄναρχον, ἄπαυστον). Now something limited, which has no beginning and no end, has the form of a circle. While the goddess evokes the image of bonds she simultaneously evokes another image: that of a circle. This image of a circle is alluded to in this particular group of verses (26-31) as well as in the preceding ones (22-25): the image of a self-contained circle is conveyed by the chiasmi πᾶν ἔστιν ὁμοῖον in 22 and ξυνεχὲς πᾶν ἐστιν in 25, μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν in 26 and πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν in 31.

Bonds and circle are fundamental symbols in magic. With her words, which primarily revolve around the claim that non-being does not exist, the goddess has drawn a circle around being that keeps birth and death away (27-28 ἐπεὶ γένεσις καὶ ὄλεθρος / τῆλε μάλ᾽ ἐπλάγχθησαν, **ἀπῶσε δὲ πίστις ἀληθής**) and makes it motionless. This is followed naturally in verse 29 by the image of an absolutely still, steady, and self-enclosed being that is conveyed through a cantilena-like repetition of the same words and sounds, resembling a magic spell (**ταὐτόν τ᾽ ἐν ταὐτῶι τε μένον καθ᾽ ἑαυτό τε κεῖται**). The image of mighty constraint and the fetters of the bonds closes the circle.[65]

These repeated sequences of images, sounds and words have a simultaneous effect both on being and on the *kouros*, who in being bound is brought to the same stillness and motionlessness himself.

An additional detail helps us to understand this language of bonds and immobility. It has been noted that in our passage legal language crops us again and again: the true πίστις, the proof that removes all doubt, the decision (κρίσις) and the banishment (ἀπωθεῖν) all create the impression that we are being presented with a court case brought against the general human terms birth, death, movement, separation, etc. (see Kingsley 2003, 172ff. and 571, referring to Heidel 1913, 718). These are all banished by the 'true proof'. In this context it is relevant to mention those curse tablets that were widespread throughout the Greek world

these in a speculative way. If Parmenides and his listeners had had to err into these considerations, they would never have come to the experience of being because they would no longer have guided their attention to being itself but to the thoughts concerning it, and they would again have been caught in the usual mechanisms of thought, in the ἔθος πολύπειρον, from which the goddess intends to divert her listener. The situation is the same with the speculations concerning the exact manner of the continuity and homogeneity of being. The goddess allows no time for such considerations because she procedes very quickly.

[64] πεῖραρ in its earliest sense designates not only 'end' or 'boundary' but also 'ship's rope' or 'sling', *Odyssey* v 289. Cf. Schreckenberg 1964, 47.

[65] vv. 30-31: χοὕτως **ἔμπεδον** αὖθι **μένει· κρατερὴ γὰρ ἀνάγκη / πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν** ἔχει, τό μιν ἀμφὶς ἐέργει.

from at least the beginning of the fifth century BC. One noteworthy group concerns opponents of the individuals who commissioned the tablets, and the opponents' witnesses in the trial. The intention is that these people will have their tongue, thoughts, and other bodily parts and bodily functions 'bound' (καταδέω) so that they will appear paralyzed and like corpses in front of the jury.[66] One of the goddesses to turn to for having someone 'bound' is Persephone.[67] The goal of Parmenides' goddess can be better understood against this background: she is the goddess who 'binds' and renders immobile. In contrast to the *defixiones*, however, she deploys her power here to produce a particular kind of immobility: one that leads to the core of existence. The true proof and its corollaries are means of concentration that operate with the concrete magical power of persuasive speech.[68] In this connection the supposed logical arguments are not important *per se* as isolated examples for a logic *in statu nascendi* but rather insofar as they create bonds that aim, with the sequences of words and sounds and the cantilena-like rhythm, to enchain and paralyze the thoughts of the *kouros* and guide him to the experience of eternity, immobility, and completeness. The force of *Peitho* is deployed in its concrete form and leads directly to the 'unmoved heart of truth'.

It is therefore unsurprising that the goddess establishes a circle-like connection between what is and what is thought: what is is the object, the goal and the cause, i.e., origin, of thoughts. The puzzling verse fr. 8.34 should also be understood in this context.

> What exists for thinking is the same / as the cause of thought.[69]
> For you won't find thinking / without the being in which [on account of which] it has been uttered.

As in the preceding groups of verses, here the image of chains appears once again:

> For there is nothing else and will be nothing else / apart from being, because *Moira* has bound it / to be whole, unmoved.[70]

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[66] Cf., e.g., Peek 1958, 61 (no. 207): τούτων καταδῶ τὴν γλῶτταν καὶ τὸν νοῦν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα καὶ ἔργα τὰ τούτων καὶ νοῦν καὶ φρένας καὶ διάνοιαν καὶ βου[λ]ὴν το[ύτων]. Cf. also the *defixio* from Selinus, below n67.

[67] Jordan 1985, no. 1: καταδῶ Στέφανον Πολυαρά[το] παρὰ Φερσε[φό]νει κ̣αὶ Ἑρμεῖ. Cf. also the *defixio* from Selinus mentioned above, *SEG* XVI.573 (no. 107 Jordan 1985): ["Α]πελον τὸν Λυκίνου κα{κα}ταγράφω παρ τὰν ἀγνὰν [θ]εὸν τὰν ψυχὰν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰν δύνασιν, ...καὶ τοὺς Ῥοτύλου υἱοὺς τοῦ Πύ(ρ)ρου παρ τὰν ἀγνὰν [θ]εὸν καὶ δύνασιν, καὶ γλώ(σ)σας.

[68] The accumulation of certain forms of alliteration, assonance, repetition of sound sequences, anagrams, both with and without any particular meaning, is characteristic of magical language: cf. Versnel 2002. On the efficaciously magical power of language in mystical texts, cf. Katz 1992.

[69] For this translation, cf. Mourelatos 1970, 170; Mansfeld 1964, 65; Kingsley 2003, 180.

[70] ταὐτὸν δ' ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὕνεκεν ἔστι νόημα· / οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ὧι πεφατισμένον ἐστίν, / εὑρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν. / οὐδὲν γὰρ (ἢ) ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται / ἄλλο πάρεξ τοῦ ἐόντος. ἐπεὶ τό γε Μοῖρ' ἐπέδησεν / οὖλον ἀκίνητόν τ' ἔμεναι. On the translation and interpretation of these verses, cf. Kingsley 2003, 180ff. and 572f.

V. Experience: 'the well-rounded sphere'

At this point the goddess finally reveals what this being is about which she has been talking for so long. As Kingsley has noted, the name of being is 'all things' (τῶι πάντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται) that men have assumed come into being, pass away, change place and alter their colour in the conviction that what they assume is true. Being in its wholeness, completeness, immobility and eternity IS every thing, every manifestation, every process, everything that can be thought and expressed. For all assertions are just assertions that IS, ἔστι (Kingsley 2003, 189ff.). Men fail to grasp this because they have fashioned for themselves an illusory 'third way', the road of definitions, of creating distinctions and differences.

A natural sequence to this 'naming', which embraces all things as an undifferentiated whole, is the image of completeness and homogeneity and eternity and absolute stillness: the well-rounded sphere, equal in every direction from its centre. Here too the corresponding feeling is produced through repetitions, alliterations, assonances.[71] And yet this image, too, refers not to some specific object but to a state or sense of completeness that is induced by the experience of 'IS' and cannot be expressed through normal linguistic means. The image of completeness emerges again in the group of verses 44-49, which is characterized by a dense network of repetitions and sequences of sounds and is closed in by the image of boundaries.[72] The goddess has brought the *kouros* to the experience of 'IS' as it really is, to the unmoved heart of *aletheia*.

Here she lets the experience end abruptly. Parmenides is led back into the world of *doxa*, into the world of differentiations, of separation, of difference, of narrative language. The goddess will narrate a traditional story, a deceitful order of words. But she describes, although from the human perspective, the same reality that Parmenides has just *experienced*. For completeness to be complete, it must also include illusion (Kingsley 2003, 255-258).

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[71] vv. 42-44: αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ **πεῖρας πύματον, τετελεσμένον ἐστί** / **πάντοθεν** εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκωι, / μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς **πάντηι**. A special function is performed in v. 42 by the repetition of the sound sequence **πει**, the string of E-sounds in τετελεσμένον ἐστι, and by πάντοθεν that together with words belonging to the semantic field of boundaries (πεῖρας πύματον) and of completeness (τετελεσμένον) all serve to depict the image of a delimiting, closed circle. Verse 44 also conveys the feeling of expansion out from the centre (repetition of the sound group σσο / σο) in all directions (ἰσοπαλὲς πάντηι) that is typical of a 'spherical' state.

[72] τὸ γὰρ **οὔτε** τι μεῖζον / **οὔτε** τι βαιότερον πέλεναι χρεῶν ἐστι τῆι ἢ τῆι. / **οὔτε** γὰρ **οὔκ ἐὸν ἔστι**, τό κεν παύηι μιν ἱκνεῖσθαι / εἰς ὁμόν, **οὔτ' ἐὸν ἔστιν** ὅπως εἴη κεν ἐόντος / τῆι μᾶλλον τῆι δ' ἧσσον, ἐπεὶ **πᾶν** ἐστιν ἄσυλον· / οἱ γὰρ **πάντοθεν** ἶσον, ὁμῶς ἐν **πείρασι** κύρει. The words and sounds in bold type illustrate the complex web of sounds and words in this particular group of verses. I would like again to draw attention to the constant repetition of the verb ἔστιν in its various forms; to the instances of anaphora with slight variations (v. 44 οὔτε τι, v. 45 οὔτε γὰρ, v. 45 οὔκ ἐὸν ἔστι, v. 47 οὔτ' ἐὸν ἔστιν); to the assonances (v. 47 ὁμόν, ὅπως, v. 49 ὁμῶς); to the sequence of πᾶν and πάντοθεν in vv. 48-49. The only interruption, in v. 46, is signalled by the anagram κεν κνε and by the metrical difficulty (τό κεν παύηι μιν ἱκνεῖσθαι); but it is simultaneously embedded in a negation of discontinuity that presupposes that the obstacle will be overcome.

Conclusions

It is time now to draw some conclusions from this analysis of the images, and their relationship to experience, in Parmenides' *Aletheia*. As soon as we abandon the route of searching for 'logical arguments' and isolating particular parts and 'thoughts' from the continuous stream of speech coming from the goddess and, instead, regard it as a whole, as a continuum of images and words and sounds (as Parmenides himself urges us to do)[73] that aims at creating a particular practical effect, and when we understand it against the background of an ecstatic journey into the underworld as described by Parmenides himself, then we discover that the whole of it works together to communicate and produce a direct experience. Obviously Parmenides' text, like other mystical texts, can be heard and read and interpreted outside of its context. And yet its meaning lies not in later interpretations but in its direct performative context,[74] to which it itself refers: the context of incubation and ecstatic journeys into the underworld that lead to the roots of truth, in other words to the experience of existence itself or of 'IS', and which above all are intended to change the inner disposition and the very life of human beings.

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[73] Cf. DK 28B4.2ff: οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ ἐὸν τοῦ ἐόντος ἔχεσθαι / οὔτε σκιδνάμενον πάντηι πάντως κατὰ κόσμον / οὔτε συνιστάμενον.

[74] Especially illuminating in this context is an observation made by Staal 1975, 35 with regard to Vedic texts: 'In Vedic times, the Vedic mantras came to be regarded as effective when properly recited at the proper time and place during the elaborate ritual—not when interpreted or provided with a meaning, a more transient, academic and individualistic pastime.'

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