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Jackson P. Hershbell

University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

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PARMENIDES' WAY OF TRUTH AND B16

Jackson P. Hershbell
Department of Classics
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

At least three interpretations have been given to B16 of Parmenides' poem. It has been taken for a fragment of his theory of knowledge, of his doctrine of sense perception, and of his views on sensing and knowing.¹ Evidence for these interpretations is taken from Aristotle's Metaphysics and Theophrastus' De Sensibus. The fragment is usually assigned to the second part of the poem, the Way of Seeming or Opinion.

In this study it will be argued the B16 comes from the first part of the poem, the Way of Truth, and that it is a statement neither of a theory of knowledge nor of sense perception, but an affirmation of the close relationship between thought and Being:² there can be no thought without that which is, or in Parmenides' words, "...neither can you recognize that which is not (that is impossible) nor can you speak about it" (B2, 7-8).³

Regardless of the motives for the second part of Parmenides' poem, no guarantee of truth is given for its content. In B1, 28-30, for example, the goddess who is addressing Parmenides, invites him to inquire into the nature of truth, and the beliefs or "guesswork" of mortals:

I bid you to inquire into all things, both the steadfast heart of persuasive (well-rounded?) truth, and the opinions of mortals in which there is no genuine conviction (*πίστις ἀληθῆς*) .⁴

In B8, 50f. the goddess concludes the first part of her presentation, and introduces Parmenides to the Way of Opinion:

I now cease my reliable discourse and reflection concerning truth. Henceforth you must learn the opinions of mortals, listening to the deceptive order of my words.

If B16, then, belongs to a part of the poem declared false or unreliable by Parmenides' goddess, how can it be considered a piece of positive doctrine? For if the Way of Opinion is false or unreliable, it would seem that all theories or teachings found in it are equally unreliable. Moreover, it is not certain that the teachings in the Way of Opinion originated with Parmenides or were proclaimed by him as his own.⁵ Whatever its interpretation, if B16 contains a positive or reliable teaching, it should belong to the Way of Truth.

The foregoing conclusion could be avoided, of course, if it be argued that the Way of Opinion is partially true, a "likely story" designed to explain the world of appearance. For example, in B8, 60-61, Parmenides' goddess declares:

I tell you this arrangement (*διάκοσμον*), fitting in all respects (*ἐοικότα πάντα*), so that no mortal will ever surpass you in opinion.

On the basis of this passage it has been maintained that the goddess is about to offer the best description of empirical reality, a description having a high degree of probability or likelihood of being true. Such an interpretation seems prima facie plausible, given the word εοικότα.⁶ But on closer inspection, whatever the meaning of εοικότα, the crux of these verses is found in B8, 61, and they cannot be interpreted to mean that the "arrangement" proclaimed by the goddess is the best and most probable account of the phenomenal world. Verse 61 only means that the goddess will instruct Parmenides so that no one can surpass him in mortal opinion concerning the world. An interpretation of the Way of Opinion as partially true or as a probable cosmology seems irreconcilable with the basic outlook of Parmenides' goddess for whom Being and non-Being, truth and falsity, always remain in sharp contrast. There are no degrees of reality for her and Parmenides.⁷

Despite the fact that no truth is claimed for the Way of Opinion, several interpreters place B16 in it and consider this fragment part of Parmenides' theory of knowledge or his doctrine of sense perception. L. Tarán, for example, maintains, "for Parmenides the phenomenal world is non-existent, and therefore there is no sense in supporting one theory about it against another."⁸ Nevertheless, he maintains that Parmenides is developing a theory of knowledge in B16 and that this fragment does not belong to Parmenides' Way of Truth.⁹ How a theory of knowledge can be seriously proposed which is considered false by its author, is not explained by Tarán. Such a procedure is like the attempt to think A and not-A simultaneously (an impossible task for Parmenides or for anyone who attempts to think). In order to avoid such difficulties, it is necessary to maintain either (a) that B16 contains a positive teaching or theory and therefore belongs to the Way of Truth, or (b) that B16 is not a true or reliable doctrine and therefore belongs to the Way of Opinion. If the latter is correct, then B16 together with the other opinions in the Way of Opinion, is unimportant for understanding Parmenides' own views concerning reality. In other words, B16 would have no genuine philosophical meaning, and must be considered only one of the many false opinions a mortal can entertain concerning the phenomenal world.

But there are important reasons for concluding that B16 has philosophical significance, and that it does not belong to the Way of Opinion, but to the Way of Truth. These will now be examined.

The only evidence that B16 formed part of the Way of Opinion is based on the accounts of Aristotle and Theophrastus, but neither of them gives a clear or wholly unambiguous indication to which part of the poem the fragment originally belonged. Aristotle quotes it in the Metaphysics (1009b) while discussing those philosophers who believe that thought (φρόνησις) and sense perception (αἰσθησις) are the same, and that impressions given through sense perception are necessarily true. Like Empedocles, Parmenides believed that changes of thought (μεταβάλλειν τὴν φρόνησιν) are dependent on changes of bodily condition. Aristotle then quotes B16 without further explanation or

indication of its original context in Parmenides' poem.

Theophrastus attempts to explain the fragment in some detail in De Sensibus, and in order to determine, if possible, the original place of B16 in Parmenides' poem, it is necessary to consider his comments.¹⁰ Having initially placed Parmenides with those thinkers who believe that sense perception involves the principle of likeness, Theophrastus proceeds in sections 3-4 to comment specifically on Parmenides' views and quotes B16. Although it is not explicitly acknowledged to be part of the Way of Opinion, Theophrastus' commentary which describes the dependence of the understanding (γνώσις) on "hot" and "cold", strongly suggests B16 came from the second part of the poem. For "hot" and "cold" seem to be nothing but the peripatetic interpretations of light and night which figure so predominantly in the Way of Opinion. Moreover, some of Theophrastus' observations may rely on Aristotle's discussion of the same fragment in the Metaphysics (1009b) where Aristotle maintained that Parmenides, together with Democritus and Empedocles, supposed that thought and perception were the same. So in De Sensibus, Theophrastus asserts that thinking (τὸ φρονεῖν) and perceiving (τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι) were considered identical by Parmenides. At this point, both interpretations are in agreement and appear to justify the belief that B16 belongs to the Way of Opinion. For since the Way of Opinion is usually interpreted as being somehow concerned with the world of phenomena or appearance, it would seem that a discussion of sense perception also belongs to it. Or at least why would Parmenides discuss sense perception in a part of his poem viz. the Way of Truth, which deals with an unchanging, unbegotten and indestructible reality?

But the decision to place B16 in the Way of Opinion on the basis that Parmenides identified thought and sense perception is premature, especially since it is not clear that B16 has anything to do with the senses, Theophrastus' (and Aristotle's) interpretation notwithstanding. Moreover, Theophrastus' observation that Parmenides considered thought and sense perception identical, though it comes immediately after B16, is hardly supported by the fragment. In fact, several interpreters think that Theophrastus made a major mistake in attributing the doctrine of the sameness of perception and thought to Parmenides.¹¹

Another reason for assigning B16 to the Way of Opinion, is Theophrastus' ascription to Parmenides of the view that understanding depends on two elements, "hot" and "cold"; as their amount varies in the individual, his understanding changes, a better or more refined understanding being dependent on the "hot". But even understanding requires a certain proportion or συμμετρία¹² (perhaps Theophrastus' interpretation of Parmenides' κρᾶσις¹³). At this point, Theophrastus quotes B16:

ὥς γὰρ ἕκαστος (ἑκάστος) ἔχει κρᾶσιν μελέων
 πολυπλάγκτων (πολυκάμπτων)
 τὼς νόος ἀνθρώποισι παρεστήκεν (παρίσταται). τὸ γὰρ
 αὐτό
 ἔστιν ὅπερ φρονέει μελέων φύσις ἀνθρώποισιν
 καὶ πᾶσιν καὶ παντί. τὸ γὰρ πλεον ἔστι νόημα.

If the fragment is read, however, without peripatetic or other presuppositions, there is no explicit mention of "hot" or "cold", or the more genuine Parmenidean light and night. Also there is no specific indication in the fragment that the mind (νόος) or object of thought (νόημα) depends on the balance of "hot" and "cold" or light and night; unless, of course, some deduction is made that the krasis consists of light and night. A reader of the fragment itself can only come to the conclusion that some kind of relationship between the krasis of limbs, presumably the limbs of the human body, and the human mind, is affirmed in the fragment. Moreover, the concluding phrase of B16, τὸ γὰρ πλεον ἔστι νόημα (lit. "for the full[or more] is thought") looks much like one of the conclusions reached in the Way of Truth where the close affinity between that which is and thought is constantly stressed, e.g. B2, 3-4; B8, 34-36; and in B8, 21ff. that which is is considered indivisible and "full of existence" (ἐμπλεὸν ἔστιν εὐόντος).¹⁴

Before the conclusion of his discussion of Parmenides in De Sensibus, Theophrastus also remarks that "absolutely everything that is has a certain kind of understanding" (καὶ ὅλως δὲ πᾶν τὸ ὄν ἔχειν τινὰ γνῶσιν), and this seems to be a loose summary statement of fragments from the Way of Truth, e.g. B8, 35-36, "for not without that which is... shall you find thinking" (οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ εὐόντος... εὐρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν), and B3 in particular, "for the same thing exists for thinking and being" (...τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἔστιν τε καὶ εἶναι). That Theophrastus' remark may be based on these or other fragments from the Way of Truth is suggested by the following: (a) Theophrastus' use of τὸ ὄν , a key term in Parmenides' Way of Truth, cannot be legitimately extended to the changing phenomena of the Way of Opinion; (b) B3...τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἔστιν τε καὶ εἶναι especially could be taken to imply not only that everything¹⁵ which thinks exists, but also that everything which exists thinks. In any case, there is no other extant fragment or anything in the Parmenidean tradition to support Theophrastus' statement.

Since Theophrastus' discussion of Parmenides nearly concludes with such an observation, possibly based on the fragments in the Way of Truth, there is some indication that he was not sure where

B16 was located in Parmenides' poem. In fact, he may not have been working with a complete text of the poem, and was strongly under the influence of Aristotle in his interpretation of Parmenides.

In view of J.B. McDiarmid's careful study of Theophrastus on the Presocratics, the previous supposition cannot be disregarded. According to McDiarmid, for example, there is no indication that Theophrastus made use of much more of presocratic original writings than he quotes in Physicorum Opiniones, and some of these are taken from Aristotle's writings, or perhaps from a collection of excerpts for use in the Lyceum.¹⁶ This could be also true of B16 in De Sensibus where Theophrastus fails to indicate its original context and surprisingly overlooks the distinction he made in Physicorum Opiniones between the two parts of Parmenides' poem. As a result, he fails to hint that the views he is stating are not Parmenides' own, or that B16 must come from the Way of Truth if it is to be taken seriously as a correct formula for either perception or knowledge.¹⁷

In fact, Theophrastus' repeated complaint about Parmenides, ὅλως οὐδὲν ἀφωρικεν and οὐδὲν ἔτι διωρικεν, may be based on lack of information about Parmenides' poem. Apart from Theophrastus' not very detailed references in De Sensibus to memory and forgetfulness, and the brief discussion of the perceptions of the dead, there is no clear evidence that he was working from a complete text of Parmenides' poem. Contrary to J. Mansfeld, the phrase ἐν οἷς φησι¹⁸ does not prove that Theophrastus had a complete copy of the poem. It only indicates that B16 and other unquoted passages (even in his treatment of other philosophers, Theophrastus seldom quotes the passages he is discussing) were known to him. Mansfeld's contention that Aristotle quoted B16 from memory, whereas Theophrastus had a copy of the whole poem, is difficult to understand.¹⁹ Given the evidence, one can as convincingly maintain that Theophrastus quoted B16 from memory whereas Aristotle had a full copy of the poem.

The other explanation, of course, for Theophrastus' complaints about Parmenides is that he is raising questions and employing categories not relevant to Parmenides. For example, there is no doubt that Parmenides did discuss memory and forgetfulness, and the perceptions of the dead, but were they discussed in the contexts and in the terms that Theophrastus suggests? As Vlastos correctly points out, the corpse-like passivity of sense perception should not surprise a reader of Parmenides, but all these references, e.g. the "undiscriminating hordes" whose eyes are sightless, and ears full of noise, are found in the Way of Truth, not in the Way of Opinion.²⁰ In any case, Theophrastus is not always a careful interpreter of his predecessors, and even such a sympathetic critic as G.M. Stratton admits that Theophrastus "was not always of clearest judgement."²¹

It must also be added that there is little in Theophrastus' discussion of B16, apart from his own doctrine that sense perception involves a certain correspondence or composition suited to the object, which could not have been derived from Aristotle's Metaphysics. For example, Aristotle claims there (1009b) that Parmenides identified thought and perception, making thought dependent on bodily changes. In an earlier section (986b) Aristotle mentioned that Parmenides placed "hot" under Being and "cold" under non-Being:

For, claiming that non-being in contrast to Being, does not exist, he thinks it necessary that Being be one and that nothing else be... But being forced to conform to phenomena, and believing that these are one according to formula but many according to sensation, he now posits two causes or two principles, the Hot and the Cold, as if speaking of fire and earth; and he classifies the Hot as the principle with respect to being but the Cold as the principle with respect to non-being.²²

Since Theophrastus was no doubt familiar with the Metaphysics he could assume from Aristotle's brief discussion of B16 that it was somehow concerned with the body and thought or perception. And since, according to Aristotle's interpretation of Parmenides, "hot" and "cold" were the two elements of the phenomenal world, perception would somehow be connected with these. Identifying the term krasis in B16 with his own concept of συμμετρία, Theophrastus concluded that "knowledge" required a certain proportion of the elements. At the same time, however, Theophrastus seems to have understood that B16 concerns a higher grade of knowledge. For knowledge (γνῶσις) in general depends on the predominant element, and in the case of the higher kind of knowledge, this is assumed by Theophrastus to be the "hot". As J. Loenen has correctly remarked, genuine νόος can only arise when "hot" predominates.²³ But returning to the Metaphysics, "hot" is the principle with respect to Being. It is, therefore, tempting to conclude that Theophrastus himself regarded B16 as part of the Way of Truth, and not primarily concerned with sense perception except insofar as it was mistakenly taken to be identical with thought.

In general, there are no overwhelming reasons for accepting Theophrastus' interpretation of B16 or for claiming that B16 belonged to the Way of Opinion. There are other equally plausible ways of interpreting B16. It cannot be assumed that since Theophrastus was closer in time to Parmenides, he was also closer in spirit, especially since his purpose in De Sensibus is not to give a detailed analysis of Parmenides, but a textbook survey of previous thought on sense perception. Moreover, in view of the ambiguity, paucity, and even inaccuracy of

Theophrastus' comments on B16, one does well beginning with Parmenides' ipsisissima verba.

In order to demonstrate the compatibility of B16 with the Way of Truth, the meaning of two important terms must be determined, that is, κρᾶσιν and μελέων in the first verse. If "limbs" is taken in its usual sense as the limbs of the human body, there seems to be little room for Theophrastus' interpretation that the krasis is a blend or mixture of "hot" and "cold, or light and night."²⁴ The grammatical construction indicates that whatever the meaning of krasis, it somehow involves the limbs of the body: κρᾶσιν μελεων. There are, however, two ways to avoid this conclusion. One could deny that μέλεα refers to the limbs of the body, but instead to the elements of the cosmos, the maxima membra mundi, light and night.²⁵ Hence the mind is dependent on the mixture of the cosmic limbs. The other argument shows that μέλεα refers to the human body. But since all things consist of light and night (cf. B9), these are also the ingredients of the human body. Hence the phrase should be interpreted as referring to a mixture of light and night which, in turn, compose the bodily limbs.²⁶

But these two explanations of μέλεα are not convincing. Nowhere in the fragments does Parmenides refer to light and night as "limbs". At best, these are the "shapes" or "forms" mentioned in B8, 53-54. Why does Parmenides not use this term in B16, if he wanted to say that men's minds are dependent upon the mixture of light and night? Parmenides is normally very consistent in his terminology. The second possibility takes μέλεα in its common meaning, but expects the reader to understand that, nonetheless, a mixture of light and night underlies the human limbs. This is stretching a point, for can it safely be assumed that all things, including the human body, are composed of light and night? Does the all in B9, for example, "since all things have been named light and night," refer to everything in the cosmos, or primarily to celestial phenomena? There is reason for thinking that light and night do not form the basis of all things in the Way of Opinion, but that these are only examples of difference or opposition.²⁷

In general, it cannot be safely assumed either that melea means more than "human limbs" or that light and night are the underlying components of these. But more important, κρᾶσιν μελέων makes perfectly good sense if the melea are the limbs of the human body.

Various meanings of krasis are cited in Liddell and Scott; for example, the temperament of the mind or body, temperature, harmony, union. Often the word refers to the mixing of water and wine, not a random mixture, but one based on a certain proportion of water to wine, usually 3:1.²⁸ The word also seems to have something to do

with the sequence in which water and wine are mixed. Consider, for example, Xenophanes B5:

Nor would anyone mix wine (κερᾶσειε) first pouring it into the cup, but rather the water and then the wine.

Similarly krasis sometimes appears in combination with ἁρμονία. For example, in Plato's Phaedo (86b) the soul is κρᾶσις καὶ ἁρμονία of the elements of the body, and in De Anima (407b31) Aristotle reports the view of those who hold that the soul: τὴν ἁρμονίαν κρᾶσιν καὶ σύνθεσιν ἐναντίων εἶναι.²⁹

If one keeps in mind, then, that krasis has the sense of intentional, artful, or even harmonious blending, what is a κρᾶσις μελέων. It is probably nothing more than a way of saying that the limbs of the human body function together or in a harmonious or unified fashion. The limbs though individually having a tendency to "wander" (note πολυπλάγκτων), function together as a whole. The literal meaning of κρᾶσις as "mixture", therefore, should not mislead one into thinking that this clearly links B16 with the Way of Opinion. In this section of the poem Parmenides does use μῆξις, but here he is probably thinking of the mingling of the sexes, a symbol perhaps of the whole cosmological process. And unlike krasis, it does seem to be a technical term.³⁰

Against the previous observations, it could be objected that interpreting κρᾶσις μελέων as a way of saying that the limbs of the human body function harmoniously, is to reduce krasis to the level of metaphor. If one keeps in mind, however, the meanings given in Liddell and Scott, it seems clear that krasis was not always understood in its root sense of a simple mixture or blending. Among the English meanings assigned are "temperature" of the air, temperament, combination or union (cf. the passage in Phaedo 86b cited above), and the combination of two vowels into one long. These examples do not, of course, show how Parmenides understood the term. But they do suggest that any literal rendering of krasis as "mixture" or "blend" is by no means certain. A metaphorical meaning of krasis is possible, and given the interpretation of μελέων as the limbs of the human body, almost necessary.

B16, 1-2 then seem to affirm that each man has a coordinated body which is formed or "mixed" of much-wandering limbs. And just as every man has a unified body, so mind is present to men. In interpreting these verses, two possibilities exist: (a) these first two lines are a simile, just as "men have similar bodies, so they have similar minds,"³¹ or (b) some kind of relationship between mind and body is being affirmed. But the nature of the relationship remains

unclear. Do the verses mean that mind is dependent on the body for its existence, i.e. "just as each man has a body...so mind is present?" Or do the verses mean the existence of a coordinated or unified body is dependent on mind? In order to understand the full meaning of lines 1-2, it is necessary to consider lines 3-4.

The grammar of B16, 3-4 has been much discussed, but Tarán, to some extent following Hölscher, has given probably the best and simplest explanation.³² According to him, φύσις μελέων is the subject of προνέει, and ὅπερ, accusative: the object of προνέει. Since τὸ αὐτό is the subject of ἔστιν and ὅπερ is correlative with it, lines 3-4a can be translated:

For it is the same thing which the constitution (φύσις) of each and every man's limbs thinks...

The term φύσις in B16, 3 needs some explanation. In a now old but important study, Περὶ φύσεως, W. A. Heidel argued convincingly that the primary sense of φύσις is "growth." But, according to him, it also has the sense of the end or result of a process. Viewed from without, it is "the outward constitution or frame of a thing"; considered from within, "it is its inner constitution or character."³³ Without pursuing Heidel's discussion in detail, it is important to note his observation that as interest in the microcosm grew, φύσις understood as the mental constitution assumed great importance. It comes to have the meaning of endowment, talent, or instinct, e.g. Protagoras B3; Democritus B33, B278. Or following Kirk's more recent analysis of φύσις in Heraclitus, the word means the constitution or essence of a thing, that which governs a thing's behaviour.³⁴ Whether one agrees wholly with Heidel's or Kirk's analyses, it seems clear that φύσις, like krasis, is by no means a simple concept. In the fragments of Parmenides' poem, the word φύσις occurs only in B16 and in one other fragment, B10, where it probably means something like "stuff" or "essence" (Ather-Wesen in DK18, p. 241). Now if it is true that φύσις in B16 can mean something like mental constitution, or that which governs a thing's behaviour, there is nothing which prohibits the identification of this φύσις μελέων with νόος; viewed from within, mind is the constitution of the bodily limbs, i.e. controls the body's movements. To understand φύσις in another sense, as a physical component of the body or the body itself, is difficult. What thinks (προνέει) is νόος, not the body. Any other interpretation of φύσις would seem at variance with common sense as well as the rest of Parmenides' thought where what apprehends or thinks is always νόος, not σῶμα. This is not to say, of course, that Parmenides regarded νόος as the φύσις of all things. It is the φύσις only of the human body. Whether he would have asserted, à la Berkeley, that all reality is at root "mental" or somehow dependent on mind is not clear, and at best, doubtful.

If the previous observations are correct, it would seem that lines 3-4 further explain the relationship between mind and body suggested in 1-2: the krasis of the body which is similar in all men is dependent on the presence of mind. Mind is the φύσις μελέων precisely in the sense that it enables the limbs to work together so that there can be a living, functioning body at all. And this mind which controls the body also thinks the "same thing" in all men:

As each man has a union of the much-wandering limbs of the body, so is mind present to men.

For it is the same thing which the constitution of the limbs (mind) thinks, both in each and every man.

The word γάρ is often used to confirm or strengthen an assertion.³⁵ In this case, it suggests that the relationship between the verses is as follows: men have similar minds just as they have similar bodies, indeed it being the mind that governs the body. That men's minds are similar is shown from the fact that they think the same object, the nature of this object being given in 4b.

The meaning of 4b τό γάρ πλέον ἐστὶ νόημα is not clear at first. Literally it can be translated, "for the full (or more) is thought".³⁶ "Full rather than "more" is the correct translation, since the lines are probably meant to recall the notion that thought is an apprehension of what is "whole" or "all together" (cf. οὐλομελές and ὁμοῦ πᾶν in B8, 4-5). What is, is full of being (ἐμπλεόν ἐστὶν εὐντος in B8, 24) In view of the references then to the "fullness" or "completeness" of Being, it is not surprising to find Parmenides maintaining that thought which has Being for its true goal, is itself fulfilled or realized. There may, in fact, be a connection between the πλέον ἐστὶ νόημα of B16, 4 and the description of τὸ εὐν in B8, 42 as being τετελεσμένον. For both πληρόω and τελέω have the sense of accomplishment or fulfillment, the former sometimes referring to the realization of what a man's θυμός desires, a psychological fulfillment (cf. πληρόω in Liddell and Scott). Taken in itself, of course, B16, 4b is an incomplete statement, but since Parmenides claims that there can be no thought without that which is (non-Being is unthinkable, e.g. B2, 7-8), "the full" must be existence or Being: genuine thought is full of that which is.

There is, moreover, little doubt that 4b further emphasizes or clarifies "the same thing" of verse 2. What is the "same thing" which the constitution or mind of all men thinks? The obvious answer is that which is or Being: All men, no matter how conceptually confused, think Being: "for you cannot recognize that which is not (that is impossible) nor could you express it," B2, 7-8. Likewise, the

path of non-existence is "unthinkable and unnamable, for it is not a genuine way," B8, 17-18. This is the Parmenidean axiom, and any attempt to interpret B16 must consider this axiom.

] Though it is dangerous to speculate in the absence of Parmenides' own words, the foregoing interpretation of B16 is not incompatible with the passage about the dead. According to Theophrastus' report on this, the dead man does not perceive light or warmth since the fire has left him. Recalling Aristotle's mistaken ordering of "hot" under Being, is it possible that the passage was originally an argument to the effect that the dead do not think at all? Theophrastus claims the dead perceive the cold, that which is not; this is impossible. The dead, then, have no minds and since νόος is absent from them, there can be no krasis of the limbs. One of the most obvious characteristics of the dead is the absence of coordinated bodily movement, or, for that matter, any movement at all. Possibly Parmenides reflecting on this concluded mind was absent from the dead.

But if B16 belonged to the Way of Truth, where was its original place in the poem? Loenen, who also believes that B16 is a fragment of the Way of Truth, places it after B3.³⁷ This seems to be correct, especially in view of Theophrastus' remark, "absolutely everything which is, has a certain kind of understanding". Moreover, both fragments contain the expression, τὸ αὐτό, and that this is a reference to that which is or τὸ εἶναι, is strongly suggested by B8, 29, ταῦτόν τ' ἐν ταύτῳ τε μένον καθ' ἑαυτό τε κεῖται. As Loenen and Holscher have indicated, "the same" (das Selbige) was probably used by Parmenides in B3 and B8, 29 to indicate an abstract concept as such.³⁸ Probably B16 also has some connection with B4:

λεῦσε δ' ὅμως ἀπεόντα νόῳ παρόντα βεβαίως
οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ εἶναι τοῦ εἶντος ἔχθραι
οὔτε σκιδναμένον παντὶ πάντως κατὰ κόσμον
οὔτε συνιστάμενον.

There are no convincing reasons for assigning this fragment to the Way of Opinion.³⁹ In B8, 25 Parmenides asserts εἶναι γὰρ εἶναι πελάζει (so in B4, 2 τὸ εἶναι τοῦ εἶντος ἔχθραι). Moreover, the whole point of B4 is to emphasize the unity of that which is; it cannot be affected by spatial or temporal distances, but is all one. Assuming then, that B4 belongs to the Way of Truth, what relationship exists between it and B16? As in B16 the limbs are given the epithet "much-wandering" (πολυπλάκτων), so in B4, Parmenides speaks of a sundering and scattering of that which is. But he is quick to add that it is not possible to separate and scatter that which is; for "things absent" are present to the mind. In B16, the mind of man, which

controls the krasis of the much-wandering limbs, always thinks the same thing. It is as if Parmenides meant that wherever men have wandered or strayed, they can only think one thing: that which is. The connection of ideas in B3,4 and 16 appears then as follows: the nature of human thought is basically the same, no matter how different men's opinions may be. Moreover, it makes no difference where men find themselves: "as the mind of a man darts quickly, he who has travelled over far lands, and thinks in his heart, would I were here, or there..." so men can only think and speak about that which is.⁴⁰

Two objections can be made against the previous interpretation of B16. First, if it is correct, is B16 not a fragment of a theory of knowledge? It appears as if Parmenides dealt with the relationship between knowledge (or thought) and Being. Second, does this interpretation not translate Being into terms of Becoming, i.e. the human body? Can the mortal frame, qua mortal, think Being?⁴¹

It is possible, of course, to regard B16 as part of a theory of knowledge provided that it is not assigned to the Way of Opinion. As such, it must belong to the Way of Truth. But more important, it is questionable whether a category such as theory of knowledge or epistemology can be applied to Parmenides' thought. There is, for example, no concern in the extant fragments with defining knowledge or with usual epistemological problems, e.g. the justification of claims to knowledge, the limits of knowledge, or the relationship between sense perception and the external world. It is not until Plato's Theaetetus that such problems are considered. Parmenides' primary concern seems to be metaphysical, that is, with the relationship between Being, language, and thought, and the implications of denying intelligibility to non-Being. Is it not, therefore, anachronistic or misleading to look for a theory of knowledge in the fragments of Parmenides' poem?

The second objection has been framed in the traditional antithesis between Being and Becoming, which, however, is not primary in Parmenides' thought: Being is not the antithesis of Becoming, but of non-Being. The human body either exists or it does not exist, and for Parmenides there are no degrees of reality.⁴² Accordingly, body exists as much as mind. It either exists or it doesn't exist: ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν. Why cannot this mind, despite its bodily associations, think that which is? Parmenides' mind could and did even thought it required divine aid.

In its entirety, B16 affirms a connection between mind and body, and a close relationship between mind and Being. There is no explicit evidence either in the fragment itself or in Aristotle's Metaphysics and Theophrastus' De Sensibus that it came from the Way of Opinion. Moreover, if it is read without peripatetic presuppositions as to what is or is not implied in it, there are no convincing reasons for con-

sidering B16 part of a doctrine of sense perception or theory of knowledge. It simply follows from the initial axioms of Parmenides' goddess, and affirms her conviction that non-Being cannot be thought or expressed. All men, even those who try to follow the backward-turning path of Being and non-Being, think the same thing, viz. that which is.

FOOTNOTES

¹ According to Burnet, "this fragment of the theory of knowledge which was expounded in the second part of the poem of Parmenides must be taken in connection with what we are told by Theophrastus in the 'Fragment on Sensation'." J. Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy (reprint, New York, 1957) 178, note 1. Many interpreters of Parmenides' poem follow Burnet in assigning B16 to the second part. See also W.K.C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. II (Cambridge, England, 1965) 67; L. Taran, Parmenides (Princeton, 1965) 253-263; J. Mansfeld, Die Offenbarung des Parmenides und die menschliche Welt (Assen, 1964) 175ff.; and U. Holscher, Anfangliches Fragen (Gottingen, 1968) 112f.

G. Vlastos, "Parmenides Theory of Knowledge," Transactions of the American Philological Association 77 (1949) 66-77, argued that B16 is part of Parmenides doctrine of sense perception, not of his theory of knowledge.

Finally, an interpretation of this fragment as Parmenides' views on sensing and knowing has been offered by H. Frankel, "Parmenidesstudien," Gottingen Nachrichten (1930) 153-92, especially 170 and 174. See also H. Frankel, Wege und Formen fruhgriechischen Denkens (Munich, 1955) 173-79. In Anfangliches Fragen, Holscher also maintains (p.113), that Parmenides' teaching in B16 concerns "...Erkenntnis im allgemeinsten Sinne..., ohne zwischen Wahrnehmung und Denken, zwischen Trug und Wahrheit zu unterscheiden."

² This thesis is not wholly new. It is proposed, for example, by J.H.M.M. Loenen in Parmenides, Melissus, Gorgias (Assen, 1959). He writes (p.58): "As to the place of fr.16 we can by no means be sure that this really formed part of the doxa. On the contrary, there are good reasons for holding that fr. 16 belonged to the first part." My reasons for assigning B16 to the first part are, however, different. Moreover, we do not agree concerning particular details or the interpretation of Parmenides' poem as a whole.

According to A. Mourelatos, The Route of Parmenides (New Haven, 1970), the thesis that B16 belongs to the Way of Truth is "extreme" (p.257), but he gives no reasons for considering it such. Mourelatos' interpretation of the fragment as an effective use of ambiguity" seems somewhat puzzling. According to him, it does three things:

openly and directly it gives a physiology of thought: indirectly it censures human thought as 'wandering' and 'confusion'; but it also gives subtle reminders of the proper relationship between mind and reality (p.257).

Mourelatos later likens the language of the fragment to counterpoint (p.259), and generally his interpretation seems

almost contrary to his earlier claim that "Parmenides can write clearly when he wants" (p.41, *Italics in text*). No explanation is given as to why Parmenides should indulge in such involved ambiguity in a section of the poem presumably false and unreliable, and Mourelatos further notes an "uncanny similarity both in wording and in syntax between B16 and such lines as B3, B4, and B8.34ff." (p.256).

³ The expressions "that which is," "Being," and "existence" are used interchangeably in this study without any attempt to give them a more precise meaning. "That which is" is a translation of the substantive participle τὸ ἔόν used occasionally in the fragments, e.g. B4,2 and B8,35. The most convincing interpretation of Parmenides' thought is that of G.E.L. Owen, "Eleatic Questions," CO 54 (1960) 84-102. According to him, the subject of Parmenides' poem is "what can be talked or thought about" (pp.94-95). I have accepted Owen's general interpretation for the purposes of this study.

⁴ In "Well-rounded Truth and Circular Thought in Parmenides," Phronesis 3 (1958) 15-30, G. Jameson argues in favor of the reading εὐπειθέος (persuasive"). His discussion strikes me as εὐπειθήs.

⁵ Tarán, Parmenides, 228. Tarán writes: "The arrangement as a whole is, most probably, Parmenides' own, but the details come from various sources."

⁶ For the meanings of ἐοικότα which have been proposed by various scholars, see Mansfeld, Offenbarung, 146-47, and Tarán, Parmenides, 226.

⁷ This interpretation of Parmenides' thought is supported by Montgomery Furth. See his "Elements of Eleatic Ontology," Journal of the History of Philosophy 6 (1968) 111-132. Tarán also convincingly maintains that "...Parmenides did not believe in degrees of error..." Parmenides, 207. Hölscher's interesting interpretation of B8,53-54:

μορφᾶς γὰρ κατέθεντο δύο γνώμας ὀνομάζειν
τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεῶν ἔστιν - ἐν ᾧ πεπλανημένοι εἰσίν -

and his translation of the first half of verse 54, τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεῶν ἔστιν, as "zwei Formen, von denen nur eine einzige zu nennen unmöglich, oder unzulässig ist," does not prove that the Way of Opinion is partially true. Whatever the meaning of B8,54 may be, it is clear that the opinions of mortals (and therefore the Way of Opinion) are false; they have decided to name two forms...in this they have gone astray. (ἐν ᾧ πεπλανημένοι εἰσίν). See Hölscher, Anfängliches Fragen, 103ff., especially 107.

⁸Taran, Parmenides, 227.

⁹Ibid., 209 and 253ff.

¹⁰For the text of Theophrastus' discussion, see G.M. Stratton, Theophrastus and the Greek Physiological Psychology Before Aristotle (London, 1917) 68-69. Or see H. Diels and W. Kranz, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, 7th edition (Berlin, 1954) 226 (A46).

¹¹For example, Taran and Guthrie, According to Taran, "his (Theophrastus') major mistake consists in attributing to Parmenides himself the doctrine that thought and perception are the same, as Aristotle had already done." Parmenides, 262. See also Guthrie, History, II, 25.

¹²For the meaning of συμμετρία, see Stratton, Theophrastus, 157. Taran appears to consider συμμετρία as Theophrastus' interpretation of Parmenides' τὸ πλεον. Taran, Parmenides, 257. But this is not correct. τὸ πλεον is interpreted by Theophrastus as ὑπερβαλλον.

¹³Readings not accepted by me have been placed in brackets. Contrary to Mansfeld, Offenbarung, 176 and Taran, Parmenides, 169 ἐκαστος and not ἐκαστοτε must be read. First, the word ἐκαστοτε is not known before Herodotus (Frankel "Parmenidesstudien," 172, note 1). Second, if ἐκαστοτε is accepted, κρᾶσιν (accusative), must be changed to κρᾶσις (nominative); otherwise there is no subject for B16,1. Mansfeld's proposal that the subject of ἔχει is the goddess (he reads ἐκαστοτε) is not convincing. For if this interpretation is accepted ἔχει κρᾶσιν must be taken as being equivalent to κεράννυμι. Moreover, the parallels cited by Mansfeld are weak (for example, Semon. fr.1, τέλος μὲν Ζεὺς ἔχει κτλ. is not relevant). See Mansfeld, Offenbarung 179ff., (especially 182-84) Third, ἐκαστος agrees quite well with πᾶσιν καὶ παντὶ in verse 4. Holscher has most recently argued in favor of ἐκαστοτε. He writes, Anfängliches Fragen, 113, "Das Zeitadverb ἐκαστοτε ist ebenso von der Überlieferung wie durch die parallelen Formulierungen desselben Gedankens, besonders bei Empedokles, geboten, und damit hängt wohl auch das Präsens παρίσταται zusammen." In support of this observation, he refers to Od. 18, 137, Archil 68 (D), and Empedocles B108. The verb παρίσταται is confirmed perhaps by Empedocles B108 and the other parallels, if they are parallels. But the adverb ἐκαστοτε appears neither in Empedocles B108 nor in the other passages cited by Holscher. One can argue equally as well that the reading ἐκαστοτε is based on a mistaken interpretation of Empedocles B20 and B108. See Loenen, Parmenides, 54, note 106. Moreover, Holscher does not explain how κρᾶσιν (accusative) can be the subject of ἔχει if the reading ἐκαστοτε is accepted.

Most interpreters accept Theophrastus' reading πολυπλάγκτων and not πολυκάμπτων . See Tarán, Parmenides, 170 . Παρίσταται instead of παρέστηκεν seems to be an incorrect variant. For metrical reasons it cannot be accepted.

But on the whole, Loenen's observation is correct:

If the arguments based on the philosophical meaning of the fragment as a whole are left out of account for a moment, it may safely be said that no conclusive philological arguments can be given for the correctness of any one of these readings. No one will therefore dispute that the decision which of these readings is the correct one has to be based on the interpretation.

Loenen, Parmenides, 51.

14

Mansfeld's objection to Loenen's discussion of the word is not completely accurate. He writes (Offenbarung, 190) , "Loenen deutet, ohne Anschluss an Fr. 9. 3 in Erwägung zu ziehen, πλέον im Sinne von ἐμπλεον ἔοντος und nimmt dies in der Bedeutung des absoluten Seienden, als ob Fr. 8. 24 die einzige Parallelstelle wäre." (Italics mine). But Loenen does mention B9, 3 specifically. See Loenen, Parmenides, 53 : "Indeed, it is not at all probable that this word here means 'more', considering that πλέον in fr. 9.3 means 'full'..." See especially note 100 on the same page.

15 In fact, a contemporary interpreter of Parmenides drew this very conclusion from B3 (incorrectly I think). See E. D. Philips, "Parmenides on Thought and Being," Philosophical Review 64 (1955), 546-60.

16

See J. B. McDiarmid, Theophrastus on the Presocratic Causes". Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 61 (1953) 85-156, especially 133. J. A. Philip, "Parmenides Theory of Knowledge," Phoenix (1958) 63-68, is not as cautious as McDiarmid. He writes (p. 63): "Theophrastus is quoting a fragment he found in the Metaphysics in the sense in which Aristotle quoted it; and Aristotle, even if he was quoting with the whole poem of Parmenides before him, chose a singularly obscure and inconclusive passage to illustrate his point."

17 McDiarmid, Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 61, 122

18 Mansfeld, Offenbarung, 177.

¹⁹Loenen also maintains that Theophrastus had a copy of the whole poem. He does not, however, give reasons for this view. Loenen, Parmenides, 55.

²⁰See Vlastos, Transactions of the American Philological Association 77, 69

²¹Stratton, Theophrastus, 60. Interestingly enough, Vlastos, who bases much of his interpretation of B16 on Theophrastus, also admits that Theophrastus was not always correct. For example, statements such as "...Theophrastus himself was far from clear about the precise reference of this formula..." or "...on any interpretation this last remark is thick-headed..." do not suggest confidence in Theophrastus. Vlastos, Transactions of the American Philological Association 77, 71, note 38. Frankel also seems to think (Wege und Formen, 176) that Theophrastus' remarks insofar as they support one's own interpretation; otherwise to reject them.

²²The translation is that of H. G. Apostle. See his translation and commentary Aristotle's Metaphysics (Bloomington, 1966) 22.

²³Loenen, Parmenides, 57

²⁴For the meaning of μέλεα, see Guthrie, History II, 67, Tarán, Parmenides, 170, and Mansfeld, Offenbarung, 189. Mansfeld writes: "Die Verwendung von μέλεα, in der Bedeutung 'Elementa' ist, dem älteren Sprachgebrauch gegenüber, offenbar ein Novum. Wir halten deshalb daran fest, dass μέλεα 'Glieder' in der Bedeutung 'Glieder' des menschlichen Körpers' bedeutet."

²⁵See, for example, H. Schwabl, "Sein und Doxa bei Parmenides," Wiener Studien 66, (1953) 70

²⁶Tarán, Parmenides, 170 and 253f.

²⁷For further discussion, see Furth, Journal of the History of Philosophy, 8, 127-129. Tarán also believes that the principal error of the Way of Opinion is "difference". He writes concerning light and night: "Whether what mortals name are these two principles or any others, they are equally mistaken." Tarán, Parmenides, 225.

²⁸See the discussion under "Meals" in O. Seyffert, A Dictionary Of Classical Antiquities (reprint, New York, 1959) 384.

²⁹ H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, ed. H. S. Jones (Oxford, 1961). See the entries under κρᾶσις. The verb κεράννυμι is also closely associated with the concept of harmony. See, for example, Plato's Laws, 835b. Under the verb κεράννυμι in H. Ebeling, Lexicon Homericum (photographic reproduction, Hildesheim, 1963), the following note is found (p. 763): "wenn κερᾶσθαι eine zufällige, natürliche Vermengung bez., mit dem Nebenbegr. der Unordnung, conturbatio, so ist eine beabsichtigte, kunstmässige Mischung mit dem Nebenbegr. der Verbesserung, temperatio."

J. A. Philip, Phoenix (1958) 64-65, also interpreted the first verse of B16 as having something to do with harmony. But he found this meaning not in κρᾶσιν, but in μελέων. He translates the latter "musical members or harmonies" and cites Phaedo (68B). But such an interpretation seems especially speculative. The meaning of "harmony" or "union" must be found in krasis, and Philip's own reference suggests this.

³⁰ See Loenen, Parmenides, 58-59, note 116.

³¹ Ibid., 60.

³² See Tarán, Parmenides, 256. He translates "for the same thing is that the φύσις μελέων thinks in each and in all men." For a survey of the interpretations given to verses 3-4, Ibid., 225-56. It must be noted that Tarán's and Hölscher's constructions of the sentence are similar. Hölscher initially argued in "Grammatisches zu Parmenides," Hermes 84 (1956) 397, that the sentence simply means "Ebendas ist es, was die Beschaffenheit des Körpers denkt" and "Erst so gelesen wird das Relativum als Akkusativ verstanden." See also Hölscher's discussion in Anfängliches Fragen, 115-116. In both works, Hölscher interprets τὸ as a demonstrative and translates B16, 2b-4 accordingly: "Denn dies ist es eben, was die Beschaffenheit...denkt...: das Überwiegende ist der Gedachte." In support of his opinion that τὸ is a demonstrative, he writes in Anfängliches Fragen, 116, note 58: "Demonstrative mit Formen von αὐτός sehr häufig, z. B. Platon Polit. 267c τοῦτο αὐτό ἐστὶν ἤδη τὸ ζητηθέν." But his example does not prove that τὸ in B16, 2 is a demonstrative. It only shows that τοῦτο with αὐτό is a demonstrative. Tarán maintains, without further explanation, that τὸ is not a demonstrative. Tarán, Parmenides, 256, note 77. Loenen interprets the τὸ of B16, 4b as a demonstrative. He translates τὸ γὰρ πλεον ἐστὶ νόημα as "for that (τὸ) is full thought" and explains "...in fact, this τὸ refers back to the preceding sentence.... The τὸ of 1.4 thus refers back to the object or content of thought (ὅπερ φρονέει) which is identical in all men (τὸ ... αὐτό) ..." Loenen, Parmenides, 53-54. In homeric usage τὸ can have a demonstrative meaning, but there are also cases in which it is used like

the Attic article (see, for example, R. Kühner and B. Gerth, Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache, Part II, Vol. I (Photographic reproduction, Hannover, 1966) 575-598, especially 579. Usually the article is placed before forms of αὐτός. In any case it can be maintained that the meaning of τό in B16 does not depend wholly on grammatical considerations.

³³W. A. Heidel, Περὶ φύσεως. A Study of the Conception of Nature among the Pre-Socratics, Proceedings of American Academy of Arts and Sciences 45 (1910) 110.

³⁴G. S. Kirk, Heraclitus, the Cosmic Fragments (Cambridge, England, 1954) 42-43, and 228ff. Kirk cites B16 of Parmenides' poem and explains that "what thinks is φύσις μελέων." Ibid., 230.

³⁵Loenen, Parmenides, 60, note 118.

³⁶Both Mansfeld and Tarán translate τὸ πλεόν "the full". See Mansfeld, Offenbarung, 189-194 and Tarán, Parmenides, 258. Hölscher's translation of τὸ πλεόν as "das (jeweils) Überwiegende" in Hermes 84, 397 and Anfängliches Fragen, 116, is not convincing. First, the adverb "jeweils" is not found in the Greek text (in "Grammatisches zu Parmenides" it is placed in brackets, but not in the book) but belongs to Hölscher's interpretation. Secondly, that τὸ πλεόν means "das Überwiegende" in Parmenides' poem, appears doubtful in view of B8, 24 πᾶν δ' ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἑόντος and B9,3 πᾶν πλεόν ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ φάεος. In these verses it can only mean "full". That πλεόν means "full" in B16 seems supported by Mourelatos' interesting discussion of the term in which he notes that it comes "very close conceptually to τετελεσμένον (accomplished, perfect')." Mourelatos, Route, 258.

³⁷Loenen, Parmenides, 58

³⁸See Hölscher, Anfängliches Fragen, 101 and Loenen, Parmenides, 59. Hölscher, however, offers a different interpretation of τὸ αὐτό in B16.

³⁹Hölscher follows J. Bollack in assigning B4 to the Way of Opinion. Anfängliches Fragen 124ff.

⁴⁰Hölscher and Frankel quote these verses from Il. 15.80f. although for different reasons. See Hölscher, Anfängliches Fragen, 123

⁴¹In order to make the objection, Vlastos' own words have been paraphrased. See Vlastos, Transactions of the American Philological Association 77, 68 and 71ff:

It would be wrong to jump to the conclusion that this preponderance provides also the physical formula for the knowledge of Being. No such formula could be given without translating Being into terms of Becoming. . . . The mortal frame, qua mortal, cannot think Being. Yet the "knowing man" can and does think it. . . . To resolve this paradox is impossible, for it is only the epistemological counterpart of the ontological dualism of Being and Becoming.

But Vlastos' own proposal, that every true judgement of Being has as its basis not only "more" light, but "all" light, seems, in fact, to be a translation of knowledge of Being into Becoming.

⁴²There are no reasons to think Parmenides would have denied the existence of the human body, and fallen into his own trap. If Owen's interpretation of the poem is accepted, it is clear that the body exists, for I can both think and speak about it. See footnote 3.