

ime it would have been true
ids saying just that; so there
me to be' in this context is
' . Here, then, 'is not' means

s on immediately to refer to
ourse) as 'the nothing' (cf.
ands non-existence as *being*
and so that for him, to exist
later (e.g. 297, 22-5; 299,
it is much easier to construe
designating existence. And
t it has some predicate true
of interpretation is correct,
existential and predicative
concluded) confused.

does not exist Parmenides
is 'indiscernible', i.e. that
the existential statement. We
ect of enquiry you like (e.g.
r Pickwick does not exist"
l. For if it were a genuine
to be acquainted with its
' does not obtain unless Mr
ie proposition denies.' This
e, has exercised a powerful
to Russell. Its conclusion
es it forces us to examine
employs - notably in this
ence and existence.²

first way as 'it is impossible for
that [it] not be', which are not
her specifications constitute not
ns of their incompatibility. Line
d it follows necessarily that, if
mutatis mutandis for line 5.
a fragment known only in quite
1, 23; Plotinus v, 1, 8 τὸ γὰρ
is there both to be thought of and to
ught and being are the same'),
hows that Parmenides explicitly
ht, not just what can be known,
vay. But if so it is surprising that
nd of 291. And it is hard to see

what contribution it adds to the reasoning of 291, 6-8. (If *noein* meant 'know' here, as e.g. C. H. Kahn (*Review of Metaphysics* 22 (1968-9), 700-24) thinks, then perhaps 292 would simply be another way of putting 291, 7-8. But *noein* is used by Parmenides in parallel with simple verbs of saying (293, 1; 296, 8; cf. *anōnumon*, 296, 17), and so must be translated 'think'.)

(ii) *Mortal error*

293 Fr. 6, Simplicius in *Phys.* 86, 27-8; 117, 4-13
χρῆ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἔον ἔμμεναι· ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι,
μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν· τὰ σ' ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα.
πρώτης γὰρ σ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ ταύτης διζήσιος (εἴργω),
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ τῆς, ἣν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν
5 πλάττονται, δίκρανοι· ἀμηχανίη γὰρ ἐν αὐτῶν
στήθεσιν ἰθύνει πλακτὸν νόον· οἱ δὲ φοροῦνται
κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοὶ τε, τεθηπότες, ἄκριτα φῦλα,
οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταῦτόν νενόμισται
κού ταῦτόν, πάντων δὲ παλίντροπὸς ἔστι κέλευθος.

293 What is there to be said and thought must needs be: for it is there for being, but nothing is not. I bid you ponder that, for this is the first way of enquiry from which I hold you back, but then from that on which mortals wander knowing nothing, two-headed; for helplessness guides the wandering thought in their breasts, and they are carried along, deaf and blind at once, dazed, indiscriminating hordes, who believe that to be and not to be are the same and not the same; and the path taken by them all is backward-turning.

Parmenides' summary of his case against the negative way (lines 1-3), which says in effect that any object of thought must be a real object, confirms despite its obscurity that his rejection of 'is not' is motivated by a concern about what is a possible content for a genuine thought. It is followed by a warning against a second mistaken way, identified as the way of enquiry pursued by mortals. No mention of this third way was made in 291, and the reason is not far to seek. The goddess was there specifying logically coherent alternatives between which rational enquirers must decide. The third way is simply the path you will find yourself following if, like the generality of mortals, you do not take that decision (293, 7) through failure to use your critical powers (293, 6-7). You will find yourself saying or implying both that a thing is and that it is not (e.g. by acknowledging change and coming into existence); and so you will wander helplessly from one of the ways distinguished in 291 to the other. Hence your

steps will be 'backward-turning', i.e. contradictory. Of course, you will recognize that 'is' and 'is not' are *not* the same. But in failing to decide between them you will treat them as though they were the same.

293 was probably followed, after an interval, by a fragment in which the goddess bids Parmenides to make up his mind (unlike the mortals dismissed in 293) about her refutation of the second way:

294 Fr. 7, Plato *Sophist* 242A (lines 1-2); Sextus *adv. math.* vii, 114 (lines 2-6)

οὐ γὰρ μήποτε τοῦτο δαμῆ εἶναι μὴ ἔοντα·
 ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆσδ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ διζήσιος εἶργε νόημα
 μηδέ σ' ἔθος πολῦπειρον ὁδὸν κατὰ τήνδε βιάσθω
 νωμῶν ἄσκοπον ὄμμα καὶ ἠχῆεσσαν ἀκουήν
 5 καὶ γλώσσαν, κρῖναι δὲ λόγῳ πολὺδερὴν ἔλεγχον
 ἔξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα.

294 For never shall this be forcibly maintained, that things that are not are, but you must hold back your thought from this way of enquiry, nor let habit, born of much experience, force you down this way, by making you use an aimless eye or an ear and a tongue full of meaningless sound: judge by reason the strife-encompassed refutation spoken by me.

(iii) *Signs of truth*

295 Fr. 8, 1-4, Simplicius in *Phys.* 78, 5; 145, 1

μόνος δ' ἐτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο
 λείπεται ὡς ἔστιν· ταύτη δ' ἐπι σήματ' ἔασι
 πολλὰ μάλ', ὡς ἀγένητον ἔον καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν ἐστιν,
 οὔλον μονογενές τε καὶ ἀτρεμές ἡδὲ τέλειον.¹

¹ ἡδ' ἀτέλεστον Simplicius: for the emendation see G. E. L. Owen in *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy* II, ed. R. E. Allen and D. J. Furley (London, 1975), 76-7, who also convincingly rejects KR's reading (taken over from DK): ἔστι γὰρ οὐλομελές τε καὶ ἀτρεμές... (Plutarch).

295 There still remains just one account of a way, that it is. On this way there are very many signs, that being uncreated and imperishable it is, whole and of a single kind and unshaken and perfect.

If we must avoid the way 'is not', our only hope as enquirers lies in pursuit of the way 'is'. At first sight it would appear that if we embrace that alternative, there open for us limitless possibilities of exploration: the requirement that any subject we investigate must

radictory. Of course, you
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Sextus *adv. math.* VII, 114

μη ἔοντα·
εἶργε νόημα
ἀ τήνδε βιάσθω
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145, 1
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exist seems to impose scarcely any restriction on what we might be able to discover about it; and the argument that what is available to be thought of must exist (293, 1-2) makes it look as though the range of possible subjects of investigation is enormous, including centaurs and chimaeras as well as rats and restaurants. But in the course of a mere 49 lines Parmenides succeeds in reducing this infinity of possibilities to exactly one. For the 'signs' programmatically listed in 295 in fact constitute further formal requirements which any subject of enquiry must satisfy; and they impose formidable constraints (note the metaphor of chains in 296 and 298 below) on the interpretation of what is compatible with saying of something that it exists. The upshot of Parmenides' subsequent argument for these requirements is a form of monism: it certainly transpires that everything there is must have one and the same character; and it is doubtful whether in fact anything could have that character except reality as a whole.

(iii) (a) *Uncreated and imperishable*

296 Fr. 8, 5-21, Simplicius in *Phys.* 78, 5; 145, 5 (continues 295)

5 οὐδέ ποτ' ἦν οὐδ' ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ πᾶν,
ἐν, συνεχές· τίνα γὰρ γένναν διζήσεται αὐτοῦ;
πῆ πόθεν αὐξηθέν; οὐδ' ἐκ μὴ ἔοντος ἐάσω
φάσθαι σ' οὐδέ νοεῖν· οὐ γὰρ φατὸν οὐδὲ νοητὸν
ἐστὶν ὅπως οὐκ ἐστὶ. τί δ' ἂν μιν καὶ χρέος ὤρσεν
10 ὕστερον ἢ πρόσθεν, τοῦ μηδενὸς ἀρξάμενον, φῦν;
οὕτως ἢ πάμπαν πελέναι χρεῶν ἐστὶν ἢ οὐχί.
οὐδέ ποτ' ἐκ μὴ¹ ἔοντος ἐφήσει πίστιος ἰσχύς
γίγνεσθαι τι παρ' αὐτό· τοῦ εἶνεκεν οὔτε γενέσθαι
οὔτ' ὄλλυσθαι ἀνῆκε Δίκη χαλάσασα πέδησιν,
15 ἀλλ' ἔχει· ἡ δὲ κρίσις περὶ τούτων ἐν τῷ δ' ἐστίν·
ἐστὶν ἢ οὐκ ἐστὶν· κέκριται δ' οὖν, ὥσπερ ἀνάγκη,
τὴν μὲν ἔαν ἀνόητον ἀνώυμιον (οὐ γὰρ ἀληθὴς
ἐστὶν ὁδός), τὴν δ' ὥστε πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι.
πῶς δ' ἂν ἔπειτα πέλοι τὸ ἔόν; πῶς δ' ἂν κε γένοιτο;
20 εἰ γὰρ ἔγεντ', οὐκ ἐστ', οὐδ' εἰ ποτε μέλλει ἔσεσθαι.
τῶς γένεσις μὲν ἀπέσβεσται καὶ ἄπυστος ὄλεθρος.

¹ Many scholars follow Karsten and Reinhardt in emending μή to τοῦ.

296 It never was nor will be, since it is now, all together, one, continuous. For what birth will you seek for it? How and whence did it grow? I shall not allow you to say nor to think from not being: for it is not to be said nor thought that it is not; and what

need would have driven it later rather than earlier, beginning from the nothing, to grow? Thus it must either be completely or not at all. Nor will the force of conviction allow anything besides it to come to be ever from not being. Therefore Justice has never loosed her fetters to allow it to come to be or to perish, but holds it fast. And the decision about these things lies in this: it is or it is not. But it has in fact been decided, as is necessary, to leave the one way unthought and nameless (for it is no true way), but that the other is and is genuine. And how could what is be in the future? How could it come to be? For if it came into being, it is not: nor is it if it is ever going to be in the future. Thus coming to be is extinguished and perishing unheard of.

These lines (as the conclusion, line 21, shows) are designed to prove that what is can neither come to be nor perish.¹ Parmenides is content to marshal explicit arguments only against coming into being, taking it as obvious that a parallel case against perishing could be constructed by parity of reasoning. He advances two principal considerations, corresponding to the dual interrogative: 'How and whence did it grow?' (line 7). He assumes that the only reasonable answer to 'whence?' could be: 'from not existing', which he rejects as already excluded by his argument against 'is not' (lines 7-9). In his treatment of 'how?' he appeals to the Principle of Sufficient Reason. He assumes that anything which comes to be must contain within it some principle of development ('need', *χρέος*) sufficient to explain its generation. But if something does not exist, how can it contain any such principle?

¹ In lines 5-6 Parmenides appears to go farther than this. The statement 'it never was nor will be, since it is now, all together' seems to claim not merely that what is will not *come to exist*, but that it will not exist *at all* in the future. Probably what Parmenides means to ascribe to what is is existence in an eternal present not subject to temporal distinctions of any sort. It is very unclear how he hoped to ground this conclusion in the arguments of 296.

(iii) (b) *One and continuous*

297 Fr. 8, 22-5, Simplicius in *Phys.* 144, 29 (continues 296)

οὐδὲ διαιρετόν ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστὶν ὁμοῖον·
οὐδέ τι τῆ μᾶλλον, τό κεν εἴργοι μιν συνέχεσθαι,
οὐδέ τι χειρότερον, πᾶν δ' ἐμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος.
τῷ συνεχές πᾶν ἐστὶν· ἐὼν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει.

297 Nor is it divided, since it all exists alike; nor is it more here and less there, which would prevent it from holding together, but