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### Plato's Parmenides: On Being and Non-Being

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Plato's *Parmenides*: On Being and Non-Being

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Part One: Being and Non-Being.....	8
III. Part Two: Theory of Forms.....	23
IV. Part Three: First Half of the Text.....	35
V. Conclusion.....	44

**Abstract:** In this paper I will discuss the Eight Hypotheses in Plato's *Parmenides* and draw out my own conclusion from them without any external help or secondary literature. I will then use this conclusion to address problems concerning the *Parmenides* in the Platonic Scholarship. The main conclusion I have drawn is that the Hypotheses are closing the gulf between Being and Non-Being via the concepts of Sameness, Difference, Becoming, Time and the Instant. In addition, the confluence of Being and Non-Being illuminates a subsidiary conclusion of this text possessing grounds for a new metaphysical presupposition of Being-Non-Being. I propose in this paper that this new metaphysical presupposition and structure of a sensible thing should replace the traditional One and Many metaphysical presupposition because of its insoluble problem of participation. The problems I will be addressing from the scholarship towards the end of the paper consist of the unity of the two halves of the text itself and the bearing of the text on Plato's grand Theory of Forms.

**Introduction:**

Socrates: ...If any one of you has composed these things with a knowledge of the truth, if you can defend your writing when you are challenged, *and if you can yourself make the argument that your writing is of little worth*, then you must be called by a name derived not from these writings but rather from those things that you are seriously pursuing.

Phaedrus: What name, then, would you give such a man?

Socrates: ...call him wisdom's lover- a philosopher...

*Phaedrus*, 278c-d.

Plato's *Parmenides*<sup>1</sup> is divided into two parts: the first part is a dramatic narrative of a conversation between a young Socrates and the philosophers Parmenides and Zeno that never actually took place. In that conversation, Parmenides attacks Plato's Theory of Forms by showing that it is logically inconsistent, and mainly attacks the plausibility of the Forms' participation in the sensible world when they are placed as separate, mind-independent entities in some otherworld beyond the sensible world by Plato. The second part, seemingly no longer a dramatic narrative,<sup>2</sup> is a meticulous dialectical exercise consisting of Eight Hypotheses on the nature of some One.<sup>3</sup>

Many scholars have trivialized and dismissed these Eight Hypotheses as inherently contradictory, a joke, and as a work of sophism.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars, conversely, praise the Eight Hypotheses as a comprehensive exposition of Plato's metaphysics,<sup>5</sup> as a doctrine of Unity and Plurality,<sup>6</sup> or as a systematic ontology that sets up the Platonic dialogues that come after the *Parmenides*.<sup>7</sup> Scholars try to find value for the text in two ways: they try to find unity of the text by trying to connect the Eight Hypotheses to the attacks made by Parmenides in the first part of the text, or they use the Eight Hypotheses to try to save Plato's Theory of Forms. The problem

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<sup>1</sup> I use the translation in Francis M. Cornford's *Plato and Parmenides*.

<sup>2</sup> Though the scholar Mitchell Miller believes the whole text is in Dramatic form (Miller, 3).

<sup>3</sup> Scholars have seen this One as a Platonic Form, I see it as a sensible thing; I will explain why throughout this paper.

<sup>4</sup> These scholars include Taylor (1934), Robinson (1942), Allen (1983).

<sup>5</sup> William Lynch (1959) sees it as a comprehensive exposition of Plato's fundamental concepts of his metaphysics, however, the scholar Brumbaugh (1959) disagrees and doesn't see it as a metaphysical exposition or a doctrine because he wonders why the *Parmenides* is in a dramatic form if it is a *sincere* exposition of Plato's most fundamental metaphysical concepts.

<sup>6</sup> Walker (1938).

<sup>7</sup> Cornford (1939). Other scholars that see the Hypotheses in a positive light include: Rickless (1998), Peterson (1996), Sayre (1978), Runciman (1959).

with the scholarship is that scholars do not consider possible internal meanings or interpretations of the Eight Hypotheses. They hold onto external pre-conceived notions of what they believe is the One that is being discussed by Plato in the dialectical exercise. The majority of them have the Theory of Forms in mind (and so they believe the One is a Platonic Form) before they start reading the Hypotheses. Scholars read them in light of the theory and thus unnecessarily box in the Hypotheses within the domain of the Theory of Forms. This results in them distorting and dismissing integral concepts discussed by Plato for the sake of their arguments. They go backwards by starting with their pre-conceived notions and conclusions and then using the Hypotheses to prove them. This paper will do the opposite. I will be approaching the Hypotheses with a clean slate and will let them guide me to the conclusion they entail. I will show how Plato's concepts of Becoming, Time, the Instant, Sameness and Difference in the Eight Hypotheses lead to the confluence of Being and Non-Being.<sup>8</sup> I will then see if the analysis of the Eight Hypotheses actually has any bearing on the first part of the text and if Plato is really *saving* the Theory of Forms in the *Parmenides*.

I will not go through each hypothesis one by one; that is not the purpose of the dialectic and the procedure is too monotonous. This approach is an inevitable failing to understand the meaning of the Eight Hypotheses because there is no single thread of argument weaving all the hypotheses together. The Eight Hypotheses are poorly written: each one impetuously jumps to conclusions and consequences of those conclusions. These Eight Hypotheses were originally written for the students in Plato's Academy as a test and as a way to philosophically train a

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<sup>8</sup> By 'confluence' I mean Being and Non-Being's interactive relationship that brings a sensible object into the domain of time and then out of it via Plato's concept of the Instant. It is the Instant (as well as other concepts like Sameness, Difference, Becoming and Time) that brings Being and Non-Being together; thus their "confluence". I will expand on all this below in the end of part one.

student's reasoning and thinking.<sup>9</sup> The hypotheses are therefore intentionally ambiguous and driving towards dead-ends. Plus, if one assents to William Lynch's<sup>10</sup> interpretation of this dialectical exercise being a comprehensive exposition of Platonic Metaphysics, then Plato kept this text truly fragmented in order to allow himself to touch the many layers and concepts of his metaphysics at the same time and in the same place.

Readers of philosophy tend to read philosophy as a treatise, and not as a poem (or as literature is read). For the former, the reader hangs on every word, scrutinizes the text for logical consistencies and expects the treatise to be going somewhere in order for some conclusion to emerge as a meaningful insight. For the latter, in accordance to Walt Whitman, the words mean nothing, "the *drift* of it everything."<sup>11</sup> This text should be read as a poem, but should be taken seriously as a *drift* of a philosophical treatise. Plato is a brilliant philosopher, but an inefficient writer in this dialogue. The tool of a writer is language and it is up to the writer to use it appropriately in order to constrain multitudinous, disparate interpretations that may follow from the subject of their discourse. If a writer fails to take this responsibility then what they are writing could mean *anything*;<sup>12</sup> and if what they are writing could mean *anything*, then ultimately it comes to mean *nothing*. Plato does not take up this responsibility as a writer in this text and if one takes the *Parmenides* in face value, it doesn't mean anything because Plato does not establish any explicit constraints that will prevent it from meaning anything, and eventually nothing. At the surface, there are inconsistencies everywhere, the text is not going anywhere, there are many disparate conclusions and dead ends, and Plato uses his terms in many different and even

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<sup>9</sup> Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, p. 130.

<sup>10</sup> A scholar I will exclusively discuss in this paper.

<sup>11</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*, "Shut Not Your Doors". Bartleby.com. 1900. Web.

<sup>12</sup> Especially when a writer is discussing concepts like 'Being' and 'the One' (as Plato does in the *Parmenides*) which literally *can* mean *anything*.

contradictory ways. However, this only becomes a problem when the text is read as a treatise, where the reader reads it word for word and no meaning emerges. The reader needs to catch the *drift* of it, then think- and think hard. This is the only way meaning could emerge from a text like the *Parmenides*. I, therefore, only present the *drift* of the text, but I do not lose touch with what the text is actually saying.<sup>13</sup>

Taken word for word, the text thus means nothing. Consequently, the student of philosophy should not take every hypothesis into account for then she will fall into the trap of taking the text word for word. In order to successfully read the text, the reader must find constraints that are inherent in the text on their own and use those constraints to come to a meaningful interpretation of it. This paper was originally going to be an investigation of the nature of Unity apparently discussed in this text, but this constraint didn't culminate to a consistent interpretation of it; in fact, this constraint could lead the reader to the trap of reading the text word for word. There is a more comprehensive interpretation of the text when one looks at the text as an attempt to find the confluence of Being and Non-Being via the concepts of Sameness, Difference, the Instant, Time and Becoming.<sup>14</sup> These concepts will serve as my *constraints* for a successful interpretation of the text.

The confluence of Being and Non-Being is the central conclusion I have reached in my analysis of the text using the concepts enumerated above. The analysis that follows below is broken down into four symmetrical sections, the way the Eight Hypotheses create a symmetry in

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<sup>13</sup> By "actually saying" I mean I provide ample textual evidence and that I am not pulling information from sources outside of the text to make sense of it. (The only external sources I refer to are of course the scholars on the subjects discussed, but I only mention some of them to support my own original reading).

<sup>14</sup> Also Motion and Rest but they are not emphasized in the analysis. I chose these constraints because Plato speaks of them explicitly, thoroughly and repeatedly in the text and never takes the One out of Time and Becoming which presuppose and entail Sameness, Difference, and the Instant (which serves as Transition and thus entails Motion and Rest). Also, it is because Plato never takes the One out of the realms of Time and Becoming that I see the One in the *Parmenides* as a sensible thing and not a Platonic Form; a Form for Plato is unchanging and eternal and thus *not* in the realms of Time and Becoming. I will discuss this point in the conclusion.

the latter half of the text. The first four hypotheses give Being its full treatment and the last four hypotheses give Non-Being its full treatment. Plato treats each in two ways: he first treats Being in the sense of Interpellation, he then treats Being in the sense of Reification.<sup>15</sup> He does the same for Non-Being. The following analysis will thus show the Interpellation and Reification of Being and then the two for Non-Being. Plato gives us the conclusion for the synthesis of the Interpellation sense of Being and Non-Being, but he does not give us an explicit conclusion for the synthesis of the Reification sense of Being and Non-Being. This is because Plato wants the reader to reach their own conclusion for this sense. It will thus be shown how the concepts enumerated above help synthesize the Reification sense of Being and Non-Being for a sensible thing that has temporal existence. From this I will further investigate if this explanation has any bearing on what other scholars have said on the relationship of this text to the Forms and then see if the Hypotheses should be even used to find solutions for the arguments raised by Parmenides in the first half of the text against the Theory of Forms.

In addition, the confluence of Being and Non-Being leads to the subsidiary conclusion and my proposal that Being-Non-Being as the metaphysical structure of a sensible thing in the domain of time should replace the traditional One and Many metaphysical presupposition. This subsidiary conclusion will be addressed in Part Two where I discuss the scholar William Lynch because of the exclusive attention he pays to the problem of participation between the One and Many (which he believes is the structure of a Platonic Form) in his work. I will argue against the

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<sup>15</sup> I derive 'Interpellation' from Louis Althusser's essay called "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in his *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* where he uses 'Interpellation' in the sense of the process of making, forging, constituting, creating a subject for discourse, language and thought (I deprived the political and ideological connotations of the concept for my purposes in this paper and strictly kept this sense of the term). For Plato, Time interpellates Being of a subject for a proposition. I derive 'Reification' from its ordinary sense of granting something objectivity. For Plato, the interaction of Being and Non-Being is reified in 'a thing' that has temporal existence and which comes in (comes-to-be) and then (perishes) out of the domain of time (this will be explained in part one). I mainly use these terms for explanatory purposes and to give myself a certain vocabulary for the analysis of the text.

modes of participation he believes the *Parmenides* possesses to help solve this problem to show that the One-and-Many's participation problem is, in fact, insoluble. The One and Many metaphysical presupposition should thus be replaced because of its insoluble problem of participation by the Being-Non-Being metaphysical presupposition and structure of a sensible thing introduced in this paper.

However, I do not develop this subsidiary conclusion in this paper because the main focus here is on how the *Parmenides* helps close the gulf between Being and Non-Being in a way that has never been explored, discovered or done before. Nevertheless, the Being-Non-Being metaphysical presupposition is derived from the confluence between Being and Non-Being that is mainly discussed in this paper. This metaphysical presupposition is also a novelty in philosophy and is thus my contribution to the field. I am reserving to develop, investigate and answer the broad questions and consequences that arise from this new presupposition for a future endeavor I will undertake where I will derive a metaphysical system from this new presupposition. I will then be in a better position to answer the broad questions and consequences that arise in this paper concerning this new metaphysical presupposition.<sup>16</sup>

The internal definitions of the two main terms I will be using throughout the analysis are: Interpellation, or Being as Interpellation, is Being that belongs to a subject of a proposition. And Reification, or Being as Reification, is Being that is the element of a thing that makes it a thing (this Being is related to Sameness).<sup>17</sup> Plato uses the same two senses for Non-Being. He uses

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<sup>16</sup> I still, of course, answered any and all feasible questions in this paper to the best of my ability; especially the ones my mentor and reviewers brought up.

<sup>17</sup> As regards to what this element is, this paper will conclude with the conjecture that Being is Continuity, but what this element *exactly* is will not be discussed here. What this element exactly is or what it could be will be the first stepping stone to a new metaphysical system that I am reserving for a future endeavor and because it will be too much for a senior thesis paper. However, this paper still shows how Being could be Continuity: for Being-itself, as an element that makes a thing a thing, is something that doesn't perish, but comes in and out of the domain of time (existence) and Becoming via the Instant (Non-Being); I will explain all this in Part One. It is therefore Continuous in this sense. This thesis's subsidiary conclusion is more of a rough proposal for a new metaphysical



Non-Being as Interpellation to show that in language, discourse and thought one has to presuppose Being in a certain sense to speak in terms of Non-Being.<sup>18</sup> He then uses Non-Being as Reification in the sense of an Instant, that does not exist in time, but still occurs in time, and is in-itself *nothing*, or pure Negation.

In the analysis that follows,<sup>19</sup> I will explain how the text speaks of Being and Non-Being in terms of Interpellation and Reification and I will then show how Being and Non-Being find their confluence in both senses. I will then show that the conclusion drawn from the analysis doesn't *save* the Theory of Forms but adopts its ontological *framework*. I will clarify this further point in Part Two by arguing against the interpretations made by scholars who try to *save* the Theory of Forms using the Eight Hypotheses.

**Part One:**

So to thine Everpresence, beyond time,  
Like spears ensanguined of one tolling star  
That bleeds infinity-

"Atlantis," Hart Crane.

*The Interpellation of Being:* I use Interpellation in this paper in the sense of Plato's assertion that he reiterates throughout the Eight Hypotheses: the subject of a proposition (or statement) requires Being in a certain sense in order to make that proposition meaningful. This Interpellation sense has two aspects: in language and in thought. I begin with Hypothesis One (141d-142a), for it is here where Plato interpellates Being as Time in order to make statements

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presupposition of Being-Non-Being as the structure of a thing that should replace the traditional One-Many metaphysical presupposition and structure of a thing.

<sup>18</sup> In other words, when one deprives existence of a thing by saying that "this thing does *not* exist," the speaker is presupposing that the object they are depriving existence of had existence in some sense and, in fact, *had* to have existence in the first place in order for the speaker to deprive the thing of its existence. I will expand on this in Part One. (This all partially relates to "intentional in-existence" in Analytic Philosophy).

<sup>19</sup> Note: I use 'thing' throughout the whole analysis to refer to any existent in the domain of time. I use One and 'a thing' interchangeably, as Plato does in the *Parmenides*, and will be arguing for why the One is "a thing," or a sensible thing in the domain of time, as I progress through the paper.

that use copulatives meaningful statements. In this part of the Hypothesis, Plato investigates what the consequences of the One would be if it is not in the domain of time (i.e. if it doesn't have a temporal existence) [all emphases are in the original]:

141D-142A: Again, the words 'was', 'has become', 'was becoming' are understood to mean connection with past time; 'will be', 'will be becoming', 'will become', with future time; 'is' and 'is becoming', with time now present. Consequently, if the One has nothing to do with any time, it never has become or was becoming or was; nor can you say it has become now or is becoming or is; or that it will be becoming or will become or will be in the future. Now a thing can have being only in one of these ways. There is, accordingly, no way in which the One has being.

Therefore the One in no sense *is*.

It cannot, then, 'be' even to the extent of 'being' one; for then it would be a thing that is and has being. Rather, if we can trust such an argument as this, it appears that the One neither is one nor is at all.

And if a thing is not, you cannot say that it '*has*' anything or that there is anything '*of*' it. Consequently, it cannot *have* a name or be spoken of, nor can there be any knowledge or perception or opinion *of* it. It is not named or spoken of, not an object of opinion or of knowledge, not perceived by any creature.

Time is thus required for the interpellation of a thing's Being in language. If a thing is rooted in time then one could say that it "was," "has become," "was becoming," "will be," "will be becoming," "will become," "is," and "is becoming," and these copulatives will have meaning in the domain of time. Without time, discourse is not possible and a thing cannot be denoted with language. Plato here believes Being in a certain sense is required to make all these copulatives have meaning for the subject they are referring to- in this case, a thing. Consequently, to make meaningful language possible to denote a thing, a thing must always have some existence in time in order to be spoken of and in order for one to denote its properties. The *is* in any statement referring to a thing thus gains meaning in the present moment, meaning, the *is* when uttered must be inextricably tied to the precise moment it was uttered in, but this present moment cannot shift to another present moment: the *is* can only be tied to *that* moment it was uttered in. Presently, it

*is* night, this statement is true in the precise moment one utters it, but cannot be shifted to the next present moment for the next present moment may be the morning.<sup>20</sup> Plato thus drives at the conclusion that, in language, *moments* give Being to a subject of a statement via the copulatives referring to it.

This was the language aspect of Interpellation, Plato also adds a thought aspect to interpellation when he says that a thing cannot be an object of "opinion or of knowledge" if it is not in the domain of time, i.e. what gives Being to a thing when it is conceived in one's mind as a thought? (I'm taking for granted here that 'opinion', 'perception' and 'knowledge' are modes of thought). Plato, here, is not asking the reader to imagine some thing or conjure an image or perception of some thing, but he believes propositions are also thoughts and if one could form a proposition of some thing in one's mind then one is thinking of that thing and that proposition serves as a thought of that thing. This way of rendering thought allows Plato to draw the logical consequence that if a thing cannot be spoken or named then it cannot be an object of opinion, knowledge or perception, i.e. thought ("Consequently, it cannot *have* a name or be spoken of, nor can there be any knowledge or perception or opinion *of it*"). If a thing is not in time, as Plato argues, then a thing in no sense *is*; and if a thing in no sense *is*, then it cannot be named or spoken of; and if a thing cannot be named or spoken of then it cannot be thought of either. Plato, here, relates Being to Time again for thought. Without time, one cannot say that "this thing *is*" for it has to be tethered to some present moment in order for the *is* to have meaning.

Consequently, then, if the *is* has no Being then the proposition cannot be conceived and thus the

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<sup>20</sup> The philosopher G.W.F. Hegel does not consider this in his masterpiece the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel, G.W.F. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A.V. Miller, Oxford University Press, 1977.); where he argues that the Now in "This is Night" is somehow paradoxically preserved through negation (p.60). I only mention Hegel here and use his example from this work; I do not wish to argue here; as William James said, nobody knows what Hegel is saying, but everyone argues adamantly for their interpretations on his work.

thing cannot then be thought of or even spoken of, nor could one say that it "has" anything or that there is anything "of" it. Assuming that knowledge requires one to utter propositions or statements about some thing, if one cannot utter statements about a thing then it cannot be "known" in this sense, for, in addition of it not being able to be an object of knowledge, the simple statement of "this thing *is*" would not have any meaning without time interpellating the *is's* Being.

This argument, however, raises the issue whether a thing, when it is referred to in a proposition with the copulative *is*, can have Being in and of itself even when the *is* referring to it in a proposition does not. If the *is* is not rooted in time, can the thing itself have Being in another sense? This leads to the Reification of Being, for a thing can have Being in another sense, however, it cannot be extracted from time-existence, a thing is always in-time for Plato. But before I get into the Reification of Being, the point that Plato is establishing here is that for language, discourse and thought (as propositions) the *is* referring to a thing, among other copulatives, must have some sort of time-existence in order for the statement to have meaning.

*The Reification of Being:* Throughout the Eight Hypotheses, however, Plato never takes a thing out of time, a thing itself always has time-existence. In another part of Hypothesis One (141b-d), Plato investigates what the consequences of the One would be if it didn't possess Sameness or Difference and comes to the conclusion that if it doesn't possess Sameness and Difference then it cannot be grounded in time. Plato argues that a thing needs to possess Sameness and Difference *before* it could be grounded in time. In the quote below, he explains that if a thing is in time it must be *same* and it must be *different*, and he uses the dynamic of becoming older and younger to show how this is so (italics in the original):

141b-d: We may infer that the One, if it is such as we have described [as not possessing Sameness and Difference], cannot even occupy time at all. Whatever occupies time must always be becoming older than itself, and 'older' always means older than something younger. Consequently, whatever is becoming older than itself, if it is to have something *than* which it is becoming older, must also be at the same time becoming younger than itself. (... Now the difference signified by 'older' is always a difference from something younger. Consequently, what is becoming older than itself must also at the same time be becoming younger than itself). Now, in the process of becoming it cannot take a longer or shorter time than itself; it must take the same time with itself... So, it seems, any one of the things that occupy time and have a temporal character must be of the same age as itself and also be becoming at once both older and younger [different] than itself.

For Plato, when a thing is grounded in time it is in a process of becoming older and younger than itself. A thing becomes older than itself relative to its beginning, but younger than itself relative to its end. A thing must then possess Difference if it is grounded in this process for it will be different in its present moment from its earlier and later moments as it is becoming older and younger. Further, if a thing has age, and the two points that determine its age are, in one corner, its younger self, and in another corner, its older self, then the interval in between these two corners will always be the *same*: At any age, the interval between its younger self and its older self will always be the same as the interval between its older self and its younger self. Plato thus uses Sameness and Difference here as pre-conditions a thing must possess before it is rooted in time.

He also discusses in Hypothesis One (139d-e),<sup>21</sup> of Sameness and Difference themselves as predicates. The reader learns here that Unity and Sameness are not derivatives of each other,<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> 139d-e: "For the character of unity is one thing, the character of sameness another. This is evident because when a thing becomes "the same" as something, it does not become 'one'. For instance, if it becomes the same as the many, it must become many, not one; whereas if there were no difference whatever between unity and sameness, whenever a thing became 'the same', it would always become one and whenever one, the same. So if this One is to be the same as itself, it will not be one with itself, and thus will be one and not one; and that is impossible. Consequently it is equally impossible for the One to be other than..."

<sup>22</sup> Schofield (1972, 1974) reads this distinction of Unity and Sameness the same way.

for if they were, whenever something became the same as something else they would become one, but this is not necessarily true, for many things can become the same as other many things and not necessarily become one thing. Plato then distinguishes Unity and Difference. Unity and Difference are not the same either because Unity-itself, which can only possess Oneness and nothing else, cannot possess the characteristic of being "Other-Than;" it cannot be anything other than Oneness and it cannot take on the characteristics of an other thing. If so, then Unity-itself cannot be "other than" anything else. Unity is spoken of as an empty concept here, but Plato uses it to give to the reader definitions of Sameness and Difference. Sameness, then, does not immediately qualify two same things as automatically one thing. Difference, on the other hand, means simply being "Other-Than" something else. Plato uses this preliminary treatment of Sameness and Difference to define them as predicates.

In Hypothesis Two (146b-156e) Plato gives Sameness and Difference their full treatment and it is here where Being becomes reified as Sameness. In Hypothesis Two, Sameness and Difference are treated as relations: Plato gives these relations several dimensions. The first one for Sameness derives the reification sense of Being: Sameness, here, is Ontological Identity: A thing is always the same as itself and the same as that element which makes it a thing (146b).<sup>23</sup> Being, here, thus means the element that makes a thing, a thing. For example, a human is always a human and always possesses that element which makes a human, a human, whatever that may be; and it is the *same* in the sense that it is constantly that element. This is the primary dimension for Sameness. The first dimension for Difference, on the other hand, is spatial location (146c):<sup>24</sup> A thing is always self-contained, but since it doesn't occupy *all* of space, but a particular place, it

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<sup>23</sup> 146c: "Again the One is not different from one, and so not different from itself."

<sup>24</sup> 146c: "Again, if a thing is in a place the same with itself and also in a place other than itself, it must be different from itself; otherwise it could not be in a different place."

is in itself and in a place distinct from itself: the outside that contains it. The second dimension for Difference is that it is not enough to explain how X is different from Y to establish that it is different, one must also explain how Y is different from X (146d).<sup>25</sup>

The secondary dimension for Sameness is its Purity. Nothing can beguile Sameness to be other than itself, nothing could sully/corrupt Sameness, nothing could break it, divide it, multiply it, etc. Plato exalts Sameness, here, to the rank of Being<sup>26</sup> and demotes Difference to the realm of Becoming because it is always becoming other-than. Sameness always exists in that which *is*, Plato says, as that element that preserves Ontological Identity, or a thing always being the same as itself and the same as that which makes a thing, a thing. Difference can never enter the domain of Sameness, for Difference will sully the purity of Sameness by disturbing its constancy and continuity. Being as Sameness, here, is not used in the same sense it was used in Hypothesis One as time, for Plato reifies Being here in the sense that he makes it *that* element which makes a thing a thing, and it is here where Being can be seen as an actual thing and not something that just persists in language and time.

Difference cannot be in that element which makes a thing a thing, or Sameness. Difference is required to help a thing acquire the property of existence (existence here meaning existence-in-time). It is here where Plato transcends Being and makes it something atemporal. A thing could come in and out of existence (in-time), without losing its Being, for the element that makes it a thing must remain constant according to the Purity clause above. However, this does not mean Sameness is Absolute. Difference is required for a thing to *be* at one moment in time "not-in-existence" and another moment *be* "in-existence," but a thing that has Absolute Sameness

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<sup>25</sup> 146d: Again, if something is different from something else, that something else must be different. Now, all the things which are 'not One' must be different from the One, and the One also must be different from them."

<sup>26</sup> 146e: "And since it is never in what is the same, Difference can never be in anything that *is*;" (Italics are mine).

cannot conceptually move from one condition to the next, for this conceptual motion presupposes a difference in condition or state. Plato reinforces the atemporality of Being as Sameness by making Difference a derivative of Time.<sup>27</sup> Being as Sameness could exist outside of time because if Difference is a derivative of time and Plato explicitly says<sup>28</sup> that the Same cannot exist in Difference and Difference cannot exist in the Same, then Sameness can exist outside of time.

This, however, raises a contradiction. Plato interpellates Being as Time, but then Reifies it as something atemporal. This contradiction is intentional, for this is the only way the reader realizes and becomes aware that Plato is using Being in the text in two different senses: namely, in the interpellation sense for language, and then the reification sense for Being's ontological treatment. The contradiction collapses when the two senses are seen as exclusive to each other and when realized that reified Being is something that could take on *and relieve* the property of time-existence via the Instant (as discussed below).

In the reification sense of Being, however, Plato uses Time to differentiate Being and Existence. Being is Sameness, but Existence simply means existing in time. Time for Plato doesn't hiccup, doesn't jump, doesn't go backwards, nor does it go in circles: It only "advances" (152a). But this doesn't mean it is necessarily linear, nor does this imply succession or evolution. For Plato, time "advances" regardless of what is happening *in* time. For, he says, things in time will come into existence and then out of existence (155e), and this is happening for a whole multiplicity of things that have their own independent durations (Plato believes every thing has a beginning, middle and end in time and thus has duration), while time just simply "advances."

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<sup>27</sup> 146d: "...there is nothing that is, in which Difference is present for any length of time; for if it were in something for any length of time whatsoever, during that time Difference would be in what is the same."

<sup>28</sup> 146d: "So Sameness will never be in what is different, nor Difference in what is the same."



Existence is thus Time-Existence: a thing has existence in the domain of time and doesn't have existence when it's out of time.<sup>29</sup>

But then Plato asserts that a thing in time is in a process of Becoming (155e). Here, Plato discusses his concept of Becoming. He sets down pre-conditions in order for a thing to be in a process of Becoming (155e): A thing has to be both "one and many and neither one nor many and is in time." A thing can only be neither one nor many if it is something that cannot be sullied by Difference to break it up into a one or many. It needs to stay pure, indivisible, continuous- it needs to stay the *same*. A thing that is neither one nor many is that element which makes a thing, a thing. This is the "internal" dimension of a thing in a process of Becoming that prevents it from being either a one or a many. A thing to be a one *and* a many, on the other hand, requires Unity and Plurality. It is here when Unity, Plurality and Difference come into the scene. These terms are just physical terms for they denote a thing that is one whole with many parts, or properties. Difference is what separates a thing into a one and many; Plurality is what keeps the parts each one thing and by keeping the parts each one thing, they become a group of one-things and thus the parts become a definite Plurality which gain their limit from the Whole, or Unity (However, Plato never explains how a One, or Unity, makes a plurality definite, how they *become* each other, how they communicate, or how a Whole *gives* limit to its Parts; so this first aspect of this condition for Becoming should be dismissed, and the second aspect should be taken more emphatically: a thing should be "*neither one nor many*." In fact, this could be seen as the whole point of the text, which I will explain at the end of part two where I address William Lynch). Unity prevents Difference from separating a thing from its parts completely and keeps the thing as a whole a one thing with many parts. Unity and Difference thus have an inverse relationship

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<sup>29</sup> 152: "to 'be' means precisely having existence in conjunction with time present..."

needed by a thing that is one and many. This is the external dimension of a thing in a process of Becoming.

But in a process of Becoming, a thing changes from one condition to the next. Here, Plato answers the bigger metaphysical questions of "when does Becoming for a thing occur? When does change occur?" It is here where Plato introduces his concept of the Instant to answer these questions and it is here where he reifies Non-Being as the Instant.

*Reification of Non-Being* [italics in original]:

(156c-e): But when, being in motion, [a thing] comes to stand, or, being at rest, it changes to being in motion, it cannot itself occupy any time at all. For this reason suppose it is at first at rest and later in motion, or first in motion and later at rest; that cannot happen to it without its changing. But there is no time during which a thing can be at once neither in motion nor at rest. On the other hand it does not change without making a transition. When does it make the transition then? Not while it is at rest or while it is in motion, or while it is occupying time. Consequently, the time at which it will be when it makes the transition must be that queer thing, the instant. The word 'instant' appears to mean something such that *from it* a thing passes to one or other of the two conditions. There is no transition *from* a state of rest so long as the thing is still at rest, not *from* motion so long as it is still in motion; but this queer thing, the instant, is situated between the motion and the rest; it occupies no time at all; and the transition of the moving thing to the state of rest, or of the stationary thing to being in motion, takes place *to* and *from* the instant.

The Instant is the *syncopation* of a thing's conditions, states or properties (including the property of existence in time) in a process of Becoming. It is here where Becoming meets Non-Being. The Instant, like syncopation, is a disturbance in the rhythm or flow of a thing's process in Becoming. Plato aptly calls it a "queer" thing (156d), for it is here where Nature doesn't abhor a "vacuum" and where it makes its jumps: The Instant does not exist in time or space, it exists as a "logical connective" for the perceiver. It exists the same way gravity exists for a thing that has not fallen yet but is losing its balance. The perceiver doesn't witness gravity in time or space but knows it will *be there* when the teetering object falls. Even though the perceiver cannot *see* it, the Instant

still must *be there* when a thing is going from one condition to another, i.e. changing. Every *thing* that is moving from one condition to another condition *has*, or possesses, Non-Being in the reified form of an Instant. A thing *needs* Non-Being in order to change: Suppose a thing is at rest and later in motion, this cannot happen without itself changing, as Plato says, and it cannot do this without making a transition. But when does this transition occur? Plato raises this question in variation of the more potent question, when does Becoming occur? It does not occur when a thing is at rest, nor does it occur when it is in motion, and if it doesn't occur in these two states then it doesn't occur in time, for a thing in time is always in one of these two states (156e<sup>30</sup>). The Instant is thus a neither/nor: when a thing is transitioning from any state X to any state Y, it is neither X nor Y. The question then is if there are any laws governing this transition, for in this moment a thing loses all determination if it is a neither/nor in order to lose a certain condition and acquire another one. There doesn't seem to be any law that states if a thing goes from state X that it will end up in state Y, and Plato doesn't speak of any laws of change and transition. Furthermore, a thing in a process of Becoming must end (for all things have finite durations for Plato) and the end is the Final Transition, but what is there inhibiting a thing from constant-transitioning, from constant change? The Instant abruptly ends things. Plato, here, thus gives us our reified sense of Non-Being: a lawless transitioning that helps a thing come into a process of Becoming at a certain starting point at a whim and helps a thing reach its final transition at a certain end point at a whim, but is itself "nothing" for it is neither/nor. It is in the Instant, however, where all transitions take place, including coming in and out of existence (in-time).

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<sup>30</sup> "...the instant, is situated between the motion and the rest; it occupies no time at all;"

Plato has thus reified Non-Being, he has to now explain its Interpellation for language, thought and discourse. He uses the remaining four hypotheses to accomplish this. It is here where Being and Existence receive their sharpest distinction.

*The Interpellation of Non-Being* (160c, 162a): In the interpellation of Non-Being for thought and discourse, Difference is related to Non-Being almost immediately by Plato. For, when one says that *a thing* does not exist, one is automatically distinguishing that thing from other things in order to effectively communicate that *that thing* in particular doesn't exist.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, then, in the interpellation of Non-Being, knowability is also immediately related to Non-Being, for there is some sort of knowledge of the thing that one is saying doesn't exist, otherwise the meaning of the statement, "that *thing* does *not* exist" would be impossible to comprehend without knowing what exactly one is depriving existence of. The thing which one is saying doesn't exist is thus something and this something has properties, otherwise it wouldn't possess anything in which one could differentiate and separate it from other things. This would then result in the conclusion that a Non-Existent thing, for language, has Being in a certain sense, for one has to presuppose the Being of a thing before they could say that it does not exist.<sup>32</sup> A thing could thus not-exist, but in language it will have Being in a certain sense. It is here where existence and Being receive their sharpest distinction.

Plato then uses the last hypothesis to address the second aspect of Interpellation: Non-Being as a thought. He supposes Absolute Non-Being where nothing exists:

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<sup>31</sup> 160c: "... if a man says 'if a One (one thing) does not exist', it is plain that the thing he is saying does not exist is something different from other things, and we know what he is speaking of."

<sup>32</sup> 162a: "...it appears that the One *is* non-existent. If it *is not* non-existent, if it somehow slips away from being so to not being so, it will at once follow that it *is* existent. Accordingly, if it is not to exist, it must have the fact of *being* non-existent to secure its non-existence, just as the existent must have the fact of *not being* non-existent, in order that it may be possible for it completely to exist... the existent must have the *being* implied in *being existent* and the *not-being* implied in *not-being not-existent*..." Vice versa for a non-existent.

166a: "Consequently neither can any appearance or seeming of that which has no being be found... nor can any notion whatsoever of what has no being be entertained... So if there is no One, none of the [many] can be so much as imagined to be one, nor yet to be many, for you cannot imagine many without a One."

This is the main consequence of the supposition of Absolute Non-Being: there will not be any appearance or seeming of either anything that has Being or Non-Being. It is here where Plato supposes a certain Being for appearances and perceptions of things: there is a deprivation of cognition, particularly the imagination, when nothing exists; for then the mind cannot think or imagine something that has Being nor something that does not have Being, for as he established earlier, one has to presuppose Being before asserting something's Non-Being (and he reiterates this point here as he says: "nor can any notion whatsoever of what has no being *be* entertained" [emphasis is mine]). This rule thus applies to both language and thought. Plato abruptly ends the text with this suggestion that for the cognition of Non-Being one still requires a certain sense of Being and this is not possible if there is nothing at all.<sup>33</sup>

*Conclusion of the analysis, the confluence of Being and Non-Being:* Plato easily closes the gulf between the Interpellation sense of Being and Non-Being, he practically gives us the conclusion: In language, thought and discourse, Non-Being must presuppose Being. However, Plato does not close the gulf between the Reification sense of Being and Non-Being. To close the gulf, one needs to find the synthesis in between the element which makes a thing a thing, or Being as Sameness, and the lawless Instant, or reified Non-Being, in the process of Becoming in time, which also possesses Difference:

Difference encapsulates all change. Since Difference can never come in contact with Being because it cannot be in the Same, the element which makes a thing a thing never changes,

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<sup>33</sup>See Wolfe (2012) where he deals with Plato's interpellation of Non-Being in language exclusively.

but Being can take on and relieve the property of existence (existence meaning anything in-time), among other properties. This means Being can co-exist with Non-Being and Difference, for it can change and transition in and out of existence (in-time) via the Instant. The question then is: does the Instant, as the reified sense of Non-Being, belong to Being or does it exist in and of itself? The Instant belongs to Being because it is the pure Negation of its properties. The Instant is neither/nor, and this helps give Being its own reality as Being that does not have any property (it is *neither* this, *nor* that), including existence (in-time). However, when Being takes on existence, it loses its special reality that it possessed as just Being and the Instant serves as reified Non-Being for Being in the sense that Being is now Non-Being, or Not-A-Being-Without-Properties, before it takes on the property of existence-in-time because the Instant, as reified Non-Being, renders Being as neither/nor in its special, atemporal reality. However, the Instant also allows the immanence of Being in a temporal reality: Non-Being, or this lawless Instant, serves as conceptual motion of Being that takes it out from its isolated reality and into time-existence, for if Being was absolute Sameness it cannot move in between conditions like coming-to-exist and ceasing-to-exist, for movement presupposes Difference in both *place* (transitioning from one reality to an other- as above, it is in the Instant where transition and change occur) and a difference between the conditions themselves. Being needs time to make a thing the subject for thought and discourse for our sake, but Being also needs time because it is inextricably attached to a thing that is a thing because of Being, and a thing cannot exist when it's out of time (for, as Plato stipulated above, each thing has a duration in time and thus needs to begin and end, or come-to-be and perish): A thing's Being, or that element that makes a thing a thing, could be *outside* time, but a thing-itself cannot for it is tethered by the temporal, sensible world where it comes-to-be and perishes. Further, this immanence of Being in time and coming

to exist and ceasing to exist occurs randomly, for Plato does not set down any laws for his Instant.

To the trained reader, this is beginning to sound like something very familiar: the Theory of Forms. The text seems to have driven the reader to only this possible conclusion and the reader could begin to see this confluence of Being and Non-Being in light of the Theory: This is how Plato explains the Theory of Forms, if the Forms are the elements that make things, things, in the *Parmenides*. The One, as some atemporal thing that can possess existence in time, is thus a Form, and Being renders it as an atemporal thing and as that element that makes a thing a thing. It is the lawless Instant that helps reify the One, or a Form, into the sensible world and sets it off into a process of Becoming in time, randomly, and then takes it out of the realm of Becoming and time, randomly, and so on and so forth.<sup>34</sup> However, I would like to put emphasis here on the *explain* in Plato 'explaining' the Theory of Forms in the *Parmenides*. This does not necessarily mean Plato has *saved* the Theory of Forms in the text, or that he is even speaking of it. This confluence of Being and Non-Being touches upon the ontological *framework* of the Theory of Forms, meaning, Plato explains Being, Non-Being and Existence for a sensible thing using the framework of the Theory of Forms rather than the actual Theory of Forms. The framework is precisely that which has been drawn from the Eight Hypotheses: that Being is the element of a thing that makes it a thing which could take on time-existence via the lawless Instant (which is

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<sup>34</sup>'Being' coming in and out of a process of Becoming and Time can perhaps be seen as a way into A.N. Whitehead's *Process and Reality*: "...relatedness is wholly concerned with the appropriation of the dead by the living- that is to say, with 'objective immortality' whereby what is divested of its own living immediacy becomes a real component in other living immediacies of becoming. This is the doctrine that the creative advance of the world is the becoming, the perishing, and the objective immortalities of those things which jointly constitute *stubborn fact*" (p. xiii-xiv). Whitehead is one of the forefathers of Process Metaphysics, but it is too early to say what sort of metaphysics can follow from the sort of relationship proposed between Being, Non-Being and Becoming in this paper. Besides, Whitehead's metaphysics is argued for in the context of the One-Many metaphysical presupposition that this paper's subsidiary conclusion is proposing to abandon and begin anew with a Being-Non-Being metaphysical presupposition as the structure of a thing (as discussed in part two). Though Whitehead's doctrine of Becoming here, specifically, may be valuable.

reified Non-Being). But this doesn't secure the One as a Form, because it doesn't necessarily have to be seen as a Form: the One could be simply be seen as a sensible thing and Being could simply be an element that makes it a thing; and Being itself could just simply have the capacity to be *outside* time, rather be in some Intelligible, Supersensible realm of which the Forms persist in (there is no reason for Being to suppose a *separate nature* from a sensible thing,<sup>35</sup> whereas Plato arbitrarily separated a Form from the sensible thing it participates in by making a Form *immaterial* and non-sensible). And the Instant doesn't necessarily have to be seen as the means of participation, for, again, the One here doesn't necessarily have to be a Form that has been separated. I will thus argue against interpretations made by other scholars, in the proceeding section, who use this text to defend the Theory of Forms to make this denial more conclusive.

**Part Two:**

Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.

*Hamlet*, 1.2.72-3.

The Forms are mind-independent entities existing in a Supersensible realm (a mind-independent reality outside time and the sensible world) that serve as the essence, or something permanent, for sensible things which are their trans-mutative copies that are perceived as appearances or phenomena; these imperfect copies strive towards the Forms in their inherent will towards perfection and the Ideal, which is the Form. The Forms are known through the epistemological act of Anamnesis (as discussed in the *Phaedo* and the *Meno*). This act presupposes the existence of a soul that gains knowledge of the Forms as it visits the

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<sup>35</sup> Once again, I have to reserve a more substantial argument for why Being doesn't have to have a separate nature from the thing it is its Being of for a future endeavor. For now, Being, as the element that makes a thing a thing, could exist *outside* time and come in and out of time-existence, but this doesn't necessarily mean that Being must then have a separate nature than the thing it is its Being of. The thing's intrinsic nature in time could precisely be the same as Being's nature outside of time, for Being is that element which makes a thing, a thing.



Supersensible realm before it descends into a human body, but loses knowledge of it as soon as it embodies a human body. When incarnated in a human body, the soul will begin to recollect the knowledge of the Forms but only if the one that possesses the soul begins to renounce his/her bodily desires and the senses and begins to train his/her Reason. The Forms, consequently, cannot be known by the senses, but through this act of Anamnesis, or recollection, for only purity (one's purified soul) recognizes purity (the Forms).

One cannot *see* the nature of Justice, but through purified thought one can attain the eternal meaning of Justice. Justice, as a Form, exists over and above the sensible world and acts of Justice in the sensible world exist as imperfect instances of the Form of Justice. Imperfect because they are relative, what one act of Justice seems just to one may seem unjust to another. The Forms are argued for by the fact that the perceiver realizes the relativity of the perceptions of things like Justice only when the perceiver also has knowledge of the Perfect, Eternal, Absolute sense of Justice. This presupposes that Relativity cannot be perceived without Absoluteness, and vice versa. This knowledge or awareness of an Absolute sense of Justice, the perceiver gained before birth. Thus, the human soul carries the knowledge of the Forms.

This is the general account of the Theory. Plato, in the first half of the *Parmenides*, uses the Theory to argue against the philosopher Zeno that a sensible thing can have contrary characteristics (such as being Like and Unlike) by *participating* in two contrary Forms. The Forms themselves, on the other hand, Socrates (Plato) the character proclaims, cannot be mixed or combined and cannot possess contrary properties for that will corrupt their absoluteness and purity. The character Parmenides then attacks the Theory of Forms by raising problems for the *participation* of Forms (which exist in some Supersensible, Intelligible realm outside the sensible and temporal world) in the sensible world (these will be discussed in Part Three). It is here where

scholars then see the Eight Hypotheses as a counterargument to the problems raised by Parmenides and thus see the text as *saving* the Theory of Forms. Among other scholars, there are three primary scholars I want to address that see the text defending the Theory: Rickless, Lynch and Miller.

Samuel Rickless<sup>36</sup> believes the results of the second half of the text can be used to solve the problems raised by Parmenides in the first half of the text (502). Rickless' main goal is to show that the *Parmenides* is trying to prove that one of the principles of Plato's Middle-period Theory of Forms expounded in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, is to be abandoned for the Theory of Forms to be consistent; namely the principle: No Form can have contrary properties. Parmenides the character, in the first half of the text, proposes versions of the Theory of Forms and proves that each one is inconsistent because of this principle. Rickless believes the Eight Hypotheses is Parmenides' attempt to prove that this principle is false and should be dismissed (502). Ultimately, for Rickless, the text tries to conclude that the One and Many are not contraries.

Rickless then shows how each version of the Theory of Forms uses principles of the Middle-Period Theory of Forms to prove that they are inconsistent. Each version contains the principle that the One and Many are contraries, except for the last one, Parmenides' argument called the Greatest Difficulty, the argument that tries to prove that there is no way for a being like us to ever possess the knowledge of the Forms in us. Rickless says that not even Plato himself was ready to address this problem (544) and quickly glosses over it.

Transitioning to the Eight Hypotheses, Rickless believes that to say that the Forms "wander" between opposites is to falsify the principle that no Form could have contrary

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<sup>36</sup> In "How Parmenides Saved the Theory of Forms," pp. 501-554.

properties (538). Rickless believes this is what Parmenides tried to conclude with the Eight Hypotheses. He then compresses the hypotheses and shows that there is an inherent contradiction within them that makes the deductions unsound. Rickless responds to this contradiction by arguing that Parmenides does not consider the propositions, "X is F" and "X is not F" to be contraries (542). For Parmenides, X is F means that there is some respect in which X is F and X is not F means there is some other respect where X is not F. Thus, it is possible for X to be both F and not F as long as there is no single respect relative to which X is F and relative to which X is not F. Thus, the hypotheses are not contradictory because Parmenides says the One is X in one way and the One is not X is another way. He then says that Socrates doesn't assume the claim that each Form is many contradicts the claim that each Form is One. Rather, Socrates assumes that the claim that each Form is many contradicts the result of conjoining the claim that each Form is one with the two claims: 1) No form can have contrary properties and 2) the property of being One and the property of being Many are contraries. Rickless then disposes these objections.

He then concludes that abandoning the principle of no forms can have contrary properties will save the Forms because if the deductions are sound and consistent then the One could hold contrary properties (543). We could then conclude that for each large number of properties the One has that property and its contrary and the One has that property and its negation.

This summary may come across as superficial, lacking thought and justification and quickly going over many important details without explaining them. This was intentional, for this was how Rickless' defense for the Theory of Forms was written. The greatest mistake Rickless made in his defense was that he does not explain *how* the Eight Hypotheses dismiss the principle that the One and Many are contraries. I do not see in any way how the observation that

Parmenides uttering "the One is F" and "the One is not F" in different senses falsifies the principle that the One and Many are contraries. Rickless does not even establish that the One in the text is alluding to the Forms, he does not present any constraints to help the reader ascend to that interpretation. Rickless also makes the grand conclusion that abandoning this principle can help solve the problem of participation, but I do not see how falsifying the principle that a Form could possess contrary properties help solve this problem. My main objection, here, is that Rickless does not show how the hypotheses themselves and the conclusion drawn from it falsify the principle that the one and many are contraries; saying that Parmenides speaks of the One in different "respects" is not enough. I cannot compare my interpretation of the Eight Hypotheses with his because he does not present his own interpretation.

William Lynch,<sup>37</sup> on the other hand, presents a comprehensive argument for the Eight Hypotheses as a defense for the Theory of Forms. He analyzes the Eight Hypotheses one by one (unfortunately, word for word as well) and tries to find the modes of participation they have hidden beneath their arguments. Lynch believes the Eight Hypotheses is making the attempt to solve the most central problem of the Theory of Forms: the dilemma of participation. However, Lynch has a distorted view of the Forms (p. 236): He calls the Forms "concrete organisms." He derives this view from his analysis of the Eight Hypotheses. This is yet another proof that the text should not be taken word for word. The reason why Lynch has a "physical" rendering of the Forms here is because the One that is discussed in the text is embedded in most sections in the realm of Time and Becoming. Since Lynch approached the text with a preconceived notion that it is addressing the Theory of Forms, he is "bending" the text to that preconceived notion. In order to synthesize his notion of the Forms with the fact that the One in this text is mostly spoken

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<sup>37</sup> In *An Approach to the Metaphysics of Plato through the Parmenides*

of in Time and Becoming, he calls the Forms a "living organism" and sees it as "living", something that has "life" like organisms do, when Plato nowhere in any dialogue speaks of the Forms as living things.

The most obvious conclusion one comes to if approaching the text with the preconceived notion that it is addressing the Theory of Forms and believing that the One in the Eight Hypotheses is a Form and reading them word for word, is that each Form

is structurally composed of a One-Many relationship, the one, or pure indivisible in it exists in an absolute fashion; the members or elements or phases of the Idea (Form) exist in a relative and participating sense (p. 237).

Lynch concludes from this that the oneness in a Form gives its many elements their Being, and that in themselves they "are not". However, by using the word "phases" here, Lynch has placed these elements in a process of Becoming, for phases presuppose Change. And so, if they "are not" then Lynch believes that the Many, or the participating elements, are appearances. This violates Hypothesis Eight, where Plato says that appearances *do* have a certain Being of their own, which also makes language and discourse possible when speaking of them. Lynch is jumping the gun too quickly in his hopes to reconcile the One and Many, however, in the dialogue, Plato does not explain how a One *gives* determination to a Many, in fact, in Hypotheses Two (Deduction 5),<sup>38</sup> he destroys all possibility of communication between a One as a whole and Many as parts and then never puts them back together. Furthermore, Lynch believes that being is in a thing when it possesses Unity as one thing. It is wholeness that gives a thing

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<sup>38</sup> 147a-b: "Consequently, if the One is one in every sense, and the things that are 'not one' are not one in every sense, the One cannot stand to the things that are 'not one' either as whole to parts or as part to whole; nor again can the things which are 'not one' be parts of the One or wholes of which the One is part." Here, Plato disconnects communication between a One and Many as whole and parts, and never connects them again in the dialogue, even though he continues on to speak of the One and Many in terms of whole and parts for the rest of the dialogue to no conclusion in sight.

being for Lynch. But Being could also be a part, and according to my analysis of Plato's Being as Sameness (as predicate), Being could just be an element. A thing doesn't necessarily have to be one thing to have Being, it could attain Being by possessing Sameness (Sameness, here, could mean simply the element that makes a thing a thing, or Being, or it could be taken as, when a thing possesses that element, or Being, it will always be the *same to* that element which makes it a thing), and Plato has already shown us that Sameness and Unity cannot be derivative of each other (above) and thus saying that a thing has to have Unity or be one thing to have Being deprives Manyness of Being, for the Many could have Being as Sameness without being one-thing (and Difference will participate in this as a relation: a difference in spatial location keeps same things apart, so a Many could have Being by also possessing Difference; it is here where Plato doesn't explain why a Many would be *in want* of a One or a whole).

However, these are some of the assumptions Lynch makes to argue for the modes of participation Plato has supposedly tucked beneath the Eight Hypotheses. He presents four modes of participation, but first defines the term as: "Participation is a concept that succeeds in locating a world midway between Being and Non-Being" (p. 240). Lynch will thus show how each mode of participation he presents closes the gulf between Being and Non-Being and how this helps save the Theory of Forms, for the dilemma of participation will be resolved.

His first mode is Participation as the Infinite, or the principle of indeterminacy (p. 243). He sees the Infinite as the mediating factor between Being and Non-Being. Here, the Many for Lynch are Non-Being because they are not one thing, or determined, or defined by Unity, and thus are indeterminate in that sense. Being is thus Unity, or the oneness, definiteness, or determination it gives to the infinite, indeterminate multitude to render it as one thing. Being here is construed as wholeness of a thing or a thing unified into one thing, it is when a thing is

one that it has Being. In this sense a thing is both Being and Non-Being by being an indefinite multitude (Non-Being) that shares in Oneness via Unity (Being) while remaining an infinite multitude. The first apparent problem with this is that this is still unexplained: Lynch doesn't explain how a thing retains its infinite quality when limited, defined, or determined by Unity. The two other problems with this is that, again, neither Plato nor Lynch explain how a One *gives* determinacy to a Many, or how it communicates with it. The other problem with this is that he does not explain in what way are the Many infinite when they have finite duration in Time. Plato attributes a Beginning, Middle and End to every *thing* in time (as discussed in the analysis).

His second mode is Participation as Otherness, or Difference (p. 244). Lynch sees a Form as the Absolute principle of Being and Unity in a thing that gives limit, definiteness and determination to its indeterminate, infinite parts. Lynch sees the Form as making a thing one thing that is distinguishable and different from another thing that is also one thing. Thus, here, a thing is both Being ("is") and Non-Being ("is not") in the sense that it *is this* thing and *is not that* thing. A thing, then, gets its Being and Oneness from participating in the Form and its Non-Being from being "other-than." This, however, doesn't explain participation but uses participation to close the gulf between Being and Non-Being. Lynch does the opposite of what he set out to do here. Further, he contradicts himself by not being careful in using "is" here. Lynch has already said that the things that participate in a Form, in a sense "are not", for only the Form has all the powers of Being. But if a thing, here, is participating in a Form, then it "is not", and if so, then in what sense is Lynch using "is" here? It is unclear.

His third mode is Participation as Relation (p. 245): Lynch believes Non-Being as Difference is a negative relation that participates in the Absolute Being of a Form. This relation, in itself, "is not" because it differentiates a one thing that is not another thing, but "is" because it

participates *in* their Being in the sense that it is keeping them as one thing that *is* different from another thing. But we already know, obviously, that participation is a relation, but what kind of relation: reflexive, reciprocal, resemblance? Lynch does not say.

His fourth mode is Participation as the Instant (p. 246-7): Lynch, here, enters my turf and uses the Instant as a mode of participation. I do not see the Instant as a mode of participation between the Forms and sensible things because I do not see Being as a Form (and I see the One in the text as a sensible thing), but just an element that makes a thing a thing that can be outside of Time. And since Being is inextricably tied to a thing that must exist in time, for it is *a thing's* Being, the Instant helps Being to come to possess the property of time-existence, and then out of it. Lynch, on the other hand, by confusing the One in the text as a Form, he retains a Form's Absoluteness that Plato dictated (p. 242). However, if a Form is Absolute, then it cannot change in condition. Change in condition requires conceptual motion from one condition to the next. This would contradict something's Absoluteness. Thus, if a Form is Absolute, as Lynch and Plato say it is, then it cannot change, and if it cannot change then it cannot transition from its reality (in whichever reality the Forms exist) and into the reality of the sensible thing. And if the Instant is change and is transition, then I do not see how it could be a mode of participation for something Absolute like a Form.

Lynch's modes of participation do not work out, and thus the Theory of Forms are not saved by the text because they are not supported by the text. However, the reader may now be wondering how my interpretation addresses the One-Many problem inherent in the *Parmenides*. It is here where I would like to propose Being-Non-Being as a new metaphysical presupposition that replaces the insoluble and outdated One-Many metaphysical presupposition: A sensible thing is *not* structured as One and Many; this is an arbitrary metaphysical presupposition. The



text teaches through these Eight Hypotheses (especially Hypothesis Two) to the student of philosophy that this metaphysical presupposition should be dismissed, even though it challenges human intuition that sees a thing as One and Many, but philosophy exists mainly because human intuition is erroneous. The main reason why the text goes towards multitudinous, contradictory conclusions and dead-end reasonings is because it begins with this supposition and thus, as a whole, the text itself is precisely showing all the problems of this supposition when the supposition is thought out and is therefore showing all the contradictions and dead-ends this supposition leads to for the student of philosophy. The Eight Hypotheses (as well as the arguments above against Lynch's modes) also evince the impossibility of a One and Many metaphysical presupposition and structure of a sensible thing because of its insoluble participation problem: Plato was never able to explain how a One and Many communicate and give determination, limit, definiteness to each other; nor was he able to explain why a Many is *in want* of a whole, or a One, when it could have Being as Sameness on its own.

The new metaphysical presupposition the student should thus leave with is that a thing is not structured as One-Many but Being-Non-Being, where Being is the constant element that makes it a thing and which could possess properties like Existence (in-time) and Non-Being is the lawless Instant that allows the Being of a thing that must exist in time to leave its atemporal reality and transition into the sensible, temporal reality of the thing, and then out of it. Scholars, but even Aristotle and later philosophers held steadfast the One-Many metaphysical presupposition to no resolution. It is time to abandon<sup>39</sup> the old and begin again with the new- this I reserve for a future endeavor, for now I must finish what I started here.

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<sup>39</sup> Metaphysical presuppositions are not falsified, but abandoned (or fall out of flavor or just presupposed without justification), for they are never proven in the first place, nor are they completely disproven because of their obviousness and intuitive evidence. The One-Many intuition still exists today awaiting its golden argument.

The other scholar that sees the *Parmenides* as a defense for the Theory of Forms is Mitchell Miller.<sup>40</sup> Miller believes Plato, in the beginning of the *Parmenides*, thinks of the Forms as sensible-physical things. He believes the dialogue, through this perspective of the Forms and the Eight Hypotheses, is trying to support the converse perspective of the Forms in the *Republic*: that they should be seen as conceptual rather than in sense-perceptual terms (pgs. 170, 173). He then reveals his interpretation of the Eight Hypotheses as a teaching and guide to help the reader come to this conclusion.

However, Miller also misreads the hypotheses (and unfortunately reads word for word). He also believes, like Lynch, that Being could only come from Unity, or when a thing is one thing it has Being. Unfortunately, he also sees the *Parmenides* as solving the One-Many problem for the Forms and sensible things.

Miller's assumptions for his arguments, however, are not supported by the text. Miller believes that the text is implying that the Forms are different from the sensible things *in kind* (p. 171), but qualifies this difference *in kind* using the property of Time, i.e. the Forms are different *in kind* of Being than sensible things that are in time. But Plato, in no where in the text, suggests or implies that an atemporal thing must be different *in kind* of Being from a temporal thing (and Miller fails to show any textual evidence for his claim). Further, if granted that the Forms are of a different *kind* of Being than sensible things, then this will create a bigger gulf between their participation than there already is, for then one would run into the greatest difficulty in all of philosophy: how does an immaterial thing participate in a material thing?

Miller then confuses the interpellation of Being and then its reification in the text (p. 171): He believes the *Parmenides* is establishing participation between a Form and a sensible

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<sup>40</sup> In *Plato's Parmenides: The Conversion of the Soul*

thing as the function of Unity: A Form gives Being to an indefinite multitude by giving it definiteness, determination and wholeness. He believes without the Form the Many would *be* a mere indefinite multitude. However, Plato only interpellates this indefinite multitude (in Hypothesis Two), for this indefinite multitude only exists in thought, not metaphysically or physically. In Hypothesis Two, Plato conjures up the Many, in thought, by arguing that if a One has Unity and Being and that if they are inherently co-dependent, where one can't have one without the other, then each Unity has Being as its part, but then that part which has Being would have Unity as its part, but that Unity would have Being as its part and so on ad infinitum. (This reasoning, in fact, leads to one of the main dead-end reasonings in the text (Hypothesis Two, Deduction 5) for Plato does not show how a One, whatever it may be, could limit or *give* limit to this "infinite thought" and destroys communication completely between a one limiting whole and an unlimited multitude; he also doesn't explain why a definite plurality, which has definiteness by each thing in that plurality being one-thing themselves, would be *in want* of a whole or Unity). This indefinite multitude, however, only exists in thought, it is not outside of thought, this indefinite multitude is not really "out there." But Miller treats it as if it *is* really out there and that Plato is suggesting that an indefinite multitude as such really exists outside of thought. Miller then reifies the One as a Form and thus treats *that* as a metaphysical thing that limits the indefinite multitude that is only interpellated in thought and is itself not reified into reality. But even besides this, neither Miller nor Plato show *how* a Form limits this indefinite multitude anywhere in the *Parmenides*.

Miller gives too much meaning *to* the *Parmenides* and doesn't gain any *from* it. From Miller's misreading his *saving* of the Forms collapses. By exalting the Forms, or the One, as some atemporal thing, Miller blatantly ignores the value of the concepts like Becoming, Change,

and the Instant that are integral to the text. He falls into the trap of reading the text word for word and reaches the valueless interpretations of the text as solving the One-Many, Whole-Part problems for the Forms, and doesn't see that the text teaches to drop these metaphysical presuppositions. I, therefore, do not see how the *Parmenides* is saving the Forms in general, let alone the version of the theory propounded in the *Republic*.

The One discussed in the Eight Hypotheses doesn't have to be a Form, and from these arguments I have posed against these scholars who see the One in the *Parmenides* as a Form, it can be seen that there are many problems that still persist for rendering this One as a Form. It is much safer to see the One as a sensible thing because Plato mostly discusses the One in the realm of Time and Becoming in the Eight Hypotheses; and also because then one does not have to confront the insoluble perplexities of the Theory of Forms such as the ones enumerated above. The One's, or a thing's, Being could just be that element that makes a thing a thing and that which could simply be *outside* of time and then become reified in time-existence via the lawless Instant. Though this takes on the ontological *framework* of the Theory of Forms,<sup>41</sup> it is not working with the Theory of Forms itself.

### **Part Three:**

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<sup>41</sup> The model of the Theory of Forms is akin to the relationship between Being, Non-Being and the Instant, for a Form, like Being, exists outside of time, but needs to participate in time and in the realm of Becoming because that's where its sensible thing persists; and there's need to be a mode of participation between the two, which the Instant as reified Non-Being seemingly serves to do. But this is just a superficial similarity, Being could be outside time but the Forms are in some supersensible realm, and the Instant is *nothing* and is characterized by change and transition, rather than a mode of participation. Plus, an Instant cannot serve its function if a Form is Absolute (as argued against Lynch). However, this relationship between Being, Non-Being and the Instant takes on the *framework* of the Theory of Forms in that Being is still in an atemporal reality and it somehow needs to *come into* the sensible thing's reality in time for it is that element which makes a thing a thing, which then the Instant thus serves to do, and a thing needs to *be* in a certain moment of time *not* in existence to transition out of the domain of time and end; so Being must stay Continuous and atemporal in this sense for transition out of time-existence to be possible. Recall: Difference (change, transition) requires a thing to *be* at one moment in time "not-in-existence" and another moment *be* "in-existence."

I would now like to turn to the other main problem in the scholarship: if part two of the text, the Eight Hypotheses, has any bearing on the first part of the text: where Parmenides the character attacks the Theory of Forms. The close reader of the first part of the text will find that the text itself provides a true division between the two parts: I have mentioned earlier above that Socrates the character uses the Theory of Forms to argue against the philosopher, Zeno, that one sensible thing can take on contrary properties. After Socrates is done arguing against Zeno, Parmenides comes into the scene and admits that Socrates' theory has successfully disposed of Zeno's difficulty:

135d-136: Socrates speaking of things in the "field" of the sensible world: 'Yes, because in that other field there seems to be no difficulty about showing that things are both like and unlike and have any other character you please.'  
Parmenides: 'You are right.'

However, there is a problem with Parmenides' admission here and it stems from the *actual* philosopher Parmenides' philosophical beliefs. The *actual* Parmenides would have never admitted that Zeno's difficulty has been resolved by Socrates, for Parmenides has to first accept that the sensible world exists in order to admit that a sensible thing can have contrary properties. But Parmenides is notoriously known to deny the existence of the changing sensible world in time and assert the eternal, rational One as true reality.<sup>42</sup> Plato, in this section (which is the transition between the first part and the Eight Hypotheses), is thus deviating away from the historical Parmenides, for there is no way the real Parmenides would have admitted the existence of the sensible world.

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<sup>42</sup> *Presocratics*, Wheelwright, p. 14: "Parmenides (followed by Zeno and Melissus, the other principle members of the Eleatic school) opposed the doctrine of universal flux by going to the opposite extreme and dismissing all change as necessarily unreal and illusory, holding it to be rationally inconceivable that what was not should begin to be or that what was should cease to be. What truly is, he argued, must be what it is independently of time;..."

So, what does this mean for the speaker of the dialectic, if Plato has deviated from the historical, actual Parmenides? It means the dialectical exercise, or the Eight Hypotheses, is not addressing the philosophy of Parmenides. The dialectical exercise, or the Eight Hypotheses, is not constrained by any predisposed agenda. By glossing over the sensible world, Plato has cleared the exercise from addressing the attacks of Parmenides in the first half of the text. And by deviating away from the historical, actual Parmenides, the dialectic is not addressing the Philosophy of the One Being of Parmenides. This section of the text thus doesn't only mark a transition, but a true division from the first part and the second part. The dialectic, where the Eight Hypotheses take place, does not have an ulterior motive.

Also, by glossing over the "field" of the sensible world in the above quote, Socrates' argument of a sensible thing participating in two contrary forms is maintained even by Parmenides, implying that Parmenides' attacks against the problem of participation in the Theory of Forms did not damage the theory. Plato, here, maintains the metaphorical relation of participation but leaves the investigation of what it is precisely and turns the dialectical exercise away from pertaining to this problem. The evidence for this is in the moment when Plato makes Parmenides begin not with Forms (after the attacks) but with ontological relations: Sameness and Difference, Motion and Rest, Coming-to-Be and Perishing (i.e. Time and Becoming) and Being and Non-Being themselves. Parmenides himself then says to Socrates: "You must study these others with reference both to one another and to any one thing you may select" (136c). If one notices here, my analysis above uses all these categories and did not arrive at the Forms, and neither does the dialectical exercise of part two where the Eight Hypotheses exist. Also, Plato makes Parmenides start the exercise with his "own original supposition" of the One (137b), to quite literally cancel out the possibility of the One being a Form in the exercise. But Plato has

already shown that he has also deviated away from Parmenides' philosophy of a One. Plato *ironically* (I use *irony* in a specific sense here: Plato is setting up the reader the way Socrates use to set up his opponents, he makes the reader begin with ambiguous, undefined terms like the One and makes his readers think for themselves, as Socrates use to do) thus takes off two constraints for the meaning of this One: It cannot be the One of Parmenides' philosophy and it cannot be a Form, however, it will be some *thing* that is embedded in those categories enumerated by Parmenides before he begins the exercise (for me, it is a sensible object because Plato speaks about space and time and Becoming exclusively for majority of the text and does not dismiss them, whereas both the Forms and Parmenides' One do not exist in time nor in a process of Becoming).

Scholars, on the other hand, try to connect part one with part two by using the Eight Hypotheses as a response to the arguments in the first part. I will show here that these arguments could be falsified internally and there is no need to resort to the Eight Hypotheses to find solutions. The three arguments raised in the first part by Parmenides are: 1) The One-over-Many argument, 2) the Third Man Argument, and 3) the Greatest Difficulty.

The One-over-Many argument goes as follows (130e-131e):

Parmenides: You say you hold that there exist certain Forms, of which these other things come to partake and so to be called after their names: by coming to partake of Likeness or Largeness or Beauty or Justice, they become like or large or beautiful or just... Then each thing that partakes receives as its share either the Form as a whole or a part of it? Or can there be any other way of partaking besides this?... a Form which is one and the same will be at the same time, as a whole, in a number of things which are separate, and consequently will be separate from itself.

Socrates: No, it would not... if it were like one and the same day, which is in many places at the same time and nevertheless is not separate from itself...

Parmenides: You might as well spread a sail over a number of people and then say that the one sail as a whole was over them all... Then would the sail as a whole be over each man, or only part over one, another part over another?

Socrates: Only a part. Parmenides: In that case, Socrates, the Form themselves

must be divisible into parts, and the things which have a share in them will have a part for their share. Only a part of any given Form, and no longer the whole of it, will be in each thing...

...consider this [:] Suppose it is Largeness itself that you are going to divide into parts and that each of the many large things is to be large by virtue of a part of Largeness which is smaller than Largeness itself. Will not that seem unreasonable? And again, if it is Equality that a thing receives some small part of, will that part, which is less than Equality itself, make its possessor equal to something else?... Well, take Smallness: is one of us to have a portion of small, and is Smallness to be larger than that portion which is a part of it? On this supposition again Smallness itself will be larger, and anything to which the portion taken is added will be smaller, and not larger, than it was before... Well then, Socrates, how are the other things going to partake of your Forms, if they can partake of them neither in part nor as wholes?

This is Parmenides' first argument against the participation of a Form and the sensible things which participate in them. Parmenides here presupposes the indivisibility of a Form and raises the argument that in order for one thing to participate in another thing it could only do so in only one of two ways: the sensible object that partakes in a Form receives its share of the Form either as a whole or as a part. He then argues that if a Form, as a whole, a single thing, is *in* the many sensible things that partake of it, then it is divisible because if there is a One Form over Many things then there will be one part of a Form in one of the Many things and another part in another one of the Many things and so on. He then uses the Forms of Largeness, Equality and Smallness to show how they cannot participate as a part either: If one divides Largeness itself into parts and each of the many large things is large in virtue of a part of Largeness, then that part which makes a large thing large would be *smaller* than Largeness itself and that is "unreasonable" for Parmenides. And if a thing is Equal by sharing in a part of Equality-itself then that part which makes an equal thing equal would be *lesser* than Equality-itself and thus unequal to Equality-itself. Parmenides then exposes the absurdity in the Form of Smallness in a similar fashion.



This argument is raising the question whether a Form possesses the same quality it gives off to sensible things; or, is the Form of Largeness, Large itself? Parmenides is of course assuming here that a Form of Largeness is Large itself and this is leading him to make the mistake of supposing that the Form of Largeness is a *physical* thing in the sense that it has a certain measure, definite quantity, or magnitude, for if it doesn't, then the parts of Largeness that Parmenides renders as *smaller* than Largeness itself cannot be determined as smaller if Largeness itself did not have a definite measure for Parmenides to compare it to and come to that judgment (same goes for Equality and Smallness). But Plato does not say anywhere that a Form is a physical thing or that it has definite measures. Parmenides' argument itself thus seems absurd for assuming the complete opposite nature of the Forms.

The Third Man Argument goes as follows (131e- 132b):

Parmenides (to Socrates): How do you feel about this? I imagine your ground for believing in a single Form in each case is this: when it seems to you that a number of things are large, there seems, I suppose, to be a certain single character which is the same when you look at them all; hence you think that Largeness is a single thing... But now take Largeness itself and the other things which are large. Suppose you look at all these in the same way in your mind's eye. Will not yet another unity make its appearance- a Largeness by virtue of which they all appear large?... If so, a second Form of Largeness will present itself, over and above Largeness itself and the things that share in it; and again, covering all these, yet another, which will make all of them large. So each of your Forms will no longer be one, but an indefinite number.

Parmenides here argues that when there are many things that seem to be large, there then also seems to be *one* universal Form of largeness that they all participate in which gives them their characteristic of being large. Hence, the Form of Largeness is a *single thing*. But then he argues, if so, then there has to be something that makes *that* Form of Largeness large as well, and then another Form of Largeness will appear to make *that* Form of Largeness large, and so on ad infinitum. Here, Parmenides is making a similar mistake: he is assuming again that the Form of

Largeness is large itself, without justifying how it could be large if it does not have a definite magnitude or measure. Without any other object, but taking a Form in complete isolation, to say it is large without using anything to compare it with, the Form must still have some definite magnitude in order for one to judge that it has a size at all; but, again, Plato never says that a Form has definite measure or magnitude. Here, again, Parmenides is mistakenly seeing the Forms as a *physical* thing and here again his argument is absurdly assuming the complete opposite nature of the Forms.<sup>43</sup>

The Greatest Difficulty argument goes as follows: Parmenides deviates away from the scope of his first two arguments and focuses on the knowability of the Forms if they exist in-themselves outside of the sensible world. He then says that if a Form exists outside the sensible world then they do not have the same sort of being (nature) that things in the sensible world have, including human beings. In other words, we are grown by the earth, but not the Forms. He then uses the Form of Mastership and Slavery to instantiate this argument (133e-134):

Suppose, for instance, one of us is master or slave of another; he is not, of course, the slave of Master itself, the essential Master, nor, if he is a master, is he master of Slave itself, the essential Slave, but, being a man, is master or slave of another man; whereas Mastership itself is what it is (mastership) of Slavery itself, and Slavery itself is slavery to Mastership itself. The significance of things in our world is not with reference to things in that other world, nor have these their significance with reference to us; but, as I say, the things in that world are what they are with reference to one another and towards one another; and so likewise are the things in our world.

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<sup>43</sup> As for the question of how a large thing is large, or if a Form of Largeness is large itself: Scaltsas (1989) elucidates and clarifies the Third Man Argument in his article and believes that the Theory of Forms is trying to answer the question, "What makes a X thing X?" He sees the Third Man Argument as calling for an explanatory model that will help to show how a Form makes a thing X if it shares the same quality it gives to a thing X (i.e. is a Form of Largeness also large?) and Scaltsas believes this will ultimately solve the dilemma of participation. It is yet to be seen what this model would be.

A master, on earth, is not the master of the Form of Slavery, but a slave, and a slave is not a slave of the Form of Mastership but of a master. Thus, the "significance" (it is unclear what Parmenides means here by "significance") of things on earth does not come from relations between the Forms but relations between themselves, and similarly, the "significance" of the Forms come from their relations between themselves, not to things in the sensible world. The Forms thus exist in a world separate from ours.

Parmenides then defines knowledge as only coming from the reality one is in and knowledge itself comes from things that only exist in that reality (134-134e):

And similarly Knowledge itself, the essence of Knowledge, will be knowledge of that Reality itself, the essentially real... And again any given branch of knowledge in itself will be knowledge of some department of real things as it is in itself... Whereas the knowledge in our world will be knowledge of the reality in our world; and it will follow again that each branch of knowledge in our world must be knowledge of some department of things that exist in our world... You will grant, I suppose, that if there is such a thing as a Form, Knowledge itself, it is much more perfect than the knowledge in our world... ...we have agreed that those Forms have no significance to things in our world, nor have things in our world any significance with reference to them. Each set has it only among themselves.

Parmenides argues here that the Forms do not exist in our reality and we can only come to "know" things that exist in our reality; and assuming that we need the Form of Knowledge itself to gain knowledge of the Forms themselves, if we do not possess the Forms then we do not have a part in Knowledge-itself. From these senses of 'knowledge' Parmenides concludes that all Forms are "unknowable" by us. He then also further concludes that there is no way to close the gulf that is between our world and the world of the Forms because there is no participation or possibility of communication between them (the Forms exist in another world and "have no significance to things in our world, nor have things in our world any significance with reference to them").

Parmenides, in the first part of this argument, says that the Forms "are what they are with reference to one another" (133e). His argument thus rests on the assumptions that the nature of the Forms come from their interrelationships, or by being a web of Forms rather than one Form here in isolation and another Form there in isolation, they gain their existence or their nature. However, if this is true, then they would not have any relationship to the sensible world, and if so, then where does the Form of Mastership gain its nature, or even that name, from, if a master exists on earth? How does a Form of Mastership gain its nature from other Forms besides the Form of Slavery (which also requires a relationship with the earth) if they are all interconnected? These questions thus reveal the absurdities in Parmenides' argument.

For the second part of this argument, the problem of the knowledge of the Forms is solved by Plato's theory of Anamnesis. The human soul closes the gulf between the two worlds. Parmenides presumes that there isn't any Form of Man and that is why the being of a Form is completely different from a human being; and he does not presume a duality between body and soul. The body is grown by the earth, but the soul has its own sort of being that is akin to the being of the Forms. It is the soul that travels in between two worlds and thus gains knowledge of the Forms in their world and *recollects* in this world, or so the theory goes.

The arguments Parmenides proposes against the Theory of Forms all have something fallacious inherent in them,<sup>44</sup> so why do readers need part two (that speaks of entirely different things) to solve them? The arguments here could be dismissed on their own; Plato would not have posed arguments against his own theory that he himself would not have been able to overcome. The second part of the text could thus be taken in isolation, for its relevance to the first part is an arbitrary judgment lacking any proper reason to relate the two parts. In fact, in this

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<sup>44</sup> Scholars whom hold that the purpose of the whole dialogue is to show that the arguments here are fallacious include: Cherniss (1957), Forrester (1974), Lewis (1979).

pursuit of relating the two parts the reader will completely miss out the intent and message of the second part.

**Conclusion:**

What might the staying of my blood portend? Is it unwilling  
I should write this bill? Why streams it not, that I may write *afresh*?  
"Faustus gives to thee his soul:" ah, there it stay'd! Why shouldst thou not?  
*Is not thy soul thine own?* Then write *again*, "Faustus gives to thee his soul."  
*Dr. Faustus*, Marlowe, ll. 64-69.

This paper aimed at gaining a clearer understanding of Plato's dialogue, the *Parmenides*, and its basic concepts through finding the confluence of Being and Non-Being using those concepts, while avoiding the superfluous higher grade of reality in which the Forms persist. The analysis above concludes that it is much more secure to interpret the One discussed in the text as a sensible thing because Plato does not take it out of the realms of Time and Becoming and speaks of the One explicitly in these realms. Taking the One to be a Form, on the other hand, is less secure because there is no constraint or warrant for this interpretation in the text. However, what we can take from the Theory of Forms is its ontological *framework*: Being as that element that makes a thing a thing and Non-Being as the lawless Instant that allows a thing's Being to come in and out of time-existence and the realm of Becoming.

Plato explicitly steps into Time and Becoming in the Eight Hypotheses, but never explicitly steps out of these realms. I thus do not see why and how scholars ascend to the Forms when Plato speaks of the One in the Eight Hypotheses and when Parmenides established the stipulation before the Eight Hypotheses that throughout the exercise Socrates (the character) should study carefully the categories of Coming-to-Be and Perishing (i.e. Time and Becoming), Sameness and Difference, Being and Non-Being, Motion and Rest, and their relationship between each other and their relationship to the One under discussion, for a Form is timeless and

unchanging and these categories make better sense when the One is seen as a sensible thing that has a temporal existence and does change, particularly change in the sense of coming-to-be and perishing.<sup>45</sup> There is one implication of Plato leaving the domain of Time when he speaks of Sameness (as discussed in the analysis), but even from this, it does not necessarily follow that the One's Being is in the Intelligible, Supersensible realm of the Forms, it could simply mean that it *can* be *outside* time. I, therefore, see Being as an element that makes a thing a thing;<sup>46</sup> the soul could be my being, or whatever element that makes me human, and this element makes me a *thing* in time; and Non-Being belongs to me as well because the Instant has brought my Being into time-existence and will take my Being out of it, *lawlessly*. I also don't see the One as a Form because I propose its Being to be not Absolute, unlike a Form which is Absolute. For if it was Absolute Sameness then it cannot change in condition or states and then cannot transition from an atemporal reality to the domain of time and thus cannot take on the property of (time-) Existence.

In addition, I see the ambiguity, inconsistencies, dead-ends and contradictions in the dialectical exercise of the second half of the text as an instruction for the student of philosophy to drop the metaphysical presupposition that a thing has to be One, or a whole, or a unified thing with Many parts to have Being and replace that presupposition with Being as Sameness and Non-Being as the Instant as the true metaphysical structure of a *thing*. However, there is one important problem in this interpretation: whether Plato himself would have agreed with this interpretation. Chances are, most likely, he would not have, for in the dialogues that come after

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<sup>45</sup> My mentor, Prof. Teufel, raised the question: if the two halves of the text really are separate and divided then why did Plato put them together? This stipulation from Parmenides in the first half of the text could be seen as one of the answers, for it is with these concepts that Plato discusses the One in the second half of the text.

<sup>46</sup> Again, I am reserving an investigation for what this element *exactly* is and other questions regarding it for a future endeavor.

the *Parmenides* (the *Sophist* and *Philebus* especially) he does not drop the One and Many problem and tries to solve it *again* and *again* to no avail. I think this attachment is more of a psychological predicament than a philosophical one. Besides the One and Many problem's positive relationship to the Theory of Forms, Plato had difficulty, like other human beings, to disbelieve what his intuition presented to him and to dismiss the obvious. For it is obvious that a thing is One and Many, that it has whole and parts, and it is difficult to dismiss what the intuition keeps presenting to the percipient again and again. I also believe this attachment stems from Plato's love of mathematics, for if the One and Many metaphysical presupposition is dismissed then we no longer need "quantitative analysis"<sup>47</sup> or a *mathematical* metaphysics and could replace it with this *qualitative* metaphysics of Being and Non-Being, but I do not think Plato ever wanted to let go of mathematics and the intuition of a thing's structure as One and Many.

Consequently, I see the *Parmenides* as a stand-alone text from his other dialogues that is abstruse for the untrained reader and thus widely open to interpretation- but again this was the point, for this text was originally written to be a test for the students of philosophy and because of the intentional ambiguity perhaps the student passes or fails from how well he or she catches the *drift* of the text using the originality of their own thought. Besides, if the intention of the dialogue was to solve the One and Many problem then it has failed, for it does not come to any conclusion and just ends abruptly; and Plato does not explain anywhere how the One and Many communicate with each other, how they participate in each other, how they *become* each other or even how the One gives definiteness to a Many. Nevertheless, Plato would have progressed if he

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<sup>47</sup> The likes of which Plato in fact employs in the *Parmenides*, with the analysis of the One as a whole or Unity and the Many as the parts or Plurality, to no conclusion in sight. This attachment to mathematics is also evinced by one of the sections in the *Parmenides*, where Plato argues how Numbers get their existence from Unity and Being (143a-144).

adopted (supposing he was aware of it) this new metaphysical presupposition buried within his own text.

On the other hand, this text is not a complete metaphysical doctrine because it does not speak of Causation anywhere. The Instant is the closest thing to causation in the text but it is something that belongs to Being and helps to reify it in the reality of Becoming and Time, but it is not the cause of it. Plato does not establish, here, if the One is *causa sui*. Also, from my analysis, two similar questions emerge: 1) What is a thing's Being when it is *outside* time? And 2) Does Being, as the element that makes a thing a thing, have the same *nature* as the sensible thing it is inextricably tied to, when the former could be outside time while the latter is tethered to it? These may be *empirical* questions rather than metaphysical questions,<sup>48</sup> but I leave these questions and the category of Causation to the next student who wishes to gain entry into Plato's philosophy (or philosophy in general) and sharpen his or her philosophical thought and reasoning by taking this entry exam that is the *Parmenides*.

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<sup>48</sup> A more *metaphysical* question would be if Being is just Continuity. However, the bigger task would be to also develop an epistemology for the metaphysics that follows from this new presupposition, for a philosopher cannot have one without the other. I will answer these questions as I undertake my future endeavor of deriving a metaphysical system from this presupposition. In this paper I wish to solely endorse the main conclusion that Plato's *Parmenides* is helping to close the gulf between Being and Non-Being in a way that has never been done, explored or discovered before (i.e. via the concepts of Sameness, Difference, Time, Becoming and the Instant).



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