The figurability of theory

The philosophical significance of circularity in Parmenides

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Introduction

In the sixth century BC, archaic Greek philosophy underwent a fundamental shift, originating in Magna Graecia. Rather than explaining the world in a prose treaty positing one single physical element to account for the existence of everything, Parmenides focussed his thoughts onto eternal Being, expressing them in poetry. To this highly abstract notion of Being he denied all the characteristics which had been fundamental to his predecessors to explain human perceptions such as change and movement. The few characteristics he did attribute to Being were those which were not logically incompatible with the fact that Being is and Not-Being is not. The account about Being is announced as the 'unshaken heart of well-rounded truth' (Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ, B1.29)[1] and therefore commonly referred to as ἀλήθεια.

However, Parmenides did not entirely break with the philosophical tradition, even though he chose to write a poem instead of a prose treatise and elaborated on Being rather than on monist cosmology, since he included a more traditional cosmology in his poem. In this part of the poem, the δόξαι,[2] two cosmogonical Forms, Fire and Night, are introduced to account for change, movement, and plurality in the physical world. These two accounts, the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι, contrary as they may seem, are part of the same poem. Both are revelations, provided by a goddess[3] to a κοῦρος ('young man'). This κοῦρος, as described in the proem, is brought to the goddess in a chariot. At the end of the proem, the goddess promises to reveal two things to him: the ἀλήθεια and the 'false opinions of mortals, in which there is no true conviction' (βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθής, B1.30). These two accounts form the remaining two sections of the poem, which has been fragmentarily transmitted. Although the δόξαι are said to lack true conviction and trustworthiness, the goddess nevertheless includes them in her revelation. In subchapter 3.1, I shall come back to the exact relation between the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι, encompassing simultaneously many differences and significant similarities.

The tendency in scholarship is to separate the literary aspect of the poem from the philosophical, the form from the content.[4] Some steps against this tendency of disconnecting the poetic form and philosophical content have already been taken by some scholars such as Morgan and Robbiano, who explored respectively the philosophical significance of the employed

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[1] All Greek quotations of Parmenides are taken of the edition of Coxon (1986); deviations are indicated in footnotes. Concerning the numbering of the fragments, I have used the Diels Kranz system, so all quotations of Parmenides are DK28. All translations in this thesis are of my own hand.

[2] Whereas the conventional name for this part of Parmenides' poem is δόξα, I shall call it δόξαι, since Parmenides always uses the plural to designate this part (βροτῶν δόξας in B1.30 and δόξας...βροτείας in B8.51); cf. Robbiano (2005) 218.

[3] The identity of this goddess is disputed. It could be Dike (Popper (1992) 12 n.2; cf. Deichgräber (1959) 9, based on Sextus Empiricus' identification), but as the goddess in B1.28 refers to Dike in the third person singular, this seems unlikely (cf. Furley (1973) 3). It could also be one of the Muses or even Ἀλήθεια herself (Bowra (1953) 47), or Persephone (Gemelli Marciano (2008) 35-36). Another possibility is that we are dealing with an unnamed, but polymorph deity uniting Dike, Ananke, Moira, Peitho and Themis in herself (Mourelatos (2008) 25-26). To me it seems most likely that the goddess is intentionally left unidentified (as Bowra (1953) 47-48 and Furley (1973) 3 argue), so in this thesis I will simply refer to the revealing deity as 'the goddess'.

[4] Examples of research focusing on the literary side of the poem are Bowra (1953) (about the origins of the images of the proem) and Miller (2006). A purely philosophical interpretation (of mainly the ἀλήθεια) is given by Curd (1998) and McKirahan (2008).

mythology and the used literary strategies to draw the audience into Parmenides' philosophy.[5] Leaving these two pioneers aside, most research aiming at connecting the literary to the philosophical focusses on the question why Parmenides chose to write in poetry rather than in prose, like his predecessors had done.[6]

Answers to this question tend to include that Parmenides wished to reject the theories of his predecessors who wrote in prose,[7] choosing instead to connect his own work to the traditional framework of the poets of the past, mainly Homer and Hesiod. One of the various themes emphasising the link between Parmenides' own poem and his poetic predecessors is authority. By placing almost his whole poem in the mouth of a revealing goddess, he frames the transferred knowledge as divine.[8] Since the gods traditionally spoke in dactylic hexameters (e.g. in Homer and Hesiod), Parmenides legitimated his new, philosophical discourse by anchoring it in the poetic tradition in which the gods were the authority of all knowledge.[9] Furthermore, it was epistemologically convenient for Parmenides to connect himself to Hesiod,[10] since he wished to convey two types of knowledge, only one of which was said to be true (ἀληθής), which echoes the statement of the Muses in Hesiod that only they know the difference between the truth and lies they will tell.[11] Since the claim to truth was already codified in hexameters by Hesiod in a way unknown to the prose of that time, it was logical for Parmenides to choose verse when he wished to claim the same truth-level.

Scholars also point out more pragmatic reasons for the choice for poetry: poetry might have reached a larger audience than prose[12] and poetry is easier to remember than prose.[13] Whereas the question to Parmenides' motive for choosing poetry certainly discusses an

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[5] Morgan (2000); Robbiano (2005).

[6] The quality of his poetry is generally regarded as rather low. For the ancient judgement on Parmenides as a poet, see Diels (1897) 5-6. Modern scholars tend to agree with this disapproval: Barnes (1982) 155 calls Parmenides' choice for poetry 'hard to excuse'; Calogero (1970) 9 states that Parmenides 'has to struggle toilsomely to force his new ideas into the hexameters'; Morgan (2000) 67 refers to Parmenides' verses as 'commonly stigmatised as clumsy and pedestrian'.

[7] E.g. Granger (2007) 416-417. He rejected their world-views on the ground that they did not take the unity of Being into account, so Parmenides' choice for poetry could be seen as emphasizing the great distinction between his own conceptions and the ones of his forbearers writing in prose (cf. Kahn (2003) 157). However, a disagreement in content would not necessarily entail a formal rupture with his predecessors.

[8] Kahn (2003) 157.

[9] Most (1999) 355.

[10] Wright (1997) 5-6. For a more elaborate discussion of the foundation of Parmenides' epistemology in Hesiod, see Iribarren (forthcoming).

[11] Hesiod, *Theogony* 26-28.

[12] E.g. Granger (2007) 405. The larger audience would mainly be due to the public or semi-public readings and competitions of poetry in archaic time (Finnegan (1977) 166). I follow Bowra (1953) 47 and Gentili (1988) 156 in assuming a large and general audience for Parmenides' poem rather than an inner circle (for which e.g. Gemelli Marciano (2002) 89-90 and Thesleff (1990) 110 argue). Thesleff's main reason for regarding Parmenides' poem as esoteric, the fact that it did not become generally known, since only philosophers commented upon it, can easily be countered by the references to Parmenides by non-philosophical writers, e.g. the contrast between δοκεῖν and εἶναι in Aeschylus' *Agammemnon* 788-789 (Kouremenos (1993) 260) and the allusions in the proem of Aristophanes' *Clouds* (the choice between two possible discourses in 112-118 could refer to Parmenides' two ways in B2; Iribarren (2013) 138-139).

[13] Kahn (2003) 157. Since it takes less effort to remember a text when rhythm or metre has been added to it, as was recognized already in Antiquity (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.1409b1ff.), the poem could more easily be memorized by both the poet and his audience.

important aspect of the relation between form and content in his poem, the literary form and philosophical content are connected even further, for example in the fact that they share common notions, as I shall demonstrate.

In this thesis, I will therefore focus on an understudied aspect of the form-content relation in Parmenides. Circularity, defined as an either two- or three-dimensional concept of radial invariance, is a regularly recurring notion in all three sections of Parmenides' poem (proem, ἀλήθεια, and δόξαι). It is employed both in form (e.g. ringcomposition, see chapter 1.2) and in content (for example the rings the cosmos consists of, see chapter 3.2). Although the significance of some of these instances of circularity has been studied thoroughly (e.g. the well-rounded ball to which Being is compared has received a great deal of scholarly attention, see chapter 2.3), the importance of others has been overlooked in scholarship. In this MA-thesis, I will provide a systematic overview of the instances of circularity throughout the poem. A notion in both form and content, I shall argue that circularity is of fundamental importance for the philosophical doctrine of Parmenides. This philosophical significance of circularity lies in the fact that the instances in which it is evoked all figure his theory in some way.

The figurability of theory, i.e. the means by which Parmenides' theory is figurable and actually figured, may come across as a paradox, because of the Platonic resonance of the Greek θεωρία, from which the English 'theory' etymologically derives. Plato's θεωρία carries the implication of the contemplation of the Platonic Ideas, which can be hardly conveyed in language nor figured. In this thesis, however, I employ the word 'theory' in the modern, English sense of the word, so without the Platonic connotation.

The theory which is figured by means of circularity should be understood in its broadest sense. Whereas sometimes the figured theory can be the philosophical doctrine of the ἀλήθεια or the one of the δόξαι, at other times it can be (the unity of) the poem as a whole, an element of the narrative in the proem to introduce these two doctrines, or a particular aspect of the doctrine of the ἀλήθεια or the δόξαι.

Figuring the theory entails three different ways in which circularity contributes to the theoretical elaboration of the doctrine. Circularity is no mere ornament, but a substantial and irremovable part of Parmenides' theory. The three ways I shall discuss, which can overlap in individual instances, are didactic, polemic, and reflective.

Firstly, circularity can figure the theory by being didactic, *showing* (an element of) the theory by demonstrating it. Circles and spheres are particularly apt for this, because their visual nature makes it easier for an audience (both the internal audience, i.e. the κοῦρος, and the external audience[14]) to grasp something more abstract. In the reasoning for the attribution of completeness to Being, for example, a comparison to a well-rounded ball is used to visually show this abstract notion of completeness to the audience, making it easier to comprehend (cf. subchapter 2.3). This ball therefore functions as a didactic and heuristic device.

Furthermore, circularity can be employed to figure the theory by polemic contrast. This opposing distinction can be directed either against predecessors and rival theories, or, more often in case of Parmenides, against the other part of his own composition (so circularity in the

[14] The external audience of Parmenides comprised both listeners and readers. The setting of poetic performances means that his work was to a large extent meant to be heard, although he was also anticipating it to be read (Havelock (1983) 9). This Presocratic literature is located in the grey area of continuity, since orality and literacy are not mutually exclusive categories (Finnegan (1977) 24).

ἀλήθεια contrasts it to the δόξαι and vice versa). The plurality of the rings out of which the cosmos of the δόξαι exists, for instance, is placed on the same line as the well-rounded ball Being is compared to. The fact that circularity is employed in the description of both elements invites for reflection and comparison by the audience. Circularity in this instance stresses the contrast between the unity which lies at the basis of the ἀλήθεια (there is only one sphere) and the plurality as key characteristic of the δόξαι (there is a plurality of spherical rings; see section 3.2).

Finally, another way in which a theory can be figured is reflectivity. A circular object can reflect on an aspect of the theory, whether that be (an aspect of) the compositional section to which it belongs or the unity of the composition. To give an example, the chariot of the proem reflects on the poem's unity. Although the chariot comprises duality, since it has two wheels, it also forms a unity, since there is only a single chariot. The round wheels of the chariot reflect on the way in which also Parmenides' poem consists of two revelations, but can and should nevertheless also be seen as one poem forming a whole, just like the chariot. I shall describe this metapoetical reflectivity in subchapter 1.1.

In this thesis, I shall thus answer the question how circularity figures Parmenides' theory and what its philosophical significance is. The theory under discussion can refer to any section or aspect of Parmenides' poem and its figuration happens through didactic, polemic, and/or reflective adhibitions of circularity in all its forms, both in compositional structure and content.

The methodology I will adhibit in this MA-thesis is close reading combined with concepts originating in art theory. One might ask why it is valuable, useful, or legitimate to transfer concepts from another scholarly discipline into one's own. I shall take these concepts, whose theoretical basis comes from Louis Marin's semiology of visual arts,[15] in order to examine the ways in which Parmenides shapes his theory by visually giving it a form.

Parmenides employs the notion of circularity as a visual tool to figure his theory. Circularity should be regarded as visual, because of the effect that people easily see it before their mind's eyes due to their experiences with this geometrical form in daily life. Some instances of circularity in Parmenides' poem can even be regarded as *ekphraseis*, which are vivid descriptions bringing the content before the mind's eye.[16] An example of *ekphrasis* entailing circularity in Parmenides is the visual description of the wheels of the chariot in the proem (cf. section 1.1), whose level of details brings it vividly before the eye of the audience. However, not all instances of circularity are *ekphraseis*, because the notion is not always vividly and elaborately described, but sometimes simply alluded to. Generally speaking, circularity is employed by Parmenides as a visual tool, with a purpose similar to the one of *ekphraseis*: bringing a vivid picture before the mind's eye. However, circularity is not only employed for the rhetorical enlivening effect on the audience, but, more than an average *ekphrasis*, it also conveys the philosophical message on a conceptual level. Due to its right combination of being abstract (and thus widely employable throughout the poem) and being concrete (helping people to visually imagine even more abstract concepts such as Being), circularity is a very helpful visual tool for Parmenides to convey elements of his theory. Because of its visual nature which easily evokes an image in the minds of the audience, circularity can legitimately be described by concepts from art theory, especially those who are meant to interpret elements of visual arts.

[15] Marin (1989); Marin (1996).
[16] Definition of the ancient rhetorician Aetius Theon; cf. De Jonge (2016) 212.

These concepts will turn out useful for this purpose, for, having proven their value in describing the significance of objects in visual arts for the total understanding of the artwork, they will increase our understanding of the ways circles and spheres contribute to Parmenides' doctrine, since circularity, due to its strong visual connotations in the audience' minds, also can be seen as a visual tool in literature. Objects in visual arts and circularity in literature thus have their visual aspect and theoretical significance in common, which makes it valuable and useful to transfer those concepts from art theory to literature.

One may ask if it is legitimate to take these concepts out of the field in which they have been developed. Are they not intrinsically connected to the understanding of the material to which they were meant to contribute? Although I grant that theories tend to be established with a particular corpus or study object in mind, this question asks for a more conceptual discussion on the function and aim of scientific theories which falls outside the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, I would like to remark that there is a certain reciprocity between a theory and the material to which it is applied. Not only does the theory change our understanding of the material, it also works the other way around: certain material can change (our views about) the scientific theory. The application of a theory only becomes scientific when scholars do not hold on too rigidly to its fixedness, but grant that a theory stands in function of the interpretation of a text, which may mean that it needs to undergo some changes to better fulfil its purpose. Although the aim of a theory is and should be to cover as many instances as possible and to possess a widespread validity, its value does not lie in covering the highest number of instances, but in the quality of interpretation which the application of the theory provides to the single instances. Therefore, I regard it justifiable to transfer these concepts from the semiology of visual arts to archaic Greek poetry, provided that they be adapted in order to better fit this new material. I have adjusted the following definitions of frame and theoretical objects, which I will adhibit in this thesis, in order to serve this purpose.

The first concept I shall employ is the one of a 'frame'. In the visual arts, a frame is one of the figurative tools of representation in paintings.[17] Being a structural element of the picture's construction, it defines the edges of the painting and hence supports the surface of representation.[18] It is not simply an ornament, but an essential addition, since it causes the representation to identify itself by excluding other elements from sight and thus by pointing to the main representational object of contemplation.[19] In this thesis, I will treat the ringcomposition as a textual equivalent of the frame, for the ringcomposition, defined as 'a theme posed at the start and after a digression (which can be long or short) repeated at the end, so that the whole digression is surrounded by sentences of the same content and more or less similar wording',[20] can fulfil the same deictic function as the frame in visual arts.

I would like to make a distinction between two types of ringcomposition: the narrative ringcomposition and the figurative ringcomposition. By a narrative ringcomposition, I mean the use of ringcomposition as a logical or rhetorical device. The ringcomposition then functions as taking up the main narrative after a digression, as closing off an element of the description, as

[17] Marin (1996) 80.
[18] Marin (1996) 82.
[19] Ibidem.
[20] Van Otterlo (1944) 3.

reminding the audience where the main story was heading or as repeating the elements the author wishes to emphasize.[21]

The second type of ringcomposition, which has not previously been recognized, is the figurative ringcomposition. The figurative ringcomposition is more than just a narrative device: through figuration of the content by the shape of composition this very content is reinforced.[22] Since the literary device of ringcomposition figures the content of the lines involved in the ringcomposition, it adds significance to them. Needless to say, the figurative ringcomposition figures the theory in the sense that its form reflects on the theory's content.

Both types of ringcomposition can function as the textual equivalent of the frame: the narrative ringcomposition has the deictic function of directing the focus of the audience to the centre of the ringcomposition and the figurative ringcomposition does the same, but not only to the centre, but also to the way in which it reinforces the content by resembling it in shape. The deictic function of both ringcompositions also makes it a didactic device, since the audience's attention is pointed towards a central point.

The second concept I shall employ is the theoretical object, which contributes to the reflective figuration of Parmenides' theory. A theoretical object is a representational object whose description contains two dimensions, the intransitive and the transitive.[23] In the transitive dimension, the theoretical object forms the representation of something else. In the intransitive dimension, the theoretical object signals that it not only presents something concrete, but also represents something different. Both these layers are constitutive of a theoretical object: it connects the object it represents (transitive dimension) with the signal that the object in question is in fact a representation (intransitive dimension). It thus reflects on its own representational capacity and thereby gives the tools to the audience to reflect upon its own functioning: the audience is invited to look for the layers of reflection that the discourse is implying. These layers often contain something that could not possibly be otherwise expressed (e.g. in a logical argumentation), but that entail a level of abstraction or suggestion that forces it to be expressed through the representation of the theoretical object.

One could ask what the difference is between an allegory and a theoretical object in a text, since both concepts contain the notion of reflectivity. There are, however, two main differences. Firstly, with a full-blown allegory the presentational layer in the intransitive dimension is absent: it purely functions as representing something else, whereas with the theoretical object both the presentational layer and the representational layer are present at the same time. Although the intransitive dimension contains a sign that the theoretical object also represents something, the described object continues to have a function in the narrative on its

[21] This narrative ringcomposition includes both Van Otterlo's (Van Otterlo (1948) 8-9) inclusive ringcomposition and his anaphoric ringcomposition, the existence of which is denied by Steinrück (2013) 9-10.

[22] A good example is the ringcomposition in the description of Achilles' shield in Homer, *Iliad* 18. The whole scene is framed by the outer ring σάκος μέγα τε στιβαρόν τε (lines 478 and 609) and the first image on the shield to be spoken of (λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο, line 489) is also the last (ποταμοῖο μέγα σθένος Ὠκεανοῖο, line 607). The striking point is that the Okeanos actually surrounds the shield (line 608). The double mentioning of the Okeanos, at the beginning and the end of the description, thus forms a figurative ringcomposition that resembles the round form of the shield itself. The shape of the literary device (the circle of the ringcomposition) thus reinforces the circular shape of the shield in the content of the lines involved in the ringcomposition.

[23] Marin (1996) 79.

own. In the case of the metapoetical and cosmologically reflective chariot which will be examined in chapter 1.1, for example, the chariot does not merely function as representing the metapoetical and cosmological layer, but also presents a chariot that functions in the narrative as bringing the κοῦρος to the revealing goddess. In a pure allegory this presentational layer would be absent.

Secondly, the theoretical object is internally reflective, whereas the allegory is externally reflective. The two concepts appeal to different kind of readings. The internal structure of the text is irrelevant for the allegory: a certain passage is taken out of its context and taken to signify something that is not in the text. It thus has an external referent, often ethics or cosmology. A theoretical object, on the other hand, is internally reflective: the theoretical object also represents something outside of the description of that specific object, but the reference is nevertheless made to something within the text or artwork as a whole. One could even say that the theoretical object 'allegorizes itself': it does not project the meaning to the outside world, but elucidates the internal logic of the text itself. The text itself thus contains clues of its own interpretation, albeit in a different order. In the case of Parmenides, for example, the description of the chariot in the proem (see chapter 1.1) reflects on the unity of the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι, and thus has an internal reflective referent.

The thesis is divided in three chapters, coinciding with the three compositional sections of Parmenides' poem. In the first chapter, I will discuss the circular objects of the chariot wheels and door gates in the proem. The circularity here employed reflects on the compositional unity of the poem and the principal unity of the ἀλήθεια in contrast to the cosmological plurality of the δόξαι. Furthermore, I shall argue that a figurative ringcomposition reflects on the circular journey of the daughters of the Sun, thus establishing the underworld as the location of the revelation.

In the second chapter, on circularity in the ἀλήθεια, I shall set forth how the goddess adhibits the image of a circle to reflect on the discourse, thus shaping the theory of the ἀλήθεια by recurrently coming back to one of its main premises. Besides, I shall argue that Being is not to be imagined as spherical or well-rounded, and that the visual tool of the comparison to a well-rounded ball, both in form and content, is meant to didactically show the homogeneity and completeness of Being to the audience, helping them to reflect on its very essence.

The third chapter will elaborate on the mistake of the mortals in the δόξαι, polemically reflecting on the conflict between the unity of the ἀλήθεια and the plurality of the δόξαι. Moreover, the various heterogeneous rings, out of which the cosmos is made, didactically demonstrate the cosmological views of the mortals and reflect on key differences between the two revelations of the goddess. The spherical moon in particular invites reflection on the very nature of the δόξαι through a polemic pun to Homer.

Chapter 1: Circularity as figuring concept in the proem

This first chapter, dealing with the way circularity functions as a poetical motif to figure the theory in the proem of Parmenides' poem (B1), consists of two main parts, preceded by an introduction providing the context of the proem. The first subchapter (1.1) will discuss the circular objects in the proem: the chariot's wheels and the turning axle-posts of the gates. I shall argue that the circularity here employed reflects on the compositional unity of the poem and the principal unity of the ἀλήθεια in contrast to the cosmological plurality of the δόξαι. Comprising duality (two wheels, two doors) and unity (one chariot, one gate) at the same time, the circular objects of the poem do not figure the theory of the proem (since the proem does not contain its own philosophical theory), but the theory of Parmenides as a whole, since (a) it reflects on the theme of unity versus plurality which runs throughout the whole poem and (b) it reflects on the unity of the compositional parts of Parmenides' poem. The second subchapter (1.2) will examine the topography of the described journey. I will argue that the ringcomposition figures the circular journey and establishes the underworld as the location of the revelation. The circular nature of the journey is reinforced by the circular narrative form, which figures the topography of the journey and the location of the goddess.

The proem, in which the κοῦρος is brought to the revealing goddess, describes this chariot journey, guided by mares and maidens, later made clear to be the daughters of the Sun. It starts with a technical description of the axle of the chariot's wheels and the sound it makes. The daughters of the Sun have left the house of Night and pull back their veils. The exact direction of the journey they made is contested, as I will dilate upon in the second main part of this chapter. It is undisputed that the journey goes through the 'gates of the paths of Night and Day'.[24] These gates, resembling the house of Night in Hesiod's *Theogony* 736-766,[25] are guarded by Dike, who is persuaded by the daughters of the Sun to let the κοῦρος pass. After another technical description of how the doors open, the κοῦρος is carried further on the path, where he meets the goddess, the narrator shifting from the κοῦρος to her in order to reveal her knowledge.

There have been two main ways in which scholars have tried to illuminate the meaning of this proem: examining the intertextual borrowings from Homer, Hesiod, and others, and reading the poem as an allegory.[26]

The proem is clearly richly embedded in other literature, which caused scholars to assume many different subtexts.[27] Although such parallels can be illuminating and can help us to understand the context Parmenides' proem should be read in, many semantic associations helping to shape the meaning of a word have been lost, so it is intrinsically impossible for us to

[24] ἔνθα πύλαι νυκτός τε καὶ ἤματός εἰσι κελεύθων (B1.11).
[25] Bollack (2006) 78. For the similarities and differences between Hesiod's house of Night and Parmenides' gates of the roads of Night and Day, see Bowra (1953) 44 and Robbiano (2005) 185-188.
[26] Most (1999) 354.
[27] Diels (1897) 12-21 accounts for an Orphic subtext; Bowra (1953) 44-46 sees the journey of Phaeton and the ascension of Heracles as subtexts; Fränkel (1955) 158 compares the chariot to the one in Pindar's *Olympian Ode* 6.22-27; Havelock (1958) 136-140 examines the intertextuality with Homer's *Odyssey*; Coxon (1986) 9-11 gives a list of Parmenides' main debts to Homer.

grasp its full sense.[28] This *caveat*, however, does not mean that we should stop searching for subtexts and discussing their meaning.

The most important way in which the proem is and has often been read, on the other hand, is as an allegory. There are several allegorical readings possible, but there are two main ones: of light as knowledge and of the κοῦρος as a religious cult-initiate. Since ancient times the proem has been seen as an allegory for a journey towards knowledge,[29] in which darkness and light would symbolize respectively ignorance and knowledge, and the gates the κοῦρος goes through would stand for the obstacles between men and the truth.[30] The most influential in establishing this allegory in modern times has been Bowra, giving an extensive overview of the meaning of the elements of the proem.[31] The second possibility of the object of allegorical reference is the account of a religious initiation, mainly because of the phrase εἰδότα φῶτα, 'the man who knows'.[32] The κοῦρος could thus be seen as described with the words that one normally would use to describe an initiate of a religious sect.[33] Although this phrase may have evoked these associations with his hearers and readers, Parmenides meant something slightly different by it, namely 'the awareness that reality cannot be known through the senses'.[34]

Partly because it is unclear whether the device of allegory was so far developed in Parmenides' time,[35] the tendency in scholarship has shifted from treating this proem as a full-blown allegory (being either of light as knowledge or of the κοῦρος as a religious cult-initiate) to seeing it in terms of 'metaphor' and 'image',[36] or to treating allegory as a possibility, but only one out of many.[37]

1.1 Circular objects in the proem

The proem contains two circular objects: the wheels of the chariot and the opening gates. Described in a high level of detail, when compared to other descriptions of these objects in archaic literature, they reflect on the metapoetical unity of the poem and the cosmological issue of unity versus plurality. The wheels of the chariot, the first circular object to appear in the proem, are described as follows:

> ἄξων δ' ἐν χνοίῃσιν ἴ<ει> σύριγγος ἀυτήν
> αἰθόμενος, δοιοῖς γὰρ ἐπείγετο δινωτοῖσιν
> κύκλοις ἀμφοτέρωθεν (B1.6-8)[38]

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[28] Burkert (1969) 2-3.
[29] Waterfield (2000) 49-50. As far as we know, the first to read the proem allegorically is the sceptic philosopher Sextus Empiricus from the 2nd/3rd century AD (Granger (2008) 4).
[30] Coxon (1986) 13.
[31] Bowra (1953) 39-40.
[32] B1.3.
[33] Bowra (1953) 50-51.
[34] Coxon (1986) 159.
[35] Bowra (1953) 40 obviously thinks that it was, stating that the allegory became more widespread in the sixth century BC and that it also came in use outside mythology, but Gemelli Marciano (2008) 27 denies that a full-blown allegory already existed at the time.
[36] Granger (2008) 4.
[37] Robbiano (2005) 18.
[38] αὐτήν] Coxon ἀυτὴν.

The axle in the naves sent forth the whistle of a pipe,
burning,[39] for it was urged forward by two whirling wheels
on either side.

There are three noteworthy elements in these lines I shall examine closer: the whistle of a pipe, the overheating of the axle and the mentioning of the wheels. First of all, the shrill noise that the axle makes when the hubs press on it, is part of a stock description of rapid chariot movement in epic.[40] A good example of this element of sound in another chariot description is to be found in the chariot race depicted on Heracles' shield:

ἐπὶ δὲ πλῆμναι μέγ' ἀύτευν. (Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles* 309)[41]

And the naves of the wheels shrieked heavily.

The sound made by the chariot is in both passages described by a word from the same root: respectively ἀυτή and ἀυτέω. In Parmenides' description, the mentioning of this noise is especially striking, since it is the first sound depicted in the proem. In fact, when we exclude the speech of the goddess, only one other sound is described: the speech of the daughters of the Sun persuading Dike to let the κοῦρος pass ('with soft words').[42] The mentioning of the shriek is an element which places the proem in a realistic, physical context.

Another element functioning likewise, is the word αἰθόμενος ('burning'), referring to the overheating of the axle. As Coxon already noted, this is founded on a physical fact: the axle of fast-moving chariots makes a shrieking noise and cannot get rid of its heat.[43]

After the reference to the thermal condition of the axle, it is said to be urged forward by two whirling wheels on either side, a statement Mourelatos argues to be quite superfluous.[44] He points to its motive as a precedent in Homer's description of Hera's chariot:[45]

πλῆμναι δ' ἀργύρου εἰσὶ περίδρομοι ἀμφοτέρωθεν·
δίφρος δὲ χρυσέοισι καὶ ἀργυρέοισιν ἱμᾶσιν
ἐντέταται, δοιαὶ δὲ περίδρομοι ἄντυγές εἰσι. (Homer, *Iliad* 5.726-728)[46]

And the naves of the wheels are of silver, running round on either side:
and the chariot-board is hung on tight-stretched straps of gold and silver,
and there are two round rails running round.

[39] According to Coxon (1986) 160 αἰθόμενος in this passage means 'burning', not 'glowing'.
[40] Mourelatos (2008) 12-13.
[41] Text Russo (1950) 155.
[42] μαλακοῖσι λόγοισι (B1.15).
[43] Coxon (1986) 160.
[44] Mourelatos (2008) 13: 'From the point of view of narration the statement is quite superfluous: the introductory γάρ makes this elaboration of the obvious even a bit pompous.'
[45] Wright (1997) 8-9 also compares the two passages, seeing a parallel in the haste. In the *Iliad*, Hera and Athena namely rush to the Olympus to consult Zeus, and in Parmenides the daughters of the Sun speed the κοῦρος towards the goddess.
[46] Text Allen (1931) 153.

Although this is indeed a parallel to the motive,[47] Mourelatos in my opinion does not entirely grasp Parmenides' aim in mentioning the two wheels, since he grants importance neither to the level of detail they are described in nor to their duality, which I shall now argue to be significant elements in unravelling interpretative possibilities.

As said before, the highly detailed description of the chariot is full of realistic elements: the shriek and the overheating. These realistic images, known to the audience from their daily life, have the effect of stressing that the κοῦρος comes from their own world. Since in that sense he does not differ so much from them, he becomes more relatable for the audience, which is an excellent way of drawing the audience into the text.[48]

Those realistic elements are also the signal to regard the chariot as a theoretical object: the level of described details functions as a signifier that the text not only presents, but represents something. The chariot is more often described in literature,[49] but Parmenides describes it ostensively with a level of details not taken into account by the other poets. By polemically putting himself apart from his predecessors, he signals with this precision that different layers of meaning are hidden behind the surface. The chariot is a theoretical object in the sense that it demonstrates two different modes of internal reflectivity, which ultimately need a figure like this to be realized, since they entail a level of subtlety which could not have been expressed in a logical step-by-step argumentation.

The first mode of reflectivity the chariot entails is the metapoetical dimension. Although the chariot had been used already as an allegory for song before,[50] Parmenides adds an extra layer: the chariot not only stands for the poem as a whole, but the detail of the two wheels, judged by Mourelatos to be superfluous, also represents the two parts of the revelation. Just as the two wheels are parts of the chariot as a whole, the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι are parts of the overarching poem. Already in this metapoetical dimension the unease of the junction of these two parts of the revelation (since they contradict each other) comes to light: the joining literally causes friction, symbolized in the description by the shrieking noise that the axle brings forth. In spite of this friction, the chariot nevertheless is able to fulfil its function and move the κοῦρος forward, just as the poem becomes a whole despite the junction that is difficult to explain.

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[47] Another parallel which is often made is Pindar's *Olympian Odes* 6.22-27. The point of comparison is the metapoetical role that the chariot fulfills. Bowra (1953) 41-43 works out the exact parallels between these two passages: both the chariots can be seen as metapoetical and go through open gates. Both attribute wisdom to their animals and two phrases strongly resemble each other. Since Pindar and Parmenides were more or less contemporaries, it is possible that Pindar's source was Parmenides or the other way around, but it is more likely that they both drew on a common source (Granger (2008) 7). Because Pindar's imagery is closely connected to its encomiastic context (Gemelli Marciano (2008) 28), the only information this parallel provides about Parmenides deals with either Parmenides' reception or Parmenides' lost source, neither of which is relevant for my current purpose.

[48] Three other elements functioning to let the audience identify with the κοῦρος are, as Robbiano (2005) 70-73 argued, the fact that the κοῦρος is described as 'the man who knows' (εἰδότα φῶτα, B1.3), which is desirable, the fact that he is the focaliser, and the fact that he is described in positive terms. Furthermore, it is made easier for the audience to relate to the κοῦρος because they have a comparable amount of wisdom at the start of the poem.

[49] E.g. Theognis 249-250; Bacchylides 5.176-178; Pindar *Olympian Ode* 9.82; see Bowra (1953) 41-42 for an extensive list.

[50] See footnote 49.

The second mode of reflectivity of the chariot as a theoretical object is the cosmological reflectivity: the chariot consists of two wheels, but nevertheless also can be seen as one single chariot. As Morgan already noted, the duality can be said to be introduced in the proem in order to provide a literary model for the progress of the poem.[51] The proem still reflects the phenomenal world, in which the audience finds itself before becoming initiated, together with the κοῦρος, in the knowledge of the ἀλήθεια.[52] This phenomenal world, just like the δόξαι, contains plurality. The duality in the proem already foreshadows the cosmological duality in the δόξαι, since there the two cosmogonical principles Fire and Night are introduced. The fact that the proem foreshadows the δόξαι in this sense should, however, not be seen as an argument to state that the δόξαι are true, but rather the opposite. Since the δόξαι are said to be deceptive,[53] the fact that the proem also contains this plurality rather implies that the κοῦρος (and the audience along with him) is still in the mindset of the mortals, who believe in plurality. From the viewpoint of the κοῦρος at the start of the poem, there is plurality in the world, but he will soon find out (by hearing the ἀλήθεια from the goddess) that this is the wrong way of looking at it.

In the world the κοῦρος finds himself in during the proem, there is duality: the chariot which carries him contains two wheels. The knowledge of the ἀλήθεια, directly following the proem, does no longer acknowledge plurality, but only recognizes unity. The cosmological reflectivity of the chariot functions as a didactic tool for the audience, since by learning the ἀλήθεια, one receives the tools to rethink the proem and can then come to the conclusion that although at the time there seemed to be duality (since there were two wheels), one now has the insight that only the unity matters (the fact that there is only one chariot). The chariot thus becomes an image of how the κοῦρος (and with him the audience) progress in knowledge: first it seemed as if there were two wheels, but now the way in which they together form a unity is striking. The ἀλήθεια thus offers the audience the possibility to reflect on the duality in the wheels and rethink it to be a unity.

The chariot through its internal reflectivity thus functions as a symbol of both the unity of ἀλήθεια and δόξαι in the same poem and the way in which duality can be rethought as unity. Both modes of reflectivity are based on the relation of the two wheels to the single chariot, and are signalled by the high level of details the description contains by which Parmenides polemically sets himself apart from other chariot descriptions.

There is one other circular object in the proem: the opening doors of the gate. Right after the description of the gates, the keys of which[54] Dike is said to hold, the daughters of the Sun try to persuade Dike to open the gates for the κοῦρος as follows:

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[51] Morgan (2000) 80.
[52] Cf. Deichgräber (1959) 11.
[53] E.g. in B1.30: 'the opinions of mortals, which comprise no genuine conviction'; cf. subchapter 3.1.
[54] It remains unclear why there is more than one key. I fully agree with Mansfeld (1964) 241 that a poetic plural in such a technical passage seems unlikely. Diels (1897) 51 argued that Parmenides described a Laconian lock, in which a number of βάλανοι (pins) would be lifted by a single key (for illustrations of this lock, see Diels (1897) 141-145). This, however, does not explain the several keys, nor is it certain that the Laconian lock already existed in Parmenides' time (Coxon (1986) 164). According to Coxon (*ibidem*), a door functioned in such a way that one key per βάλανος was required, and since βαλανωτὸν ὀχῆα makes clear that these gates only have one βάλανος, he concludes that Parmenides 'is concerned to emphasize the impregnability of the divine realm'. This, however, still does not explain the inconsistency in this further accurate description.

τὴν δὴ [...] κοῦραι [...]
πεῖσαν ἐπιφραδέως, ὥς σφιν βαλανωτὸν ὀχῆα
ἀπτερέως ὤσειε πυλέων ἄπο˙ ταὶ δὲ θυρέτρων
χάσμ᾽ ἀχανὲς ποίησαν ἀναπτάμεναι πολυχάλκους
ἄξονας ἐν σύριγξιν ἀμοιβαδὸν εἰλίξασαι
γόμφοις καὶ περόνῃσιν ἀρηρότε (B1.15-20)

Her the maidens […]
carefully persuaded to swiftly push back the bar, fastened with a bolt-pin,
for them from the gates: and when the gates had flown open,
they created a yawning gap in the door frame,
as they had caused the bronze axle-posts, fixed with bolts and pins,
to turn successively in their sockets.

This is the second passage in which Parmenides gives a highly detailed and technical description. The bronze axle-posts (πολυχάλκους ἄξονας) turned in their sockets (ἐν σύριγξιν), which were sunk in the threshold and probably also metal-lined.[55] This circular movement, of which the axle-posts form the centre, is also characterized by duality: there are two doors. In contrast to the chariot wheels, who made the same movement at the same time, the doors open one after the other (ἀμοιβαδόν).

This passage thus resembles the previously discussed one about the wheels in multiple ways. Both passages entail circularity (in the roundness of the wheels and in the movement of the axle-posts) and duality (two wheels and two axle-posts). They both contain a high level of detail connected to daily experiences of the audience. Furthermore, the language recalls the earlier passage: the word σύριγξ is used in both contexts, albeit in a slightly different meaning (‘pipe’ vs. ‘door socket’).[56] These passages are thus closely connected, but how should this be interpreted?

In my opinion, the references of this passage to the description of the chariot wheels are the signal that the audience should look for the layers beyond this description as well. The close connection between the two passages invites to examine their interconnection and is the signal that these gates also should be considered as a theoretical object. The result of the examination to their interconnection is that the gates contain the same two reflective layers as the chariot did: the two passages are connected in every possible way.

The gates entail the same cosmological reflectivity: the depicted object carries at the same time a duality (two doors) and a unity (one gate). As described above, they thus form a didactic tool for the audience, who at the beginning notices the duality but with the unfolding of the poem receives the needed information to regard it as a unity.

Although less obvious than the cosmological reflectivity, the gates also contain the metapoetical mode of reflectivity. The description of the chariot, where the metapoetical layer is absolutely undisputed because of the tradition already attributing that meaning to chariots in poetry, is clearly invoked in the mind of the audience in the description of the gates. Because of the strong references (level of detail, lexical reference of σύριγξ, thematical reference of

[55] Coxon (1986) 165.
[56] Morgan (2000) 76.

circularity) and mainly because of the fact that this passage contains the same elements of a duality nevertheless being contained within a unity, the gates also can be seen as reflecting on the way in which the revelations of the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι are part of the same poem. Although at first sight these two compositional parts may seem to contradict and to fit in badly with each other, they nevertheless form a unity, in the same way in which the gates together form the unity of the door.

Through its references to the description of the chariot, the gates share the chariot's metapoetical and cosmological reflectivity. Besides functioning as a tool to draw the audience into the text by the fairly large amount of details, the gates thus figure the theory of the poem as a whole. Whereas I shall argue that circularity in the ἀλήθεια and δόξαι mainly figures the doctrine of its own compositional section (and at most the theory of the other part by polemic contrast), the gates and the chariot reflect on the relation between unity and plurality (for more information, see subchapter 3.1) which runs through the entire poem as a leitmotiv. Furthermore, it also figures Parmenides' theory, because it reflects on the way his poem remains a whole, despite its fairly contrasting components.

1.2 Circular topography of the journey

The topography of the journey made by the daughters of the Sun and the κοῦρος belongs to the most heavily debated topics in Parmenidean scholarship. The question is whether the κοῦρος is brought in the chariot to the house of Night or to the light. Where can we locate the goddess and where did the revelation take place? Or is the topography so blurred that it becomes impossible to pin it down? I will argue that the ringcomposition shaping the proem helps us in establishing the journey as circular, which places the revelation in the darkness. Circularity is in this case employed not as a notion of content, but as one of form. As such, the ringcomposition which encompasses the circularity also establishes a circular event (the journey), thus reinforcing its own circular shape. The narrative form of ringcomposition in the proem figures the course of events (the circular journey) in the sense that it deictically demonstrates it by resembling its circularity. The audience thus learns of the location of the goddess in the darkness (an important characteristic of Parmenides' theory, since the theme of darkness and night is omnipresent in the poem, both as the setting against which the proem unfolds itself and as a cosmogonical principle in the δόξαι) through the circular journey which is reinforced by the circular narrative structure of the poem. The ringcomposition and the journey therefore have a didactic purpose in figuring this element of Parmenides' theory: they are meant to educate the audience on the location of the goddess.

The unclarity about the direction of the journey is caused by the indeterminacy of Parmenides' syntax in the following key clause:[57]

> […] ὅτε σπερχοίατο πέμπειν
> ἡλιάδες κοῦραι, προλιποῦσαι δώματα νυκτός
> εἰς φάος, ὠσάμεναι κράτων ἄπο χερσὶ καλύπτρας. (B1.8-10)[58]

[57] Miller (2006) 20.
[58] κοῦραι,] Coxon κοῦραι (without comma).

when the daughters of the Sun made haste to escort me,
having left the house of Night for the light,
after they had thrust the veils from their heads with their hands.

The direction of the journey depends on whether one constructs εἰς φάος with the finite verb σπερχοίατο πέμπειν ('made haste to escort me towards the light') or with the immediately preceding participial clause προλιποῦσαι δώματα Νυκτός ('having left the house of Night to go towards the light').[59]

The former construction was the *communis opinio* in the first half of the twentieth century. The editors Diels and Tarán placed προλιποῦσαι δώματα Νυκτός between commas, arguing that the κοῦρος was taken by the daughters of the Sun into the light, where he received the revelation of the goddess.[60] Several arguments can be given for this position. First of all, it is convenient in the reading of the proem as an allegory, in which light stands for knowledge and darkness for ignorance (i).[61] When one wishes to maintain this allegory, the goddess, and therefore the destination of the κοῦρος, needs to be located in the light. It is not implausible to assume these metaphors, since the same imagery can be found in Pindar.[62]

Secondly, the leading powers of the journey are the daughters of the Sun (ii). Thus it appears natural for the journey to lead towards the heaven.[63] Furthermore, as soon as they reach the light, these daughters of the Sun thrust the veils from their heads (B1.10), which could be interpreted as their being at home in the light (iii).[64] Besides, the gates of Night and Day are characterized as 'ethereal' (αἰθέριαι, B1.13),[65] and even have the connotation of the doors of heaven,[66] so they are located high up in the sky (iv). The discussion of the connotation of the 'yawning chasm' (χάσμ' ἀχανές, B1.18) which the gates create in the doorframe has also been used to defend the position that the revelation took place in the night (v). Although the Hesiodic resonance of χάσμα points towards a gap beneath, the word is later used to express an open space above, which supports the idea of an ascension of the κοῦρος to the light.[67] Finally, the phrase Parmenides employed to designate the chariot going through the gates, 'there then through them' (τῇ ῥα δι' αὐτέων, B1.20), closely resembles the one employed by Homer to describe the course of Hera's chariot through the 'gates of heaven' in her upwards journey to Zeus (τῇ ῥα δι' αὐτάων, *Iliad* 5.752)(vi).[68]

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[59] Unfortunately neither punctuation, which is added only later, nor meter can solve this problem, since in the stichic meter of the dactylic hexameter a pause at the end of each line is normal, the line being the determining unit, which does not help to construct the syntax (Miller (2006) 20 n.33).
[60] Diels (1897) 31; Tarán (1965) 7. The same conclusion is drawn by Bowra (1953) 43-44 and Deichgräber (1959) 11.
[61] Bowra (1953) 39; Mourelatos (2008) 15.
[62] For these metaphors in Pindar, see Bowra (1953) 40-41.
[63] Fränkel (1955) 161; Miller (2006) 19; Mourelatos (2008) 14-15.
[64] Fränkel (1955) 161; Miller (2006) 19.
[65] Miller (2006) 19.
[66] For in *Iliad* 5.749ff. the doors of heaven are guarded by the Hours/Seasons, to which Dike according to Hesiod, *Theogony* 902ff. belongs (Mourelatos (2008) 15).
[67] For an extensive discussion of the connotations of this word, see Miller (2006) 21-22. The later use is manifested among others in a now lost play by Sophocles and an instance of the 2nd/3rd century AD.
[68] Granger (2008) 11-12. The sole difference is the dialect (Miller (2006) 19).

Morrison (1955) was the first to oppose this thesis that the revelation took place in the light, replacing it by the hypothesis that it took place in the darkness.[69] Although Burkert (1969) supported this night hypothesis with more founded arguments, it was ignored by the English-speaking world until the article of Furley (1973). Afterwards it has been commonly accepted among editors and translators.[70]

Many arguments have been given for this position. The first and foremost argument is that the word-order makes it more natural to read εἰς φάος with the immediately preceding participial clause προλιποῦσαι δώματα Νυκτός than with the finite verb σπερχοίατο πέμπειν that stands at a larger distance (a).[71] The elliptical construction λιπεῖν...εἰς is well-attested,[72] so this reading is highly plausible. Furthermore, tradition places the daughters of the Sun in the underworld, since that was the daily birthplace of the Sun (b).[73] This negates the argument (ii) of the light-hypothesis, because the daughters of the Sun were thus not only associated with the sky, being the daughters of the sun god Helios, but also, and perhaps even stronger, with the underworld. This makes it probable that they took the κοῦρος to their home. Argument (iii) (the throwing of the veils signifying that they feel at home in the light) can also be discarded, since ὠσάμεναι (B1.10) is a aorist participle, therefore describing a completed action (c). The daughters of the Sun already had thrown their veils from their heads while they were still in the house of Night, which could reflect that they are at home there (as already argued as well in argument (b)).[74]

Another reason to assume the revelation took place in the dark is the reassurance that the goddess gives to the κοῦρος in B1.26: it was not ‘an ill fate’ (μοῖρα κακή) that brought him to her (d). This phrase was commonly used to designate ‘death’.[75] The fact that the goddess says that the road to her is normally only travelled by the deceased, means that she is located at the place where the deceased travel to: the darkness of the underworld. Argument (e) is the counterargument of (v): although χάσμα in the later tradition came to indicate an open space above, it also echoes the ‘huge chasm’ (χάσμα μέγ’) of the Tartarus from *Theogony* 740.[76] Since we cannot prove that χάσμα already had the later meaning at the time of Parmenides, it seems more plausible to me that the association of χάσμα with the underworld played a role here, because we can prove that association (Hesiod was widely known at the time of Parmenides and Parmenides frequently alludes to him).

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[69] He named the journey to the underworld a κατάβασις, to which he offered the parallel of Odysseus, who went to the underworld to receive instruction (Morrison (1955) 60). The element of κατάβασις was soon removed from the night hypothesis by Burkert (1969) 15.

[70] The thesis that the revelation took place in the dark, so that εἰς φάος belongs to προλιποῦσαι δώματα Νυκτός, is followed by e.g. Mansfeld (1964) 234; Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983) 243; Coxon (1986) 44-45; Sassi (1988) 386; Sedley (1999) 124; Waterfield (2000) 57; Morgan (2000) 73; Miller (2006) 12-13; Bollack (2006) 75-76; Primavesi (2013) 54.

[71] Among others Mansfeld (1964) 238; Burkert (1969) 7; Furley (1973) 1-2; Coxon (1986) 160-161; Robbiano (2005) 162 n.34; Granger (2008) 11.

[72] For examples see Mansfeld (1964) 238 and Furley (1973) 1-2.

[73] Waterfield (2000) 49. See Morrison (1955) 60 for instances in Homer, Stesichorus, and Mimnermus.

[74] Miller (2006) 20-21. The fact that the veiled deities in Hesiod are the Heliconian Muses, associated with nighttime (Hesiod, *Theogony* 9-10), supports the claim that the darkness of the underworld is their home; cf. Granger (2008) 12.

[75] This phrase is also used by Homer to describe the death of Nisander in *Iliad* 13.602 (Coxon (1986) 10).

[76] Cf. footnote 67.

The fact that the horses carrying the κοῦρος are mares is highly significant, because we barely have parallels to the use of mares in literature of Parmenides' time (with the exception of their use in races) (f). The only significant parallel is the *Hymn to Demeter*, where mares carry the chariot bringing Persephone to the underworld.[77] The feminine nature of the horses therefore also points to a journey to the darkness. Furthermore, Primavesi argued for an analogy between the path of night and day before the gate and the house of Night on the one hand and the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι on the other hand (g).[78] In order for the proem to form a literary analogy to the internal relation of the following two parts, in the sense that the ἀλήθεια and δόξαι entail the same ternary structure as the topography of night and day in the proem, [79] the daughters of the Sun need to come from the house of Night to the light, pick the κοῦρος up there and take him through the gates of night and day to the house of Night. This argument receives its strength from the fact that it is based on Parmenides' text itself rather than speculative intertexts. Finally, the adjective 'severely punishing' (πολύποινος, B1.14) suggests an infernal nature for Dike, which pleads for the location of the gates at the access to the underworld (h).[80]

It may be clear that many arguments can be and have been given for both sides. I strongly agree with the night-hypothesis, stating that the daughters of the Sun brought the κοῦρος through the gates to the house of Night, where the revelation took place. I do not wish to deny that there are elements of the imagery of light and heaven in the proem (the gates are still called 'ethereal' and the description of going through the gates does indeed resemble Hera's upgoing chariot)[81], but I deny both that this means that the revelation took place in the light and that it suggests that the topography of the journey is (intentionally or unintentionally) unclear.[82] As appears from the strong arguments above, it is clear that the revelation took place in the dark, but I argue that Parmenides intentionally also introduced elements of light in the proem in order to make it resemble the world of the δόξαι. Just as the circular elements in the proem, that all appear in twofold, resemble the duality of the δόξαι (since the κοῦρος is not yet initiated with the knowledge of the ἀλήθεια), the two elements of Fire (i.e. Light) and Night which occupy a central position in the δόξαι are resembled in the proem. This way, the proem makes clear on a literary level that the transmission of knowledge still needs to take place. This, however, does not detract from the fact that the revelation took place in the dark.

A highly important and potentially decisive argument can, however, be added to the ones given above. The fact is that all these other arguments in favour of the night hypothesis are

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[77] Gemelli Marciano (2008) 29, who concludes that the parallel of the *Hymn to Demeter* illuminates two inseparable levels in Parmenides: the divine plan and the willing cooperation of the κοῦρος.
[78] Primavesi (2013) 45-46.
[79] The analogy consists in the fact that before the gates, night and day alternate, whereas behind the gates there is only night. The ἀλήθεια also knows such a ternary structure: there are the roads of Being and Not-Being, which alternate in the world of the δόξαι, although in the ἀλήθεια only one of these actually is, which is the road of Being.
[80] Mourelatos (2008) 15.
[81] The other arguments of the light-hypothesis have already been rejected: the arguments (ii), (iii), and (v) respectively by arguments (b), (c), and (e) of the night-hypothesis and argument (i) since reading the proem as an allegory is nowadays regarded as only one of the possible options, which is certainly not strong enough to carry the whole interpretation that the revelation took place in the light.
[82] Fränkel (1955) 161; Curd (1998) 18; Granger (2008) 12 argue that the topography of the journey is unclear, so that it would be a mistake to choose. Suggesting that the blur might be intentional are Morgan (2000) 78; Miller (2006) 20-23; Mourelatos (2008) 15.

based on syntax, the relation with the other parts of the poem, and the relation to other texts. The formal structure, however, offers a powerful argument in favour of the revelation in the night. Martin Steinrück, who examined the formal structure of the proem, strangely enough failed to see its potential in solving the difficulty of the direction of the journey. I intend to fill this gap with this subchapter.

Steinrück identified two ringcompositions in Parmenides' proem. The first ringcomposition manifests itself in the first four verses of B1,[83] and is taken up in the second, larger ringcomposition that covers B1.1-26. It is the latter ringcomposition that concerns me here. According to Steinrück, the proem consists of a ringcomposition that contains six layers:

A: lines 1-2 (echoed keywords ἵπποι ταί με φέρουσιν ... ἱκάνοι)
B: lines 3-4 (echoed keyword δαίμονες)
C: line 5 (echoed keyword ἅρμα)
D: lines 6-8 (echoed keywords ἄξων ... σύριγγος)
E: lines 9-10 (echoed keywords κοῦραι ... ὠσάμεναι...ἄπο)
F: lines 11-12 (no echoed keywords)
F': lines 13-14 (no echoed keywords)
E': lines 15-18 (echoed keywords κοῦραι...ὥσειε...ἄπο)
D': lines 19-20 (echoed keywords ἄξονας ... σύριγξιν)
C': line 21 (echoed keyword ἅρμα)
B': lines 22-23 (echoed keyword θεά)
A': lines 24-26 (echoed keywords ἵπποις ταί σε φέρουσιν ἱκάνων)[84]

Every single layer thus concerns certain themes and keywords that are echoed or repeated in the layer which closes that ring off. The centre of the ringcomposition is formed by the description of the gate.

I propose that the ringcomposition echoes the journey undertaken by the daughters of the Sun (so not by the κοῦρος): they start from the house of Night and move towards the light (εἰς φάος). They then pick up the κοῦρος and with him on board the chariot goes through the gates and back to the house of Night, where the revealing goddess awaits its arrival. The journey of the daughters of the Sun is thus circular and the house of Night is both their starting point and finish. The turning point is formed by the gates of the paths of Day and Night, which also form the turning point and centre of the ringcomposition.

It is not unimaginable that, like in the case of Homer's Shield of Achilles,[85] the narrative construction reflects on the content it encompasses, in this case the journey of the daughters of the Sun. Their circular journey, already supported by so many arguments that favour the revelation in the night, would then also be reflected in the narrative arranging principle of its description. The ringcomposition here thus is what I described in the introduction to be a figurative ringcomposition: it not only structures the content, but this very content is reinforced through its figuration in the shape of the composition. This figurative composition has a characteristic deictic nature that manifests itself in two ways. Firstly, it directs the attention to the

[83] Steinrück (2005) 19.
[84] Simplified version. For the full version with more details, see Steinrück (2005) 20.
[85] Cf. footnote 22.

centre of the ringcomposition: the gates. Secondly and perhaps even more importantly, it points towards the function of its own structure in the narrative: instead of being a mere structural device, it adds meaning and functions as a sign that it represents the circular direction of the journey of the daughters of the Sun.

To conclude, the figurative ringcomposition of the proem has a didactic purpose in educating the audience about the direction of the journey and the location of the goddess, which it fulfils by figuring the content in its form.

Chapter 2: Circularity as figuring concept in the ἀλήθεια

At the end of the proem, the goddess announces what knowledge she will convey to the κοῦρος: the truth and the false opinions of mortals. The former account is fragmentarily transmitted under fragments B2-B8. In this chapter, I will examine how circularity is employed in these fragments of the ἀλήθεια in order to figure and shape Parmenides' theory of truth.

This chapter contains three parts shedding light on the ways in which three instances of circularity figure his doctrine. In the first section (2.1), I shall discuss the two textual variants 'persuasive' and 'well-rounded' truth in B1.29 and argue why the former is to be preferred. Although 'persuasive' truth itself does not figure Parmenides' theory, it is important to discuss this issue, since 'well-rounded' truth could have been an apt way for Parmenides to help his audience to grasp the abstract notion of truth by visualizing it. For a correct understanding of Parmenides it is vital to recognize the error in reasoning lying at the basis of the variant 'well-rounded' and to realize why Parmenides chose not to figure his theory by attributing circularity to truth.

The second part (2.2) will maintain that the image of a circle is presented to reflect on the discourse (B5). Adding circularity to the widespread poetological motif of the road for the unfolding of the discourse, Parmenides uses circularity to quite literally shape the theory, since the shape of a circle reflects on the discourse always coming back to the same key element of his doctrine. Circularity here thus figures the theory because it reflects on the shape of the discourse in which the theory is communicated, stressing one of its main premises.

The third section of this chapter (2.3) will examine how the comparison of Being to a well-rounded ball (B8.42-49) contributes to a better understanding of Being. Taking as the point of comparison the homogeneity and completeness of the well-rounded ball instead of its circular shape, I shall demonstrate how both the content and the form of this comparison figure an important aspect of Parmenides' theory: it didactically presents the audience with a visual tool to memorize relevant characteristics of Being: completeness and homogeneity. The comparison with this spherical object both helps the audience to process these features and reflects on the very essence of Being.

2.1 Persuasive truth

The very first thing that the κοῦρος hears about truth is the following announcement of the goddess:

> [...] χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι,
> ἠμὲν ἀληθείης εὐπειθέος ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ
> ἠδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, τῇς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθής. (B1.28-30)
>
> You must be informed of everything,
> both of the unmoved heart of persuasive reality
> and of the beliefs of mortals, which comprise no genuine conviction.

Our sources for these lines, however, are divided in the readings they present. The best-attested form is certainly εὐπειθέος ('persuasive'), given by Sextus, Plutarch, Diogenes, and Clement. Proclus reads εὐφεγγέος ('brilliant/shining') and Simplicius is the only authority for εὐκυκλέος ('well-rounded').[86] εὐφεγγέος is rejected as an anachronism by all modern editors and commentators, since it derives from Proclus' Neoplatonic reading of Parmenides.[87] Scholars are, however, divided in their preference concerning the choice between εὐπειθέος and εὐκυκλέος. εὐπειθέος used to enjoy common acceptance, until Diels in 1897 argued for εὐκυκλέος, which then became the preferred form in the first half of the twentieth century. Since Jameson in 1958 made out a case for εὐπειθέος again, commentators have been divided between the two readings until nowadays.[88]

In this subchapter I shall argue that εὐπειθέος is to be preferred and that εὐκυκλέος entered the tradition based on a misunderstanding of Parmenides' comparison of Being to a ball at B8.42-49. Although the reading with εὐπειθέος does not contribute to the shaping of Parmenides' theory, I nevertheless will discuss this issue, for the reading of 'well-rounded' truth, which I reject, could have been an apt way to figure Parmenides' theory. One might say that the designation of truth as circular or spherical could have been a suitable didactic tool to help the audience, who only has a very abstract notion of truth, to understand it by attributing an adjective making it more visible and therefore easier to grasp. The qualifier 'well-rounded' could have been an apt way to figure Parmenides' theory by making an element of it more visual.

Why, then, should Parmenides not haven chosen to do so? The answer to this question is simple and straightforward: because truth was not well-rounded, circular, or spherical to him. Had he attributed well-roundedness to truth as a didactic tool for the audience, this would have countered everything he argues truth to be: the logical, rational delineation of arguments about Being. The textual variant εὐκυκλέος ended up in the textual transmission of B1.29 because of a common misconception of the comparison to a 'well-rounded ball' (εὐκύκλου σφαίρης, B8.43). As I shall argue in subchapter 2.3, when Parmenides compares Being to this ball, the point of comparison is the homogeneity and completeness, not the spherical shape. A group of scholars, however, has understood this comparison as asserting that Being is spherical and extended that sphericity even to truth. What are the arguments of the adherents of εὐκυκλέος in B1.29?

They first of all point at the authority of Simplicius: he possessed a good manuscript of Parmenides, which grants authority to his text readings.[89] Furthermore, they claim that this reading is to be preferred because it is the *lectio difficilior*.[90] The later philosophers did not understand the 'perplexing' εὐκυκλέος[91] and therefore changed it into something that they did understand. εὐπειθέος thus could have entered the text as a gloss on εὐκυκλέος, since πίστις and ἀλήθεια are often connected to each other (in B1.30; B2.4; B8.28; B8.39; B8.50-51).[92]

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[86] Jameson (1958) 21-22.
[87] For this rejection, see e.g. Tarán (1965) 17; Bicknell (1979) 9.
[88] Preferring εὐκυκλέος are Diels (1897) 55; Reinhardt (1916) 5; Tarán (1965) 16-17; Ballew (1974) 191-192; Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983) 242; Bollack (2006) 97-100; Wersinger (2008) 143; Palmer (2009) 90 and 379; those who argue for εὐπειθέος are Jameson (1958) 21-26; Deichgräber (1959) 22; Bicknell (1979) 9-10; Coxon (1986) 51; Robbiano (2005) 60; Gemelli Marciano (2008) 36; Mourelatos (2008) 154-158.
[89] See e.g. Bollack (2006) 100.
[90] Tarán (1965) 16.
[91] Palmer (2009) 379.
[92] Jameson (1958) 25-26.

This argument can, however, easily be subverted and turned around. Although Diels claimed that εὐκυκλέος is on the first view 'formally and contentwise so offensive and shocking that it is psychologically just impossible to imagine the origin of such an interpolation,'[93] I do think it is imaginable how εὐκυκλέος entered the tradition: ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος closely resembles the comparison of Being to a well-rounded ball (εὐκύκλου σφαίρης, B8.43). As I shall demonstrate in subchapter 2.3, Being is rather compared to a ball in that passage than identified with it. The misinterpretation of this passage has, however, led some philosophers to the belief that Being is in fact spherical, which could have led to the emendation of the text of B1.29 to ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος instead of the original ἀληθείης εὐπειθέος.[94]

Another argument for εὐπειθέος is that it is well-attested.[95] Sextus, Plutarch, Diogenes, and Clement all give this reading, whereas εὐκυκλέος is only found in Simplicius. Furthermore, the manuscripts of Sextus have the advantage over Simplicius' that they quote B1 as a whole, instead of only the last few verses.[96] Both the context of appearance and the frequency are favourable to εὐπειθέος.

The case for εὐπειθέος is made even stronger by the connection between ἀλήθεια and πίστις that the poem often establishes, as mentioned above. Truth is convincing, whereas the δόξαι lack true conviction. The reason that the way of Being exercises this persuasion over us is that it is exhibited in a truthful and logical argumentation, opposed to the δόξαι which, even though logically presented, are not truthful and therefore cannot claim persuasion.[97]

Finally, the grammatical form εὐκυκλέος is unparalleled. It was chosen because of the hiatus that the normal form εὐκύκλου would yield.[98] εὐκυκλέος is a *hapax legomenon* that is difficult to account for. Diels has tried to argue that the form is not strange, since there are more adjectives that have an ending in -ης as well as in -ος,[99] but Jameson demonstrated that in these cases the form with ending -ης entailed a passive sense and the ones with -ος an active one.[100] It is thus hard to maintain that εὐκυκλέος was the original reading of B1.29 and that the conveyed meaning was the same as in the εὐκύκλου σφαίρης of B8.43.

The attributing of the adjective εὐκύκλου to ἀληθείης, concludingly, is based on a misunderstanding of the comparison in B8.42-49. In these lines, Being is not identified as spherical, but compared to a spherical object; the point of comparison not being its form but its homogeneity and completeness. Being is therefore not spherical, nor is truth, since it is the logical delineation of Being. Truth is, however, persuasive, so εὐπειθέος is the more probable textual variant for B1.29.

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[93] Diels (1897) 55: 'εὐκυκλέος ist für den ersten Augenblick formell und inhaltlich so anstößig, dass es psychologisch schlechterdings unmöglich ist, sich die Genesis einer solcher Interpolation vorzustellen.'
[94] Bicknell (1979) 9-10.
[95] Wersinger (2008) 145.
[96] Mourelatos (2008) 154.
[97] Cf. Mourelatos (2008) 155.
[98] Diels (1897) 57.
[99] Ibidem.
[100] Jameson (1958) 24.

2.2 Being: the point the discourse always returns to

The goddess goes on to declare that there exist two ways. The first way is 'is, and is not for Not-Being' and the second path is 'is not, and that it must needs not be'.[101] Those ways are exclusive: one has to choose and cannot walk on both at the same time.[102] The first road is said to be the road of persuasion and will be more elaborately explored in fragment B8. The κοῦρος is dissuaded from travelling on the second road, because it is practically impossible to find there what one looks for and even if one finds it, one cannot give a genuine account of it to others.[103]

In B6 a third road is introduced, on which two-headed mortals wander, who 'think that Being and Not-Being are the same and not the same'.[104] Following this 'backward turning' (παλίντροπος, B6.9) path brings the traveller back to the starting point and gets him nowhere, since he says and unsays the same things, owing to the changeable nature of the objects he reflects upon.[105] This third road will be more elaborately described in the δόξαι.[106]

The fragment I shall now continue to discuss, B5, originally probably placed somewhere between fragment B2 and B8,[107] reads as follows:

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[101] Respectively ὅπως ἐστίν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι (B2.3) and ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὥς χρεών ἐστι μὴ εἶναι (B2.5). The meaning of ἐστί is highly disputed. There are three main advocated meanings: existential ('…exists') (e.g. Owen (1960) 94-95; Sedley (1999) 114-115), predicative/copulative ('…is…') (e.g. Calogero (1970) 17-18; Curd (1998) 4-5, 39), and veridical ('…is the case') (Kahn (1988) 238-253). There are also adherents of a 'fused' meaning (Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983) 246). For a solid discussion of the arguments for each type, see Wiesner (1996) 205-232. It is, however, anachronistic to expect that Parmenides was conscious of the use of these various types of εἶναι (Barnes (1982) 160; Sellmer (1998) 16), so it seems best to me, as many scholars recently have argued (e.g. Waterfield (2000) 50; Miller (2006) 44; Palmer (2009) 95-97), not to restrict the meaning of ἐστί at this point. There have been several attempts to substitute the subject of ἐστί (e.g. 'what can be thought or spoken of' by Owen (1960) 14-16; 'what is' by Diels (1897) 33 and Cornford (1939) 30n.2), but it seems best to preserve the indeterminacy of the verb at this point (cf. Mourelatos (2008) 47; Iribarren (2018) 101). The undetermined subject does not remain vague: it gains attributes in B8 (Sellmer (1998) 19). A possible reason for the absence of a subject at this point is that a subject would have distracted the κοῦρος from what is really important: 'is' and 'is not' (Gemelli Marciano (2008) 39).

[102] Robbiano (2005) 105.

[103] B2.6-8. Cf. Curd (1998) 50 and Robbiano (2005) 110-113.

[104] οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι τωὐτὸν νενόμισται / κοὐ τωὐτόν (B6.8-9).

[105] Osborne (1997) 32. There is an ongoing discussion as to which people these lines form a polemic: Heraclitus (Diels (1897) 68; Tarán (1965) 61-62), all rival philosophers (Coxon (1986) 300), or men in general (Mansfeld (1964) 32; Barnes (1982) 167).

[106] This third road is generally assumed to be identical to the δόξαι. For people who think that it is not the same, see Tarán (1965) 63 and Coxon (1986) 300. Some people have maintained that Parmenides' goddess describes only two ways (since the second and the third one would be the same) (Calogero (1970) 40; Cordero (1979) 15; Curd (1998) 51-63; Waterfield (2000) 51n.4), but for arguments against this, see Wiesner (1996) 101-112; Mourelatos (2008) 91 n.47; Palmer (2009) 63-73. An overwhelming majority of scholars of Parmenides assumes three roads.

[107] Proclus, the only authority for this fragment, locates it after B8.25, but this is almost certainly not its original position (for arguments against this location, to my knowledge only advocated by Cornford (1939) 41n.1, see Jameson (1958) 21 and Tarán (1965) 53). It seems improbable that Proclus was so far off as to transfer this quotation from the δόξαι to the ἀλήθεια (as Bollack (2006) 198 proposed, for arguments *contra* see Bodnar (1985) 57 and Sedley (1999) 122). A position between B1 and B2, as among others Coxon (1986) 286 has defended, cannot be excluded on basis of the remaining fragments, but a position between B2 and B8 seems best (cf. Mansfeld (1964) 92).

[…] ξυνὸν δέ μοί ἐστιν
ὁππόθεν ἄρξωμαι· τόθι γὰρ πάλιν ἵξομαι αὖτις. (B5)

To me it is common whence I begin,
for I shall come back again to that place.

This fragment refers to the motion from a starting point, either in space or in discourse.[108] This motion is the actual situation, there is nothing hypothetical about this fragment.[109] The starting point is the same as the point which will somehow be returned to, since it is the ξυνός: 'common' or 'general'.[110]

An old and by now altogether dismissed interpretation of this fragment is that it would refer to the circularity of the path of Being.[111] A more influential analysis of this fragment takes it as referring to circularity of argument. It is not important which characteristic of Being is argued for first, since every characteristic of Being can be deduced from another. That way, in the end, it is possible to return to the discussion of the first characteristic.[112] The adherents of this interpretation tend to translate ξυνόν as 'indifferent', but this meaning is unattested for ξυνός.[113] Furthermore, this meaning would render that it is arbitrary where the goddess starts her discourse about Being, which is contradicted by the carefully constructed argument of B8. The straightforward delineation of the properties of Being also counters this whole analysis of the fragment, since the goddess does not come back at the end of B8 to the argument against generation and destruction which has been her starting point.[114]

I favour Reinhardt's interpretation that the point to which the goddess always returns is the premise 'is, and is not for Not-Being'.[115] This premise forms the core of the whole argument of the ἀλήθεια and the goddess indeed repeatedly comes back to the meaning of the prevalence of the first path over the second (e.g. in B8.15-18 and B8.34-38).[116]

Opponents of this interpretation point out that it is inconsistent with the plurality of possible starting points that is expressed by ὁππόθεν ἄρξωμαι, which would be superfluous if only one were imaginable.[117] I firmly deny, however, that ὁππόθεν entails the notion of an indeterminate origin. Instead, it refers to a determinate starting point probably pinpointed in the preceding or following lost line: the proposition 'is, and is not for Not-Being'.[118]

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[108] Tarán (1965) 51.
[109] Jameson (1958) 19.
[110] Bodnar (1985) 61.
[111] This position, defended by Diels (1897) 67 and reaffirmed by Ballew (1974) 195-196, has been rejected mainly because it is incompatible with the logical, deductive method employed in B8 (Jameson (1958) 18-19; Bodnar (1985) 59; Curd (1998) 69).
[112] Mansfeld (1964) 106; Curd (1998) 69.
[113] Bodnar (1985) 61.
[114] Cf. Jameson (1958) 18-19; Tarán (1965) 52; Bicknell (1979) 9; Bodnar (1985) 59; Coxon (1986) 287; Sellmer (1998) 185.
[115] Reinhardt (1916) 60, followed by Bicknell (1979) 9; Sedley (1999) 122; Palmer (2009) 85n.104.
[116] Bicknell (1979) 9.
[117] Jameson (1958) 18; Sellmer (1998) 185; Wersinger (2008) 146.
[118] According to LSJ, ὁπόθεν means 'whence', 'from what place', so determinate. When one wishes to make this notion indeterminate, it is necessary to add something; cf. ὁπόθεν ἄν τύχῃ 'from whencesoever' in Plato, *Theaetetus* 180c (Liddell, Scott, Jones (1961) 1240).

The strong lexical and thematic connection between B6.3 ('for I shall begin for you from this first path of inquiry')[119] and B5 also speaks in favour of this interpretation: the goddess announces the two first paths, then states that she shall return to the starting point at the end and continues to mark the point from which she starts.

Parmenides here adhibits the widespread metaphor for poetry of the movement on a way. Changing a road or starting on a path are common poetological motifs to refer to the course of a poem: departing on a road for starting a poem and changing the way as a transition to close off a unit and start a new element of the narrative.[120] The goddess' remark that the discourse will return to the point it started from fits in well with this general poetological motif. Parmenides, however, does more than simply fitting in: he integrates it with another notion. By the use of the word ξυνός also alluding to fragment DK22 B103 of Heraclitus, which asserts that the beginning and the end of a circle are in common,[121] he adds the element of circularity to the metaphor of the path and thereby creates a new motif: the metaphor of moving around in a circle for a discourse which returns to the same point.[122] Circularity is thus employed as an image to reflect on the continuation of the discourse: it repeatedly comes back to the same point that Being is.

The goddess thus adds the notion of circularity in B5 to the poetological motif of the road in order to draw the attention of the κοῦρος and the audience to her most important message: 'is'. Not only does she repeat this premise frequently, she also directly reflects on the course of her discourse by highlighting the repeated returns to the 'common point' (ξυνός). The associations with a circle that this focus on 'is' carries (by alluding to Heraclitus' circle which also shares its beginning with its end) contribute to shaping the theory of the goddess in the sense that they underline the most important point. The reflective function of the adhibition of circularity here thus figures the theory by reflecting on the shape of the discourse, which stresses the key premise that Being is. The underlining of this point also has a didactic function: besides the frequent references to this basis of Parmenidean philosophy, the audience is also presented with the visual image of a circle that assists them in understanding the flow of the discourse and in distinguishing between the main issues and matters of secondary significance. The metaphor of the circle thus steers the attention of both the κοῦρος and the audience towards the most important principle of Parmenidean philosophy.

2.3 Comparison with a well-rounded ball

In fragment B8, the goddess gives an account of the signposts (σήματα) along the first path 'is, and is not for Not-Being'. These signposts consist of the argumentations of various characteristics of Being,[123] already announced in lines B8.2-6 and subsequently argued for. These announced propositions can be divided in 4 categories: 1) generation and destruction

[119] Palmer (2009) 85 n.104.
[120] See for example Homer, *Odyssey* 8.499, where Demodocus' starting a poem is described in terms of departure on a road. Pindar adhibits the metaphor of changing the way to complete a narrative in *Pythian Ode* 4.247-248. For more instances of the poetological metaphor of the road, see Nünlist (1998) 228-254.
[121] ξυνὸν γὰρ ἀρχὴ καὶ πέρας ἐπὶ κύκλου περιφερείας; cf. Coxon (1986) 287.
[122] This motif would later also be used by Empedocles (DK31 B35.1-2); cf. Nünlist (1998) 241.
[123] For a compelling discussion of why the signposts are not the announced characteristics in B8.2-6, but rather the following arguments for them, see Robbiano (2005) 151.

(ἀγένητον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον ‘ungenerated and imperishable’, argumentation in B8.6b-21); 2) quantity (οὖλον, ἕν, μουνογενές, συνεχές, ‘whole, one, unique, continuous’, argumentation in B8.22-25); 3) movement (ἀτρεμές, ‘immobile’, argumentation in B8.26-31); 4) completion (ἀτέλεστον, ‘complete/perfect’, argumentation in 32-33).[124] The culmination of this description of the signposts along the path of Being is a comparison of Being to a well-rounded ball (B8.42-49):

> αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πεῖρας πύματον, τετελεσμένον ἐστὶ
> πάντοθεν, εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκῳ,
> μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντῃ· τὸ γὰρ οὔτε τι μεῖζον
> οὔτε τι βαιότερον πελέναι χρεών ἐστι τῇ ἢ τῇ.
> οὔτε γὰρ οὐκ ἐόν ἐστι, τό κεν παύοι μιν ἱκνεῖσθαι
> εἰς ὁμόν, οὔτ’ ἐόν ἐστιν ὅπως εἴη κεν ἐόντος
> τῇ μᾶλλον τῇ δ’ ἧσσον. ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ἄσυλον·
> οἷ γὰρ πάντοθεν ἶσον, ὁμῶς ἐν πείρασι κύρει. (B8.42-49)[125]
>
> Now, since there is a furthest limit, Being is complete from every side,
> like the bulk of a well-rounded ball,
> and everywhere equally strong from the centre: for it must not be
> somewhat more here and somewhat less there.
> For neither does Not-Being exist, which could prevent Being from reaching its like,
> nor is Being such that it could be more than Being here and less there.
> Since it is all inviolable, for it is equal to itself
> from every side, it stays uniformly within its limits.

The structure of this passage fits with the common structure also applied in the argumentation of the other characteristics: the central argument is both preceded and followed by the statement to be proven.[126] In this case, this statement is that Being is completed from all sides and held within bounds. The ἐπεί-clause shows, as it does in the argumentations for other characteristics, how the new passage relates to the earlier ones: it is the continuation of the proof of completeness of 32-33.[127] Being complete means that Being extends itself uniformly within its limits, which is proven by two premises: 1) there is no Not-Being that can stop Being from reaching itself (lines 46-47) and 2) Being is everywhere in an equal measure (lines 47-48).[128] These premises are repeated in the conclusion that Being is inviolate[129] and therefore

[124] For a slightly different division in categories, see Ruben (2007) 165.
[125] 42. τετελεσμένον] Coxon τετελεσμένου, virtually all other editors τετελεσμένον. 48. ἧσσον.] Coxon comma instead of full stop; see footnote 129.
[126] Barnes (1982) 202.
[127] Owen (1960) 93.
[128] Palmer (2009) 158.
[129] As Palmer (2009) 158 argued, the second half of B8.48 is a reason for the following conclusion rather than an explanation of the foregoing. It is a summary of the argument above that leads to the conclusion. A full stop should therefore be placed after ἧσσον, instead of the comma that all editors except Palmer punctate.

extends uniformly within its limits. The completeness from all sides is compared to the bulk of a well-rounded ball.[130]

There have been two main ways of interpreting this passage. The first is that the comparison of Being to the well-rounded ball means that Being itself is spherical. Followed by the modern scholars Cornford, Jameson, Mansfeld, Barnes, Meijer, Sedley, and Palmer,[131] this interpretation is rooted in the peripatetic tradition.[132] The adherents of this line often also argue for the form εὐκυκλέος in B1.29 (see subchapter 2.1), since it is a small step from spherical Being to a spherical or well-rounded truth. A crucial point in interpreting this passage is the *tertium comparationis*, which this group of scholars takes to be the spherical shape of the ball. According to them, the fact that Being is compared to a well-rounded ball means that Being itself is also spherical.[133] Defending their literal reading of the passage, they point out that it is rather difficult, if not impossible, to interpret 'larger' and 'smaller' (μεῖζον βαιότερον, lines 44-45) in a metaphorical way instead of in a literal spatial one.[134] Counterarguments against this equation of Being with sphericity include the fact that a ball or sphere can be divided (for example in hemispheres)[135] and, more importantly, the question, if Being is indeed spherical, what would lay outside that sphere.[136] If that is Not-Being, Not-Being would exist (which the goddess already forcefully contradicted in B2.5) and if that is Being, Being would not be a sphere.[137]

The second manner of interpreting this passage takes the language slightly less literal and maintains that Being is not spherical, but only compared to a ball. Having its origins in the Platonic tradition,[138] this interpretation is the most commonly defended in modern scholarship, and I join the fairly large group of scholars supporting it.[139] Although I agree with Tarán that lines 42-49 do not introduce a new attribute of Being,[140] I firmly reject his verdict that this comparison adds nothing to Parmenides' doctrine of Being.[141] In the remaining part of this subchapter, I will argue that the comparison to a well-rounded ball figures the theory of Being and as such substantially contributes to the doctrine. Located at the end of the ἀλήθεια, these lines fulfil the didactic function of reminding the audience of some key attributes of Being by comparing the abstract notion of Being to a visual object that is memorised easier. Furthermore, when

[130] Although σφαῖρα has sometimes been translated with 'sphere', the word means 'ball', since it contains a mass (ὄγκος) (which a stereometrical sphere lacks) and the adjective 'well-rounded' (εὐκύκλου) would be superfluous for a geometrically perfect sphere (Iribarren (2018) 106; cf. Jameson (1958) 15n.3). For the subtext of a physical, manufactured artefact in the descriptions of Being in the passage as a whole, see Mourelatos (2008) 128.
[131] Cornford (1939) 44-45; Jameson (1958) 15n.3; Mansfeld (1970) 418-419; Barnes (1982) 203-204; Meijer (1997) 38-40; Sedley (1999) 121-122; Palmer (2009) 155.
[132] For a subdivision of interpretation within the peripatetic tradition, see Iribarren (2018) 104.
[133] E.g. Jameson (1958) 15n.3.
[134] Sedley (1999) 121.
[135] Sedley (1999) 121-22.
[136] For more counterarguments, see Owen (1960) 96 and Sellmer (1998) 137-138.
[137] Among many others pointed out by Tarán (1965) 152.
[138] Iribarren (2018) 104.
[139] Owen (1960) 95-96; Tarán (1965) 148; Ballew (1974) 199; Coxon (1986) 337; Curd (1998) 93; Sellmer (1998) 132; Waterfield (2000) 54; Bollack (2006) 188; McKirahan (2008) 213; Mourelatos (2008) 121; Wersinger (2008) 143; Iribarren (2018) 105-106.
[140] Tarán (1965) 191.
[141] Tarán (1965) 159: 'The passage adds nothing to Parmenides' doctrine of Being.'

compared to the sphericity in the δόξαι, this comparison reflects on the relation between the two accounts the goddess presents.

I shall now continue to explain how this passage relates to the previous attributes of which it reminds the audience by examining the point of comparison between Being and a well-rounded ball. This twofold comparison exists in both the homogeneity and the completeness of Being. To start off with the latter: Being is said to be completed from every side (τετελεσμένον ἐστί πάντοθεν, lines 42-43).[142] The argument for the perfect completion of Being started in lines 30-33, where it was called 'not incomplete' (οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον, line 32).[143] The argument there was that Being is complete because it lacks nothing, here the links between the boundaries and the completion of Being are stressed: because the limit that determines Being is ultimate, the completion of Being is universal and established from all sides.[144]

This ultimate limit should not, as the defenders of spherical Being assert, be understood spatially.[145] The limit around Being is not mentioned for the first time in line 42; Being was already said to be held by Justice in her fetters (B8.14), to be changeless in the coils of huge bonds (B8.26), and to be held in the bondage of a limit by strong Necessity (B8.31). These limits should be taken metaphorically rather than spatially. The notion of spatial limits in Parmenides finds its roots in a common misconception of οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον in line 32. This characterization is interpreted as finiteness, although for Parmenides completeness has nothing to do with finiteness.[146] Understood metaphorically, these bonds and fetters are the visual representation of Necessity which lies at the basis of the deduction of several attributes of Being from the basic premise 'is, and is not for Not-Being'. By visually presenting Necessity as the personification of the choice between Being and Not-Being, the κοῦρος and the audience are assisted in grasping the truth about Being and the argumentation of several of its characteristics. Besides this didactic function of the bonds, Parmenides also transforms the traditional mythological motif of Necessity holding someone in bonds (e.g. Prometheus in Hesiod's *Theogony*) into a form of abstract philosophical argumentation, thus polemically stressing the difference between his use of the motif (as a visualisation of the most abstract of topics) and the one of his poetic predecessors (as an action of a goddess in a mythological narrative). In Parmenides, the bounds are thus used metaphorically; in lines 42-49 they assert the completeness of Being, since it is held within the limits.

The universal perfection of Being which is the result of the ultimate limit, then, is compared to a well-rounded ball, since both present a complete form. Because Being is completed, instead of presenting a different character to various observers, it presents one single nature, just like a well-rounded ball does.[147] This is also what makes it so important that the ball is well-rounded (εὐκύκλου): when the physical artefact of a ball is not exactly round, it would present a different character depending on the angle one chooses to observe it.

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[142] πάντοθεν is taken with τετελεσμένον by the majority of editors and translators, as it should be. The exceptions are Kirk, Raven, Schofield (1983) 252; Curd (1998) 92; Mourelatos (2008) 123, who read it with the following εὐκύκλου (for arguments in favour of this reading, see Mourelatos (2008) 123n.24).
[143] Coxon (1986) 337. On the exact meaning of the word τέλος, see Mourelatos (2008) 121.
[144] Curd (1998) 92-93.
[145] Asserting the spatiality of these limits are among others Barnes (1982) 203 and Sedley (1999) 117.
[146] Tarán (1965) 151-152.
[147] Curd (1998) 93.

The fact that Being is compared to the *expanding mass* (ὄγκος)[148] of this ball is highly significant for the second part of the *tertium comparationis*: the homogeneity of Being. The relation between the two points of comparison is stressed by the parallelism between πάντοθεν (first word of line 43) and μεσσόθεν (first word of line 44).[149] The principle of homogeneity, that was already argued for in lines 22-25, is reformulated in these lines.[150] Being is 'from the centre everywhere equally strong/balanced' (μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντῃ, line 44).[151] This homogeneity is proven by two arguments. Firstly, Not-Being, which could prevent Being from reaching homogeneity, does not exist (lines 46-47). Secondly, Being is equally divided and thus homogeneous: the amount of Being everywhere is the same; it is said to be nowhere μεῖζον (line 44) and nowhere βαιότερον (line 45) than itself. I mentioned above that the adherents of a spherical Being asserted that it is impossible to translate these words metaphorically, since their literal meaning is 'larger' and 'smaller'. I think that it is nevertheless possible to read these words adverbially and thus metaphorically without negating their literal meaning. When taken adverbially, this sentence claims that it is not possible for Being to be somewhat more there and somewhat less here. I support this meaning of the clause, but suppose that Parmenides chose these spatial terms to mark his comparison. Whereas these words are significant for the homogeneity of Being when read adverbially, they can be understood spatially when one has the mass of the ball Being is compared to in mind. I therefore agree with Sellmer that this ambiguous phrasing could have been chosen by Parmenides in order to connect Being and the ball to each other.[152] The second point of comparison is thus the homogeneity: when Being is everywhere equally strong from the middle and thus homogeneous, it is in equilibrium, just like the mass of a well-rounded ball (which also needs to be the same in every point in order to obtain an equilibrium).

Lines 42-49, then, containing the comparison of Being to a well-rounded ball, serve as the continuation of two earlier proven characteristics: the homogeneity and completeness of Being and unite two contrary forces: the expanding and the limitative. But the content alone is not sufficient reason to explain Parmenides' motive to express these two forces through a comparison. Why did he decide to compare Being to a ball? First of all, the comparison, taken as a philosophical adaptation of the epic simile for the sake of heuristic analogies,[153] can be used for an educational purpose, since the image of the comparison has the power to explain otherwise not immediately visible concepts.[154] Because Being is one of the most abstract entities one could think of, such an analogy would help the audience to make sense of it.

The placement of the comparison at the end of the logical enunciation of the characteristics of Being speaks in favour of this function of the comparison. After the discussion

[148] McKirahan (2008) 213-214 discusses various possibilities to translate ὄγκος and argues in favour of 'physical extension'.
[149] Sellmer (1998) 130.
[150] Mansfeld (1964) 102.
[151] For this meaning of ἰσοπαλές, see Tarán (1965) 145. For arguments against the equality of radius as value of ἰσοπαλές, see Mourelatos (2008) 127.
[152] Sellmer (1998) 133.
[153] Most (1999) 351.
[154] Cf. Betegh (2002) 382, who also remarks that although such an image or visual representation can be useful, it can also give a misleading and distorted image when not accompanied by reflection on its status and limitations. We encounter this in Parmenides' comparison, which, even though containing reflective information (as demonstrated in the main text), has been understood in misled ways.

of the signposts, a reference is made to the relation between thought and Being which had previously been discussed in fragments B2, B3, and B4.[155] Because of the interruption of the continuous argument for completeness (in lines 32-33 and 42-49) which lines 34-41 carry, it has been suggested that these lines should be transposed.[156] Aside from the fact that this means a grave interference of the text handed down by Simplicius, who quotes B8 as a whole, I would argue that the current location of these lines is uncontroversial and even self-evident. Following the signposts of Being, some more general aspects of the theory of ἀλήθεια are repeated. Finally, the audience is reminded of some of the key characteristics of Being: its completeness and homogeneity. The comparison is a heuristic tool leaving a lasting impression in the minds of the κοῦρος and the audience. The image of the well-rounded ball is easily remembered and can afterwards be used to deduce the characteristics of Being. The comparison of abstract Being to a visual sphere thus functions as a visual image that recapitulates the most important elements of the account of Being for the audience. A ball is chosen as representation because a) it is a visual image which will stick easier than an abstract concept and b) it is the only body that does not contradict all the given attributes that determine Being.[157]

Its placement at the end of the report on Being not only serves to turn it into a climax, but also as a means to optimise contrast with the δόξαι. Whereas in lines 42-49 the important elements of the ball Being is compared to are its indivisible nature and the fact that this is *one* ball, the image of a dimensional form appears again in lines 55-59 (cf. subchapter 3.1), the main points there being its plurality and division in parts.[158]

As I have shown, the comparison to a well-rounded ball functions as a heuristic tool and a mnemonic device for the audience to illustrate and underline the expanding and limitative forces of Being. I shall now continue to make a point that has previously been overlooked by scholars: the literary form of this comparison adds meaning to it, since it fulfils exactly the same function as the content of the comparison itself, namely stressing both the completeness and homogeneity of Being. The narrative structure functions as a deictic frame: it encapsulates the whole comparison, but at the same time, it also indicates the meaning of the comparison by demonstrating it.

The limitative force is symbolized by the positioning of the word ‘limits’. This notion of limits forms a ringcomposition, being expressed by πεῖρας at the start of line 42 and ἐν πείρασι at the end of line 49.[159] The mention of limits encloses the comparison in the same way that the ultimate limit encircles Being. It is not possible to extend outside the limit. Just like Being, entirely confined within its limits, the comparison to a well-rounded ball is restricted to lines 42-49. Outside the limits formed by the ringcomposition of πεῖρας entailing the comparison, no mention at all is made of the resemblance of Being to the mass of a well-rounded ball.

Within the limits of the ringcomposition which encapsulates the comparison, nothing else is mentioned than logical steps of the argumentation of the *tertium comparationis* (cf. the structure of the passage described above). The inside of the comparison therefore consists of only the comparison, just like the inside of the limits contains only Being.

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[155] Curd (1998) 75-76.
[156] Palmer (2009) 139. For counterarguments, see Jameson (1958) 15n.2 and Sedley (1999) 119.
[157] Iribarren (2018) 106.
[158] Tarán (1965) 159; cf. Iribarren (2018) 107-108.
[159] Iribarren (2018) 106.

The comparison of Being to a well-rounded ball functions as a mnemonic device to underline the completeness and homogeneity of Being, but the comparison itself is explained by its very structure, which by means of analogy also points to the completeness and homogeneity of the description of the comparison. The effect of this is that the content of the comparison and the message it wants to convey (that one should remember that Being is complete and homogeneous) is strengthened and visually demonstrated by the structure of this very message.

Chapter 3: Circularity as figuring concept in the δόξαι

The ἀλήθεια is followed by a part of the poem which was presumably significantly longer:[160] the δόξαι. These δόξαι are the opinions of mortals,[161] which are regarded as deceptive (ἀπατηλόν, B8.52), but nevertheless included by the goddess, lest any mortal opinion may outstrip the κοῦρος (B8.60-61). Although only about 10 per cent of the original δόξαι are transmitted to us,[162] we know that it dealt with a broad variety of topics, including cosmology, cosmogony,[163] astronomy, theogony, physiology of reproduction, and human cognition.[164] Some of the gaps in our knowledge about Parmenides' δόξαι are filled by doxographical accounts.[165] I shall, however, only treat the doxographical accounts if they clarify the fragments under discussion. The doxographies as such fall outside the scope of this thesis and will not be discussed in their own right, since understanding figuring techniques through the words of an intermediate author would become too speculative.

This chapter will deal with three passages in which circularity is directly or indirectly employed to figure the theory of the δόξαι. The first section is about the error of the mortals laying at the basis of the δόξαι. Circularity is not directly evoked here, but the positing of μορφαί ('Forms', B8.53) attributed to the mortals invokes the comparison between the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι by the location of this passage so shortly after the comparison to the well-rounded ball discussed in chapter 2.3. This juxtaposition results in the didactic figuration of the error of the mortals, since this error is made visible by reified and visual forms which point at the similarities between the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι. However, it also reflects on the conflict between unity and duality laying at the basis of the doctrines by the contrast between the two cosmogonical forms and unified Being.

The second subchapter will elaborate on the way that these two Forms, Fire and Night, shape the doctrine of the δόξαι even more clearly in the way the universe is organised: in concentric rings. These circular rings are didactic, because they reveal how the cosmos works. They also carry a reflective element on the relation between ἀλήθεια and δόξαι. On the one hand they stress some key differences; on the other hand, the recurring theme of circularity also unites the two compositional sections.

The last section of this chapter will be about a particularly good example of the deceptive character of the δόξαι: the moon. As a moving sphere composed out of the two elements, it reflects on the ἀλήθεια-δόξαι relation in the same way as the spherical cosmos described in the preceding subchapter. But the moon is more than simply didactic and reflective in that manner; it also invokes the deceptive character of appearances through a polemic pun to Homeric word-

[160] Estimates of the size of the δόξαι vary from 75 to 80 per cent of the whole poem (respectively Iribarren (2018) 110 and Palmer (2009) 160).
[161] For a compelling argumentation to prefer 'opinions' as a translation of δόξαι over 'appearances', see Mourelatos (2008) 195-197.
[162] Generally accepted estimate of Diels (Diels (1897) 29).
[163] Fragment B10 clearly states that both the origin and nature of the cosmos will be discussed, so the δόξαι comprises both a cosmogony and a cosmology. There is an ongoing discussion as to which category fragment B12 belongs; for an overview of the viewpoints, see Mansfeld (1964) 163n.1.
[164] Cf. Tor (2015) 4.
[165] For a short overview of the knowledge transmitted in doxography, see Palmer (2009) 160-161.

use, inviting the κοῦρος and the audience to reflect on the deceptive character of the δόξαι which is so very essential to it.

These three case-studies will thus demonstrate how instances of circularity figure the theory of the δόξαι in several ways: didactic (visual description of the two forms chosen by the mortals), reflective (on the relation between ἀλήθεια and δόξαι carrying both similarities and differences), and polemic (using a pun to Homer to underline the deceptiveness of the δόξαι).

3.1 Mistake of the mortals

Essential to the question what exactly the mistake of the mortals entails is the way one regards the δόξαι as a whole. The debated status of the δόξαι is due to its paradoxical nature: although the goddess calls them deceptive (ἀπατηλόν, B8.52) and says that they lack true conviction (ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθής, B1.30), she nevertheless includes them in her revelation. Why would the goddess have chosen to incorporate these opinions? Does she nevertheless believe them to have a certain value, regardless of their deceptive nature? The reason she gives for revealing the δόξαι to the κοῦρος is to ensure that no mortal opinion may outstrip him (B8.60-61), but does this mean that she grants to this compositional section a certain positive quality?

This question, to which different answers have been given, has occupied a significant number of scholars. An answer which used to be common opinion, but is now quite disregarded, is that the δόξαι lack any positive value whatsoever. Its main purpose is dialectical: it underlines the superiority of the ἀλήθεια. Within the group of scholars providing this answer, opinions differ whether it consists of a collection of opinions of other philosophers,[166] or whether Parmenides himself build this cosmogonical system to demonstrate that any philosophy is essentially flawed, although his is the best system possible.[167]

Instead of focussing on the differences between the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι, as the last group of scholars did, other scholars have focussed mainly on the similarities between the two parts of the goddess' revelation. Although these scholars grant the existence of certain differences, they nevertheless argue that the goddess attributes a positive value to the δόξαι.[168] Palmer, for example, in his convincing argumentation stated that the reason that the δόξαι are false, is to be found in the lack of necessary Being in it.[169] As shown in the second chapter, the object of the ἀλήθεια is Being. This is not simply Being, however, but 'is, and is not for Not-Being' (B2.3), so necessary Being. According to Palmer, the δόξαι certainly have value in giving an account of the physical world (which is a different objective than the ἀλήθεια has), as long as none of the Forms equals Not-Being. The δόξαι simply are not subjected to the logical deduction that characterizes the ἀλήθεια and therefore lack genuine trustworthiness.

Whereas I wish to make clear that I agree with Palmer's position in this debate, this subchapter does not aim at dissolving this longstanding discussion on the value and the status

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[166] Diels (1897) 63; Barnes (1982) 156-157. This position is undermined by the fact that some scientific discoveries (such as the finding that the Morning Star and the Evening Star are identical) have been attributed to Parmenides, so the δόξαι cannot have consisted solely of opinions of other philosophers; cf. Sedley (1999) 123.

[167] Owen (1960) 89; Long (1963) 91. An important objection to such a position is that, since there are no levels of falsehood in Parmenides, no such things as a 'best system possible' exists; cf. Tarán (1965) 207.

[168] E.g. Reinhardt (1916) 25; Coxon (1986) 342; Tor (2015) 6.

[169] Palmer (2009) 161-163.

of the δόξαι, but to show in which ways circularity contributes to the relation between the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι. From the short overview above, it should be clear that there are simultaneously similarities[170] and differences[171] between the two compositional parts of the poem, and in this subchapter, I shall demonstrate how the Forms of Light and Night, posited by the mortals, contribute to both the highlighting of essential differences and the underlining of some shared characteristics.

The mistake of the mortals is clarified already in the very first verses of the δόξαι. Its deceptive nature is due to the positing of two Forms by mortals:

> […] δόξας δ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε βροτείας
> μάνθανε κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλὸν ἀκούων.
> μορφὰς γὰρ κατέθεντο δύο γνώμας ὀνομάζειν,
> τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεών ἐστιν, ἐν ᾧ πεπλανημένοι εἰσίν,
> ἀντία δ' ἐκρίναντο δέμας. (B8.51-55)
>
> From this point learn human beliefs,
> listening to the deceptive composition of my words.
> For they decided[172] to name two Forms,
> a unity of which it is not right to name, wherein men have gone astray,
> and they chose opposites in body.

The key phrase to understanding where the mortals went astray is τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεών ἐστιν, which has been interpreted in various ways. I shall argue that its correct translation is 'a unity of which it is not right to name'. One should add ὀνομάζειν and οὐ belongs to χρεών ἐστιν rather than to ὀνομάζειν.[173] The meaning of χρεών is fundamental to this phrase. As Mourelatos argued, χρῆ-cognates in Parmenides do not express the notion of necessity ('a unity of which it is not necessary to name'), but the notion of aptness and propriety ('a unity of which it is not right to name').[174] The sentence therefore does not convey the absence of an obligation but the

[170] Similarities include the appearance of Dike and Ananke in both parts (Morgan (2000) 86), the adhibition of σήματα (Deichgräber (1959) 62), and the similar use and transformation of ancient poetic traditions (Bollack (2006) 197). An excellent summary of the similarities is given by Mourelatos (2008) 248-249.
[171] Outside the obvious differences of unity versus plurality and the genuine account of Being versus the false account of the physical world, the differences entail for example the different meaning of νόος in the two parts (Wiesner (1996) 160) and the distinctive use of κρίσις (Tor (2015) 14-16). For an extensive list of verbal and conceptual differences, see Mourelatos (2008) 232-234.
[172] Almost all editors choose γνώμας, only Furley (1973) 6 prefers the variant γνώμαις. Mourelatos (2008) 228-230 has an excellent interpretation of γνώμας which also explains how γνώμαις entered the textual tradition: the line has two different meanings to two different audiences ('they decided' to the mortals; 'they did not decide/they were of two minds' to the more exclusive audience of the κοῦρος and those who grasped her argument about Being) and readers could not resist bringing the meaning meant for the second audience out in the open by positing γνώμαις, thereby destroying the subtle irony and ambiguity.
[173] Meijer (1997) 203.
[174] Mourelatos (2008) 84.

assertion of disproval. This disapproval is uttered by the goddess, so the opinion conveyed in these lines is hers.[175]

The meaning of the relative phrase τῶν μίαν has been under discussion, too. Aristotle has taken it to mean 'one of which', thus pinpointing the mistake as the naming of one of the two Forms. Aligning Fire with Being and Night with Not-Being,[176] he believed the mistake of the mortals to be the positing of Night. His position, or the adaptation in which the mistake is the positing of either Form, has been taken over by some modern scholars.[177] An important linguistic objection discounts this position of taking τῶν μίαν to signify 'one of which': the meaning of τῶν ἑτέρην would be assigned to τῶν μίαν, which is improbable, since there are examples of μία meaning 'one of two' only about thousand years after Parmenides.[178]

Two other interpretations of this clause can be easily dismissed. τῶν μίαν cannot mean 'none of which', as Cornford advocated,[179] since τῶν μίαν οὐ is not the same as οὐδετέραν.[180] The goddess could also not be asserting that the mortals should have named two Forms instead of one ('of which it is not right to name only one [sc. without the other]'), thus criticizing the Ionian philosophers who posited only one Form,[181] since this (a) would again imply τῶν μίαν to mean τῶν ἑτέρην,[182] and (b) would be incoherent as a criticism of the mortals, who actually posit two Forms.[183]

The only remaining possibility is taking τῶν μίαν as 'a unity of which', as Tarán and Mansfeld have argued.[184] This translation does more justice to the Greek, its rendering being paralleled in Aeschylus.[185] What exactly does 'a unity of which it is not right to name' mean? What does the mistake of the mortals entail according to the goddess? The problem is not that the mortals believe that the two Forms exist, but rather that they think that they are a unity. Although both Forms entail Being and thus 'are', they are definitively not the same – the equality expressed in line B9.4 should not be mistaken for identity. A unity cannot and should not be formed out of them, since they are opposites and therefore far from identical to each other. It is not a problem to posit two Forms and to make a cosmology out of them, although this system cannot be as trustworthy as the ἀλήθεια because it doesn't follow the strictly deductive rules of necessary logic. The problem of the mortals is not the system they pose, but the fact that they falsely think that their system, described in the δόξαι, falls under those rules. They think that the two Forms out of which their cosmology is built can form a unity and as such be subject to the rules of the ἀλήθεια or even be equal to Being. Although both Forms encompass Being (since a

[175] It has been argued that the opinion in these lines is the one of the mortals ('a unity of which [they say] it is not right to name'), e.g. by Tarán (1965) 220. But, as Mourelatos (2008) 84 noted, this would entail an implausible shift from the first person to the third person.
[176] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 987a1-2.
[177] Following Aristotle in regarding the positing of Night as the mistake is Fränkel (1955) 180. The adapted version is defended by Long (1963) 99; Sedley (1999) 124; Mourelatos (2008) 85-86.
[178] Mansfeld (1964) 124.
[179] Cornford (1939) 46.
[180] Mansfeld (1964) 124.
[181] This position was defended by Coxon (1986) 344.
[182] Tarán (1965) 219-220.
[183] Tor (2015) 16.
[184] Mansfeld (1964) 126; Tarán (1965) 220. Although Tarán defends this translation, the line belongs, according to him, to the opinion of the mortals, rather than expressing the goddess' view.
[185] Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 209-210 (Mansfeld (1964) 126).

good cosmological system entailing also Not-Being is impossible), they remain contraries and therefore should not be regarded as a unity. The criticism of the goddess is thus not directed at the Forms themselves or at their being posited, but to the false conviction of mortals about them. The description of the physical world itself stands and even has a positive value[186] (although inferior to the ἀλήθεια, but no system describing the physical world could ever follow the rules of the ἀλήθεια). The methodological reflection of the mortals on the way in which their system would be subjected to the rules lined out by the ἀλήθεια is astray: the false conviction of their system being compatible with the logical rules of necessity in the ἀλήθεια is the mistake of the mortals the goddess is condemning in these lines.

The Forms the mortals posited are visually described. The word used to indicate the Forms of Fire and Night is μορφαί, 'Forms' (B8.53). The goddess then says that the two chosen Forms are opposites 'qua body' (δέμας, B8.55). This very word δέμας is again used in reference to the Form of Night in B8.59. μορφαί and δέμας are words for a visual, dimensional structure. The lines in which these terms are introduced follow closely upon the comparison to the ball which ended the ἀλήθεια: in B8.50-51 the goddess asserts that her discourse on Being is finished and that she will continue to describe the physical world of the δόξαι. In the comparison, one single form was at stake: a well-rounded ball. Immediately after the transition, the goddess again mentions visual forms and shapes, but this time two different ones. Although the Forms of Fire and Night are itself not said to be circular (for explicitly circular shapes in the δόξαι, see subchapters 3.2 and 3.3), circularity is implicitly evoked through the comparison between the well-rounded ball and the other forms mentioned only so shortly afterwards. This is not to say that the two cosmogonical principles of the δόξαι possess the shape of a circle or sphere, but to argue that the visual language chosen to describe the Forms here invites reflection on the status of these Forms compared to Being, which is compared to the visual form of a well-rounded ball.[187] The Forms in the δόξαι are not abstract, but concrete. Contrary to Being in the ἀλήθεια, they possess a body and shape rather than only being compared to it. Although the shape of the two cosmogonical principles remains unspecified, one could say that the mortals received the image of a ball from the ἀλήθεια and reified it into the more concrete Forms of Fire and Night, dividing it in two.[188]

The Forms, although not spherical or circular, are thus described in a way which closely resembles the well-rounded ball Being is compared to. The fact that their description is formulated as it is, stressing the similarities between the two parts by referring to the respective visual shape, also underlines that the positing of the Forms as such is not the problem, as I argued above. At the same time, the positing of the two Forms figures the theory of the δόξαι by reflecting on the duality contrasting the unity of the ἀλήθεια, one of the main differences between the two revelations. This contrast becomes clearer because the unity and plurality are described in similar, visual terms of shape (whether compared or actual shape), making the difference more poignant. This reflective figuring of the theories also has a didactic function, since it visualizes the difference by visual, reified forms pointing out both similarities and contrasts, thus confirming that the mistake of the mortals is not in positing the two Forms, but in the thought that these two Forms are a unity, like the one of the ἀλήθεια.

[186] Cf. Mansfeld (1964) 126.
[187] Cf. Iribarren (2018) 107.
[188] Iribarren (2018) 109.

3.2 Concentric rings and spheres figuring the theory

The two Forms posed by the mortals, described in the previous subchapter, are cosmogonical principles from which everything in the physical world and universe is made. This second section will elaborate on the way that Fire and Night figure the doctrine of the δόξαι in the way the universe is organised. I will argue that the spherical cosmos is didactic and reflective on many elements of the relation between ἀλήθεια and δόξαι. In order to grasp how these didactics and this reflectivity work, I shall first describe the picture of the universe presented in the δόξαι.

The only direct information we have about Parmenides' perception of the cosmos in the δόξαι is fragment B12. Having been cited three times by Simplicius[189] for the purpose of showing that Parmenides posed an efficient cause,[190] these lines show how the heavenly bodies came into being. The described cosmos is a spherical one[191] consisting of several layers:

> αἱ γὰρ στεινότεραι πλῆντο πυρὸς ἀκρήτοιο,
> αἱ δ' ἐπὶ τῇς νυκτός, μετὰ δὲ φλογὸς ἵεται αἶσα·
> ἐν δὲ μέσῳ τούτων δαίμων, ἣ πάντα κυβερνᾷ. (B12.1-3)[192]
>
> For the smaller ones [sc. rings][193] were filled with unmixed Fire,
> and those next to them with Night, and between them [sc. between the rings of Fire and the rings of Night] a portion of Fire is brought:
> in the middle of these is the goddess, who governs everything.

The spherical cosmos thus consists of several rings (στεφάναι). Although the exact meaning of Parmenides' στεφάναι is disputed, a majority of scholars takes it to signify 'rings' rather than 'spheres'.[194] These rings are cylindrical rings, of hollow form, spherical shells which together form one large sphere. From these three lines, however, it is quite impossible to reconstruct the outlook of the universe. Doxography can help us to fill the blanks in our knowledge. Aetius gave an account of the cosmos in Parmenides' δόξαι, basing himself on the information Theophrastus transmitted (A37).[195] Although Aetius is by some scholars regarded as having misinterpreted B12,[196] it is possible to combine B12 and A37 into one system in a

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[189] Bollack (2006) 238.
[190] Morrison (1955) 61.
[191] Betegh (2002) 402.
[192] The fragment continues for another three lines with a specification of how the δαίμων governs everything: by bringing about the mixing of the male and the female.
[193] According to the *communis opinio*, στεινότεραι should refer to the στεφάναι (e.g. Bollack (2006) 239).
[194] Only Diels (1897) 104 takes στεφάναι to be pure spheres. Fränkel (1955) 183n.1 and Coxon (1986) 364 prefer the translation 'rings'. Although Tarán (1965) 233, Finkelberg (1986) 316n.41, and Iribarren (2018) 111 choose the translation 'spheres', they pose a system with spherical rings highly similar to mine.
[195] Fränkel (1955) 183.
[196] Fränkel (1955) 184: '[die] erhaltene falsche Auslegung des erhaltenen echten Textes'; Tarán (1965) 239: 'The report of Aetius contains a gross misunderstanding of fr. 12.1-2'; Coxon (1986) 363: 'Aetius' assertion that the outer envelope is στερεόν ['solid'] appears to be a misinterpretation of ὅλυμπος ἔσχατος ['extreme olympus'].'

convincing way, as Finkelberg has shown.[197] In the following paragraph, I shall explain the outlines of this cosmological system of the spherical universe according to Finkelberg.

At the outside of the universe a solid outer wall is posed, which is called ὄλυμπος ἔσχατος in fragment B11.2-3. Directly under this outer shell of the universe, there are rings of pure, unmixed Fire (B12.1). These rings of Fire form the aether,[198] in which 'all signs of the aether' (τά τ' ἐν αἰθέρι πάντα σήματα, B10.1-2), i.e. the planets,[199] are located. Under the fiery rings, a number of mixed rings is located, consisting of a mixture of Fire and Night (the atmosphere, described in the second half of line 12.2), followed by a ring of pure Night. This ring of pure Night is the spherical earth, posited at the centre of the universe.[200] Moving from outside inwards, the earth is followed by a subterranean Fire and a solid centre. The location of the goddess in this universe is debated, since ἐν δὲ μέσῳ τούτων ('in the middle of these', B12.3) can be interpreted in several ways, but it seems best to identify her with the innermost ring of Fire.[201]

This system of the universe does more than didactically show the κοῦρος and the audience how the cosmos looks according to the δόξαι of mortals, since as a whole it could and should also be regarded as a theoretical object. For many smaller elements of this description, or the lost parts which we know of through doxographies, contribute to a reflection of the issue of the relationship between the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι and thus to the question of the unity of the composition of Parmenides' poem. In the following paragraphs, I shall elaborate on the manner in which some aspects of Parmenides' description of the cosmos stress differences and therefore key characteristics of the two compositional parts through the close resemblance in circularity.

The most eye-catching resemblance between the structure of the universe and the ἀλήθεια is the spherical shape (respectively of the cosmos and of the well-rounded ball). The geometrical solid of the ἀλήθεια is converted by the mortals into a perceptible physical body

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[197] Finkelberg (1986) 303-317.

[198] Finkelberg (1986) 314. This identification is made on basis of Cicero's account in *De Natura Deorum* 1.11.28.

[199] Coxon (1986) 353.

[200] Finkelberg (1986) 307. The earth is not, as Diels (1897) 105 and Coxon (1986) 363 argued, identical to the solid centre in the middle of the universe, but rather to the ring of Night, thus making the innermost ring of Fire a subterranean one instead of one surrounding the earth. For a discussion of the evidence in favour of the sphericity of the earth, see Tarán (1965) 234n.15 and Burkert (1972) 304-308. For the counterargument that στρογγύλη can also mean 'circular' instead of 'spherical', see Morrison (1955) 64.

[201] This line has already traditionally been understood in two different ways: in the middle of the mixed rings (Aetius on basis of Theophrastus) or in the middle of the universe (Simplicius) (cf. Diels (1897) 107). Reinhardt (1916) 13 followed Aetius in locating the goddess in the middle of the mixed rings, but this is unlikely, since Aetius' account is based on a corrupt sentence of Theophrastus (at least two words, and probably even more, are missing; cf. Finkelberg (1986) 311). Meijer (1997) 217n.1205 enumerates the arguments why the goddess cannot be the aether, as Coxon (1986) 368-370 argued. Although it is possible that the location is not exactly pinpointed (Mansfeld (1964) 164) or that it is simply somewhere between the two elements in order for the goddess to fulfil her cosmogonical tasks (Iribarren (2018) 112), there are several arguments in favour of the identification of the goddess to the subterranean ring of Fire: (a) if Parmenides would personify Fire, a female deity would be a logical choice, since according to his biological theory, the female is hotter than the male, (b) Aetius says that the goddess is a ring (and the subterranean Fire forms a ring around the solid centre), and (c) Cicero confirms that the goddess is a ring of Fire (Finkelberg (1986) 311).

which is a possible starting-point of becoming.[202] Although the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι thus share the spherical form, there are also important differences.

First of all, whereas Being was only compared to a well-rounded ball, the cosmos of the δόξαι actually *is* spherical. Furthermore, Being was compared to one single ball, reinforcing the unity, whereas plurality is introduced in the δόξαι: there are several spherical heavenly bodies and there are multiple στεφάναι. Becoming, which is a key characteristic of the δόξαι, is not only apparent in the plurality, but also in the heterogeneity of the various στεφάναι. The στεφάναι filling up the whole cosmos consist of either Fire or Night or a mixture of both. This contrasts sharply with the homogeneity of the well-rounded ball. Fourthly, this ball was unmovable and held still within limits, unlike the revolving heavens and the heavenly bodies turning in circles within their rings. The contrast between the two spheres is also polemically expressed on a word-level. The radial invariance, expressed in spatial terms in B8.44-45 (οὔτε τι μεῖζον οὔτε τι βαιότερον, 'neither somewhat more here nor somewhat less there'), contrasts with the spatial descriptions of the radial difference in B12.1-3 (αἱ γὰρ στεινότεραι…αἱ δ' ἐπί…μετὰ δέ…ἐν δὲ μέσῳ, 'for the smaller ones…and those next to them…and between them…and in the middle').[203] These phrases, expressing location, thus figure the theory of respectively the ἀλήθεια and δόξαι by a polemic contrast to each other. Finally, the furthest limit which held Being in place (πεῖρας πύματον, B8.42) is reified by the mortals to the outer wall which forms the limit of the universe (ὅλυμπος ἔσχατος, B11.2-3). Likewise, as Necessity was said to hold Being in her bounds (B8.14-15, B8.31), this personified goddess fettered heaven to contain the boundaries of the stars (ὥς μιν ἄγουσ' ἐπέδησεν ἀνάγκη πείρατ΄ ἔχειν ἄστρων, B10.6-7).[204] Whereas the notions of the limits and Necessity in the ἀλήθεια were metaphorical, abstract, and posited to represent the conclusions of logic deduction, the mortals in the δόξαι reify them and give them a physical place in their universe.

One could ask oneself whether the system of the spherical cosmos in the δόξαι is not only didactic, reflective, and polemic to the ἀλήθεια in the aforementioned ways, but also polemic to Parmenides' predecessors. It is very well possible that the cosmological account of the δόξαι also figures its theory in that regard, but the loss of a substantial part of the δόξαι makes it impossible to assert anything on this topic with more certainty than mere speculation. According to ancient doxography, Parmenides was the first to pose a spherical earth.[205] If he is right, we can assume that Parmenides stresses this difference to his predecessors, albeit perhaps implicitly. The words he used to distance his own spherical world from the world views of his predecessors (e.g. Anaximander's disc-shaped earth) could have figured the theory of his δόξαι in a polemic way, but since these words are not transmitted, we cannot say anything more about it.

The spherical cosmos of the δόξαι thus figures the theory in a didactic sense, for it demonstrates the views of the δόξαι about the cosmos. As a theoretical object, the system is also reflective on some key differences between the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι (compared vs. actual sphericity, homogeneity vs. mixture, immovability vs. movement, unity vs. plurality). The stressing of these differences is only possible by the similarity in the recurring themes of mainly

[202] Cornford (1939) 48.
[203] Mourelatos (2008) 233-234.
[204] Coxon (1986) 356; Morgan (2000) 72.
[205] Diogenes Laërtius 9.21 (Burkert (1972) 304n.20).

circularity, but also of bounds and Necessity, which emphasize the close connection between the two compositional unities.

3.3 The figuration of deceiving appearances by the wandering moon

One of the spheres which is part of the cosmological account on the universe figures the theory of the δόξαι in particular. The moon, as a spherical heavenly body, will prove to be essential in understanding the figuration of the δόξαι, since it reflects on their deceptive character. I shall argue that through a pun to Homer the 'wandering' nature of the moon figures the relation between the actual nature of the δόξαι and the opinion the mortals themselves have on it. One transmitted line about the moon is vital to this reflection:

νυκτιφαὲς περὶ γαῖαν ἀλώμενον ἀλλότριος φῶς (B14)

Shining in the night, wandering around the earth, an alien light.

From the transmitted fragments, we even receive a little more information about the moon: it is round-faced (κύκλωπος...σελήνης, B10.4), its deeds are wandering (ἔργα...περίφοιτα, B10.4), and it always gazes at the rays of the sun (αἰεὶ παπταίνουσα πρὸς αὐγὰς ἠελίοιο, B15). Since the moon only radiates 'an alien light' and always 'gazes at the rays of the sun', it lacks illumination of its own. Parmenides might have been the first to discover that the moon is illuminated by the sun, rather than producing light of its own.[206] This observation also accounts for the faces of the moon: the apparent shape of the moon is in fact caused by the relative position of the moon to the sun. This can only be the case when the moon is not only 'round-faced', but actually spherical.[207]

The doxographical tradition provides us with even more knowledge: the moon is made out of a mixture of air (which has separated out from the earth) and Fire.[208] Because it consists of a mixture, it is also located in the mixed rings, unlike the sun and the stars, which, entirely composed of Fire, are placed in the outer ring of Fire.[209]

The moon can therefore on itself also be seen as a theoretical object, which reflects on the ἀλήθεια-δόξαι relation in the same way as the spherical cosmos as a whole (cf. subchapter 3.2). Just like the spherical cosmos, the moon is actually spherical (in contrast to the compared sphericity of Being), in movement (opposing the immobility of the ball in the ἀλήθεια), and heterogeneous, because of the mixture of air and Fire (diverging from the homogeneity inside the ball). These three contrasts between the moon and the well-rounded ball of the ἀλήθεια are evoked by the similarity in shape, just as it was the case between the spherical cosmos and the well-rounded ball. The only difference with the way this whole cosmos reflects on the key characteristics of the δόξαι is the absence of the unity-plurality contrast in the description of the moon (which can easily be explained, since the moon is one element of the plurality described in

[206] Sedley (1999) 123.
[207] Coxon (1986) 375.
[208] A37, cf. Tarán (1965) 245. For a clear overview on the doxographical contribution to our knowledge about the moon, see Coxon (1986) 373.
[209] Finkelberg (1986) 315.

the δόξαι, rather than itself also encompassing plurality). The moon is thus in these ways reflective on the relation between the two revelations of the goddess and also didactic, since it shows the δόξαι's conception of the celestial body of the moon.

Besides figuring the theory of the δόξαι in these two ways, the moon is also an excellent example of the deceptive character of the opinions of the mortals. I shall argue that it entails a reflection on the tension between appearances and nature which is the foundation of the δόξαι. The reflection on this discrepancy between the true nature and false and deceiving appearances can be seen on three different levels.

First of all, the moon has changing appearances: it seems to wax and wane. Although it thus seems to transform, Parmenides' theory proves that it doesn't: since it is a spherical body receiving its light from the sun, the appearance of the moon to the people on earth changes, whereas it actually remains the same. This deceptive aspect in the light of the moon invites to reflection on the deceptive aspect of the δόξαι. Although the mortals are convinced that their theory is sound because it is subjected to the logical rules of the ἀλήθεια (see subchapter 3.1), the goddess can see its true nature: although valuable, nevertheless deceptive. Although the mortals have convinced themselves to have brought forth a solid cosmological and cosmogonical theory, it actually is not. Similar to the contrast between the apparent character of the δόξαι (to the mortals) and its actual status (according to the knowing goddess), another image is posited to reflect on this contrast between appearances and nature: the moon. The epistemological gap between the apparent and actual character of the moon thus reflectively figures the issue of the mistake of the mortals in the δόξαι.

Secondly, the 'alien light', ἀλλότριος φῶς (B14), is a pun to the Homeric word-use of a stranger. Homer used the phrase ἀλλότριος φώς, 'a man from somewhere else', to designate a stranger or wanderer. The neutrum φῶς ('light') is a homonym of the masculine φώς ('man').[210] By twisting this phrase and attributing it to the moon, Parmenides establishes a connection between the moon, whose light comes from the sun, and a wandering stranger in the minds of the κοῦρος and his audience, to whom the Homeric phrase ἀλλότριος φώς was familiar. The fact that the moon also 'wanders over the earth' (περὶ γαῖαν ἀλώμενον, B14) contributes to this connection. When this allusion to wandering is made in the δόξαι, any reader will remember the characterization of the mortals by the goddess in fragment B6: they 'wander two-headed' (πλάζονται δίκρανοι, B6.5) on the path of the δόξαι. Wandering is in Parmenides always a signal of falsehood: the subject does not manage to reach its goal straightforwardly.[211] Thus, Parmenides again reflects on the appearance-nature discrepancy: in the same way that the moon seems to send out its own light, but in fact only reflects the light of the sun, the mortals regard their own theory to be sound, whereas in fact they wander.

Thirdly, it is possible that the aforementioned word-pun of ἀλλότριος φῶς is an allusion to a specific passage in Homer. When Penelope addresses Telemachus in the *Odyssey*, she says the following:

> καί κέν τις φαίη γόνον ἔμμεναι ὀλβίου ἀνδρός,
> ἐς μέγεθος καὶ κάλλος ὁρώμενος, ἀλλότριος φώς. (Homer, *Odyssey* 18.218-219)[212]

[210] Bollack (2006) 270.
[211] Mourelatos (2008) 224-225.
[212] Wright (1997) 15-16 mistakenly referred to this passage as *Odyssey* 18.719, which does not exist.

And someone would say that you are the son of a rich man,
when he looked only to your stature and beauty, himself being a stranger.

If the designation of the moon's alien light is indeed an allusion to this passage, it would reflect on the appearance-nature relation in a third way. The ἀλλότριος φώς of this Homeric passage is somebody from faraway, who has not been acquainted with Telemachus. Judging by appearance, he would say that Telemachus is the son of a rich man. Although this information is true in this case, this allusion does evoke the topos of appearances and the question whether they are right or wrong. Parmenides very subtly invoked this theme of appearances by adding a pun to this passage to his description of the origins of the Light which mortals see as coming from the moon.

Concludingly: besides didactically demonstrating the mortals' view on the moon, this passage figures the theory of the δόξαι by reflecting on some key differences between the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι (e.g. homogeneity versus mixture). Furthermore, it reflects on the discrepancy between (false) appearances and (true) nature in three ways, thus offering the κοῦρος and the audience food for thought about the status of the δόξαι. Firstly, the moon's appearance to mortals is different than its actual nature: although it seems to wax and wane, it always remains the same sphere reflecting the light of the sun. Secondly, by alluding to a Homeric stranger in the phrase ἀλλότριος φῶς, Parmenides' goddess evokes the theme of wandering mortals whose theory is not trustworthy, although they think it is. This topos of the falseness of appearances is even evoked more specifically by the reference to a stranger judging Telemachus merely by appearance in ἀλλότριος φῶς. The moon as a spherical heavenly body is thus highly significant in figuring the theory of the δόξαι.

Conclusion

In this MA-thesis, I have provided an overview of the instances of circularity throughout the three sections of Parmenides' philosophical poem, arguing that circularity, a notion in both form and content, comprises a theoretical significance in Parmenides' doctrine. This philosophical importance lies in the fact that the instances in which circularity is evoked all figure Parmenides' theory in some way. These means of figuration can be didactic, polemic, and/or reflective, and function on different levels.

The most basic level is the one on which circularity figures Parmenides' narration or discourse. This is the case in the ringcomposition of the proem, in which the journey of the daughters of the Sun is reflected upon by the circular shape of the narration itself. This formal device of ringcomposition not only works didactically by pinpointing the location of the goddess as the night, but it also reflects on the form of Parmenides' narration of the described journey. Another example of circularity as a theoretically employed notion on the level of the discourse is the statement of the goddess in which she alludes to a metapoetical path in shape of a circle, therefore always returning to the same point, thereby reflecting on the unfolding of her own discourse, which repeatedly comes back to the premise 'is, and is not for Not-Being'.

On a second level, one aspect of Parmenides' philosophy is figured, so either the ἀλήθεια or the δόξαι. The audience is for instance reminded of Being's most important characteristics at the end of the argumentation by the way these features are comprised in the well-rounded ball. In the δόξαι, the way in which the moon reflects on their deceptive character figures the theory of this particular compositional section.

Polemic figuration plays a key role on the third level, on which in the case of the ἀλήθεια its theory is not only figured, but also contrasted with the δόξαι, and vice versa. Circularity is on this level employed to stress some key characteristics of the respective theory and to contrast them to the other revelation of the goddess. This degree of theoretical significance thus involves both the ἀλήθεια and the δόξαι. For example, the rings out of which the spherical cosmos in the δόξαι consists underline the mixture, movement, and plurality so characteristic of the δόξαι, effectively contrasting it to the homogeneity, immovability, and unity of Being in the ἀλήθεια.

On the highest theoretical level, the relation between the two revelations of the goddess is reflected upon externally. The metapoetical reflectivity of both the chariot's wheels and the gate's doors in the proem figures the unity of the whole poem; this unity being one of Parmenides' most conceptual novelties. Even this highly abstract difficulty of the inclusion of the δόξαι, although they are said to be untrustworthy, is figured by circularity.

Concludingly, circularity contributes on many different levels throughout the poem to the figuration of Parmenides' philosophy. It is not some mere decoration to his poem, but an irreplaceable means of expressing his doctrine which should not be underestimated. Further research could be done on the theoretical significance of circularity in the work of other Presocratic philosophers. Having written on a more abstract and theoretical level than his predecessors, Parmenides ultimately needed very refined tools to express his almost inexpressible thoughts. Circularity, however, is not the only means he employed. Other figuring devices awaiting further exploration are the literary motive of the returning female deities and resemantised mythological motives. Parmenides' philosophical poem still abounds in unrevealed subtleties.

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