

The Argument To The Hypotheses In *Parmenides*

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126a-127a

The reader of Parmenides should put himself in the place of the Clazomenian philosophers who have come to Athens to hear the great argument of Socrates with Zeno and Parmenides as recorded in the memory of Antiphon. From it they would learn what Anaxagoras had not made clear, how the *nous*, alone unmixed, could relate to the atoms in each of which were all difference, the endless process of separating their differences from the original mixture. Of the atoms in this endless process nothing could be said distinctly that would not show itself as other in further division.

Zeno gave general form to this recurrent same and different: the contraries themselves would have both to be united in the individual, and in that contradiction must be annulled. Parmenides would thus be shown to have said rightly that thinking and being were immediately one and that negativity or not-being was unthinkable.

Socrates had however given up the separation he found in Anaxagoras of the pure, unmixed *nous* from its work of distinguishing and ordering the atomic individuals. As the good, the *nous* was determination of itself and ordered its determinations to itself. This unity of the divided and the undivided Socrates could not think directly but had discovered a method by which a true finitude could be known. The confusions of sense perception and opinion or ordinary language, where the being of things has ever a negativity lurking in it, he thinks to be eliminated in 'separate' ideas - 'separate' in that, like the *nous* of Anaxagoras, they are 'pure' and 'unmixed', self-identical. In these objects Socrates had perhaps discovered the true finitude which Zeno thought to be impossible.

What the Clazomenians will hear reported to them by Antiphon is an examination of this 'true being' by Parmenides, whether and in what way it can sustain the argument of Zeno that all division and finitude ends in contradiction and nullity.

I

127a-130a: Introduction

DOULL: THE ARGUMENT TO THE HYPOTHESES IN *PARMENIDES*

What the dialogue is about is indicated more distinctly by the place and occasion of the meeting of Socrates with the Eleatic philosophers. Parmenides and Zeno have come to Athens to celebrate the Great Panathenaea. In Athena poets and other artists embody aesthetically the self-conscious reason which knows opposed positions, can stay and reconcile thus what would be mutually destructive conflicts -- the circumspect reason which exists humanly in Odysseus, her favoured hero; which gives Achilles pause when in just anger he would kill Agamemnon, first among the Greek commanders; can order the conflicting demands of Apollo and the Eumenides; which drives to madness and suicide in the soul of Ajax conflicting heroism and slighted dignity, where time and the reflection of an Odysseus would have saved him. In the last example, or in the mad Heracles, Zeno's contradiction as the truth and nullity of extreme division occurs, as also a possibility of surviving the contradiction. Athena one should suppose to preside over the division between Zeno and Socrates and to know a resolution adequate to both.

A brief exchange between Socrates and Zeno states the opposed positions whose relations, and in the end their unification, will occupy the remainder of the dialogue. Zeno has read his book, which then for the first time became known in Athens, to an interested audience, among whom was Socrates. The reading finished, Socrates, to be sure he has grasped rightly the logic of Zeno's proofs that there cannot be a plurality of beings, asks him to read again the first hypothesis of the first argument, and, that being read, states what he takes to be its meaning: 'if beings are many, they must be both alike and unlike, which is impossible; for neither can unlikes be like nor likes unlike'. Zeno confirming, he goes on: 'that being so, it is impossible that there be many; for if there were, they would suffer impossibilities'. Is it the common intention of all your arguments to contend against all the ways one speaks of a plurality that there are not many? Zeno confirms that Socrates has understood well the meaning of his whole book.

Thus all the forty 'paradoxes' of Zeno's book *On Nature* are comprised in one formula and taken into the discussion. Omitted in Socrates' statement of Zeno's logic is the counter hypothesis that there can be nothing that is neither like nor unlike. That one must attend also to negative hypotheses enters the argument of the dialogue when Socrates' response to Zeno has been stated, its meaning drawn out, and the problems of participation gone through. They will be shown by Parmenides to be no less necessary than the affirmative hypotheses about unity and being to a knowledge of the relation of a 'separate' intelligible world to a sensible world.

Zeno, so understood, appears to Socrates only to repeat in other words what Parmenides has already said, that a multiple world was an unthinkable, that is, contradictory, not-being. His many arguments were in effect a deception, by which, saying the same as Parmenides, he seemed to be saying something different. Zeno disallowed this reading of his intention: his purpose was neither to deceive nor to propose another than Parmenides' philosophy, but polemical only. He would show to those who thought it absurd that there was only being that, supposing a plurality, they were involved in equal and greater absurdities. Socrates, one might say, saw Zeno as a Sophist, as one who could at his will obliterate the difference of contraries. Zeno's clarification allows

Socrates to state his position not against 'sophistic' but in relation to the being of Parmenides.

Socrates takes it to follow from Zeno's adherence to the undivided being of Parmenides that they have common ground: 'Tell me this, do you not think there is an *eidōs* by itself of likeness and another, its contrary, which is unlike; and that in these, which are two, you and I and the rest which we call many participate? Neither Zeno nor Parmenides has conceived such an ideal plurality. It occurs to Socrates to expect that Zeno has made this assumption because he for his part has another concept of being than the Eleatic. Being for Socrates is another name for the good, and the *eidh* are determinations of the good. Individuals, it seems clear to him, can have part in contrary *eidh* without contradiction. When Sophists say of something that it is 'like and unlike', 'one and many', they fail to distinguish in what comparison or in what respect the two belong.

The true difficulty for Socrates lies in the implications of a unified relation of the 'separate' *eidh* to individuals, which will not fall in the shifting comparisons of an extraneous subject or be in one respect and not another. In *Phaedo* where he tells how he came to the hypothesis of separate universals he speaks of them as substantial causes, e.g., of the union of soul and body which constitutes the human individual. But as not only separate and in themselves but present in individuals, universals are also mixed with one another. Nature is the process of mixing and separation. And this negativity and circulation of contraries is not only in changing and corruptible individuals but in their unchanging ideal basis, and through this individuals have a mediated relation to the good.

Socrates would marvel greatly if someone began by distinguishing and setting apart such universals as 'likeness' and 'unlikeness', plurality and unity, rest and motion, and then showed them able among themselves to mix and be separated - if someone could show the same *aporia* among objects attainable by reasoning as Zeno showed among sensibles, contraries mutually entwined in every sort of way. As Zeno's arguments proved the being of Parmenides to be the only truth of the sensible world, so would the concurrence and mutual exclusion of contrary universals prove the primacy of the good. So one might take the analogy. But for Socrates, as said, being has become the self-identity of the good. The good is not only in itself but divided and different from itself and relating its determinations to itself as to their end. And so he reads Zeno as showing among sensibles the multiple relations everyone assumes them to have, not their nullity.

It makes a difficulty in reading *Parmenides* that in speaking of the good, Plato uses abstract Eleatic concepts - unity and being. What these concepts signify for him is plain from the context, whether one think of the transition in *Phaedo* from the intelligence of Anaxagoras which separates extraneously the mixed individuals of a material world to an intelligence which moves 'for the best', or of the good of *Republic* toward which are ordered alike the divisions of the state and the soul. Zeno's arguments had for their purpose to show that nature or the material world which humans commonly suppose to be there, and themselves to be in it, is, for a thinking which has just begun to know itself, a nullity. How from this abstract beginning 'the one' came to be 'the good' in which is

centred in the sensible and ideal totalities Plato treats only elusively. From his standpoint it is not possible to write such a history of Presocratic philosophy as one has in Aristotle, which supposes that the substantial unity of the ideal and sensible world, toward which Plato's thought tends, has been discovered, and with it the division of being into primary genera or categories. The history of philosophy can then be regarded as a history of the discovery of the elements of substance.

This Aristotelian view of the movement of philosophical thought from Parmenides and Zeno to Plato is itself too narrow. The opponents of Parmenides appear in it as accomplishing something, if obscurely and without direction. The source of the instability of the several positions and the recurrent need to begin anew is seen to lie in a groping after the stability of substance as the category which alone remaining itself is receptive of contraries. Implicit in the history is therefore a relation to Zeno's common criticism, as one has it in *Parmenides*, of all who supposed they could think a multiple and finite being. But to bring out this relation clearly one would have to say of the successive attempts to think the finite that there was in them not one or more of the causes but them all and an incapacity of the category constitutive of a particular position to contain them. In all the positions until Anaxagoras, unless transiently in Heraclitus, thinking either with Parmenides and Zeno cannot find itself in the world that is there for it, or entering into it finds the logical forms in which it would think it inadequate to itself. Anaxagoras first brings the two sides in their strong separation together and would know them as one totality. But thought stands in an extraneous relation to the supposedly true entities of Anaxagoras' world. The endlessly recurrent relation of their togetherness and their separation, as for the unity of the thinking which divides and orders them, is subject to Zeno's criticism and, as 'ex hypthesi' independent of thought, first shows itself a contradiction and nullity.

Between Zeno and Parmenides in their own historical situation at the beginning of Presocratic philosophy and the application of their principle to Anaxagoras at the end, there is this difference, that then the nullity for thought of nature as simply there is immediately asserted without proof; now after successive attempts to think the finite were made and given up, the whole relation of thinking to its assumed world became explicit. Or, one might say, the Eleatic principle had its complete proof. On this understanding, Plato's use of Parmenides and Zeno in the dialogue as that against which Socrates presents his discovery of a true finitude can be taken as an abbreviation of Presocratic philosophy generally.

The result of Presocratic philosophy was not what Zeno would require, were his principle to be applied to its several forms and especially to Anaxagoras. Instead the thinking which knew itself one with being, with Socrates and the Sophists passed into the form of self-consciousness - a thinking which knew the positive and negative moments of what was other than itself as related to each other and to the thinking subject. There was no longer the thinking which knew being but not its division and multiplicity. One had in its place first the self-conscious subject which knew itself as 'measure of the being of beings and of the not-being of not-beings'. Or with Socrates the new principle took the form of a universal being to which belonged all negativity and difference. This principle

Plato called 'the good'. Regarded in its simple unity, apart from its division and multiplicity, it might be called 'one' or 'being'. And the reasoning which considered the relation of this unity to its determinations might be extraneous and not expressive of a teleological relation.

To use the Eleatic forms, abstract and inadequate to what one would think by them was indeed inevitable for Plato so long as he took for principles the 'one' and the 'indeterminate dyad' and on the assumption of their difference sought their unity through an external reflection and did not know their relation as the intrinsic self-determination of an original unity or as actuality. In *Parmenides* one sees the genesis of that concept, which begins to appear in the criticism of Eleaticism in *Sophist*.

II

130a-e: Of what are there ideas?

The argument then passes to the Platonic Parmenides for whom 'the one' is 'the good' and is assumed capable of showing the relation of all things to that principle. Ascertaining first from Socrates that the explanation he has given of a sensible plurality as 'participating' 'separate' ideas was not a thesis merely but for him the ideas are separate and self-identical, Parmenides would first learn whether it is intended universally or to apply only in some cases. By Aristotle's account¹ it was held in the Academy that there were not separate *eidh* of negations, privations, relations, or where there was a prior and posterior. That is, the ideas were properly essences or substantial natures, 'by themselves' or self-identical, without the types of negativity and otherness mentioned. Always included as well were unity, being, like, unlike and such pure universals. The Socrates of the dialogue had not fully clarified the position, but was beyond the historical Socrates who was occupied with definition and with virtues and the good or beautiful as the end sought by them. He was beyond that Socrates who had not 'separated' these or any universals from language and 'opinion', whose ambiguities he disclosed. Here he had 'separated' and knew these forms as self-related objects of a universal thinking.

The Socrates of *Phaedo*, to discover what that unmoving independence of the soul was from all its mutable relations to the world, 'separated' universals from their unstable presence in the objects of sense and imagination. He came to this knowledge by correcting a view of the soul as simply in the natural cycle of birth and death, coming to be and perishing, or as having the continuity of a harmony of the changing elements of the cycle. In this reflection he comes to a knowledge of the ideas through mutable nature and has not, or has only begun, to relate the 'separate' ideas to that way through which thought came to them. Asked by Parmenides at that point whether there were ideas of 'man' as embodied soul or of the elemental natural bodies he would no doubt be perplexed. And it would appear absurd that there be ideas of 'hair', which protects animal bodies from externals, or of 'mud', 'dirt' and such unordered mixtures of the elements. The thought came to Socrates sometimes that there must be one account in all cases, but from it he falls back for fear he be destroyed in an 'abyss of absurdity'.

¹ *Met.* 990a34-991a8 and elsewhere.

The 'abyss of absurdity' from which Socrates recoils is a loss of that stability his thought has found in a knowledge of the ideas. That certainty and himself as a thinking self-conscious being appear to be lost in that comprehensive idea to which Parmenides' questions have led him. The true being he had in the ideas will rest on a common idea inclusive also of that of which thought has not a certain knowledge. That which is self-identical and as such true for thought will also be not itself and untrue. This consequence is for Socrates absurd, that is, contradictory.

But Socrates, Parmenides observes, is still a young man and as such respects overly the opinions of men. He is not yet capable of what is not a human but rather a divine knowledge. The discovery of the ideas is the beginning of a science, of a knowledge of what the scientific understanding is. But there is also a dogmatism of the understanding, a common sense not easily moved from its certainty. But in Socrates, Parmenides discerns a philosophical enthusiasm which in his greater maturity will break through that barrier.

131a-e: The first *aporia* of 'participation'.

After intimating to Socrates that, having separated the ideas, he cannot stop short of a total idea reflecting all externality, Parmenides questions him on how one is to understand 'participation' or the relation to ideas of the individuals of the sensible world. This inquiry develops further Socrates' problem how self-identical ideas can be interconnected. For now not only has all the diversity of the sensible world been brought under one identity, but one asks how that identity can be individualized. In this and the previous line of questioning there is taking shape the structure of the ideal world, as this will be treated in the hypotheses about the relations of an absolute unity to a divided totality.

Parmenides begins by asking whether individuals participate a whole idea or a part of it or in some other manner, that is, can 'participation' be understood through the relation of parts to whole, or if not, through some other relation of the many to the unity of the idea. One will observe that the question, so formulated, takes up from where the questions on the content of the ideal world ended: how is that comprehensive idea related to the individuals of the sensible world.

Socrates in his answer shows that he knows well the sense of the question. 'Participation' is like the diffusion of light, which while remaining undividedly itself is spatially extended even to individuals. Elsewhere Plato compares the diffusion of the good to that of the light from the sun in the sensible world. But is not that identity, considered in its relation to individuals, rather like a sail spread over many individuals, touching each with some part of itself? 'Participation' would then not be of the whole, as Socrates' image intimates, but of the part.

The relation thus described one should compare with that of a unified thought to extension in the philosophies of Descartes and Spinoza. The difference lies in this, that the light in the image is thought to have division and difference in its identity, as on the other side the sail is not simply the continuity of extension but as partitioned among a

multitude of individuals. Here a like relation to that of the moderns emerges as one seeks the truth of a presupposed world. The particularity of the many has not given way to the abstract form, as later it will (as already in a manner in the matter of the Stoics) but is to be united with it. The argument then passes from the relation of parts to whole to the 'some other way' mentioned.

Parmenides begins the exposition of this more developed relation with the question whether an idea can truly be partitioned and remain one. Socrates accepting that to be impossible, Parmenides presents to him a way in which it can be thought possible. Consider the contrariety of 'great' and 'small' and an 'equality' which neutralizes their difference. In this relation one has the conditions of a unified process. The reflection of the self-diffusing unity and that process into each brings the process or becoming to a momentary halt and permits that first apprehension of being which is called *aisthesis*.² The conditions of this relation are here simply set before Socrates, who apprehends both an immediately stabilized unity of the divided and the undivided and the need to go beyond it to a more than evanescent truth, and thus to a second account of 'participation'.

But before passing to the second and subsequent explanations of 'participation' a general observation on their common structure. In every case 'participation' is through a certain relation of the Platonic 'principles' - undivided unity and the indeterminate dyad. From one to another there is a strict logical development towards an adequate relation of the principles - a relation in which both have explicitly the same total content. In *Republic* one has the image of a divided line, whose divisions represent relations of thought to being, at each division more adequate than the last, 'hypotheses' by which one ascends to the good - the 'unhypothetical' principle in which being and thought are no longer divided. Neither the logic of that ascent is there given nor how a 'dialectical' or 'hypothetical' thinking can exceed itself in an 'unhypothetical' principle. *Parmenides* will supply both. In the several *aporia* of 'participation' it will attend not only to a positive relation of thought and being at each grade but also to a negativity in which they are divided. The negativity present at one grade is at the next taken into the positive relation, only to recur in another form. The series is not endless but in four stages reaches a point where the object of thought is seen to be the principles themselves. Hence there are four *aporia*, the last leading to the 'hypotheses' about unity and being or the relations of an ideal and a sensible totality.

The endlessness which for Zeno nullified immediately a plurality of beings is here limited, allowing at each level an apprehension of finite being, a truth more stable as one ascends, until with the 'separate' ideas the relation appears to be absolutely stabilized.

The insufficiency of this first account of participation, which appears when its logical constituents have been brought out, is not further examined here. It is enough to have

² The argument here, dense from its brevity, will be explicated fully in the second hypothesis. For the general sense of it one may reflect on the difficulty in early modern philosophy of passing from the abstract relation of extension to thought to their relation in sense perception. Plato brings into one a rational and an empirical beginning of knowledge.

given the basis of the criticism of sense perception as knowledge which is amply set forth in *Theaetetus*³

131e-132c: Second *aporia*.

Socrates avowed that to define 'participation' was more difficult than he had supposed. The first attempt, that is, resulted for him in a renewed separation of individual and universal and the forming in his mind of a new relation. The object of his thought is not one individual but a multitude, and when he regarded them all there appeared to him one idea over them all. The multitude, that is, was not for him an indefinite plurality but implicitly under a universal. The many he regarded from the side of the universal into which the unstable content of *aisthesis* returned as to a stable and true being, as in that relation he could regard all the individuals of a kind, e.g., great things. And when he so regarded them there came into view for him one idea over all. In that way was formed for him the attitude of thought to being which in *Theaetetus* is called 'true opinion'.

Socrates accepts from Parmenides as true this account of how he discovered separate ideas. But the multitude being thus unified, what is the relation of the idea or universal to the many 'participants'? Parmenides sets before Socrates the difficulty of that relation. In coming to this position one has circumvented the indefinite plurality of things which makes true universals appear the unattainable end of an endless process. In this unification the idea has been separated from all the individuals, and it appears evident that there can be no 'participations'.

Socrates counters this difficulty with the proposal that the ideas be regarded as objects of thought which occur nowhere but in souls. In *Theaetetus* the attempt to find in the soul a bridge between universals and individuals is examined at length. The constituents of the sought mediation are memory, recollection and imagination - a mediation attempted not for the last time in the history of philosophy, though decisively defeated in *Theaetetus*, where it is shown that a determinate relation of individual and universal is not to be found in the collaboration of these psychic powers.

Here Parmenides simply points to the consequence of Socrates' interpretation of the position - that the ideas as in the soul would save their universality, while through the soul related to endless division. To which Parmenides objects that each of these thoughts taken in itself would be a thought of nothing. Socrates concedes that a thought must be of something that is. Of some one object which that thought, being present to all the individuals, thinks, namely the one idea as being. The true being and the relation to it of all the individuals, with which the formulation of this position began, appear to be restored. But in a peculiar and impossible sense: the same necessity as thus conjoins the idea and all its participants also divides them and imposes a choice between an absorption of all the many into the thinking of them - where one will say that all things think - or a separation of thoughts from thinking - where one will say that all things are unthought thoughts.

³ That criticism turns on the relation of the world as it is for the philosopher's contemplation to the world as measured by the clock.

The same division is treated in *Theaetetus* under the proposed definition of knowledge as true opinion with a *logos*. The *logos* both inwardly unites all plurality with the universal and is externalized into a dispersed multitude of parts, an externalized universal and a relation of individual to that universal. The elements of thought are thus materialized and as such unthought. So ends in that dialogue the attempt to equate knowledge with true opinion, by itself or with a *logos*. The whole argument in its barest essentials is given here in a few sentences. Its result is that an adequate account of 'participation' has not been found. For if the alternatives one is left to choose between are combined, the multiplicity and difference which *ex hypothesi* have their stability and truth in the ideas are rather obliterated in the *logos* so taken. There is demanded a *logos* which inwardly and in its explication contains all differences within a unity of form.

132c-133a: Third *aporia*.

This reasoning awakens in Socrates what in consequence of it appears the best explanation of participation: there are unmoving 'paradigms' in nature, 'the others', i.e. all the many individuals, resemble these and are likenesses of them; their participation in the ideas is nothing else than imaging them. In this he adopts the standpoint of a 'dianoetic' or reasoning thought which in treating of universal objects refers its proofs to sensible individuals in which are imaged the intelligible objects of which alone they are true.

Socrates takes 'participation' to be a positive relation, a likeness, of these individuals to the true objects of thought from which unlikeness has been excluded. He assents to Parmenides' statement that the relation must be reciprocal. But with that a negativity appears in the relation which demands a new idea to assimilate the two sides, a demand which repeats itself indefinitely, so long as all the variety of the many instances are not seen to have their truth in the one idea. Socrates sees the conclusion that 'participation' cannot be by 'likeness'. You see, observes Parmenides, how great is the *aporia* if one posit self-subsistent ideas. The transition from the scientific understanding of which for Plato the only model was geometry to a philosophical science was the most difficult. But only in that science could the relation of individual to universal be made clear and not subject to endless division.⁴

133a-135c: The fourth *aporia*.

Socrates is at the edge of the greatest and most difficult *aporia* for one who has separated ideas from the sensible world. The preceding problem demands for its solution that the division in 'dianoetic' thought between the true objects of its necessary reasoning and the many sensibles it uses to represent them and this multitude be replaced by one idea. Thought will then have for its primary object the identity and division of the idea itself, in which will be contained the sensible multiplicity⁵

⁴ Not that Plato has here fully in view the logic of geometry: his criticism is in relation to that middle position he assigns to mathematics in *Republic* and, as in the other cases, the method is a Zenonian dialectic.

⁵ *Republic*, 510b-511d.

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The *aporia* which occurs here is that if one take this new relation of thinking to being as an identity of the two sides, there appears against it their division - an unbridgeable gulf between thinking and its objects. The equivalent in the older modern philosophy is the division of the rationalist and the empiricist. For Plato it is the division between the philosopher and the sophist. Protagoras speaks like many since when he says that the shortness of life prevents one from knowing whether there are gods, that is, an endless division and otherness makes inaccessible such knowledge. But the later rationalism and empiricism have a common root and, as Plato will show in *Sophist*, so have philosophy and sophistic.

In *Parmenides* the *aporia* is given the form that the sensible and intelligible worlds are incorrigibly separated and also are not separated, in that each side has the other in it. Humans are cut off from the ideal or divine world and can know nothing of it. The gods, likewise, as Epicurus will teach, are in their realm and can know nothing of human affairs.

But if humans have no knowledge of ideas or universals there can be no unified direction in their lives. As Plato elsewhere elaborates, the state would disintegrate, justice would be the will of the stronger. Or rather there would not be justice or a political community at all. Even in the arbitrary will of the tyrant there is a residual reason. And Protagoras for whom truth is the immediacy of feeling Socrates proves to be a calculating utilitarian. The sophist who is the measure of being and not-being has reason in him. In a later age Hume for whom 'impressions' were the primary truth had in him a reason which knew the universal and divine, and that his empirical self could not attain to what he knew. The division between empirical and rational, as between sophist and philosopher, is a subordinate distinction.

As to the ignorance of the gods, it is in the transition from the 'dianoetic' to the unified knowledge of ideas that this has in it, and in truer form, a knowledge of the sensible world. In all the forms of knowledge criticized there in the previous *aporai* there has been a conjunction of ideal and sensible worlds. In this last form, fully explicated as it will be in the 'hypotheses', the ideal and sensible worlds are known as complementary totalities. The *aporia* lies in the contradiction between the omniscience of the gods and their ignorance, which follows from the separation of a human or empirical world from a world true for thought. The resolution is in a recognition that the separation of the two is impossible.

How Plato saw the relation of human and divine he tells elsewhere in mythical language, especially in the great myth of *Phaedrus*. The life of the gods is a contemplation of all nature, within which is the human world. This contemplation is not of something alien, but of that through which the knowledge of their world is actual, is separated and the separation negated. Humans from their being in the world strive to participate in the divine contemplation of the unity of the two worlds, but even if they attain something of it, are drawn back from it to their world and the assumption that on its own is the prime reality. In *Parmenides* and other late dialogues the mythical vanishes and the interest is to give this content the form of thought.

135c-136c: Revised Zenonian dialectic.

The conditions on which such a philosophical thought is humanly possible were spoken of at length in *Republic*. From the standpoint the 'aporetic' argument has here reached, it is only necessary for *Parmenides* to impress on Socrates the necessity of being thoroughly practiced in dialectic. One has to be freed from a sophistic use of dialectic in the service of ambitions and particular ends or as the strongest defense against philosophy. For philosophical thought to be possible dialectic must have become a purely objective contemplation of ideas, of divisions and interconnections not imported but found in them. That dialectic Socrates had in the wonder which is the beginning of philosophy. But despite the strong philosophical spirit moving in him he will never discover the truth unless he has made his own that dialectic which is the method of its discovery.

On that method, before he consents to apply it to unity and being, the primary Eleatic concepts, Parmenides makes several comments, important if one would follow him. The dialectic is that of Zeno, his own principle with the negative moment by which one does not immediately declare the many nothing but shows their intrinsic contradiction and nullity. It is Zeno's dialectic applied, in response to Socrates' 'separation' of ideas and his difficulty concerning them, to the self-identical ideas. Through the *aporiai* which applied this method to particular relations of being and knowledge, the method has become known in its universality. Applied in this form to the relations of ideal and sensible totalities the method itself undergoes a certain change. In the earlier *aporiai* the method drew out the affirmative and negative moments of the forms of being, reflected on them and separated ideal and sensible components. There were not affirmative and negative 'hypotheses' separated and about the same totalities. Here where there is, to use analogically the *Phaedrus* myth, a going over of divine knowledge to its reflection in a sensible world and then a retraction and return to itself, the one movement can be followed through affirmative, the other through negative hypotheses. And on the human side there is a like alternation between an affirmative relation of rational and sensible moments, and one in which the difference of the moments is negated. The negative hypotheses have thus in the original a definite meaning which Neoplatonic commentators laboured vainly to discover from their standpoint, which had nothing in it of Plato's dialectical method.