PLATO ON UNITY AND SAMENESS

d Οὐδὲ μὴν ταὐτόν γε ἑαυτῷ ἔσται.—Πῶς δ' οὔ;—Οὐχ ἥπερ τοῦ ἑνὸς φύσις, αὐτὴ δήπου καὶ τοῦ ταὐτοῦ.—Τί δή;—Ὅτι οὐκ, ἐπειδὰν ταὐτὸν γένηταί τῳ τι, ἓν γίγνεται.—Ἀλλὰ τί μήν;—Τοῖς πολλοῖς ταὐτὸν γενόμενον πολλὰ ἀνάγκη γίγνεσθαι ἀλλ' οὐχ ἕν.—Ἀληθῆ.—Ἀλλ' εἰ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ ταὐτὸν μηδαμῇ διαφέρει, ὁπότε τι ταὐτὸν ἐγίγνετο, ἀεὶ ἂν ἓν ἐγίγνετο, καὶ ὁπότε ἕν, ταὐτόν.—Πάνυ γε.—Εἰ ἄρα τὸ ἓν ἑαυτῷ ταὐτὸν ἔσται, οὐχ ἓν ἑαυτῷ ἔσται· καὶ οὕτω ἓν ὂν οὐχ ἓν ἔσται. ἀλλὰ μὴν τοῦτό γε ἀδύνατον· ἀδύνατον ἄρα καὶ τῷ ἑνὶ . . . εἶναι . . . ἑαυτῷ ταὐτόν. *Parmenides* 139 d 1–e 4

BURNET's text (here printed) should be emended or repunctuated at three points. At d 1 we should follow Moreschini[1] and with BT omit Proclus' γε: the unanimous voice of our best manuscripts must be allowed to drown the unreliable Neoplatonist. At e 2, as I shall argue, ἕν before ἑαυτῷ should be excised. And at e 2–3 the clause ἀλλὰ μὴν τοῦτό γε ἀδύνατον is to be attributed to Aristoteles, as Brumbaugh[2] (tentatively supported by Stokes)[3] advocates. This attribution gives a better and more typical question and answer sequence, although I can find no other example where Aristoteles ventures ἀδύνατον *sua sponte* (but he often enough—if less often than when prompted—volunteers ἀνάγκη: e.g. 137 c 9, 138 c 6, 142 c 5, 145 a 1).

I now give a translation of the text thus revised:

> Nor yet will it [sc. the one] be the same as itself.—Why not?—The nature which belongs to the one surely does not belong to that which is the same, too.—Why so?—Because it is not the case that whenever a thing becomes the same as something, it becomes one.—But why not?—If a thing becomes the same as the many, it necessarily becomes many, and not one.—True.—But if the one and that which is the same differ in no respect, whenever a thing became the same, it would always become one, and whenever one, the same.—Certainly.—If, then, the one is to be the same as itself, it will not be so through itself; and in this way, although it is one, it will not be one.—But that is impossible.—It is impossible, then, for the one to be . . . the same as itself.

I shall first expound Parmenides' argument as I think it should be construed with the text and translation I propose. Then I shall defend my excision of ἕν at 139 e 2. I shall conclude with some general observations on the passage.

I

At 139 b–e Parmenides aims to show that *the one* is not different (that is, other than) itself or anything else, and not the same as itself or anything else either.

[1] *Platonis Parmenides Phaedrus* (Rome, 1966).

[2] *Plato on the One* (New Haven, 1961), 270.

[3] Review of Brumbaugh, *Archiv f. Gesch. d. Philos.* xlvi (1964), 123.

As Proclus remarks in his discussion of these arguments, he proves first the easier propositions, then the more difficult.[1] Our passage constitutes the last argument of the set, the demonstration that *the one* is not the same as itself.

The form of the argument is clear enough. Challenged to give a reason for his conclusion ('Why not?', d 1–2), Parmenides states a premiss ('The nature . . . too', d 2–3), which he then proceeds to establish ('Because . . . whenever one, the same', d 3–e 1). This done, he draws an inference, licensed by the premiss he has just defended, from the contradictory of his conclusion ('If, then, . . . through itself', e 1–2), and from this result draws a further inference ('and . . . be one', e 2). The proposition thus arrived at is declared to be impossible ('But . . . impossible', e 2–3). Parmenides accordingly declares the contradictory of his conclusion impossible ('It is impossible . . . itself', e 3–4). A little more formally: (i) a premiss, *p*, is stated and proved (d 2–e 1); (ii) an indirect proof of the conclusion of the whole argument, not-*q*, is then given (e 1–4): if *q*, then (given *p*) *r*; if *r*, then *s*; but not-*s*; therefore not-*q*.

The claim Parmenides appears to be making in the premiss stated and argued at d 2–e 1 is that to be one is not to be the same; that unity and sameness are different concepts. He puts his point in a rather disconcerting way, saying that the nature of *the one* is different from that of *that which is the same*. I think we should read this as we would the following sentence, addressed to Jones, a prime minister who sometimes forgets he is not still reproving erring colleagues when conversing with his wife: 'The role of the husband, Jones, is different from that of the prime minister.' The point seems sound. The chairs in my study in Cambridge are the same as themselves and they may be the same as the chairs I had in my study in Oxford. But they are not therefore one. Parmenides thinks rather of identity through change. He observes that if *x* becomes the same as *y*, it does not necessarily become one—it may become many. We may supply an example: the milk in the churn may become the same as six yoghurts (they are the same stuff as it, or more precisely the same quantity of stuff).[2]

Parmenides seems to think that once he has established this premiss, the rest is plain sailing. Here is his first move (with that premiss expressed, not just assumed as it is in the text):

(1) To be one is not to be the same.
(2) *The one* is the same as itself.

Therefore

(3) *The one* is the same as itself not through itself.

(1) is, of course, the premiss argued at d 2–e 1; (2) is the contradictory of what Parmenides wants finally to prove, assumed true here so that it may eventually be shown false. The argument is plainly valid, given (i) that 'to be one' is taken as the identifying characteristic of *the one*, and (ii) that 'through itself' is taken as equivalent in this context to 'in virtue of being one'. Just so one might argue that since to be prime minister is not to be a husband, it follows that if the prime minister is a husband, he is not so in virtue of 'himself', i.e. in virtue of being prime minister.

[1] In *Parm.* 1177, 27–1178, 3 Cousin.

[2] I imply here the Russellian notion of quantity explored by Helen Cartwright in her recent article 'Quantities', *Phil. Rev.* lxxix (1970), 25–42.

Assumption (i) is of course licensed by Parmenides' referring to being one as the *nature* of *the one* at the beginning of our argument. We can find support for making assumption (ii) in the preceding proof in this set of arguments, to the effect that *the one* is not different from anything different, which I now quote and translate, again from Burnet's text:

Ἕτερον δέ γε ἑτέρου οὐκ
ἔσται, ἕως ἂν ᾖ ἕν· οὐ γὰρ ἑνὶ προσήκει ἑτέρῳ τινὸς
5 *εἶναι, ἀλλὰ μόνῳ ἑτέρῳ ἑτέρου, ἄλλῳ δὲ οὐδενί.—Ὀρθῶς.*
—Τῷ μὲν ἄρα ἓν εἶναι οὐκ ἔσται ἕτερον· ἢ οἴει;—Οὐ
δῆτα.—Ἀλλὰ μὴν εἰ μὴ τούτῳ, οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἔσται, εἰ δὲ
μὴ αὐτῷ, οὐδὲ αὐτό· αὐτὸ δὲ μηδαμῇ ὂν ἕτερον οὐδενὸς
d *ἔσται ἕτερον.—Ὀρθῶς.* 139 c 3–d 1

But it will not be different from something different, so long as it is one; for it does not belong to one [Parmenides here draws a mental circle round 'one' in the last clause, and refers to the character signified by that predicate][1] to be different from something, but only to different from different [this time he draws his circle round 'different from something'], and to nothing else.—Correct.—It will not be different, then, through being one—or do you think it will?—No indeed.—But if not through this, it will not be so through itself, and if not through itself, it will not itself be so; and if it is itself in no way different, it will be different from nothing.—Correct.

It is plain from his last sentence in this extract that Parmenides takes 'through itself' as entailing (for *the one*) 'through being one', which is what (ii) requires.

The next step in Parmenides' reasoning is not so straightforward. From (3) above he moves to:

(4) *The one*, although it is one, is not one.

How from the fact that it is the same, but not in virtue of itself, could it possibly be supposed that *the one* is not one? The clue, I think, is given by the sort of predication we have in the concessive clause: 'although it is one'. As we have seen, being one is for Parmenides in this argument the identifying characteristic or nature of *the one*. So 'although it is one' very likely has the force 'although it is identified as one'. We are accordingly licensed to read '*the one* . . . is not one', designed as it evidently is to contradict the concessive clause, as having the force: '*the one* is not identified as one'. Now on this reading, it is possible to construct a not implausible defence of the inference from (3) to (4).

Consider again, for the last time at present, our prime minister. The prime minister, we may suppose, is a husband, but not, plainly, in virtue of being prime minister. Why then, do we call him 'husband'? Simply because we identify him, or at any rate someone suitably placed *could* identify him, as the spouse of some woman—and not, *pro tanto*, as prime minister. In the same way, it might be argued (and, as I claim, it is argued by Parmenides), if we call *the one* 'the same as itself', we do so because we identify it, or could identify it, as the same, and not, *pro tanto*, as one. In short: if the *one* is the same, not in virtue of itself, it is identifiable *pro tanto* not as *the one*; it has another identity.

[1] For this interpretation compare G. E. L. Owen on *Phd.* 74 a 9–12, in 'Dialectic and Eristic in the Treatment of Forms', *Aristotle on Dialectic*, ed. Owen (Oxford, 1968), 114–15.

With this interpretation (as, indeed, with any interpretation of the text emended at e 2 as I propose) a premiss not expressed has to be supposed implicit in Parmenides' train of thought—e.g.:

(3A) It is through having the identity 'the same' that *the one* is the same as itself.

From (3) and (3A) together (4) (construed in the way advocated above) will follow.

Three independent merits may be claimed for this interpretation. First, the premiss which the reader is required by it to supply is one which the run of the Greek permits him to do easily. He would need only to add the clause: ἀλλὰ τῇ τοῦ ταὐτοῦ φύσει at the end of the sentence (e 1–2): *Εἰ ἄρα τὸ ἓν ἑαυτῷ ταὐτὸν ἔσται, οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἔσται.* Secondly, the premiss (3A) itself is very closely paralleled by the premiss of the preceding proof (c 3–d 1): 'it does not belong to one to be different from something, but only to different from different, and nothing else.' Thirdly, the train of thought which the interpretation ascribes to Parmenides in his move from (3) to (4) as a whole is very close to the reasoning of that proof. There he argued: *the one* is not different through itself; therefore it is not itself different. Here he argues: *the one* is the same, but not through itself; therefore it is not itself.

Little need be said about the remaining part of the argument. Aristoteles declares (4) impossible, correctly if, as I have supposed, it is a strict contradiction. Parmenides, accordingly, says that it is therefore impossible that (2) (the impossibility of the consequence rather than of the consequent, I think). This is reasonable, since (2) is the only premiss in the argument to (4) that is a mere supposition, as the table of the argument which follows will remind us:

(1) To be one is not to be the same. (Proved at d 2–e 1)
(2) *The one* is the same as itself. (Hypothesis made at e 1)
Therefore (3) *The one* is the same as itself not through itself. (Cf. c 6–7)
(3A) It is through having the identity 'the same' that *the one* is the same as itself. (Cf. c 4–5)
Therefore (4) *The one*, although it is one, is not one.

II

I turn now to explain why I think that at e 1–2 we should read not οὐχ ἓν ἑαυτῷ ἔσται, with the MSS., but οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἔσται.

The standard way of translating the received text at 139 e 1–2 is that found in Taylor's version:[1] '*Ergo*, if the one is to be the same with itself, it will not be *one* with itself, and thus will be one and yet not one.' This rendering of the Greek ascribes to Plato a relational use of ἓν which is extremely rare in texts earlier than or contemporaneous with Plato.

LSJ s.v. εἷς 2(a) cite two examples of εἷς c. dat., but neither involves the same construction as is involved in Taylor's reading of the Greek. One of these, at Plutarch 1089a, is too late to be of much interest: ἐκ μιᾶς οἰνοχόης Ἐπικούρῳ πεπωκότες. The other offered is Eur. *Ph.* 156: ἐμοὶ μιᾶς ἐγένετο ἐκ ματρός. At first sight this looks like another instance of the construction implied by the Plutarch example. But Pearson says (ad loc.):[2] 'ἐμοὶ is *dat. commodi*,

[1] *The Parmenides of Plato* (Oxford, 1934).
[2] *Euripides: The Phoenissae* (Cambridge, 1909).

and should not be taken with μιᾶς (= τῆς αὐτῆς) alone. . . . The same doubt arises in *Γ* 238 τώ μοι μία γείνατο μήτηρ, *T* 293.' Ast (who does not cite our passage in this connection) quotes a single and rather doubtful Platonic example at *Laws* 745 c 7, excised from the text by e.g. Bury and Taylor (following Peipers), although not by the most recent English translator, T. J. Saunders, nor by the Budé editor. This one instance does present the same construction as Taylor supposes at *Parm.* 139 e 2: τὸ πρὸς τῇ πόλει μέρος τῷ πρὸς τοῖς ἐσχάτοις εἷς κλῆρος (the Athenian stranger is talking of the combining of pieces of land in different parts of the city's territory to form lots).

Not until Aristotle do we meet a relational or two-place use of εἷς at all frequently. It is not hard to find examples of this use with the construction which interests us in the treatises: see e.g. *Metaph. Δ* 6. 1015 ^{b}23–6, *I* 3. 1054 ^{a}35, *Phys.* V 4. 227 ^{b}5.[1]

The rarity of the relational use of εἷς in Plato and in pre-Platonic literature suggests that we should accord Taylor's translation, and the text on which it is based, not scepticism, but watchful scrutiny. One would at least expect Plato to have some strong, not to say special reason, for introducing the two-place construction here, some purpose for which the ordinary use of the word would be inappropriate or insufficient.

Yet if we take this presumption as a guide to the interpretation of Parmenides' argument, what results is an argument not just invalid, but so blatantly implausible that it is hard to believe it to be what Plato intended. Consider the inference from 'the same as itself' to 'not one with itself'. (i) One might suppose that Parmenides means to be arguing that, if to be one is not to be the same, then one cannot in general substitute 'one' for 'the same' *salva veritate*. That is, he might mean that if *the one* is the same as itself, it is not *thereby* one with itself. But plainly, it would be just silly to conclude from this that *the one* is categorically not one, as Parmenides goes on to state. (ii) Alternatively, it might be suggested that his argument is rather that if to be one is not to be the same, then if *the one* is the same as itself, it cannot be one—not even one with itself, as 'the same as itself' might seem to imply. On this view οὐχ ἓν ἑαυτῷ ἔσται would have the force: 'it will not be one *even* with itself'; and the clause which follows, καὶ οὕτω ἓν ὂν οὐχ ἓν ἔσται, will present not a further inference, but a statement of the pass to which what has just been inferred brings us. But this interpretation is no more convincing than the former. The 'even' it requires in the apodosis of the conditional sentence is not there in the Greek. The inference it expresses is obviously fallacious. What is worse, the fallacy is peculiarly uncomfortable in this context. For Parmenides' argument at 139 d 3–e 1 for the thesis that to be one is not to be the same assumes that, although to be *many* and to be the same are different, there is nothing to prevent there being some things which are both many and the same. Nor does he write there as though he thought that nothing which was the same could be one, only that from being the same being one did not follow. Of course, one might try to shore up Parmenides' inference, as Cornford[2] (who gives substantially the same translation as Taylor) seeks to do, by imputing to him a tacit premiss. Cornford culls one from the preceding proof: 'that the One we are supposing has no second character' (cf. 139 c 7–8). Now I am in no position to reject such expedients on principle. I will remark only that whereas the tacit premiss I myself attribute

[1] References kindly supplied to me by Mr. D. Bostock.

[2] *Plato and Parmenides* (London, 1939), 124.

to Parmenides is, I think, suggested by the use of ἑαυτῷ to mean 'through itself', 'in virtue of itself', and fits naturally enough, as something the reader might easily supply, at the end of the conditional sentence, Cornford produces no indication which might suggest that Parmenides had his premiss in mind, a premiss, moreover, which has simply to be stuck in the middle of the conditional sentence, as something flatly omitted. And while Cornford may save the argument by this device, he cannot explain why Plato leaves us to imagine an 'even'.[1]

I can see no plausible interpretation of the received text of 139 e 1–2 if Taylor's translation of it be accepted. But the only alternative translation that seems possible permits no more convincing account. Parmenides would have to be saying that if *the one* is to be the same as itself, it will be not one *through* itself. How could this inference be made plausible? The natural way to take the apodosis would be to suppose that according to Parmenides *the one* will, in virtue of itself, *not* be one. But that is just bizarre. The other, and much less natural, way of understanding the apodosis yields a no less objectionable inference. For if Parmenides is taken as concluding that *the one* is one not in virtue of itself, it is hard to comprehend, let alone to accept, his train of thought. Perhaps the idea would be that for *the one* to be the same as itself entails its being one in virtue of the reflexive relation, as well as simply in virtue of itself. But this tortuous notion is not in itself plausible, and it runs counter to the drift of 139 d 2–e 1.

I conclude that our only reasonable course is to excise the first ἕν at 139 e 2. This restores the forceful argument expounded in my first section. The intrusion of ἕν before ἑαυτῷ can be explained as due to the example of τὸ ἓν ἑαυτῷ ταὐτόν in the protasis (139 e 1). For the omission of the predicate ταὐτὸν in the apodosis, compare 139 c 7: Ἀλλὰ μὴν εἰ μὴ τούτῳ, οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἔσται.

III

In my concluding section I first say something about the logic of the argument I attribute to Parmenides in my first section, and about the place of the argument within the first deduction of the second part of the dialogue. Then I consider the relevance of the passage to certain characteristic theses of Plato's middle and later metaphysical dialogues. Finally, I compare Plato's treatment of sameness and unity here with Aristotle's in the *Metaphysics*.

As I understand Parmenides' argument, he claims that if *the one* is the same as itself, it can be so not through having the identity 'one', but only through having the identity 'the same'; in which case *the one* both does and does not have the identity 'one'. Now someone might feel this to be convincing enough, and yet find Parmenides' conclusion not in the least embarrassing. To show why we need not accept Aristoteles' response (139 e 2–3): 'But that is impossible', he might turn again to our example of the married prime minister. The prime minister, if a husband, is so not because he is prime minister, but because he is a husband. In that case he has the identity 'prime minister', but also another identity: not 'prime minister', but just 'spouse of some woman'. He is both the prime minister and the husband. But, of course, there is nothing peculiar, logically or otherwise, in a man's having these two roles, these two identities.

[1] But he never considers what point 'one *with itself*' might have.

Why, then, should Parmenides see any difficulty in the thought that *the one* might have two identities, two independent characterizations true of it?

The solution to the problem lies in noticing a difference in the contexts in which we talk of prime ministers and Parmenides talks of *the one*. If I inform a person previously unaware of the identity of a man in the room that it is the prime minister, my interlocutor and I must already have identified the man in question under some other description than 'prime minister' (preferably each of us under the *same* description)—e.g. as 'husband of the woman in white'. Even if you and I can identify the prime minister under no other description than 'the prime minister' (perhaps we are politically apathetic in the extreme), we know that he must possess other characteristics than those he possesses in virtue of being prime minister. The context of our identifications is a world in which people and objects have and are known to us through a variety of features. Contrast *the one*. It does not inhabit the world of our senses. Parmenides introduces it rather as something to be grasped solely by reasoning or argument (135 d 8–e 4; cf. 136 a–137 b). And his method in the first deduction is simply to consider what must be true of the subject whose existence is asserted in the premiss 'one is' just in virtue of its being identified as one. It is left quite uncertain at the outset whether abstract subjects of this sort (*like, unlike, change, rest*, etc.: 136 b 1–6) *could* possess attributes not deducible from their identifying characteristics. This is because Parmenides, while making it clear enough that we are to abandon the conceptual machinery we employ when talking and thinking about the sensible world, has put very little in its place. He makes no distinction between *sorts* of attribute which might properly be ascribed to a subject—e.g. between a basic identifying characteristic (such as Aristotle's essence)and less fundamental characteristics (such as Aristotle's accidents), or again between these and attributes which are not characteristics at all, but are rather ascribed to subjects of discourse simply as such (such as self-identity—Parmenides' 'same with itself'). Nor *a fortiori* does he give himself any way of deciding when it might be legitimate or obligatory to ascribe to something other attributes besides its basic identifying characteristic. Consequently, when he considers an attribute such as being the same as itself, which (as he argues) could belong to *the one* only in virtue of some other description than 'one', Parmenides (or rather Aristoteles, in the first instance) feels impelled to reject it. To allow that it belonged to *the one* would be to admit to *the one* an attribute (and so, in default of any distinction between attributes that characterize and those that do not, a characteristic) which is not deducible from its unity, and thus to treat *the one* as not *pro tanto* identified (in default of any distinction between identifying and non-identifying characteristics) as one. Given that our only way of knowing that we are still talking about *the one* is by being certain that we are always talking about something identified as one, this treatment of *the one* is naturally seen as equivalent to making *the one* other than itself, other than what it was originally understood to be.[1]

[1] According to this account of the argument at 139 d 1–e 4, it depends solely on quite general assumptions about predication: similar arguments would go through for any pair of subjects identified by single, but distinct, predicates. This distinguishes it from the very next argument of the deduction, which has a similar conclusion, but depends on a feature special to 'one', viz. that it is not really a predicate at all, but a quantifier masquerading as a predicate. Parmenides first gets Aristoteles to accept that what is characterized by (or, has as an attribute: περιπονθός—the possibility of alternative renderings is not significant here) the same is like (139 e 8–9). He then continues

I see in this argument (and in the preceding proof that *the one* is not different from anything else) a fruit of Plato's reflection upon the deductive method of reasoning as it was pioneered by the historical Parmenides in his poem—more particularly, in the long derivation of attributes of what is which we read as Fr. 8. 1–49. At any rate if Parmenides is understood, as Plato seems to have understood him,[1] as arguing there a monist thesis about what there is, rather than as attempting to show what must be true of any successful candidate for being,[2] it is arguable that he committed himself to the assumption that the only attributes we can or need ascribe to a thing are those which are entailed by its identifying characteristic. The arguments at 139 c 3–e 4 bring out this assumption and reveal its absurdity.

That Plato is much concerned with Parmenides' thought in the second part of the *Parmenides*, as also in the *Sophist*, is not in serious doubt. But it is worth noting that the arguments of the first part of the first deduction (137 c–139 b) are so designed as to be at once irresistible and distressing to an Eleatic. Employing the single principle, Eleatic in provenance, that what is one cannot be many, Parmenides is made to argue that if 'one is' (a hypothesis Plato has him claim for his own, 137 b 1–4), then not only is it not possessed of parts[3] nor in motion,[4] conclusions parallel to those of Parmenides' poem, but it does not have the attributes which had there met with approval: it is not a whole, it is without limit, it has no shape, it is not 'at rest, itself within itself.'[5] At 139 b–e, with the set of proofs showing that *the one* is not the same or different, the argument turns to a sequence of predicates which had not figured prominently, if at all, in the deduction of Fr. 8 of the poem. But this does not, I think, mean that that deduction is forgotten. What Plato in effect does is to ask how a Parmenides would decide whether a given subject were the same as itself and different from other things. The reply he puts in the mouth of his fictional Eleatic at 139 c–e is one he gets by considering the implications of the general character of the deductive mode of procedure presented in the poem. It was there taken to be (or at least could seem to be intended as) an all-sufficient method for determining what attributes can and should be ascribed to something. Here, accordingly, the test is applied: does 'the same as itself' or 'different from something else' follow from 'one'? Only if they do could *the one* be held to be the same as itself and different from anything else, on Parmenidean principles. But it is convincingly argued that they do not. And the absurdity of the

(139 e 9–140 a 4): 'That which is the same appeared distinct from the one in its nature. —It did.—But if the one is characterized (*πέπονθε*) by anything apart from being one, it would have the character of being more than one, and that is impossible.—Yes.—It is not possible, then, for the one to be characterized by the same in any way, neither with another thing nor with itself.—It appears not.' Cf. also 140 a 4–b 3. In distinguishing between 139 d 1–e 4 and 139 e 7–140 a 4 in this way, I exploit a suggestion made by G. E. L. Owen, 'Notes on Ryle's Plato', in *Ryle: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. O. P. Wood and G. Pitcher (New York, 1970), 350, although the terms of my discussion differ from his.

[1] See *Parm.* 128 a 8–b 1, *Theaet.* 180 e 2–4, *Soph.* 242 d 4–6, 244 b 6–245 d 11.

[2] So Parmenides is read by e.g. G. E. L. Owen, 'Eleatic Questions', *CQ* N.S. x (1960), esp. 89–99; A. P. D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides* (New Haven, 1970), esp. 90–3, 134–5.

[3] *Parm.* 137 c 5–d 3; cf. DK 28 B 8. 22–5.

[4] *Parm.* 138 b 7–139 a 3; cf. DK 28 B 8. 26–33.

[5] Cf. in general DK 28 B 8. 4 (with text as in Owen, op. cit. 101–2) and 22–33, 42–9, with *Theaet.* 180 e 3–4, *Soph.* 244 e 2–8 (which implies that Plato took Parmenides to be ascribing spherical shape to what is). My thesis here is not, of course, a new one: see Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 134, with n. 2.

resulting conclusion, that *the one* is not the same as itself or different from anything, serves to discredit the methodological presupposition on which the test is based.

It is sometimes felt that in these arguments about sameness and difference Plato points some moral for the middle-period theory of Forms. For instance, it might be that he is implicitly raising the problem that if Forms are each μονοειδές—as the *beautiful* is just 'that which is beautiful'—this simplicity of character could be held to rule out our saying that any of them is the same as itself or different from another.[1] It need not be, of course, that in the middle-period dialogues Plato was at all clear about the conditions something would have to meet in order to qualify as μονοειδές. His arguments here could be read as forcing the issue by their assumption of one interpretation of 'being μονοειδές'—so that either a different interpretation would have to be found or the claim that to be a Form is *inter alia* to be μονοειδές abandoned.

To deny that Plato had any such thought when he penned our passage would be wrongheaded. After all, he represents Parmenides as recommending to Socrates that he practise a Zenonian method of antinomy on Forms (or at least, on what 'someone would take to be Forms', 135 e 3–4; cf. also 136 a 4–b 6, 129 d 2–e 4). And even though Parmenides' description of the premiss he himself examines as 'my own hypothesis' makes it look as though *he* is not going to treat of the Platonic Form, One (as if his principle were: each to his own hypothesis), none the less as it is understood in the first deduction *the one* shares with One the property of being identified solely by the predicate 'one'. So, given Plato's preoccupation in the first part of the dialogue with problems confronting his middle-period theory of Forms, we would have to take an unduly narrow view of his capacity to make logical connections, and to accommodate a plurality of interests within one frame of argument, if we were to refuse him a possible glance at 'the One itself' or 'that which one is' (and indirectly at 'the Beautiful itself', 'what beautiful is', etc.) at 139 c–e.

But in allowing the possibility we should not go further and suppose that Plato's principal aim here is to formulate a difficulty for the theory of Forms of the *Phaedo* and the *Symposium*. To do so would not only be to squeeze more from the text than it could ever be shown to hold. We should be in danger of missing the significance of the Eleatic affiliations of the arguments we have been considering.

There is no very dominant concern with the middle-period theory of Forms and with its logical problems in the second part of the *Parmenides*, any more than there is in the *Sophist*. Plato plays with the Eleatic instruments of deduction and antinomy upon themes chiefly Eleatic. The topics he considers—for example, the compatibility of unity and plurality, the nature of an unlimited plurality, the intelligibility of propositions of the form: 'x is not'—are topics which he treats of for the first time in this dialogue, or at any rate the first time in depth and at length. In handling them he deals with questions to which the theory of Forms could supply no answers and the dialectic of the middle-period dialogues no obvious means of answering. What we meet in the second part of the *Parmenides* is a new venture, fresh in matter and method.

This means that when Plato at 139 c–e presents a couple of arguments which

[1] A line of thought suggested by G. E. M. Anscombe, 'The New Theory of Forms', *The Monist*, l (1966), 404–9. Cf. also G. Prauss, *Platon und der logische Eleatismus* (Berlin, 1966), esp. 99–136, 183–7.

pose problems about the nature of predication, we should not look away to earlier dialogues for intimations either of the problems or this way of posing them, at least in the first instance. For the source of problem and presentation alike is more likely to be found in that very response to Eleatic subject-matter and method which the second part of the dialogue as a whole expresses. Obviously it would not be surprising to find moments in earlier dialogues where central themes of the *Parmenides* seem to be anticipated: it would be foolish to think the antinomies quite discontinuous with what had gone before. But what is at issue is whether we need look beyond the dialogue itself in order to appreciate why Plato raises the problems he does in the way he does, indeed whether we *can* explain how these become in the *Parmenides* major themes except in the terms which immediately suggest themselves as appropriate, viz. those of engagement with Eleatic ideas. In the present instance, it is surely the obvious inference to suppose that Plato came to appreciate the problems about predication raised by 139 c–e just by setting himself to work out the implications of applying the Eleatic test of derivability to the predicates 'same' and 'different'. This inference is, of course, speculative. But it is hard to see how any other account of what alerted Plato to these difficulties about predication could fail to be more speculative.

In the *Sophist* Plato presses his inquiry into some of the questions he opens in the second part of the *Parmenides* more fully and more decisively. Thus (to take a fairly minor example) his second argument against Parmenidean monism in the *Sophist* (244 d–245 d) reworks the materials of the proofs at *Parm.* 137 c 4–d 6, that what is truly one cannot be a whole nor possess the parts that extremities and a middle constitute; and from them he constructs what purports to be a fatal dilemma for Parmenides. The attempt to solve the problem set by the third antinomy of the *Parmenides*, whether someone who says that something is not says anything intelligible, lies at the heart of the *Sophist*. The precondition of that attempt, the assumption that there is κοινωνία γενῶν, 'communion of kinds', gives us Plato's answer to the arguments of *Parm.* 139 c–e.

I argued above that the force of the argument that *the one* is not the same as itself derived from the treatment of all predication as having the same basis, with no distinction made between identifying and less fundamental characteristics, or between these and attributes which are not characteristics at all, but possessed by a subject simply in virtue of its being a distinct subject. In the *Sophist* Plato makes it plain that he accepts what is required to rob the argument of its force: he does not merely insist that unless a subject have ascribed to it predicates other than its identifying predicate, you could not even formulate the denial that it could have other predicates (251 a–252 c); he points to a difference in range and function between predicates true of some subject in virtue of its own nature and predicates like 'different'. The nature of the different traverses all kinds (255 e 3–4), but there are kinds which associate only with a limited number of other kinds (253 b 8–c 1, d 5–e 2, 254 b 7–d 2). The reason given for this fact about the nature of the different is that it makes each kind different from the others (255 e 4–6). Its role, plainly, is not to characterize a kind which participates in it, but simply to explain, in the safe and simple manner of the *Phaedo*, the distinctness of one kind from another. Plato marks the distinctive character of this sort of role by comparing it to the function a vowel has and other letters of the alphabet do not, the function of connecting one letter with another (252 e–253 c).

The arguments at *Parm.* 139 c–e and the implicit response to the questions they raise in the constructive treatment of the μέγιστα γένη in the *Sophist* together constitute one of Plato's sharpest and most economically written exercises in what would now be called philosophical logic. This makes it the more curious that Aristotle, although he no doubt profited from the relevant pages of the *Sophist*, appears to have ignored, dismissively or otherwise, the argument of the *Parmenides* with which we have been most concerned (viz. the proof that *the one* is not the same as itself), or more particularly, its claim that to be the same as something is not to be one.

In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle says that sameness is a sort of unity (*Δ* 9. 1018 ^{a}5–9) and the same a species of the one (*Γ* 2. 1003 ^{b}33–6), by which he means (as Kirwan points out)[1] that 'same' is defined or explained in terms of 'one': 'For things whose matter is one, either in form or number, are called the same, and things whose substance is one' (*Δ* 9. 1018 ^{a}5–7; cf. e.g. *Δ* 15. 1021 ^{a}10–11, *I* 3. 1054 ^{a}32 ff., *Top.* I 7). This doctrine of his has been helpfully expounded and persuasively analysed by Professor Nicholas White in a recent article.[2] White suggests that Aristotle does not clearly distinguish between 'the use of "X and Y are one" to mean that they are in some way identical from its use to say that they make up a unitary entity', the use which he rightly takes as more central to Aristotle's account of 'one'. He comments: 'If these remarks about the state of Aristotle's thinking in *Metaphysics* V are correct, they go some way toward showing why he is neglecting to give a clear account of the notion of identity. Rather than thinking about what it is for X and Y to be identical, he has his mind fixed on what it is for an entity to be unitary, whether its having elements is compatible with its being unitary, what sort of elements they must be, and how they must be joined together This discussion drags the treatment of sameness along on its coat tails.' And he shows[3] that where in the *Topics* Aristotle discussed 'same' without reference to 'one', he did better.

Why did Aristotle march smartly in the direction which Plato had warned his readers from taking? The answer is perhaps to be found in the provenance of Aristotle's doctrine. At a couple of points in the *Metaphysics* (*Γ* 2. 1004 ^{a}1–2, *I* 3. 1054 ^{a}29–32; cf. Alex. in *Metaph.* 250. 17–20 Hayduck), Aristotle refers us for an account of the connection of *same*, *like*, and *equal* with *one* to a work of his, now lost, containing a 'selection of contraries'.[4] There are good grounds for believing that this work and its doctrine originated in the Pythagorizing milieu of the Academy to which the debate about the One and the Indefinite Dyad and the rival principles of Speusippus and others, recorded and settled to his own satisfaction by Aristotle particularly in *Metaph. N* of the surviving works, evidently also belongs. For one thing, Alexander knew such a 'selection of contraries' in the second book of Περὶ τἀγαθοῦ, a lost work concerned with

[1] *Aristotle's Metaphysics: Books Γ, Δ, and E*, translated with notes by Christopher Kirwan (Oxford, 1971), 83.

[2] 'Aristotle on Sameness and Oneness', *Phil. Rev.* lxxx (1971), 184–9.

[3] Ibid. 178–82.

[4] It is reasonably supposed that Diogenes Laertius lists this same work as Περὶ ἐναντίων, *On Contraries* (5. 22). The fragments which Ross allots to *On Contraries* (*Aristotelis Fragmenta Selecta* [Oxford, 1955], 106–10 = Fr. 118–24 Rose^{3}), extracted from Simplicius, are convincingly held by P. Moraux, *Les Listes Anciennes des Ouvrages d'Aristote* (Louvain, 1951), 53, to derive from a different work: Περὶ ἀντικειμένων, not mentioned in the ancient lists of Aristotle's writings. It has much material in common with the later chapters of *Metaph. I* and *Cat.* 10 and 11. Rose, followed by Moraux, thinks it spurious: see e.g. *Aristoteles Pseudepigraphus* (Leipzig, 1863), 130–1.

the debate to which I have just referred (in *Metaph.* 250. 17–20, 262. 18–24).[1] For another, Aristotle refers to the contraries considered in the 'selection' as 'led back (or up) to' *one* and *many* (*ἀνάγεται*: *Γ* 2. 1004 ^{a}1, ^{b}28, 34; we might say 'explained in terms of'), so employing the same word as he uses to refer to the way the Platonists explain things in terms of their principles both in the *Metaphysics* (*A* 9. 992 ^{a}10) and (if we may believe Alexander) in *Περὶ τἀγαθοῦ* (Alex. in *Metaph.* 56. 15–16).[2] And he speaks of the contraries as belonging to 'columns' (*συστοιχίαι*: *Γ* 2. 1004 ^{b}27,) recalling to our minds the Pythagoreans' columns of opposites, to which he applies the same word (*A* 5. 986 ^{a}23, *N* 6. 1093 ^{b}12). It seems plausible to suppose that in the doctrine that *same*, *like*, and *equal* are to be explained in terms of *one* we have an echo of the young Aristotle's own attempt at a theory of first principles in Pythagorizing style, perhaps of the first account of *ἀρχαί* that he ever tried to give. That he should have proposed such a theory would not be surprising: theories of this kind were plainly the philosophical fashion during his first years in the Academy.[3]

Was Aristotle's view that *same*, *like*, and *equal* should be 'led back' to *one* original with him, his own original variant of the general Academic idea that *one* (and some opposed factor) could be invoked to explain a great number of other concepts? In a section of the *Philebus* which is plainly influenced by Pythagorean or Pythagorizing notions, Plato has Socrates state that it is the business of dialectic to look for the character and the number of species in every genus: *τοῦτο κατὰ παντὸς ἑνὸς καὶ ὁμοίου καὶ ταὐτοῦ δρᾶν καὶ τοῦ ἐναντίου*, 'to do this with everything that is one and like and the same, and its opposite' (19 b 6–7). This looks like a reminiscence, even if not a highly self-conscious reminiscence, of columns of opposites very like those Aristotle's doctrine seems to involve. It might be thought that we should postulate a common Academic exemplar from which both Plato's allusive talk in this passage and the lists in Aristotle's 'selection' derive.

But that would be to multiply Pythagorizing texts *praeter necessitatem*. We know of no other member of the Academy besides Aristotle whose name is associated with these particular lists. And if they were his own from the start, we are not debarred by chronology from supposing that it was Aristotle's 'selection' which Plato exploited in the *Philebus*.

If it were right to look for any specific text which might lie behind Aristotle's columns of opposites, we could do worse, strange to say, then consult the *Parmenides*. For Parmenides, having argued that *the one* is not the same or different, goes on to show that it is not like or unlike, equal or unequal (139 e–140 d). Perhaps the sequence of predicates in this part of the *Parmenides*, and in particular Parmenides' specification of the conditions for applying 'like' and 'equal' in terms of 'same' (139 e 8, 140 b 7–8), set Aristotle thinking on the lines of the 'selection'.

[1] It is conceivable that *On Contraries* and *Περὶ τἀγαθοῦ B* are in fact one and the same work. For brief and inconclusive discussion, see P. Wilpert, 'Neue Fragmente aus *Περὶ τἀγαθοῦ*', *Hermes*, lxxvi (1941), 241; Moraux, op. cit. 52–3.

[2] The word is, of course, a favourite of Aristotle's in contexts where *ἀρχαί* are mentioned: see Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* (Berlin, 1870), 42^{a} 11 ff.

[3] White offers an account of why Aristotle may have thought the treatment of *same* in terms of *one* natural, op. cit. 189–97: Aristotle, he claims, was exercised by problems about the identity of objects and movements *through time*, and such problems naturally present themselves as puzzles about what makes an object or a movement one. But he does not attempt to explain the *origin* of Aristotle's doctrine, as I have tried to do.

We have stumbled into that obscure but central dispute about ἀρχαί which so occupied members of the Academy; and, as so often, the *Parmenides* and the *Philebus*, the two dialogues of Plato which might be expected to throw light at least on his own attitudes, give us very little to go on. The forceful argument of the *Parmenides* that being the same does not entail being one makes it look as though Plato thought sameness was not to be explained in terms of unity, at any rate when he wrote that dialogue. Whether we should press his incidental use of Pythagorean 'columns' similar to Aristotle's in the *Philebus* as indicating conversion to something like Aristotle's contrary opinion we cannot know. Even supposing it were right to do so, we should be unable to give any acceptable account of why he changed his mind.

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