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**Ghost in the *kerameikos*:
Parmenides, Translation, and the Construction of Doctrine**

Abstract

Although the Parmenidean poem (late 6th-early 5th centuries BCE) is in epic meter and teems with vivid imagery, it has been translated into the domain of philosophy since its earliest reception. Within this domain it has traditionally been interpreted as the first "explicit and self-conscious argumentation" of western philosophy (Gallop 1984, 3). Yet, the poem aims at persuasion and affect rather than logical demonstration (Smith 2003, 269-75).

Working primarily with a sense of translation as critical reception, this paper articulates the history of a translational protocol that excises conceptual matter from linguistic form (Cassin 2010, 19; Batchelor 2010, 49-50), reducing the semantic range of the Parmenidean poem. Beginning with Zeno and Melissus (early 5th c BCE), a series of translations reduces the Parmenidean poem into a vehicle for a separable and fully translatable doctrine, stabilizing and homogenizing a thinking that otherwise persists as polyvalent and heterogeneous.

Keywords: Parmenides, ancient philosophy, translation, reception, interpretation

1. Katabasis

Thea – Goddess of uncertain identity, polyvalent,² sings the Parmenidean poem,³ which in the late archaic period was still a form of song. As a song, the Parmenidean poem

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² The goddess has been variously identified: "the Muse" and "the power of truth or of understanding or insight" (Fränkel 1975, 353); as both a repetition of Hesiodic Muses and as "the goddess of light" (Jaeger 1947, 94, 107); "Aletheia" (Heidegger 1992, 5); "Constraint," "Fate," "Justice," "Persuasion" (Mourelatos 1970, 160); Valentine prefers a "notion of the divine female with flexibility and fluidity rather than fixity in her identity" (Valentine 2011, 109; and see the well-illustrated discussion underpinning this conclusion, 100-9).

³ This manner of naming the work springs from Valentine's occasional use of the phrase "Parmenidean poem" (Valentine 2011, 17 et passim). Its use here for other "pre-Socratic philosophers" intends to problematize even at the level of names a simple author-text relationship with respect to the "fragments"

calls for performance and there is no knowledge of when, how, or by whom, in the vague range of Parmenides's own lifetime (approx. mid-late sixth to early-mid fifth centuries BCE) the poem was committed to writing. Like Xenophanes, Parmenides is part of a group of philosophers for whom the form of epic poetry shaped thinking as a performance.

In dactylic hexameters the Parmenidean poem resounds as a richly polysemic song, imagining a turbulent journey and an encounter with a feminine deity and configured initially as a first-person narrative and then as the goddess' speech in *oratio recta*. Take, for instance, the image of the deity Moira and her action in restricting being to a state of motionlessness:

...for nothing else [either] is or will be
Besides what-is, since it was just this that Fate [Moira] did shackle
To be whole and changeless [or motionless; ἀκίνητόν] (Parmenides fr. 8.36-38; transl.
Gallop 1984, 71; interpolations in square brackets added)

The image recoils on itself, challenging imagination: if nothing exists apart from being, how does Moira shackle being? Is Moira an abstract power ("Fate") whose force is *like* the restraint of shackles? In that case, what is her force (since the image would also indicate that Moira's force is *other than* that of restraint by shackles)? Further, even as the text asserts the immobility (ἀκίνητόν) of being, the image of shackling suggests that, unfettered, being tends both to be not whole and to change. What explains such a tendency, the errantry and resistance of being that must be forcibly restrained by a divine power?⁴

Interpretation that attempts to identify "an extended argument" in which Parmenides elucidates ontological "properties and deduces them" (Graham 2012, 237) minimizes the language of the poem in favor of a putative argumentative content separable from the poetry, its polysemy, its images.⁵ As Smith has convincingly shown, however, the poem's refusal to release thinking from images and figures exposes attempts to make it do so (Smith 2003, 266, 271). Everywhere Smith turns in the poem's language he uncovers a paradigm not of "logical deduction" but rather of persuasion (Smith 2003, 278). Yet, the predominant way of engaging the poem advances from the notion that logical conclusions result in doctrine that can be simply restated and scrutinized.

"Ghost in the *kerameikos*" traces the history of a translational protocol that excises conceptual matter from linguistic form, reducing via an instrumental view of language the

preserved by later authors under the names of certain archaic and early classical thinkers.

⁴ These questions serve as prompts for a paper by David M. Spitzer, "Hauntings: Fugitive Being and Destiny in the Parmenidean Poem," currently in progress.

⁵ In Graham's commentary these lines, with one exception (the final two-and-a-half metrical feet of 8.38, which begin a new independent clause) are excluded.

semantic range of the Parmenidean poem. Extracting doctrine not only enables the poetry to be discarded, it also stabilizes and homogenizes a thinking that otherwise persists as polyvalent and heterogeneous. To carry out its task this paper works from an ample sense of translation that includes reception and interpretation, mobilizing the concepts of *translative* and *translational* actions (Spitzer 2017, 15): the former describes actions, events, or themes that can be understood as figuring or representing translation in some meaningful way; the latter has to do with specifically lingual transformations registered in Jakobson's threefold schema (Jakobson 2012, 127). Interpretation of translative moments is aided by a transfictional approach to texts such as that articulated and deployed by Arrojo whereby thematics of translation – in this case, mostly in philosophic texts – are identified and explored (Arrojo 2014, 46).

2. Afterlife

From the earliest reception(s) of the Parmenidean poem, two translational actions operate on the poem: first, the transformation into variegated and diverse forms; second, the translation of a provocative and challenging dynamics of form and content into a stable doctrine of prose. In Zenoan philosophy the two translational actions seem to merge and cooperate, while in Melissoan philosophy the latter prevails. This convergence of two translational practices in Zenoan philosophy takes the form of "a defense of Parmenides' theses" that also generates creative thinking (Perilli 2018, 155). A paradox energizes Zenoan translation of the Parmenidean poem: on the one hand Zeno mortalizes thinking, centering on a human figure instead of the divine *Thea* of the Parmenidean poem;⁶ on the other hand, the connection with Zenoan writing as presented by Diogenes Laertius in a sense immortalizes philosophy, locating it in the swiftly emerging technology of writing away from the traditional orality of epic poetry.⁷ Each of these has a translational character.

⁶ The characters of *Thea* and Akhilleus have different roles in Parmenidean poem and Zenoan texts, but each one bears a central role as a figure around which thinking circulates. While in the Parmenidean poem *Thea* delivers the teaching, which is ascribed to her by the narrator, on another (narratological) level she is within the narrator's discourse. On this level *Thea* and Akhilleus converge – the latter operating as the narrator's (Zeno's) central image (see below for more on the centrality of Akhilleus).

⁷ A third form of translation, not pursued in this paper, Zenoan philosophy applies to the Parmenidean poem seems to be *from* Parmenides's qualitative *to* quantitative senses of concepts like limitation and self-similarity (Palmer 2009, 196-98). In his challenge to the received notion that Zeno merely defends the positions of Parmenides as an Eleatic monist, Palmer suggests instead that Parmenides was as an influence either "tangential and indirect" or "essentially non-existent" (Palmer 2009, 205).

No longer divine, in Zenoan texts the thinking once sung assumes a complexion of human mortality. In place of the goddess of the Parmenidean song, Akhilleus, in whom dwells a genetics of divinity wrenched by the ankle down into the mortal realm, moves as the central figure in Zenoan thinking.⁸ Consonant with Zenoan formulation of paradoxes, Akhilleus's status in-between immortality and mortality, human and divine, intimates a paradox of untranslatability and translatability, which surfaces in two Zenoan images. First, Aristotle translates the Zenoan "so-called Achilles" paradox:

the slowest, running [θέον], will never be left behind [καταληφθήσεται] by the fastest, since before that the pursuer must have come to the place the pursued set off from, so that the slower is necessarily always in front by some amount (Aristotle, *Physics* 239b.14-18; transl. Sachs 1995, 164; interpolations added).

On the one hand, the first runner perpetually eludes Akhilleus and suggests an unbridgeable gap between two, any two. As a translative image, the schism opens between various doubles in tension: between thought and speech, between orality and writing, between original and translation, where in each case Akhilleus represents the latter term of each pair. The scene in the Zenoan paradox strikes the chord of untranslatability and translatability. In the uncloseable distance constituting all relation the paradox refuses a translatability according to what Sallis has termed the "classical determination of translation" through which, because of the fully separable noetic and aesthetic regions, meaning is simply available in various languages (Sallis 2002, 62). Aristotle's phrasing of the paradox might register a sense of this refusal to be contained in a paraphrase or summary (a type of translation), an instance of the uncloseable distance the paradox speaks. The verb καταληφθήσεται drifts between καταλαμβάνω (grasp) and καταλείπω (left behind), while θέον remains suspended in its near homophony between the participle form θέον (running) and the accusative noun θεόν (the divinity), as if the divine element is spiriting away (*theon*) and evading the grasp (καταλαμβάνω) of a reductive translation. The language itself undermines the attempt at this type of translation and the resolution of the paradox.

Counter to the "classical determination" and its dichotomy, and given the implication that the relation between Zeno and Parmenides was intimate and erotic (Diogenes Laertius IX.5.25), another translational practice takes place as a dialogic and

⁸ Even where absent, Akhilleus's presence is felt. For instance, in the third paradox the "flying arrow" reverberates with the fall of Akhilleus by arrow to the heel. See Jonathan Burgess' investigation on the traditions surrounding Akhilleus, his baptism for translation to immortality and, especially here, his death by an arrow wound to the ankle, which Burgess finds to have been "present in the Archaic Age and perhaps originated in pre-Homeric tradition" (Burgess 1995, 225).

irenic encounter. The erotics of intimacy does not operate without differences; rather, it brings differents into relations of intimacy that preserve the non-identical standing of each (Spivak 1993, 183). In one of its valences, the paradoxically inflected untranslatability underlying the doxography of Zeno provokes, rather than prohibits, attempts at translation according to the "classical determination." The translative figurations in Zenoan philosophy summon the bind of translation as both necessary and impossible as well as the continual attempts unfolding from that bind (Derrida 1985, 171), while the array of reasonings that work towards multiple translations refuses the double,⁹ seeming to prefer instead a "series of endless versions that are always possible" (Littau 2000, 26). Inflected on the root of *eros*, the bind becomes an embrace.

On the other hand, there is a sense in which Zenoan translations of the Parmenidean poem attempt a reproduction of sameness. This is one dimension of how Plato's Sokrates views the relation between the Zenoan paradoxes and the Parmenidean poem: they assert the same thing (τὰὐτὸν) veiled by deceitful changes (Plato, *Parmenides* 128a.6-8).¹⁰ Aristotle too finds them interchangeable, even the same reasoning (ὁ αὐτὸς λόγος), with one exception noted (Aristotle, *Physics* 239b.14-20). This alteration suggests the presence of the same meaning repeated with inconsequential differences.¹¹

Similarly, with writing – the translation of oral song to written prose, in Diogenes Laertius's biography Zeno seems to figure a transition to written philosophy and an increasingly textualized climate, marking a rupture from history and temporality such as that Detienne identifies in the trajectory of philosophico-religious thought away from rhetoric (Detienne 1996, 129-34). Away from performative speech, the turn to the system of writing, pulsing in the imagery of Diogenes Laertius's doxographies, initiates a type of memory that "becomes a means for transcending and separating the soul from the body" (Detienne 1996, 128). Indeed, the mutilated body of Zeno in Diogenes's accounts has been reduced to mere

⁹ Aristotle lays out four of Zenoan reasonings on movement and time (Aristotle, *Physics* 239b.5-240a.18). Plato, in *Parmenides*, has Sokrates illustrate the translations of Parmenides Zeno has undertaken, in which "he [Zeno] offers proofs that are very many and very great" (Plato, *Parmenides* 128a.3-b6; trans. Whitaker 1996, 26; interpolation added).

¹⁰ The passage reveals the inclination of Plato's Sokrates to locate the one unifying thing, as he requests of Meno in a different dialogue, "in which they are all the same and do not differ from one another" (Plato, *Meno* 72c.3-4; trans. Grube/Cooper 2002, 61). But see Palmer, who brings out the ways Plato's Zeno challenges superficial interpretations of the Parmenidean poem such as that which Sokrates advances in the dialogue (Palmer 2009, 191-93).

¹¹ With close readings of Borges's "Pierre Menard," the American Translators Association's Code of Ethics, and a passage from Alexander Fraser Tytler's *Essay on the Principles of Translation*, Arrojo has concisely unveiled the logic of sameness (Arrojo 2018, 20-23).

attire for the soul, disposable – translatable.¹² In the first version, on the pretense of whispering a secret to Nearkhos, Zeno attacks Nearkhos's ear until the tyrant's supporters kill the assailant. According to the other version, Zeno's self-mutilation transforms his tongue into a political instrument – he is said both to have propelled it at Nearkhos, the tyrant of Hyele, and to have died as a consequence (Diogenes Laertius IX.5.26-27). In both cases the body parts – the ear and the tongue – can be read as presenting images of orality, which Zeno dispossesses and transforms into detachable instruments. Across the two versions reported by Diogenes, the body becomes a translative figure for this instrumentalization of language and an abrupt transition from orality to literacy, poetry to prose.

What is more, Diogenes mentions the books of Zeno but does not mention writing in his entry on Parmenides, a detail that adds to Diogenes's accounts an undertone of a translation from the orality of singing to writing (Diogenes Laertius IX.5.26). Near the end of the Greek archaic period writing seems to have become "more 'autonomous', more easily envisaged as an independent conveyor of information separate from oral communication" (Thomas 1992, 64).¹³ Zeno no longer needs the means of orality; writing enables the (partial) dismemberment of language and opens a pathway for the objectification of speech by means of writing and its concomitant separability from a speaker.

The translational relation of Zeno to Parmenides seems to be constituted by varying tendencies, giving weight to the epithet ἀμφοτερογλώσσου (speaking from both sides) attached to him by Timon (Diogenes Laertius IX.5.25). On the one hand, it operates as a translational commitment to sustaining and making visible differences. In this sense the paradoxes render out of the song of Parmenides something productively different, another perspective on the questions of motion and division that form one aspect of the Parmenidean poem (e.g. Parmenides fr. 8.22-31). On the other hand, the Zenoan paradoxes can be – and have been – interpreted as attempts at laying bare the inner teaching, the doctrine of Parmenidean poem. Further translational reception takes its bearings from this latter tendency.

Turning to Melissus of Samos, an eastern Aegean Greek island, the fact of the distance across which the poem traverses to reach Melissus, or that Melissus traverses to reach the poem, already bears a translative theme. There may have been a text circulated in the poetic form or as an epitome, or an oral transmission as performance or summary, or some

¹² This image builds on van Wyke's account of the body/clothes metaphor and its implications for translation. Here the body is the clothing attiring the interior, what van Wyke calls "the location of our true identity," that, on his reading, can never be dissociated from its various representations, just as "original" and "translated" texts are bound together (van Wyke 2010, 39-40).

¹³ Morgan develops this thought in her discussion of textualization and its role in the emergence of philosophy (Morgan 2000, 24-30).

combination of these. Or, Melissus might have travelled to Hyele-Elea and encountered any of these forms (or any combination thereof).

Melissoan reception of the Parmenidean poem takes place primarily along the second of the two translational pathways. As Piergiacomini notes, a critical interpretation concerned with logical stringency can be understood as motivating Melissus's recalibration of the Parmenidean poem into an easily transportable doctrine (Piergiacomini 2014, 200-01). This aspect of Melissus's translation may testify to an albeit minor way in which the first translational pathway – the formation of diverse translations – is retained: while Parmenides does not prioritize logical stringency, but rather images and figures emblematic of complex reasoning generative of manifold resonance and register,¹⁴ Melissus takes the ideas in the direction of a prose without such literary features. As such, the Parmenidean poem finds an afterlife in the prosaic expressions of doctrine not received via theophany but posited through human reasoning and argumentation.

The Melissoan translation of the Parmenidean poem will illustrate its mode. Here sounds the *crisis* (κρίσις) of being:

The force of commitment will not allow
generation from nothing, and Dikē therefore
does not loosen her bonds
to permit birth or destruction
but holds fast. Here again is the critical [κρίσις]
IT IS or IT ISN'T, and our decision has been
to leave the latter unnamed, an unknowable nothing,
not a true route at all,
and to affirm the former as the authentic Way.
Being does not get to be, either in time past or future:
It would not BE if it did.
In this way,
birth is snuffed out and destruction unheard of (Parmenides, fr. 8.12-21; transl. Lombardo 1982, 15-16; interpolation added).

So Melissus translates:

Whatever was always was and always will be. For if it came to be, it must have been nothing before it came to be. Now if it was nothing, in no way would anything come from nothing (Melissus fr. 1; transl. Graham 2010, 471).

¹⁴ These prioritized features perhaps are described by the *σήματα* of Parmenides fr. 8.2-3, which are multiple (*πολλὰ μάλ'*), poetic-imagistic, and semantically dense.

The translation dissolves the poetry of the Parmenidean song into a prosaic gloss that stakes out both a rejection of generation and a "strong kind of monism" (Graham 2010, 462). All the figures of the Parmenidean song – the horses (Parmenides fr. 1.1ff), the Heliades (Parmenides fr. 1.8-10), the singing Goddess (Parmenides fr. 1.24ff.), the two-headed mortals (Parmenides fr. 6.4-9), the anthropomorphized *Dike* and her shackles (Parmenides fr. 8.14), and more – and the song's narratological alienation and distancing of the very lines Melissus here translates are extinguished and fall into silence,¹⁵ "[a]s if translation, far from being the trials of the Foreign, were rather its negation, its acclimation, its naturalization" (Berman 2012, 241). Yet, it is precisely these poetic, literary elements whose polyvalent resonances send tremors of uncertainty and instability through the poem.

In the Parmenidean poem a trial of the foreign is staged within its own limits, translating within itself "the relationship of the self-same (*Propre*) and the Foreign" (Berman 2012, 240) through layers of *oratio recta* "as a mimesis of live speech within the context of live speech" (Bers 1997, 3),¹⁶ but also in its own shiftings, intra-linguistic translations on the very name of being, between *πέλ-* and *εἶναι*.¹⁷ In the introduction and presence of the Goddess' voice as "speech within speech" and in the ways in which that "secondary voice" entwines foreignness of the self-same with itself (Bers 1997, 7),¹⁸ the poem already activates the energies of *l'épreuve de l'étranger*:

IT is indivisible [οὐδὲ διαίρετόν ἐστιν], an homogeneous whole,
not more in one place
which would prevent its coherence
and less in another
a plenum of existence
continuous gravitation of being towards being [ἐὸν γὰρ ἐόντι πέλᾳζει] (Parmenides fr. 8.22-25; transl. Lombardo 1982, 16; interpolations added).

¹⁵ The narratological distance and alienation occurs in this passage, as others, in the attribution of the speech (both *logos* [Parmenides fr. 8.50] and *mythos* [Parmenides fr. 8.1]) to the Goddess (Parmenides fr. 1.23).

¹⁶ The "context of live speech" is performance.

¹⁷ Smith reads this translation through Heidegger as voicing "what comes to pass...a kind of being that 'is' at rest within its 'stirring,' 'arising,' 'coming to the fore'" (Smith 2003, 273-274). His attention falls mainly on the intra-linguistic translation at Parmenides fr. 6.8, though he mentions two other occurrences (Parmenides fr. 8.18, 11); he does not discuss the optative *πέλοιτο* (Parmenides fr. 8.19).

¹⁸ The Goddess' addresses to the interlocutor suggest a dialogue, an atmosphere of orality. For his own reasons – namely, to highlight his interpretation that "ἐὸν is not just available, it is what always compels and attracts mind" (Mourelatos 1970, 174) – and as one of many translations of the Parmenidean poem Mourelatos produces in his study, Parmenides fr. 8.38-41 is translated into a dialogic form.

With the uneven lines and line-breaks against the statements on homogeneity Lombardo's translation puts on view the self-estrangement of the Goddess' song.

In the *πελάζει* formulation and the active condition spoken in *-ίζω-* verbs (Smyth 1984, 245; §866), *πελ-* no longer bears a stillness in its arising, as Smith has thought it (Smith 2003, 273-74); here it actively turns, resonant of the broad sea's ceaseless active motion (*πέλαγος, πελάζει, πέλειν*). Even as being does not differ from itself (*οὐδὲ διαίρετόν ἐστιν*), its tidal pulls and swells turn it towards itself, performing the self-differentiation of reflexivity and a self-translation from and into itself. Such intra-lingual translation surfaces most notably in the lines stressing sameness while fanning into diversity:

ταύτόν τ' ἐν ταύτῳ τε μένον καθ' ἑαυτό τε κεῖται

remaining the *same* and in the *same* [it] lies by *itself* [*same*] (Parmenides fr. 8.29; transl. Gallop 1984, 69; interpolations and underlining added)

Heavy, spondaic opening feet in the hexameter, with five consecutive long syllables, draw attention to the *sameness* in repetition and its modulations attached to the dental *-τ-*, adding emphasis to the in-built differentiation of reflexivity and of translation. The second sense of Berman's trial comes forward in the poem's self-translations, as its language flashes its own "most distant from itself" (Berman 2012, 240).¹⁹

Translating the Parmenidean poem, Melissoan philosophy minimizes the poem's abundant foreignness. It appears that Melissus moved the poem towards the translating language (prose) in his translational encounter, attempting to make an analysis of the other's thinking "down to its innermost core, to disregard the constitutive role played by a language and then, as it were through a new chemical process compound this 'prelinguistic' core with the essence and the power of another language" (Schleiermacher 2002, 234). Melissoan philosophy seems to attempt to move such a "prelinguistic core," not only prior to language but also "an unchangeable core or essence" (Arrojo 2018, 50),²⁰ from poetry into prose.

On the other hand, Melissus finds different outcomes from the idea of ungenerated and eternal being drawn from the Parmenidean poem: "Now since it did not come to be, but is, it always was and always will be, and it has no beginning nor end, but is unlimited [*ἄπειρον*]" (Melissus fr. 2; transl. Graham 2012, 471; interpolation added). As Graham has noted, working from the same starting point as Parmenides – that being is *ἀγένητον* (unge-

¹⁹ See Jacobs' reading of *αὐτός* (same, self), which he takes to say "belonging together," as the center of the Parmenidean poem (Jacobs 1999, 186-87).

²⁰ Arrojo writes here on Plato from a transfiction perspective, drawing out the implications of a theory of forms and mimesis for translation, where the author's thought, the original text, and the translated text run parallel to the three removes articulated in *Republic* (Plato, *Republic* X.595c.7-597e.10).

nerated) and ἀνώλεθρόν (imperishable) (Parmenides fr. 8.3) – Melissus finds being unlimited (ἄπειρον) instead of limited (e.g. ἐπεὶ πείραξ πύματων [Parmenides fr. 8.42], ἐν πείρασι [Parmenides fr. 8.49; underlining added]), as the Parmenidean poem holds (Graham 2012, 462). Piergiacomì articulates two further areas and ways in which Melissus diverges from Parmenides. Epistemologically, Melissus finds sensation inadequate as a source of knowledge because sensation bears a "natural unreliability...in perceiving Being and change," whereas for Parmenides the opinions of mortals lead to misunderstanding and false belief (Piergiacomì 2014, 212). Theologically, in Piergiacomì's view Melissus gives argumentation for an assumption operative in Parmenides concerning the divinity of being, but also concludes that the divine being is entirely separate from, as well as inactive and undiscoverable in the empirical world, though it is discoverable through the efforts of human reason (Piergiacomì 2014, 213).

To varying degrees and in different ways, both Zeno and Melissus translate the Parmenidean poem in a twofold manner. In one sense, their translational encounters with the Parmenidean poem generate an array of forms and emphases that hinges on the unsettled character of the poem. According to this mode, the translations perform active interventions that charge the poem with a vital energy. In another sense, however, insofar as the former mode involves a dissolution of the form-content dynamics of the Parmenidean poem – shearing conceptual content from the dactylic hexameter form – that mode of translation lays the groundwork for the construction of a homogenous and stabilized doctrine separable from the poetry of the poem.

3. Into the *kerameikos*

Whereas Parmenides remains unnamed in the mode of translation as critical reception performed by Zeno and Melissus, Plato inaugurates a more forceful continuation of this protocol. With a translative gesture that renders Parmenides directly by name, Plato constructs the Eleatic thinker as a figure of his own philosophy. Valentine reads there a certain violence, a forced migration Plato imposes on Parmenides, relocating him to classical Athens and stripping the poem of its resonances with the local environment in southwest Italy (Valentine 2011, 29-30). In placing Parmenides within the orbit of dialogic philosophy and the centrality of Athens, Plato seems to enact an assimilative translation of Parmenides, or what Casanova has termed (about world literature and translation) an "annexation" that takes place as "a denial of difference" (Casanova 2010, 301). Involved in Plato's annexation is a division of thought and place that is of central concern to Valentine's study. Similarly, such a translative gesture unfolds as an intra-lingual version of

Schleiermacher's "author-to-reader" translation, in which the foreign becomes other than itself, familiar and no longer foreign (Schleiermacher 2002, 229): Plato moves the thinking of the Parmenidean poem into the more familiar language of Attic prose, as Melissus had done at Samos; more importantly, the thinking is no longer song, poetry.

On the other hand, the translative gesture of annexation is complicated by the manner in which Plato lets the Parmenidean poem reverberate into multiple outcomes of dialectic investigation, leaving room for the poem to be more and other than the translative elaborations: in the *Parmenides*, Plato has the character Parmenides engage in dialectics that identify eight variations on themes of being, unity, and plurality.²¹ Furthermore, the detachment Valentine notes is in the first place *fictional*, expressive of the twin aspects of action and play that constitute the *drama* of Platonic writing. Place is semantically active in the dialogue, though differently than in the Parmenidean poem. Within the fiction, place and movement activate some subtle tensions and implications. For example, those who seek out the drama are foreign to Athens, having arrived from Klazomenai in the Greek east (Plato, *Parmenides* 126a.1-b.4), while within the narration given by Antiphon – son of Purilampes (Πυριλάμπης) (Plato, *Parmenides* 126b.4), a very subtle gesture towards Parmenides's father Pyres (Πύρης) (Diogenes Laertius IX.3.21) – those who seek Parmenides and Zeno must travel to the western part of Athens (Plato, *Parmenides* 127c.1). These movements result in a curious reversal whereby the foreigners (Zeno and Parmenides) become the hosts, and an even more curious rendering of the foreign-hosts as foreign also to themselves by way of, and as a feature of, their own writings: Zeno's writings, a product of his youth, had been stolen and published involuntarily (Plato, *Parmenides* 128d.7-e1) – Sauvage points to the *Parmenides* as a location of "la theme de la copie volée se rencontre notamment" (Sauvage 1973, 30); Parmenides is absent for much of the reading (Plato, *Parmenides* 127.c6-d5); the readings themselves become the energy for discussion beyond their limits, i.e. into foreign zones of discourse (Plato, *Parmenides* 127d.6ff), which Collins reads as a transitional moment in the *Parmenides* as it turns from repetition to dialectics (Collins 2010, 153 and n. 3).

The house lies beyond the city walls, evoking the passage through the gates of the paths of Night and Day (Parmenides fr. 1.11). In the *kerameikos* (Plato, *Parmenides* 127c.1), which was a neighborhood and a burial ground, the Platonic translative gesture echoes with the movement of the Parmenidean poem's chariot from east to west, its downgoing (Parmenides fr. 1.8-21). Kingsley has emphasized the downward path of the Parmenidean journey by way of the poem's association with the world of the dead, bringing

²¹ On the complexities of Plato's translation of Parmenides in the dialogue, see Palmer 2009, 191-92.

out a cluster of evidence in favor of Persephone as the poem's goddess: the common location – beyond the paths of the gates of Night and Day – in archaic poetry; paintings from Hyele-Elea, contemporary with Parmenides, depicting Persephone greeting Herakles; the particular importance of Persephone in and around Hyele-Elea; inscriptions and dedications to Persephone; the archaic Temple of Persephone at Rome and its Elean priestesses (Kingsley 1999, 93-100, 233-34). Situating the dialogue in proximity to that region, among the dead, adds nuance to Plato's interpretation and representation of the Parmenidean poem, as Whitaker has also observed (Whitaker 1996, 23-24).

The *kerameikos* was also the starting point of the great civic-religious procession in Athens. The Panathenaia was the chief ritual in which the Athenians reaffirmed their connection to and citizenship in the polis of Athens. That is, moving as it did from west to east, from extremity to center, from death to life, the Panathenaic procession led each citizen and the community as a whole from death, through the mundane and ordinary activities of life in the polis, to a sacred mountain at the heart of the city.²² There the principal tutelary goddess was presented with the *peplos* and other offerings, renewing the sacred and ancient bond between humans and the goddess. Arriving thus at the center and peak of the polis, Athenians gave themselves to a life beyond their own, private lives, a life as citizens of the Athenian polis.²³

The journey of the Parmenidean poem makes similar movements, seeking the Goddess and a relationship with the divine beyond the ordinary, far from the path of men (Parmenides fr. 1.27), perhaps with the goddess Athena. Miranda interprets several fragmentary inscriptions as dedicated to Athena and Zeus, for the former pointing back to Phokaia's Temple to Athena, and suggests that "i Focei, fuggiti dalla loro patria, trapiantassero o fondassero a Velia un cult di Athena e Zeus Hellenii," recalling that the Phokaiaians were among the nine Ionian cities that established sanctuaries at Egyptian Naukratis (Miranda 1982, 168). She also interprets indicia of Athena found at the site to suggest not Athenian influence but rather "l'ambiente religioso ealete" (Miranda 1982, 164). Athena figures also into Valentine's range of identities radiantly surrounding the poem's goddess (Valentine 2011, 109).

In Plato's *Parmenides* the destination is the home of Antiphon, a man concerned, like his grandfather, with horsemanship (Plato, *Parmenides* 126c.7-8, 127a.1-2), a subtle

²² This point has been inferred from Will Freiert's lecture, particularly from his metaphorical use of the journey *from* the city *towards* the academy by way of, or through, the cemetery (Freiert 2004).

²³ The information on the Panathenaia presented here is based on Neils 1992, 13-27; Mikalson 1976, 149-51; Hornblower and Spawforth 2003, s.v. "Panathenaia."

literary detail attaching the scene to the horses of the Parmenidean poem (Parmenides fr. 1). Horses are further emphasized by the fictional Parmenides himself:

And yet I seem to be suffering something like that Ibyceian horse (δοκῶ μοι τὸ τοῦ Ἴβυκείου ἵππου πεπονθέναι), which, as a prizewinner but old, is about to take part in a chariot race (ἄρματι) and, being experienced (ἐμπειρίαν), trembles (τρέμονται) at what is about to happen. Ibycus says that he resembles the horse since, although he is so old and unwilling, Necessity forces him to fall in love (εἰς τὸν ἔρωτα ἀναγκάζεσθαι ἰέναι) (Plato, *Parmenides* 136e9-137a.4; transl. Whitaker 1996, 36).

In quoting the line from Ibycus Plato deepens associations with place: Ibycus began at Rhegion in Sicily, one of the several locations where the displaced community of Phocaeans landed before founding Hyele-Elea, home of Parmenides (Herodotus 1.166.3).

The connection of place also occurs at the level of the language and moves beyond horses to several elements of the Parmenidean poem echoing in Plato's reference to Ibycus:

- the passive construction in which the horse is the agent; compare Parmenides fr. 1.1.
- the chariot (ἄρματι); compare the chariot (ἄρμα) of Parmenides fr. 1.5.
- the horse's trembling (τρέμονται); compare the straining (τιταίνουσαι) of horses in Parmenides fr. 1.5.
- the presence of compulsion (ἀναγκάζεσθαι); compare ἀνάγκη in Parmenides fr. 8.16, 30.
- experience (ἐμπειρίαν); compare with the limit (πεῖρατος) in Parmenides fr. 8.31.²⁴
- the presence of *eros* (ἔρωτα) as the destination towards which he is compelled; compare the erotic element at the center of the *Doxa* and first among divine beings (Parmenides fr. 13).

Plato seems to be drawing attention emphatically to the similarities between the Parmenidean and Ibycean poems, linking the former to the cultural matrix of Western Greece by (translational) means of the latter. This puts on display a feature of early Greek philosophy and its "strategy of assimilation and inclusion by employing mythological figures and even poetic and narrative mythological elements." Such a strategy, articulated by Morgan, Plato and other early Greek philosophers mobilized from a position in a "new"

²⁴ Experience entails limits, a notion embedded in the Greek words formed on -πειρ-.

cultural setting both to rival the old mytho-poetic discourse and to "dramatize the weaknesses that both these worlds share" (Morgan 2000, 28-29).²⁵

Turned another way, Athenian Plato has Parmenides perform the translational action from poetry to prose that Melissus carried out on the Parmenidean poem, reducing the poetry to prose.²⁶ Parmenides is depicted not only translating the poem of Ibycus into prose, but also producing a self-translation into the dialectical idiom of Plato and into the dialect of Athens. The problem is not paraphrase or translation or misquotation – a typical practice for ancient philosophy, where interpolation and interpretation of texts take place without a "strict regard for verbatim accuracy or intellectual property" (Thomas 1992, 162) – but rather the homogenization of philosophic discourse into prose, even in a fictional dialogue and all its complexities, and the assignment of doctrine to the subject of translation. Put another way, the *Parmenides* stages a more intense version of a translational action in which the translation is signed in the name of the original author, concealing the translator's presence and, further, the translation itself: the problem of invisibility (see Berman 2012, 241; Venuti 1995, chap. 1; Hermans 1996). This becomes especially clear when Plato's character Parmenides begins his engagement with Aristotle (Plato, *Parmenides* 137b.2-3).

In the *Parmenides*, the layered images and literariness of Plato's writing perform a complex translation in the dialogue's presentation of Parmenides. Overall, in Plato's *Parmenides* the gestures and actions work in the two ways already operating in *Zeno*: first, the dialogue lets a variety of interpretations of the Parmenidean poem remain in play, so that Parmenides appears less a source of doctrine than of a way of thinking; second, in the implication that the thinking done in and as the Parmenidean poem can be translated *simpliciter*, that is, according to the "classical determination," into prose, Plato assumes a doctrine *available to be translated*.

The problem resurfaces in the translation of Parmenides undertaken by Plato in the well-known passage from *Theaetetus*. With characteristic flourish, Plato layers the figuration of a Parmenidean doctrine of the one and static being by staging Parmenides as single and alone in the dramatic speech of the dialogue – alone against Protagoras, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Epicharmus, and Homer "the general" (Plato, *Theaetetus* 153a.2) –

²⁵ One might also think about the strengths shared by those worlds; for instance, in both the Ibycean and Parmenidean poems and Plato's dialogues, the strength of similarity, simile, can be thoroughly felt. On Ibycean poetry, and this particular poem, see Davies 1986, 403.

²⁶ Robb regards this as central to Plato's translational protocol of *Republic*, particularly in the tenth book: the "counter-charm" protecting audiences depends on the translation of "those wondrous ancient verses into plain everyday prose" so that their deceptive powers are exposed (Robb 1994, 226).

and by formulating that doctrine in the negative within a re-enactment of Protagoras's teaching of oppositions, non-being, and flux:

I will tell you, and it's definitely no lowly statement, that nothing, therefore, is one thing itself by itself [ὡς ἄρα ἔν μὲν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ οὐδέν ἐστιν], nor could you in any way correctly call it anything whatever, but if you address it as large it will also appear small, if heavy, light, and everything at all in this way, since nothing is either any one thing or of any one sort, but it's from rushing around and from motion and from blending into one another that all things come to be – we say they "are," not addressing them correctly, since nothing ever *is* but is always becoming. And in this regard let all those who are wise be lined up together, except Parmenides [πάντες ἐξῆς οἱ σοφοὶ πλὴν Παρμενίδου συμφορέσθων]: Protagoras and Heraclitus and Empedocles, and the top-notch poets in each sort of poetry, Epicharmus in comedy and in tragedy Homer, who in speaking of Ocean, progenitor of the gods with mother Tethys, has said that all things are offspring generated out of flowing and motion (Plato *Theaetetus* 152d.2-e.9; transl. Sachs 2004, 30-31; interpolations added).²⁷

In the phrase ὡς ἄρα ἔν μὲν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ οὐδέν ἐστιν ("nothing...is one thing itself by itself"), Plato issues a shadow of the Parmenidean phrase ταῦτόν τ' ἐν ταῦτοι τε μένον καθ' ἑαυτὸ τε κεῖται ("Remaining the same and in the same, [it] lies by itself" [Parmenides fr. 8.29; transl. Gallop 1984, 69]) and leaves the doctrine in shadowed silence, unspoken and absent, but present as the shadow of what all others say.

Again, Plato's translation is complex, shadowing the Parmenidean song in a negative valence, available as *what is not*. Quietly and playfully Plato's translation disturbs the Parmenidean song's repeated apparent denial *and* affirmation of negation, such that "a statement," in Curd's interpretation-translation, "that purports to disclose being must be thoroughly positive with no negative elements at all" (Curd 1991, 252):

ἡ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι.

The one – that [it] *is*, and that [it] *cannot not be* (Parmenides fr. 2.3; transl. Gallop 1984, 55).²⁸

While Plato's presentation of the positive statement of being in relief may subject it to slight ridicule, insofar as the very statement itself as Parmenides sings it advances the negation it denies, it may also be a show of respect to the Elean thinker of being. For, Plato's translation makes Parmenides the standard against which all other thought is measured.

²⁷ Another Platonic subtlety resonates in the συμφορέσθων of 152e.3, which gestures in the direction of Heraclitus (Heraclitus fr. 10: ...ὅλα καὶ οὐκ ὅλα, συμφορόμενον διαφερόμενον...) and follows immediately Parmenides's name.

²⁸ Repetitions: Parmenides fr. 6.1-2; fr. 7.1; fr. 8.9, 46.

The alleged doctrine of Parmenides comes to light in a line of *Theaetetus* that has been construed as a variation on a line from the Parmenidean poem, though it is presented as an amalgam, attributed to "many a Melissus and Parmenides:"

οἷον ἀκίνητον τελέθει τῷ παντὶ ὄνομ' εἶναι

Since it is wholly motionless, being is the name for the all (Plato, *Theaetetus* 180e.1; transl. Sachs 2004, 76).²⁹

This translates the Parmenidean line:

οἶλον ἀκίνητόν τε ἔμεναι· τῷ παντ' ὄνομ(α) ἔσται

To be whole and changeless; wherefore it has been named all things (Parmenides fr. 8.38; transl. Gallop 1984, 71).³⁰

Plato's phrasing provides an example, perhaps, of the kind of memory characteristic of orality that concentrates on "the sequence of arguments" rather than a phrase or passage verbatim (Lentz 1989, 92; see also Thomas 1992, 162). The reduction to doctrine involves here silencing all the poem's images and figures that work in various ways to create internal dissonance with this very proposition.³¹

Socrates speaks the composite translation then translates it to prose as follows: that all things are one and it stands still in itself, having no place in which it moves (Plato, *Theaetetus* 180e.3-4; transl. Sachs 2004, 76).

Here Socrates translates a twofold doctrine of singularity of being and its accompanying stasis. Putting in view a haphazard quotation attributed across multiple thinkers – across poetic and prosaic thinking – and following that with a further prose translation that encapsulates in a single statement what many thinkers and thinkings thoroughly assert (δυσχυρίζονται), the reduction of manifold into singular restates the translational protocol motivated by an attempt to extract and "to communicate as quickly as possible the thing underlying the words, to reveal the unity of being under the differences of languages, to reduce multiplicity to the singular" (Cassin 2010, 19).

In Plato's student Aristotle the history of philosophy seems to begin as a text-based enterprise and its problematic, though characteristic, doxographic quality (Nightingale

²⁹ Sachs comments on this line that "Socrates seems not so much to be misquoting as engaging in free variation on a theme" (Sachs 2004, 76, n. 39)

³⁰ The text here is from Sauvage (1973, 62); a variant (ὀνόμασται in place of ὄνομ(α) ἔσται) occurs in the line's last foot.

³¹ On internal dissonances, or tensions, in the Parmenidean poem, see Marciano (2008), Cherubin (2017), Spitzer (2020).

2007, 169-173; Fränkel 1975, 258-59; Robb 1994, 214-251; Thomas 1992, 92; Jaeger 1947, 7), even as it depends and builds on a textual history already underway. Mansfeld's study into historiography of early Greek philosophy has illustrated that Aristotle both receives and transmits particular readings – translations – of the Parmenidean poem, making use of existing doxographic sources that classified archaic thinking in various ways while adjusting them through his own philosophic engagements with them. Already by the fifth century BCE Protagoras, Hippias, and Gorgias produced compendia of earlier thinkings: Gorgias's presentation was oriented by a "systematical point of view," while Hippias arranged thinkers in relation to questions, and Protagoras's collection, as Mansfeld views it, aimed specifically at a critical assessment of Eleatic monism (Mansfeld 1990, 25, 27).

At once accepting and establishing a doctrinal reading of the poem, Aristotle disqualified Parmenides from the thinking of physics on the grounds that the thought of being as a static unity cannot be a source or origin (ἀρχή) because a source entails differentiation, multiplicity (Aristotle, *Physics* 185a.3-5). That is, from the point of view in *Physics*, if the static unity of the Parmenidean poem gave rise to some other thing it would be self-destructive on two counts: it would erase its own singularity; it would be involved in the change of generation. However, as Finkelberg has observed (Finkelberg 1990, 103-04), elsewhere Aristotle gives a more nuanced and generous reading of Parmenides as advancing a vision of unity according to the *logos* (κατὰ τὸν λόγον; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 986b.19).³² On the other hand, Aristotle's treatment, outlined by Finkelberg, is grounded in a distinction between "formal" and "material" unity, performing the kind of interpretation Fränkel understands in Aristotle's and Theophrastos's activity that translates with a view to "working out the details of their own doctrine" (Fränkel 1975, 259).

Doctrine emerges from translational readings that stabilize and assign to thinkers unshifting thoughts in place of sinuous thinkings. As a translational action, doctrine reduces complexity and asserts identity of thinking and thought, of thought with itself: it takes place as the philosophy of the same. This has been termed "essentialism" and, in translation theory, has been aligned with Plato (Arrojo 2010, 247-48; Berman 2012, 252-53; van Wyke 2010). Van Wyke links a notion of "ideal form" with "original works" whose "'essence' is treated with a reverence similar to that which Socrates shows towards forms" (van Wyke

³² Citing Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 986b.27 and 984b.2 for the unity in definition that enables the "sensible manifold," the harmony of *Doxa* and *Aletheia* (Finkelberg 1990, 103-04). Also, see Mansfeld, who imagines Aristotle generating a later and more nuanced reading of the Parmenidean poem by the time of *Metaphysics*, which he takes to explain the different treatments found between that text and *Physics* (Mansfeld 1990, 26).

2010, 32). However, reading along these lines hypostasizes and homogenizes a text by practicing an "effacement of differences" – an inherent feature of translation according to Paul Bandia, though not immune to forms of resistance under the sign of "heterogenization" (Bandia 2012, 423-24). That is to say, critique of essentialism folds into its own essentialist movement by extracting and presenting philosophic doctrine,³³ as it must do under the compulsion of metaphysics and "the medium of the concept" (Adorno 1973, 406). Yet, following Adorno, that "magic circle" will not be undone by referring essentialism to itself, but instead will take another turn into a "micrology" whose action produces fissures in the identity yielded by the translational action of subsumption (Adorno 1973, 407-08). Thus, to assert that "Plato's is a philosophy of sameness" is to excise much important complexity and to reperform that impulse towards stabilized identity that animates the criticism (van Wyke 2010, 20). In the translational and translative movements of Plato, Zeno, and Melissus on the level of the *micrologic* Parmenidean thinking appears to continue its resistance to essentialism itself even as it produces the conditions for its formulation.

4. The Ghost

After a quietus in late antiquity during which a fully textualized and instrumentalized Parmenidean poem is mobilized in lines or sections to bolster the concerns of whoever happens to be making use of the text (Cordero 1987, 5), the practice of collecting the writings of archaic Greek thinkers resurges in early Renaissance Europe in the prolific activity of Henri Estienne, known as Henricus Stephanus, whose pagination of the Platonic corpus still forms the standard means by which to cite Plato's texts. That is, this practice renews the translational action of philosophic historiography traced by Mansfeld (1990) to its pre-Platonic beginnings. Yet, under the new conditions of the sixteenth century the task is translated: by producing *Poesis Philosophica* at Geneva in 1573, the first effort to extract the poem from the "'véhicules' d'un texte perdu" (Cordero 1987, 8),³⁴ Stephanus institutes a philological drive towards a singularity. Lloyd-Jones sees in the emergence of such veneration for originals a characteristic of Renaissance philological and translational practice rooted, on his reading of Stephanus, in the figure of the *vox universalis* that

³³ This mode also enacts some of the "deforming tendencies" identified and analyzed by Berman, perhaps without the controls he sees as necessary for possible liberation from forces and impulses that are unconscious and ontologically inscribed on translators and cannot be escaped "merely by becoming aware of them" (Berman 2012, 242).

³⁴ The translational layers begin to accumulate, as texts become conveyors (translations) of other texts that translate the *vox universalis* into the *ipsissima verba*.

transcends rational and linguistic categories yet forms an intimate connection with the words in which it is spoken or written. Certain original words, *ipsissima verba*, enable access to the *vox*, which leads Stephanus towards a commitment to "lexical precision" pivoting between a "linguistic obligation toward the authority of the source language, and a conceptual service rendered to, and shaped by, the target language's inherent insufficiencies" (Lloyd-Jones 1994, 2).³⁵

The path down to Diels and other philological presentations of the Parmenidean poem now opens as an attempt at "restoring the pristine qualities of material that the passage of time, like all other kinds of transformation, has altered" (Lloyd-Jones 1994, 6). On the other hand, that impulse to restore involves preservation, with the result that the poem's language remains in view, endowed with special value and significance. Though Diels recognizes that elements of the Parmenidean poem are lost irretrievably, particularly its dialect and its "künstliche und conventionelle Dichtersprache," he nevertheless sees as the task of philological effort to restore "den Codex des Aristoteles" (Diels 1897, 26-27). This elevation of an original generates the ambivalent character of the translational moment inaugurated in Renaissance Europe, given a negative complexion in terms of failure and loss, or, in the case of Stephanus as Lloyd-Jones sees it, of "regret and resignation" that might encapsulate a history of translation in the west told as a narrative of the translators' experience (Lloyd-Jones 1994, 11).³⁶

A predominant mode of philosophic translation oriented towards reproduction of the same appears to diverge from the pathway open for philology, reimagining the "tension" between the two disciplines as a schism. For much of philosophy insists on the separability of ideas from language; indeed, Derrida thinks this detachability as "philosophy's *unique thesis*" (Derrida 1982, 229). Within the strain of dialectics in Hegel's *Vorlesungen der Geschichte der Philosophie* this insistence and its manifestation seize early Greek thinking in the movements towards synthesis. From the outset, the sweep of dialectics generates "the Eleatics" within which Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno, and Melissus are gathered. On Aristotle's recommendation the latter, Melissus, is eliminated from further consideration: "es sei nichts Bestimmtes durch ihn hervorgetreten" (Hegel 1989, 49).

³⁵ NB: the page numbers refer to the digital version of this article and do not correspond to those of the original publication.

³⁶ See also Arrojo's treatment of the various ways such negative complexion has been applied to translators (Arrojo 2006, 92-95). Venuti sees this complexion in psychoanalytic terms as characterized by identification or repression and carried out as "a weird self-annihilation" (Venuti 1995, 7-8); he is dealing with twentieth century CE examples. "Invisibility," 7-8. Rée thinks of the situation in terms of deprivation (Rée 2001, 223).

After translating biographies into a composite narrative of each of the remaining three Eleatics, Hegel enters the "reineres Feld" on which the principal teaching (*Hauptlehre*) can be seen: "Es ist nur Eine, das Sein; alles andere hat keine Wahrheit, ist nur Meinung, Schein" (Hegel 1989, 51). Again the dialectical movement surfaces in the rapid move away from particularities of place and biographic minutiae and into the *Hauptlehre*. As translational mode, elimination constitutes the task. Elimination entails identification and selection and the production of schisms on the fabric of history. In action, the second dialectical moment of Hegel's translation carves philosophy out of and away from history: after completing the translation of Zeno's biography, Hegel introduces philosophy in the purified field, i.e. the region of philosophy demarcated from that of bodies, "colonization," particular cities. After this, Hegel can begin: "Was nun die Philosophie der Eleaten anbetrifft, so treten wir hier in ein reineres Feld" (Hegel 1989, 51). This open country, *Feld*, is more pure (*reineres*) than the political fray Hegel has just translated concerning Zeno and the tyrannicide at Hyele-Elea.

Through dialectics Being and One translate one another with no remainder and no friction as full presence obtains across the terms *das Sein, das Eine*, τὸ ὄν, τὸ ἓν (Hegel 1989, 52).³⁷ The initial translation, rendered a moment in dialectical inquiry, accumulates through the translational work and reaches another stage in the phrase "Das Wahrhafte ist nur das Eine, das Sein. Alles andere ist nicht." All the poetry of Xenophanes and Parmenides, all the richness, the subtleties and interplay of images in Zeno's paradoxes, these form the mere excess and matter that has been shorn from the innermost, "der allgemeine Satz der Eleaten" (Hegel 1989, 67). Dialectics has churned these as concepts as it also has churned the thinkers out of the initial synchronic presentation (where this translation of equivalence occurs) into a diachronic relation, so that Xenophanes is eliminated, then Parmenides, until the final paragraphs of the chapter feature Zeno alone. The two temporal relations then dialectically converge such that Zeno and Kant form a dialectical pair, with the greater achievement bestowed on the former for his reformulation, his translation through Hegel's translation, into a subjective, but not yet objective, configuration of the dialectic: "Die Welt ist an ihr selbst das Erscheinen, und nur das Eine Sein ist das Wahre" (Hegel 1989, 69). In the chapter's synthetic movement *Eine* and *Sein* have been translated into a synthesized substantive that bears, even through all the magic of

³⁷ Venuti articulates the importance of the remainder from the standpoint of translation theory as deviations from standardized or the "major form" of a language that disrupt the dominant form (Venuti 1998, 10).

dialectics, the markings of the elemental translation of the philosophic poem of Parmenides into doctrine, the core available to any language.

For moderns, Nietzsche gives a typically caricatured and inventive translation of the twofold doctrine of stasis and unity. After styling Parmenides as having formed into a type of a prophet "formed of ice rather than fire, pouring cold piercing light all around" who achieves a "bloodless abstraction" (Nietzsche 1962, 69), Nietzsche develops a biography of Parmenides to reconcile the apparent gap between cosmology and ontology in the Parmenidean poem. Unlike Hegel, for whom the residue of history constitutes impurity and must be purified through dialectics, Nietzsche translates Parmenides with reference to biography. On the other hand, the biography Nietzsche embeds in his critical translation is the product of his own imagination, a fiction that serves a purpose in translating the text to itself, spanning the distance between *Alētheia* and *Doxa*.

Moving through and across the seemingly incongruous parts of the poem, Nietzsche attends, unfolds, and translates the conventional doctrinal reading:

It can be neither infinitely large nor infinitely small, for it is perfect, and a perfectly given infinity is a contradiction. Thus it hovers: bounded, finished, immobile, everywhere in balance, equally perfect at each point, like a sphere, though not in space, for this space would be a second existent. There cannot be several existents. For in order to separate them, there would have to be something which is not existent, a suppositi-
on which cancels itself. Thus there is only eternal unity (Nietzsche 1962, 78).

In Nietzsche's reading Parmenides performs the basic operation of philosophy that persists and determines its very activity, formalized in Plato and carried on in the history of philosophic thinking, the division of the *noetic* and the *aesthetic* fields that "lies upon philosophy like a curse" (Nietzsche 1962, 79). Doctrine emerges from the translational protocol that silences and represses language's "own foreignness to itself" in order to render a text into a veneer of glassine ice, "to make it," as Barbara Johnson has put it, "the transparent expression of a great philosophical thought," a protocol Johnson sees as constitutive of Western philosophy (Johnson 1985, 146-47). In this spirit, Kahn takes the so-called proem,³⁸ to be a "transparent" allegory of Parmenides's "quest for knowledge." Seeing through the transparent allegory and translating it will make possible on his view a "correct interpretation of his thesis" (Kahn 1969, 704).

The doctrinal translation and reception of the Parmenidean poem guides editions for and by philosophers seeking to study the poem-as-text. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield have

³⁸ For a sound challenge to understanding the opening scene of the Parmenidean poem as a "proem," see Havelock 1958.

conditioned many readers of the Greek text with their bilingual (Greek- English) edition, which disrupts "fragments" in order to gloss and outline the arguments. The summary of the poem's "radical and powerful" argument follows the conventional lines: Parmenides "proves in an astonishing deductive *tour de force* that if something exists, it cannot come to be or perish, change, or move, nor be subject to any imperfection" (Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 241). Graham's recent edition includes similarly conventional commentary, reinforcing the doctrinal reading of the song (Graham 2010, 203-04). The philosophic mode of translation seems to rely on a presumed "ease of accessibility to the meaning(s) of the original text that ignores the inevitable interpretations and alterations that are a result of its translation into another language" (Batchelor 2010, 49-50). Through this translational "ease of accessibility" doctrine is established and reinforced.

Conclusions

From archaic Greece to the present the ambiguities of the Parmenidean poem have been translated into certainties of doctrine, the literary dimensions into secondary qualities of a primary substance: prosaic philosophic thinking and its law of non-contradiction. Prose that intends a reduction of other texts and thinkers to a doctrine or set of doctrines – already forming in the Melissoan translations – inaugurates a translational protocol that constructs stabilized doctrine and depends on its portability through languages, cultures, places, i.e., its detachment from history. Beneath the gaze of a philosophy of self-sameness unity and stability, translated into doctrine, conflict with diversity and motion – a conflict perhaps characteristic of philosophy, which in Morgan's view prefers the former pair (Morgan 2000, 36). While each translation and translative gesture renders a complex figure, the movement seems oriented towards reducing the Parmenidean poem to a stable doctrine and diminishing the song's polyvalence.

Yet translation, even as it renders such profound changes on the Parmenidean song, bears within itself a capacity to reimagine and to reawaken the poem as "an open ended dialogue rather than the pursuit of one ultimate truth" (Batchelor 2010, 46). Another branch in the early moments of the translational history of the Parmenidean poem performs such a reawakening by way of the diversifying aspect of the translational mode at work in Zeno, Melissus, and Plato without a reduction to doctrine. From southwest Italy to the southern Sicilian polis of Akragas (modern Agrigento), the Parmenidean poem is translated by a mode of like-to-like in the poem of Empedocles. As with the translations of Zeno and Melissus, the Empedoclean poem does not explicitly assign doctrine to Parmenides. Rather, in a graceful encounter in which figures engage with other figures the Empedoclean poem

adds to a Heraclitean translational action where the harmonies and disharmonies resound (Heraclitus, frs. 8, 10, 51), opening areas of difference(s) in which thinking might enjoy its movements from many to one *and* – vitally, urgently, energetically – from one to many (Heraclitus, fr. 10).

Some pedagogical implications flow from a heightened attention to translation (in broad and narrow senses) as woven into the fabric of philosophy's history. To the extent that doctrine comes to be established via translation(s), approaches to teaching history of philosophy can attempt to reanimate texts by releasing them from the encasements of what have become conventional, doctrinal interpretations – disrupting one form of what Hix has called "translation inertia" (Hix 2019). Without the assignment of doctrine *in advance* of interpretive-translational encounters, texts can circulate among readers in more fluid ways, ways that can both surprise and delight readers – instructors and students – if they remain open to those movements. On the part of faculty this approach calls for a re-evaluation, a willingness to be learners more than knowers.³⁹ This approach does not foreclose the possibility of knowledge but rather emphasizes the processual and relational aspects of knowledge as *knowing*, an activity in progress or, to borrow from Cassin, not as *ergon* but as *energeia* (Cassin 2010, 27). Translation serves to issue a critical reminder of this ongoing activity of philosophy, the continual reconfigurations of its concepts in and through language(s) as "a process of interaction with the other – other thought, other language, other culture" replete with ethical implications (Avtonomova 2020, 108).

These closing remarks do not recommend a cessation of critical, prosaic, scholarly interpretation. Rather, the recommendation is for greater awareness of the translational action inherent to such interpretation and for attempts to balance the prosaic with other interpretive-translational forms. In the lights of multiple and different translational approaches the Parmenidean poem, as well as other canonical texts of philosophy, might shine in more brilliant and more subtle ways.

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³⁹ Grateful appreciation to D. H. Saussy for conversing on this point.

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