Dr. Tamer Nawar (T.Nawar@rug.nl)   http://tamernawar.weebly.com

Parmenides of Elea

Parmenides of Elea (born. c. 515 B.C.) wrote a poem, *On Nature*, composed of 3 parts: the Proem; the Way of Truth (*alētheia*); and the Way of Opinion (*doxa*). In the Way of Truth, he argues for a number of starting claims: that what-is-not cannot be, and cannot be thought of; that the senses are deceptive; that what-is must be; and that there is no change or plurality. The following translations are from *A Presocratics Reader: Selected Fragments and Testimonia*, P. Curd, R. D. McKirahan [Hackett, 2011].

But come now, I will tell you—and you, when you have heard the story, bring it safely away— which are the only routes of inquiry that are for thinking: the one, that is and that it is not possible for it not to be, is the path of Persuasion (for it attends upon Truth), the other, that it is not and that it is right that it not be, this indeed I declare to you to be a path entirely unable to be investigated: For neither can you know what is not (for it is not to be accomplished) nor can you declare it.
(Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* 1.345.18; lines 3–8: Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* 116.28; tmpc = DK 28 B2)

. . . for the same thing is for thinking and for being.
(Clement, *Miscellanies* 6.23; Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.1.8 = DK 28 B3)

But gaze upon things which although absent are securely present to the mind. For you will not cut off what-is from clinging to what-is, neither being scattered everywhere in every way in order nor being brought together.
(Clement, *Miscellanies* 5.15 = DK 28 B4)

It is right both to say and to think that it is what-is: for it can be, but nothing is not: these things I bid you to ponder. For I < 3 > you from this first route of inquiry, and then from that, on which mortals, knowing nothing, wander, two-headed: for helplessness in their breasts steers their wandering mind. They are borne along deaf and blind alike, dazed, hordes without judgment for whom to be and not to be are thought to be the same and not the same, and the path of all is backward-turning.
(Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* 86.27–28; 117.4–13; tmpc = DK 28 B6)

For in no way may this prevail, that things that are not are; but you, hold your thought back from this route of inquiry and do not let habit, rich in experience, compel you along this route to direct an aimless eye and an echoing ear and tongue, but judge by reasoning (*logos*) the much-contested examination spoken by me. (lines 1–2: Plato, *Sophist* 242a; lines 2–6: Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.114; tmpc = DK 28 B7)

. . . Just one story of a route is still left: that it is. On this [route] there are signs very many, that what-is is ungenerated and imperishable, a whole of a single kind, unshaken, and complete. Nor was it ever, nor will it be, since it is now, all together [5] one, holding together: For what birth will you seek out for it? How and from what did it grow? From what-is-not I will allow you neither to say nor to think: For it is not to be said or thought that it is not. What need would have roused it, later or earlier, having begun from nothing, to grow? [10] In this way it is right either fully to be or not. Nor will the force of true conviction ever permit anything to come to be beside it from what-is-not. For this reason neither coming to be nor perishing did Justice allow, loosening her shackles, but she [Justice] holds it fast. And the decision about these things is in this: [15] is or is not; and it has been decided, as is necessary, to leave the one [route] unthought of and unnamed (for it is not a true route), so that the other [route] is and is genuine. But how can what-is be hereafter? How can it come to be? For if it came to be, it is not, not even if it is sometime going to be. [20] Thus coming-to-be has been extinguished and perishing cannot be investigated. Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike, and not at all more in any way, which would keep it from holding together, or at all less, but it is all full of what-is. Therefore it is all holding together; for what-is draws near to what-is. [25] But unchanging in the limits of great bonds it is without starting or ceasing, since coming-to-be and perishing have wandered very far away; and true trust drove them away. Remaining the same and in the same and by itself it lies and so remains there fixed; for mighty Necessity [30] holds it in bonds of a limit which holds it in on all sides. For this reason it is right for what-is to be not incomplete; for it is not lacking; otherwise, what-is would be in want of everything. What is for thinking is the same as that on account of which there is thought. For not without what-is, on which it depends, having been solemnly pronounced, [35] will you find thinking; for nothing else either is or will be except what-is, since precisely this is what Fate shackled to be whole and changeless. Therefore it has been named all things that mortals, persuaded that they are true, have posited both to come to be and to perish, to be and not, [40] and to change place and alter bright colour. But since the limit is ultimate, it [namely, what-is] is complete from all directions like the bulk of a ball well-rounded from all sides equally matched in every way from the middle; for it is right for it to be not in any way greater or lesser than in another. [45] For neither is there what-is-not—which would stop it from reaching the same—nor is there any way in which what-is would be more than what-is in one way and in another way less, since it is all inviolable; for equal to itself from all directions, it meets uniformly with its limits. At this point, I end for you my reliable account and thought [50] about truth. From here on, learn mortal opinions, listening to the deceitful order of my words. For they established two forms to name in their judgments, of which it is not right to name one—in this they have gone astray — and they distinguished things opposite in body, and established signs [55] apart from one another—for one, the aetherial fire of flame, mild, very light, the same as itself in every direction, but not the same as the other; but that other one, in itself is opposite—dark night, a dense and heavy body. I declare to you all the ordering as it appears, [60] so that no mortal judgment may ever overtake you.

(Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* 145.1–146.25 [lines 1–52]; 39.1–9 [lines 50–61]; tmpc = DK 28 B8)

Zeno of Elea

Zeno of Elea (born c. 490 BC) was a follower of Parmenides who offered some powerful arguments against the possibility of motion or change. Translations from J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle.*

The same method should also be adopted in replying to those who ask, in the terms of Zeno's argument, whether we admit that before any distance can be traversed half the distance must be traversed, that these half-distances are infinite in number, and that it is impossible to traverse distances infinite in number—or some put the same argument in another form, and would have us grant that in the time during which a motion is in progress we should first count the half-motion for every half-distance that we get, so that we have the result that when the whole distance is traversed we have counted an infinite number, which is admittedly impossible.
Aristotle *Physics* 8.8, 263a4–11

Zeno's arguments about motion, which cause so much trouble to those who try to answer them, are four in number. The first asserts the non-existence of motion on the ground that that which is in locomotion must arrive at the half-way stage before it arrives at the goal […]
The second is the so-called Achilles, and it amounts to this, that in a race the quickest runner can never overtake the slowest, since the pursuer must first reach the point whence the pursued started, so that the slower must always hold a lead. This argument is the same in principle as that which depends on bisection, though it differs from it in that the spaces with which we have successively to deal are not divided into halves. The result of the argument is that the slower is not overtaken; but it proceeds along the same lines as the bisection argument (for in both a division of the space in a certain way leads to the result that the goal is not reached, though the Achilles goes further in that it affirms that even the runner most famed for his speed must fail in his pursuit of the slowest), so that the solution too must be the same. And the claim that that which holds a lead is never overtaken is false: it is not overtaken while it holds a lead; but it is overtaken nevertheless if it is granted that it traverses the finite distance. These then are two of his arguments.
The third is that already given above, to the effect that the flying arrow is at rest, which result follows from the assumption that time is composed of moments: if this assumption is not granted, the conclusion will not follow.
The fourth argument is that concerning equal bodies which move alongside equal bodies in the stadium from opposite directions—the ones from the end of the stadium, the others from the middle—at equal speeds, in which he thinks it follows that half the time is equal to its double. The fallacy consists in requiring that a body travelling at an equal speed travels for an equal time past a moving body and a body of the same size at rest. That is false. E.g. let the stationary equal bodies be AA; let BB be those starting from the middle of the A's (equal in number and in magnitude to them); and let CC be those starting from the end (equal in number and magnitude to them, and equal in speed to the B's). Now it follows that the first B and the first C are at the end at the same time, as they are moving past one another. And it follows that the C has passed all the A's and the B half; so that the time is half, for each of the two is alongside each for an equal time. And at the same time it follows that the first B has passed all the C's. For at the same time the first B and the first C will be at opposite ends, being an equal time alongside each of the B's as alongside each of the A's, as he says, because both are an equal time alongside the A's.
Aristotle *Physics* 6.9, 239b5–240a17 (= DK 29 A25, 26, 27, 28)