

PLATO'S TESTIMONY CONCERNING ZENO OF ELEA*

In the opening paragraphs of Plato's *Parmenides* (126A–128E) we learn of a work by Zeno which could be read comfortably at a single sitting. As we know from the surviving fragments, it was full of extraordinarily compressed material. So we could hazard the guess that it could not have taken more than an hour or so to read, since the reading was to be a preliminary to extended discussion. Such a length would match that of the earliest works of scientific prose which have survived intact: the Hippocratic treatises. *On Ancient Medicine* is about 5,000 words; *On Airs, Waters, Places* about 6,800.¹ A work of even 5,000 words would have contained the originals of all of Zeno's arguments of which we know and many more besides. From the way the book is talked about here² we get the impression that it contained the whole of Zeno's oeuvre.³ The references are to a single work written when Zeno was still 'very young' (say, twenty or a little more). Zeno is made to say it had been 'stolen' from him (i.e. put into circulation by unauthorised third parties) before he had made up his mind to publish. If he had put out other works thereafter we would expect some reference to them to drive home his point that the pugnacious temper of that youthful work⁴ should not be thought to represent his present outlook. Diogenes Laertius (9, 26) speaks of βιβλία, but in a context which gives no indication that he is following a reliable source. The four titles listed by Suidas⁵ (a very late source, perhaps of the tenth century A.D.) inspire no confidence.

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¹ Other prose essays are even shorter. The pseudo-Xenophontic *Constitution of the Athenians* is about 3,600 words.

² The plural γραμμάτων in 127C3 and 127D3 has no significance: subsequent references to the same material (τῷ συγγράμματι, 128A6; τοῦ γράμματος, 128B8; etc.) turn without explanation to the singular form.

³ Socrates refers to the book as τὰ Ζήνωνος γράμματα (cf. Zeller [1923, 610, note]). Simplicius too (*Phys.* 140, 28) speaks of Zeno's treatise in the singular (ἐν αὐτῷ . . . τῷ τοῦ Ζήνωνος συγγράμματι). Burnet's remark [1930, 311], 'in the *Parmenides* Plato makes Zeno say that *the work by which he is best known* [my emphasis] was written in his youth . . .' is misleading: there is nothing in Plato's text to warrant the suggestion that Zeno had also other, less well known, works. [For bibliographical references here and hereafter, see the works listed under the author's name at the end of this paper.]

⁴ διὰ τῆς αὐτῆς δὴ φιλονικίας ὑπὸ νέου ὄντος ἐμοῦ ἐγράφη, 128D6–7.

⁵ One of them, πρὸς φιλοσόφους, has been singled out for favourable treatment by champions of the theory that Zeno's arguments were anti-Pythagorean

polemic (e.g. Burnet [1930, 312]; Lee [1936, 8]); claiming that 'in the fifth century φιλόσοφος had not yet its generalised meaning of 'philosopher,' but meant Pythagorean', they found in the title 'evidence that Zeno wrote attacking the Pythagoreans' (both quotations from Lee, *loc. cit.*). But that Zeno himself should have entitled a work of his πρὸς φιλοσόφους seems 'extremely improbable if we date the work [as it is commonly agreed that we should] ca. 465 B.C.' (Heidel [1940, 22]); the origin of the title is much more likely to be Alexandrian. But even if the title were Zeno's own, the claim that by so entitling his work he must have been addressing Pythagorean philosophers turns on a premise which is demonstrably false: cf. the use of φιλόσοφος in such a text as Heraclitus B35 (if the injunction to those aspiring to become φιλόσοφοι—that they should be εὖ μάλα πολλῶν ἴστορες—is addressed to those who are scorned for having attained mere πολυμαθίη in B40, its constituency would include a group diverse enough to be illustrated by Hesiod, Pythagoras, Xenophanes and Heacataeus in the latter fragment); cf. also the use of φιλοσόφων in Gorgias B11(13), and of φιλοσοφίην in [Hippocrates] *On Anc. Med.* 20 (there is no allusion to Pythagoras or Pythagoreans in either of these texts, and in the latter φιλοσοφίη is obviously speculative physiologia, illustrated by 'Empedocles or others who have written περὶ φύσεως'). [All references to Presocratic fragments here and hereafter are by their numbering and text in H. Diels and W. Kranz *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (sometimes abbreviated to 'DK'), 6th ed. (Berlin, 1952).]

If we could trust what Plato tells us here we would know the following about Zeno:

(A) The first discourse⁶ in his book had been directed against the 'hypothesis'⁷ that plurality exists.⁸ The argument had the logical form of a *reductio ad absurdum*: it assailed the hypothesis by purporting to demonstrate that it entails an outright contradiction.⁹

(B) All of the arguments in his book were meant to refute plurality (127E8–128A1).

(C) Zeno was a personal intimate (127A8–B6)¹⁰ and, in his book, a philosophical partisan of Parmenides (128A4–B5).

(D) Parmenides, in his arguments for monism, and Zeno, in his arguments against pluralism, were maintaining 'virtually the same thing' (128A6–B6).

⁶ I take Plato to be using *λόγος* in our passage in a sense which is broad enough to cover any stretch of argumentative discourse regardless of whether this is

- (a) as short as a single argument, or
- (b) an extended stretch of argumentation containing several arguments,

and I assume that he is using it in sense (b) in the phrase *τὴν πρώτην ὑπόθεσιν τοῦ πρώτου λόγου*, 127D7, since otherwise *τὴν πρώτην ὑπόθεσιν* would be a senseless redundancy (we could hardly suppose that Plato wanted us to think of a single argument which had more than one hypothesis), but in sense (a) in *τεκμήριον εἶναι ἕκαστον τῶν λόγων, ὥστε ἡγῆ τσαῦτα τεκμήρια παρέχεσθαι, ὅσουσπερ λόγους γέγραφας*: it must mean 'argument' here, for each of the particular arguments would surely count as a *τεκμήριον* of the hypothesis (cf. the three arguments in *Republic* 433B7–434C7 by which Socrates 'proves' [ἔθεν τεκμαίρομαι, 433B5] his definition of *dikaiosyne*); the *τεκμήρια* ascribed to Parmenides (128B1) are clearly the individual arguments (extremely short ones) reeled off in the course of the 49 verses that make up Parmenides' discourse on Being. At the other extreme, we have Diès and Cornford who translate 'argument' throughout our passage, but think of these 'arguments' as divided up into multiple sections called 'hypotheses' (Diès [1956, 17]; Cornford [1939, 57]), ignoring the difficulty to which I allude above: Plato himself could hardly have thought of arguments each of which contained several hypotheses. Proclus is undoubtedly using *λόγος* in sense (a), not sense (b) (as misunderstood by Burnet, *loc. cit.*), when he remarks that there were forty *λόγοι* altogether in Zeno's book (*Comm. in Parm.*, 694, Cousin); he could not have meant it in sense (b): a figure several times forty for the total number of arguments in Zeno's treatise would be too bloated to commend itself to his sober judgment.

⁷ This—the protasis of a conditional statement, not the whole conditional—is clearly the sense of *ὑπόθεσις* in 128D5–6, where each of the suppositions, 'many things exist' and '[only] one thing exists', is unambiguously denominated a *ὑπόθεσις*. This is also the sense of 'hypothesis' in which Plato generally uses the term: clearly so in the rest of the *Parmenides* (136A ff.), and demonstrably so in other dialogues (Crombie's view [1963, 533] that the 'hypothesis' in *Meno* 87B ff. is the conditional 'if virtue is knowledge,

then it is teachable', rather than the protasis of that statement, is untenable: it was refuted by Cherniss and Friedländer in their critique of R. Robinson who had taken this position in the first edition of his book, but abandoned it in the second in response to their criticism: Robinson [1953, 117–18, with references there to his critics]). In *τὴν πρώτην ὑπόθεσιν τοῦ πρώτου λόγου* (127D6–7) *ὑπόθεσιν* is being used in an extended sense to mean not only the protasis of the conditional statement which formed the thesis of the argument, but the whole of the argument which refuted that protasis: Socrates would hardly be thought of asking Zeno to re-read anything less than that.

⁸ Literally, 'that many (things) exist' (*πολλά εἶναι*, 127E7; *πολλά ἐστί*, 127E10, etc.). In the expanded form in which the hypothesis occurs in 127E1–2, *εἰ πολλά ἐστί τὰ ὄντα*, I take *τὰ ὄντα* to be a Platonic addition which is not meant to be part of the quotation but to fill out *εἰ πολλά ἐστί* in a way which adds nothing to its sense but suits better Plato's taste in philosophical prose, so he prefers to use this expanded form in his initial reference to the plurality thesis, turning to the sparer formulation thereafter. That the latter was the Zenonian original we know from the form in which the hypothesis appears not only in B1 but also, and more importantly, in B3 (where we have the complete text): there *ὄντα*, understood in the hypothesis, *εἰ πολλά ἐστί* becomes explicit in the course of the argument and is mentioned in the conclusion, *καὶ οὕτως ἄπειρα τὰ ὄντα ἐστί*. Cf. also the hypothesis in Melissus B8(2), *εἰ γὰρ ἦν πολλά*, and, B(8)6, *εἰ πολλά εἶη*.

⁹ It would be wrong to assume (as Burnet [1930, 313] seems to do) that all of the arguments had this form. Thus in the first three arguments against motion the absurdity which refutes the premise is not an explicit, but an implicit, contradiction: the absurdity results only from the fact that the conclusion contradicts a premise the reader brings to the argument, *sc.* that the stadium is traversed, that Achilles overtakes the tortoise, that the arrow moves.

¹⁰ His boy-love according to Plato, his adoptive son according to Diogenes Laertius 9, 25 (but the latter, as Zeller surmised [1923, 609, note], is probably only the prudish effort of some later writer to put a better face on the all too plain sense of *παιδικά* in Plato).

(E) The real aim of Zeno's book had been to expose the absurdity of the position of those who found Parmenides' monism absurd (128C6–D6).¹¹

(F) The plurality thesis under attack in the book was the commonly held belief: in denying that thesis Zeno was going 'against all that is said' (127E9–10).¹²

How much of this testimony can be trusted? In particular, *can it be trusted at (C)*?¹³ I italicise because our answer to this question is bound to be of the last importance for our interpretation of ancient reports of Zeno's arguments and even for our interpretation of those fragments which have survived verbatim. For when we interpret these data we cannot ignore Zeno's intentions—particularly so when we confront inferences of his which look like patent fallacies to us. And an author's intentions are notoriously hard to ascertain beyond reasonable doubt even in cases where his text has survived intact, as e.g. in the Socratic dialogues, where scholars confronting a particular fallacy may still disagree sharply on whether or not Plato himself was aware of it and, if so, whether or not he wants us to credit his mouthpiece, Socrates, with the same awareness. In Zeno's case the difficulty is magnified by the textual incompleteness of the most elaborate of his surviving arguments against plurality (the one which includes B1 and B2),¹⁴ by the extreme brevity and compression of the one argument against plurality where our text is, to all appearance, complete (B3), and by the fact that all of his other arguments (with the exception of the Arrow, in my opinion: see Vlastos [1966, 3 ff.]) reach us only in paraphrase. What we need to know as we work our way through this source-material is the following:

- (1) (a) Was Zeno an honest thinker whose seriousness of purpose in searching for truth was on a par with that of Parmenides, Melissus, and of the other Presocratic philosophers? Or (b) was he a slippery character, a sophist, who would not be above resorting upon occasion to arguments which he knew, or suspected, to be fallacious?¹⁵

¹¹ That this aim was not openly expressed is an unavoidable inference from Socrates' charge that Zeno had tried to 'fool' his readers (128A7), concealing his true intentions in the book. Though Zeno rejects the charge (128C2–5), neither does he say anything to imply that he had avowed positively his alliance with Parmenides anywhere in the book: had this been the case Socrates' charge could hardly have been made in the first place.

¹² That the book was addressed 'to those who tried to ridicule [Parmenides] by showing that if one thing exists his argument will have many absurd and contradictory consequences' (128C) *could* mean (though it need not) that the book was provoked by some particular philosopher(s) who had criticised Parmenides in this way. If that were true, and if the book was written in Elea (as is likely), it would not follow, as Burnet and others have claimed, that the critics had been Pythagorean philosophers: Burnet does not tell how he knows that 'the Pythagoreans are the only people who can have criticised the views of Parmenides there and at that date' [1930, 314]: were there no non-Pythagorean philosophers in Magna Graecia at that time? We know of Alcmaeon; and there were doubtless many others. Moreover, since there was good inter-communication between different parts of the Greek world (thus Heraclitus at Ephesus criticises [B40, B129] Pythagoras in Croton), the critic or critics could have been anywhere in the greater Greek world. And if the

book were a reply to critics it would not, of course, be for their exclusive consumption. Anyhow, the surviving fragments do not contain a single word which would suggest that the views they combat are anything but those of common sense—common to all non-Eleatic philosophers and to non-philosophers alike. (Cf. Vlastos, [1959, 534; 1967, 376–7].)

¹³ This is the crucial question, to be distinguished sharply from the question of whether or not we may accept Plato's testimony at (B) and (E). As I shall argue in Section I below, we have good reason for accepting it at (C), while rejecting it at (B) and scaling down (E) accordingly (substituting 'views' for 'monism').

¹⁴ Diametrically opposite interpretations of the import of this fragment turn very largely on whether or not we accept the correctness of Simplicius' reading of the part of the argument he has preserved and the adequacy of his laconic summary of the part of the argument which he fails to quote (*in Phys.* 138, 33–139, 19): see e.g. Vlastos [1959, 197–8], following Fränkel and others; *contra* Solmsen [1971, 130 ff.]. And since, as Solmsen has emphasised [1971, 126 ff.], Simplicius is heavily influenced by Plato's testimony on Zeno in the *Parmenides* the question of whether or not we can trust what we get from Simplicius on this fragment will turn to some degree on whether or not we can trust Plato's testimony (on this see the terminal paragraph of n. 17 below).

¹⁵ The question I am raising here has never been

- (2) (a) Was he committed to a positive, systematic, doctrine—that of the Parmenidean system? Or (b) was he a free-lance assayer of diverse theses and forms of argument, constructing conundrums and paradoxes with no thought of advancing the logical fortunes of any particular metaphysics, arguing on both sides of the dilemmas he sprung on his public and leaving the outcome unresolved?¹⁶

If Plato's testimony at (C) were to be accepted, the answer to question (2) would be settled at once: we would be assured that Zeno was an adherent of the Parmenidean system.¹⁷

properly debated in the extensive literature on Zeno. That (a) is the correct answer has been the usual, but unargued, assumption. The decisive challenge to it came in Fränkel's fundamental study of the text of the original fragments [1942] which claimed to discover repeated resort to verbal legerdemain in Zeno's arguments against plurality and concluded with the following characterisation of their author:

He was well aware of the gravity and profundity of his problems, and, nevertheless, while handling them, he often playfully, lustily, and defiantly deceives and mystifies his reader (206).

Elsewhere I argued that this characterisation gets no sound support from the Zenonian texts (B1 and B2) on which Fränkel had sought to base it (see Vlastos [1959, 195–6; 1971, 121 and 129–31]); I am glad to see that Solmsen, in his important paper on Zeno [1971], to which I shall be making numerous references hereafter, agrees with me against Fränkel on this point (p. 117). Here I shall be arguing that neither is it supported by Plato's testimony, as Fränkel curiously thought it was. I say 'curiously' because to substantiate the claim that Plato's *Parmenides* bears out the two-in-one Zeno—profound philosopher and verbal trickster—Fränkel gives us nothing more solid than references to the regrets voiced by the Platonic Zeno in 128 D6–E3 for the *φιλονικία* and *φιλοτιμία* which animated his youthful work (236). But surely this is sheer *ignoratio elenchi*: pugnacious ardour in no way entails indulgence in light-fingered dialectics; Fränkel does not claim, and could not have plausibly claimed, that it does. He would surely have had to admit that there is not one word in Plato's *Parmenides* to lend colour to the imputation of resort to genial fraud by Zeno in his arguments.

¹⁶ Here again the question has been largely ignored in the earlier literature. The consensus on (C) has been so broad and so assured that even Fränkel, the maverick who argued for (1b), took the truth of (2a) for granted. The dissidents have been few and far between and, prior to the appearance of Solmsen's fundamental paper in 1971, their dissent was expressed more in *obiter dicta* than in carefully reasoned conclusions. Thus all we get from Diès (normally an exceedingly thorough scholar) by way of putatively Platonic evidence for his sponsorship of (b) are *Phdr.* 261C6–8 and *Alc.I.* 119A5–6 (to be discussed below in Section II and the Appendix respectively); after a mere citation of these two passages and a hasty reference to Eudemos *ap.* 'Simplicius, in *Phys.*,

p. 98 et suiv.' (*sic*; but he must mean to refer to pp. 97, 10 ff. and 99, 10–12) he feels entitled to declare that the passage in *Alc. I* 'indiquerait un Zénon sophiste de profession' and that the first 'semblerait, à tout le moins, viser un Zénon qui manie la dialectique pour la dialectique elle-même', adding, 'Et ce pourrait bien être, historiquement, la meilleure manière de comprendre Zénon' [1923, 16]. We get nothing better from Cornford [1939, 67–8] to back his view that in the *Parmenides* Plato regards Zeno's work 'as an essay in *eristic* controversy, implying . . . that *its author did not take his own arguments seriously* . . .' I have italicised the parts of the statement which are unsupported by argument and cannot get support from Plato's text, where Zeno is portrayed as countervailing Parmenides' adversaries, and doing so most pugnaciously, but without any indication that he was doing so in an 'eristic' temper and that he 'did not take his own arguments seriously'. For the further opinion that Plato thought Zeno 'a mere sophist' Cornford, following Diès, refers us, more plausibly, but still without serious argument, to *Phaedrus* 261C. We do get considerably more by way of argument in von Fritz [1970, 42 ff.], with much fuller use of the Eudemos fragment in Simplicius (on which, however, see under (b) in n. 57 below), to support the view that Zeno, though no sophist, is still only an aporetic arguer and brings help to Parmenides only by showing 'that one gets into no smaller difficulties when one denies Parmenides' doctrine' (75; for further references to von Fritz and for a brief rebuttal of this construction of the Zenonian dialectic see n. 52 below). But it is not until we come to Solmsen [1971, 140–1] that we get (in apparent independence of Diès and Cornford, to whose judgments on this point he makes no reference) a searching critique of the Platonic evidence which had led to the traditional acceptance of (a). Though I cannot accept Solmsen's conclusions, I believe that he has rendered a signal service to Zenonian scholarship by presenting a detailed, well-documented, challenge to the traditional view, compelling a re-examination of data which had been read most uncritically in the past by many scholars, including myself.

¹⁷ It is well to note at this point—as Solmsen does not; this is a major lacuna in his argument—that we do get just this picture (vaguely, but unmistakably in its total effect) from both (I) Aristotle and (II) writers who reflect the doxographic tradition stemming from Theophrastus:

(I) Aristotle associates Zeno firmly with Parmenides in *Soph. El.* 182B22–26 when he alludes in passing

to 'the *logos* of Zeno and Parmenides' which, he says, has been refuted *διὰ τὸ πολλαχῶς . . . λέγεσθαι τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ ὄν*. For in a much fuller passage (*Phys.* 185A20–186A3) he makes the multivocity of 'being' and 'unity' the base from which the whole critique of Eleatic monism must proceed. So when we see that in the *Soph. El.* passage he ascribes to Zeno, no less than to Parmenides, an argument which is to be refuted by the application of the same semantic insight, we have no good reason to doubt that he is thinking of both as adherents of the same *ἐν τὰ πάντα* doctrine which in *Phys.* 185A22 he ascribes to Parmenides and Melissus, without naming Zeno in that context. Nor is there any good to suppose that in so coupling Zeno with Parmenides Aristotle is merely echoing what he had read in Plato's *Parmenides*: he makes no such allusion, direct or indirect; and that his knowledge of Zeno was independent of Plato is certain from his discussion of many Zenonian arguments to none of which is there any reference in the Platonic corpus (*Top.* 160B7–9; *Phys.* 209A23–5, 210B22–3, 239B5–240A18; 250A20–1, 263A4–6; *Met.* 1001B7–9).

(II) In the ambience of the doxographic tradition we hear of Zeno as the 'familiar' (*γνώριμος*) of Parmenides (Plutarch, *Adv. Colotem* 1126D; Sextus, *Adv. math.* 7, 7; Alexander, *Metaph.* 227, 13–14); his 'auditor' (*διακήκοε*, *Diog. Laert.*, *Vitae philos.* 9, 25); his 'pupil' (*μαθητής*) (Suidas on Zeno; scholiast on [Plato], *Alc. I*); his 'successor' (Suidas on Parmenides). And *cf.* below n. 69 *sub fin.* The Theophrastean source epitomised in ps.-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 6 (immediately after the sketch of the Parmenidean philosophy) states: *Z. δὲ ὁ Ἐλεάτης, ἴδιον μὲν οὐδὲν ἐξέθετο, διηπόρησεν δὲ περὶ τούτων ἐπὶ πλείον. διηπόρησεν* here cannot mean that Zeno's *aporiai* were hostile to Parmenides or even non-committal in their doctrinal import. In Aristotle *Zήνων ἠπόρει* in *Phys.* 210B22 and *ἡ Ζήνωνος ἀπορία* in *ibid.* 209A23 introduce an argument which, if valid, would be fatal to the belief in space; and the puzzles concerning motion (*Phys.* 239B5 ff.) are no less clearly meant to be destructive; and who but Parmenides and his clique would be made happy if both space and motion were argued out of existence? (Same implication in Plato's reference to the upshot of Zeno's arguments as *ταύτην ἀπορίαν*, *Prm.* 129E6.)

The import of the Aristotelian association of Zeno, no less than Melissus, with Parmenides is ignored by von Fritz [1971, 42–3] when he argues that Aristotle's designation of Zeno as the 'inventor of dialectic' (frag. 1 Ross of Aristotle's *Sphoist*, *ap.* Diogenes Laertius 8, 57 [cited in n. 103 below]) 'nur bedeuten kann, dass er bewusst kontroverse Sätze aufstellte, die nach der einen wie nach der anderen Seite hin diskutiert werden kann'.

This is the most precarious inference, in view of the fact that Aristotle uses the term *διαλεκτική* in a variety of senses (see Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* s.v.) and that the testimony in Diogenes Laertius gives absolutely no

indication of its Aristotelian context which might have enabled us to pin down the special sense Aristotle had in view when citing Zeno as the inventor of dialectic. There is one sense—argument which cannot produce scientific demonstration because its premises are only *ἐνδοξα* (*cf.* n. 105 below)—which would fit perfectly Plato's description of Zeno in (D) above. And there is still another sense—the one employed in Aristotle's famous remark that Plato's metaphysical views diverged from those of the Pythagoreans *διὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σκέψιν* (*οἱ γὰρ πρότεροι διαλεκτικῆς οὐ μετεῖχον*), *Metaph.* 987B31–2—which could have been alternatively (perhaps even concurrently) the very one Aristotle had in view; and this too would comport with the Platonic description of Zeno. We know that Sextus so understood Aristotle, for he argued that Parmenides could not have been 'unversed in dialectic since Aristotle regarded his familiar, Zeno, as the originator of dialectic' (*Adv. Math.* 7, 7). This is, of course, the picture in Simplicius, who finds Plato's account in the *Parmenides* so congenial that he parrots 128C6–D6 almost word for word (*Phys.* 134, 4–8), as has been noticed by Untersteiner [1963, 4–8] and Solmsen [1971, 126–7].

Because of Simplicius' verbal dependence on Plato in that passage, Solmsen holds (*loc. cit.*) that Simplicius' own conviction that Zeno was a disciple of Parmenides has no independent evidentiary value. This would indeed be the unavoidable conclusion if Simplicius had no direct access to non-Platonic sources. But the fact is that, in addition to his access to Theophrastean sources, Simplicius had in his possession substantial Zenonian texts. What he read in these texts must have giped with Plato's representation of Zeno as a partisan of Parmenides—giped so well that he did not feel it incumbent upon him to change a single word to mark even a shading of difference in his own understanding of this matter. To argue that this has no confirmatory value for the Platonic testimony one must proceed on the assumption—which Solmsen in fact makes—that Simplicius' concurrence is due entirely to his subservience to Platonic authority. I see no good reason to grant that assumption. Certainly Simplicius' respect for Plato does not fall short of veneration; it would be bound to influence greatly his reading of Zeno's texts. But let us suppose that it had been the case, as Solmsen believes (128 ff.), that the Zenonian texts in Simplicius' possession deployed arguments both *pro* and *con* Parmenidean theses—no more *pro* than *con*. Why must we believe that when confronting such a state of affairs, whose *prima facie* import would tell so strongly against the Platonic representation of Zeno as totally committed to the defence of the Parmenidean position, Simplicius would have simply disregarded the textual evidence, without so much as a sentence to explain away the discrepancy between what he read in Plato and what he found in the texts before him? (*And cf.* below n. 35 *sub fin.*)

In that case we would have good reason for also answering question (1) in favour of (a).¹⁸ For if Zeno were what Plato depicts in *Prm.* 127–8, we would expect him to observe the same respect for the truth which inspires his master's poem: it is not very likely that he would have used sophistical logic to advance his master's sacred ἀλήθεια.¹⁹ To be sure, no more than probability may be claimed for this conclusion: we cannot rule out altogether the possibility that an Eleatic might have resorted, in desperation, to fallacious arguments to startle his readers—to jar them out of the stolid dogmatism which Parmenides' own austere logical discourse had failed to shake.²⁰ If we may trust Plato's testimony we would be assured that he, at any rate, gives no quarter to such a suggestion. This is clear in the language he uses when his Socrates compares Zeno's arguments with those of Parmenides: the latter τεκμήρια παρέχ[ει] καλῶς τε καὶ εἶδ for his monistic thesis, while the former τεκμήρια . . . πάμπολλα καὶ παμμεγέθη παρέχεται in refutation of the converse of that thesis (128B1–3). Socrates could hardly have been made to sum up in Parmenides' presence the two ventures in this way if he had meant to insinuate a contrast between chaste veracity in the one case and sophistical trickery in the other. There is not the remotest suggestion of such a thing in the description of Zeno's arguments as παμμεγέθη: nothing here, so far as I can see, but an expression of admiration for the forcefulness of the Zenonian dialectic.²¹

Let me then review the considerations on the strength of which the acceptability of Plato's representation of Zeno at (C) will have to be decided. We may start from the fact that Plato's is our earliest,²² as well as our fullest, testimony about Zeno's relation to

¹⁸ Provided, of course, that on this point our conclusions from the Platonic testimony agreed with conclusions drawn from our analysis of Zeno's reasoning in preserved fragments. I have referred in n. 15 above to the (strongly positive) results of my study of those portions of the argument against plurality which are cited verbatim by Simplicius (B1, B2). No weight whatever could be attached to the inference which Cornford drew (see n. 16 above) from references in *Prm.* 128D–E to the contentious spirit (*cf.* n. 4 above) in which the youthful Zeno had composed his book: strong polemical animus (*φιλονικία*) would be quite in line with seriousness of intent, would indeed be normal in a young man engaged in a counter-attack on a revered master's adversaries.

¹⁹ Sacred: the 'tremorless heart of well-persuading Truth' (B1, 29: for the text see Mourelatos [1970, 154], with references to Deichgräber and Jameson) is presented in the form of a religious revelation.

²⁰ But I should emphasise that I consider this only an abstract possibility. I know of no example of such tactics in contemporary, or near-contemporary, literature. Thus I do not believe that Socrates uses such tactics, even when he is most provocative, as, notoriously, in the *Hippias Minor* (there he does not conclude that the good man is the ἐκὼν ἀμαρτάνων but that he would be, εἴπερ τις ἔστιν οὗτος [376B]).

²¹ Calogero [1932, 91, note 1] takes καλῶς τε καὶ εἶδ, said of Parmenides' arguments, to mean that they are 'honest' and are to be contrasted in this respect with the (dishonest?) πάμπολλα καὶ παμμεγέθη arguments of Zeno. How he gets this sense out of the text remains a mystery, unless he is reaching back

to ἐξαπατᾶν in 128A7, which would be surely arbitrary, since the ἀπάτη there refers all too clearly to Zeno's supposed intention to say 'something different' from Parmenides, without the slightest implication, so far as I can see, that Zeno used dishonest arguments to implement that intention.

²² The only report of an earlier testimony is the following in Diogenes Laertius (8, 56):

Alcidamas in his physical treatise (*ἐν τῷ φυσικῷ*) says that at this same time Zeno and Empedocles heard Parmenides but afterwards left him, and that, while Zeno pursued philosophy on his own (*κατ' ἰδίαν φιλοσοφῆσαι*), Empedocles heard Anaxagoras and Pythagoras, emulating the latter's dignity of life and bearing, and the former's natural philosophy.

The allegation that Empedocles 'heard' Pythagoras (near the middle of the fifth century!) suffices to discredit the historical reliability of this testimonium. However, even if it were fully reliable it would still tell us nothing about Zeno's doctrine, unless we take *κατ' ἰδίαν φιλοσοφῆσαι* with Hicks (in his translation of Diogenes Laertius, vol. 2 [London, 1931]) to mean 'framed his own system'. Though this rendering is apparently approved by some scholars (Solmsen [1971, 137] seems to be reading the text in the same way), it is surely mistaken: in *κατ' ἰδίαν φιλοσοφῆσαι* Zeno is being contrasted with Empedocles who is represented as remaining in *statu pupillari* with new teachers, Anaxagoras and Pythagoras, while he (Zeno) pursued philosophy by himself, not under a master.

Parmenides, and that Plato is expressing himself in this passage not in vague generalities but in direct and circumstantial references to the form and content of Zeno's book. And it so happens that the one thesis of the book which Plato reports here, *εἰ πολλά ἐστὶ τὰ ὄντα, ὡς ἄρα δεῖ αὐτὰ ὅμοια τε εἶναι καὶ ἀνόμοια*, can be checked against original material in Simplicius and found to agree so closely with the latter that any doubt of its accuracy would be idle: there can be no doubt that the essential part of the protasis,²³ *εἰ πολλά ἐστὶ τὰ ὄντα*, is a verbatim quotation; as for the apodosis, it is identical in logical form with that of the hypotheses in B₁ and B₃: the sentence-frame 'are——and not——' recurs in all three, the only difference being in the words that fill the blanks, 'alike' in the present text, 'so small as to have no magnitude' in B₁, 'as many as they are' [i.e. finitely many] in B₃. And since we know that *ὅμοιον* is a predicate which figures prominently in Presocratic philosophising,²⁴ we have every reason to think that Plato is reproducing as accurately as could be expected²⁵ a sentence in Zeno's book which must have read, *εἰ πολλά ἐστὶ, ἀνάγκη αὐτὰ ὅμοιά τε εἶναι καὶ ἀνόμοια*.²⁶

When an author refers so specifically to a well-known book and quotes from it with this degree of accuracy, we may reasonably infer that he is speaking from first-hand knowledge.²⁷ And since there is no good reason to think that when Plato had got hold of Zeno's book he would have read only its first few lines, we would be justified in inferring, further, that his characterisation of Zeno at (C) had good foundation in the book. It is fair to say that the overwhelming majority of scholars have proceeded on the assumption that this conclusion is correct. In so doing they have ignored two grounds on which its correctness could—and in fact has been—challenged.

- (I) Plato's testimony at (B)²⁸ could be thought to undermine the credibility of his testimony at (C), since (B) contradicts what we know about Zeno's arguments from other sources.²⁹
- (II) Plato's characterisation of the relation of Zeno to Parmenides at (C) could be thought to be in conflict with the allusion to Zeno in the *Phaedrus*.³⁰

I want to argue that neither (I) nor (II) give us good grounds for doubting the characterisation of Zeno at (C). In an Appendix I shall argue that neither does the remark about Zeno in *Alcibiades I*, 119A.³¹

I. QUESTIONS ABOUT *Parmenides* 127E8–128B

This is the crucial segment of Plato's testimony in the *Parmenides*. Let me quote it in full:

²³ I.e. the first three words, the last two being a Platonic addition which adds nothing material to the source of the phrase: cf. n. 8 above.

²⁴ Cf. the Word Index in Diels-Kranz s.v. 'ὅμοιος', noting particularly occurrences in Parmenides and Melissus.

²⁵ Given the fact that he is not undertaking to quote verbatim throughout: cf. the following note.

²⁶ I omit the *ὡς*: it is only a feature of the indirect discourse employed by Socrates. For *δεῖ* I substitute *ἀνάγκη*, for this is the logical connective used by Zeno in B₁ and B₃ (though *δεῖ* is not impossible: Melissus uses it—though exceptionally—in B₉).

²⁷ Epitomes of the teachings of Presocratic philosophers, containing occasionally references to their works and snippets of (more or less) accurate quotations from them became common in the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman periods. The fountain-head

of these works (and, in all probability, the first work of its kind) was Theophrastus' *Doctrines of the Physical Philosophers*. It would be arbitrary to assume that any such work was in circulation when Plato was composing the *Parmenides* (in the late seventies or early sixties of the fourth century) so that Plato's knowledge of Zeno's book might be derived from such a secondary or tertiary source.

²⁸ Also, to some extent, at (E), which agrees with (B), in mentioning only Parmenides' monism as the doctrine which 'in truth' (*τό γε ἀληθές*) Zeno defended by his counter-attack, but does not go so far as to say (or directly imply) that all of Zeno's arguments were directed to the proof of just this doctrine.

²⁹ Solmsen has so argued: cf. n. 16 above.

³⁰ Cf. n. 16 above.

³¹ *Pace* Diès, cited in n. 16 above.

'Is this the intention of your arguments (δ βούλονταί σου οἱ λόγοι)—to vindicate, against all that is [commonly] said, that plurality does not exist ($\omega\varsigma$ οὐ πολλά ἐστι)? And do you think that each of your arguments is a proof of just that, so that you believe ($\eta\gamma\epsilon\iota$) you have produced as many proofs [of the thesis] that plurality does not exist as are the arguments you have composed? Is this what you mean ($\omicron\upsilon\tau\omega$ λέγεις), or am I understanding you wrongly?'

'No,' said Zeno. 'You have grasped very well what the whole of my essay is driving at.' (127E7–128A3.)

What exactly is Plato telling us here? Is it

- (1) that the plurality thesis was *the explicit refutand* of each of the arguments in Zeno's book?

Or only

- (2) that to achieve the refutation of that thesis was Zeno's intention in each of those arguments?

To summarise the testimony, as I have done above, in the form of

(B) All of the arguments in Zeno's book were meant to refute the plurality thesis, is, clearly, to opt for (2), whose difference from (1) is substantial, since (2) could very well be true while (1) was false. For suppose there were any number of arguments in the book whose refutands were *A* or *B* or *C*, none of these mentioning the plurality thesis, *P*. Even so it would be entirely possible for (2) to be true, provided only that Zeno believed that not-*A* implied not-*P* and that so did not-*B* and not-*C*, and that Zeno had produced his refutations of *A* and *B* and *C* with the intention that the reader would draw for himself the conclusion that *P* was thereby refuted three times over. Once sensitised to this difference between (1) and (2) we should have no difficulty in satisfying ourselves that it is not (1), but (2), i.e. (B), that Plato means to be telling us here.

For it is evident on inspection that (2) *is all he says*. Socrates is not asking Zeno whether or not each of his many arguments *states* that it refutes the plurality thesis, but only whether or not Zeno *thinks* ($\omicron\iota\epsilon\iota$) or *believes* ($\eta\gamma\epsilon\iota$) that each of those arguments does so. Nor is more than this implied in Socrates' subsequent remark that Zeno 'denies that many things exist and . . . adduces very many and very powerful proofs' [of this] (128B1–3). To say that an argument has been adduced as a proof of not-*P* is not of itself to imply that *P* is the explicit refutand of that argument: if we happen to think that the arguer believes that his refutand implies not-*P*, we may still wish to say that the argument has been adduced as a proof of not-*P*, even if there has been no mention of *P*. So all we can get out of the dialogue between Socrates and Zeno is (2), not (1), i.e. only the allegation, made by Socrates and admitted by Zeno, that Zeno believed that all of his arguments refuted the plurality thesis and that he had produced all of them for the purpose of achieving its refutation.

Now to say that Zeno believed that

- (3) in each of his arguments the conclusion, if valid, refutes the plurality thesis

is, obviously, not to say that (3) is true or that Plato believed that (3) is true—which is just as well, for a little reflection will show that (3) is a very dubious article and, further, that there is no good reason to think that Plato himself thought (3) true. Thus, in the case of Zeno's arguments against motion, though it may reasonably be thought that motion implies plurality (i.e. that to have any motion at all we must have at least two things in existence whose relative distance is changing),³² it does not look as though the converse

³² This conception of motion is conspicuously see e.g. Vlastos [1967, 375]. displayed in Zeno's paradox of the 'Moving Blocks':

were also true: what is there to stop us, for instance, from conceiving of a state of affairs in which a multitude of distinct objects remain motionless throughout eternity? Only if we take the objects envisaged in the plurality thesis to be those of the familiar world of sense-experience, only then would it be plausible to hold that e.g. to refute the belief that a runner can reach the end of his course or that an arrow can fly would be tantamount to demolishing the whole structure of our beliefs about the world, and *thereby* destroying the plurality thesis. And if we then ask if we are compelled to believe that Plato would think (3) true, here again the answer must be in the negative. Thus if Plato were thinking not of physical objects but of his own Ideas he would certainly hold that, though plural, they are the very acme of motionlessness;³³ so how could their plurality be impugned, how could it be touched at all, if it were demonstrated that no arrow flies, that no race-course is traversed? Plato could hardly fail to recognise this, and what he says in the sequel suggests that he does recognise it.³⁴ He could do this while holding that Zeno, for his part, did believe in the truth of (3). For Plato would find it very natural to believe that Zeno, who had not even dreamed of the strange new world of incorporeal, super-sensible Forms, and had thought of plurality only as an attribute of corporeal sensibles, would indeed hold that in refuting motion he was refuting plurality by destroying the only possible world in which plurality could exist.

We can now face up to the question of whether or not we have any independent reason to think that Plato's allegation at (2) above—i.e. his testimony at (B)—is true. And the answer is, surely, that we have none. Rummaging through the whole of our source-material, we find nothing to incline us to agree with Plato that the refutation of plurality was *the* intention of Zeno's arguments.³⁵ We find nothing in this mass of evidence—nothing except Plato's say-so in our present passage—to persuade us that, for example, Zeno wanted to refute motion only as a means of refuting plurality. If Zeno had wanted to subordinate one of these two objectives to the other, why should he not have rather preferred the converse—to refute plurality as a means to refuting motion? The latter would have been fully as useful for the purpose of backing Parmenides and routing his detractors. We can see for ourselves, from our own reading of Parmenides' poem, that changelessness is as essential an attribute of Parmenidean Being as is its unity.³⁶ So if Zeno could banish

³³ Cf. Vlastos [1973, 276–8 and notes].

³⁴ He makes Socrates argue [128E ff.] that Zeno's argument would not be valid against Ideas, even if they were valid against sensible instances of Ideas.

³⁵ Simplicius' concurrence on this point (e.g. at *Phys.* 139, 5–7 and 141, 10–11) is worthless for this purpose. For we know that his own Neoplatonic faith would itself have predisposed him to similarly tendentious reading of Parmenides. He too, for reasons of his own, would exalt unity as the all-important attribute of Parmenidean Being—so much so that the phrase *τὸ ἐν ὄν* comes to be used quasi-nominatively in his own writings as a referring expression for Parmenides' conception of Being (for a good example see his triple use of the phrase within a few lines at *Phys.* 142, 30–143, 1). Having thus the strongest inclination to make anti-pluralism the thrust of Zeno's polemic against Parmenides' detractors, Simplicius' acquiescing in Plato's testimony on this point could hardly yield confirmation of it. Given two testimonies, both infected by the same prejudice, the later of the two could hardly strengthen the earlier. Solmsen (126–8) has rightly emphasised all this, calling attention to

Simplicius' verbatim reproduction of several phrases from Plato's text. I agree with Solmsen completely on this point, *pace* my disagreement with him in n. 17 above, which concerns a very different point, *sc.* Simplicius' corroboration of Plato's testimony at (C), which could be valuable, while his corroboration of Plato's testimony at (B) was worthless—a possibility which Solmsen failed to consider.

³⁶ It is said to be *ἀτρεμές* (B8, 4) and *ἀκίνητον* (B8, 26 and 38). The sense in which *κίνησις* is denied of Being, is of course, that of *change* in the broadest possible sense which would include (a) 'generation' and 'destruction' (Aristotle's 'substantial change'), (b) locomotion, and (c) qualitative change. The assertion that Being is *ἀκίνητον* in v. 26 starts with the denial of change in sense (a) in v. 27 which had been proved already at great length (vv. 6–21) and proceeds to its denial in sense (b) in vv. 29–30. There is specific mention of *τόπον ἀλλάσσειν* in v. 30. To prove that *τόπον ἀλλάσσειν* entails absurdities would be as direct and effective a way of coming to Parmenides' aid as would be any of Zeno's arguments against plurality.

motion from the universe by force of argument, the aid he would bring Parmenides would be direct, immediate, and decisive. What is it then that makes Plato so sure that a refutation of motion would have to be converted into a refutation of plurality in order to aid Parmenides? So far as we can see, it is nothing more than Plato's own assumption that to establish the unity of Being had been Parmenides' all-engrossing concern.³⁷ This assumption we know to be false. Having Parmenides' very words in our hands we can see for ourselves that Plato is misrepresenting him at this point. For though unity is most certainly one of the essential attributes of Being in the Poem,³⁸ it is no more than one of these, and by no means the one which matters the most to Parmenides. The one on which he seems to put by far the greatest stock³⁹ is immutability: to the proof of the proposition that

³⁷ In our passage Plato goes so far as to suggest that this had been Parmenides' only objective: he puts Parmenides' aim to prove the unity of Being on a par with Zeno's aim to disprove the plurality thesis (128A8–B3), having previously (127E10–128A1) claimed that this had been Zeno's only aim, and then proceeding to say (128B3–5) that the upshot of the two works was that Parmenides and Zeno were saying virtually the same thing.

³⁸ It is asserted twice within the first six lines of the account of Being in the Poem, each of the two assertions pertaining to distinct senses of *unity*, both of which were regarded essential components of the term in classical philosophy:

(1) In B8, 4 Being is said to be *οἶλον μονογενές* (for a defence of this reading, now widely accepted, see Taran [1965, 88–93]; for the sense of *μονογενές*, "alone of its kind," "*sui generis*," hence unique', see Kahn [1960, 157, n. 1]). Here Parmenides asserts the claim that Being is the only thing in existence, which he proceeds to demonstrate at a later stage of the argument—B8, 37–8 where Parmenides argues that 'nothing but Being exists or will exist', as a conclusion from the propositions (previously established) that it is 'whole [i.e. complete] and changeless' (*οἶλον ἀκίνητον τ'*). *Uniqueness* is so common a sense of *unity* in classical philosophy that 'one' is ordinarily used as an ellipsis for 'just one'. See e.g. the flock of passages in Plato where 'one Form' is used to mean 'just one Form': Vlastos [1973, 355–6]; note that at *R.* 597 'one only' (*μίαν μόνον*) in C3 replaces simply and without explanation 'one' (*μία*) in B5; and note too how Plato passes *ἐν τῷ πᾶν εἶναι* to *ἐν . . . μόνον εἶναι* for the identical Parmenidean doctrine in *Sph.* 244B6–10. And cf. Melissus' shift from his ordinary use of *ἐν tout court* (B5; B6; B7(1) and (2); B9) to *ἐν μόνον* in B8(1), simply for greater emphasis, without change of meaning-content.

(2) In B8, 6 Being is said to be *ἐν, συνεχές*. Here, as Solmsen points out [1971, 120], the emphasis falls on the internal unity of Being—its indivisibility, which follows from the absence of differentiations or divisions within it. When he comes to prove this property (B8, 23–5) Parmenides refers to it only by *συνεχές* (v. 25) and *οὐ διαιρετόν* (v. 23), inferring this from its homogeneity (*ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἔστιν ὁμοῖον*, v. 22) which he explains in the next two lines (*οὐδέ τι*

τῆ μᾶλλον . . . οὐδέ τι χειρότερον . . .). This is the sense of *unity* which empowers Melissus to reason that if something has 'parts' (*μέρια*) it cannot be *one* (B9), and Plato that 'what is truly one must be said to be absolutely without parts' (*Sph.* 245A8–9; and cf. *Prm.* 137C: if Being is one, it cannot have parts).

This dual sense of 'unity' does not seem to have been clearly grasped in some of the scholarly comment on Parmenides, else it would have been realised that Parmenides has two proofs for the unity of Being—not just the one in vv. 37–8, as maintained by Taran [1965, 190], nor only the one in vv. 22–6, as maintained by Owen [1960, 92–2], and the debate as to which of the two is *the* proof of unity in the Poem would have been pointless. I am glad to see that this is no longer at issue in the most recent contribution to the discussion (Stokes [1971, 134–44]), where the dual meaning of 'unity' is duly recognised ('the oneness of Being, in that it is unique of its kind . . . and continuous', 134).

It may be worth pointing out that while Plato and Aristotle take for granted the dual sense of the unity of Being in Parmenides, they never bring this assumption into the open, never juxtapose the two senses it has for Parmenides, and in their comments on him do not keep the two senses distinct, sign-posting the change when they shift from one to the other. Thus Aristotle (followed by Theophrastus and Eudemos *ap. Simplicius, Phys.* 115, 10–14) explains the unity of Being in Parmenides as its uniqueness in *Met.* 986B28–30, while in *Phys.* 185B7–34 its indivisibility is what he has in view. As for Plato, his critique of Parmenidean monism in *Sph.* 244B ff. starts by attacking its uniqueness (i.e. the assertion *ἐν . . . μόνον εἶναι*, 244B9–10) but then (244C14 ff.) proceeds to attack its indivisibility, arguing that *τὸ ἀληθῶς ἐν* must be *ἀμερές παντελῶς* (245A8–9, cited above).

³⁹ I resort to this vague expression for want of means of stating the point at issue more exactly: we are dealing with difference of importance between predicates all of which purport to be *essential* and to follow by inexorable logic from the premise of the system (its 'Axiom', I shall call it), *sc.* that Not-being is unstateable and unthinkable. The difference in importance between these predicates is marked first and foremost by differential allocation of space to the proofs of immutability, but also by the logical priority of the proof of this particular attribute

Being is everlasting (*ἀγένητον* and *ἀνώλεθρον*)⁴⁰ and of the closely related one that it is *ἀκίνητον*⁴¹ he devotes nearly half of his disquisition on Being—23 vv. out of 49 all told—while he gives only 7 to the proof of its unity. What is more, everlastingness is the only attribute of Being which is proved directly from the foundational Axiom of the system,⁴² while the proof of unity is derived from derivatives of that Axiom.⁴³

Is it shocking, is it even surprising, that Plato should put out so tendentious an account of the work of two predecessors? Only the most naive and inexperienced reader of the Greek philosophers would find it so. As every scholar in this area knows all too well, Aristotle does far worse things to philosophers he discusses, and so does Plato upon occasion.⁴⁴ The order of misrepresentation in the present case is a relatively low one. It does not involve the false imputation of a substantive doctrine to Parmenides or Zeno: there is no falsehood in saying that Parmenides was a monist⁴⁵

over that of others (immutability is proved first and is derived directly from the Axiom at vv. 8–9 and again at v. 17, while both arms of the proof of unity come much later, and neither of them derives its predicate directly from the Axiom).

⁴⁰ Vv. 6–21.

⁴¹ Vv. 26–31.

⁴² Cf. n. 39 above. The Axiom introduced in the methodological preamble (the doctrine of the Two Ways), is recalled twice (vv. 8–9 and v. 17) to anchor the proof of the everlastingness of Being.

⁴³ See above (1) and (2) in n. 38.

⁴⁴ One example of each: Aristotle contrasts Melissus with Parmenides by saying that while Being is for Parmenides 'that which is one by definition', for Melissus it is 'that which is materially one' (*II. μὲν εἶοικε τοῦ κατὰ τὸν λόγον ἑνὸς ἀπτεσθαι, Μ. δὲ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ὕλην, Met.* 968B19–21). Yet we know from Melissus' own words that, so far from holding that Being is 'materially one', he undertook to prove that it is incorporeal: he offers a formal refutation of the thesis that Being has *σῶμα* (B9).

In *Th.* 152E Plato says that 'almost all the wise except Parmenides' would agree that 'nothing ever is—[whatever is] is always [in a state of] becoming' (*ἔστι μὲν γὰρ οὐδέποτε οὐδέν, αἰεὶ δὲ γίγνεται*), and cites Empedocles (in the same breath with Protagoras and Heraclitus!) as one who would agree. Yet we know that Empedocles endowed his four 'roots' with Parmenidean Being for which there can be neither generation nor destruction, but only 'mixing and unmixing'. (See Empedocles B8, and also his B17, noting the force of *ἀκίνητοι* in v. 13 and of *ἡνεκές αἰὲν ὁμοῖα* in v. 35).

If one is puzzled that these great thinkers should be guilty of misrepresentations which even third-rate critics can see through, one need only recall that neither Plato nor Aristotle give any sign of having reflected on the principles which should guide philosophers in imputing beliefs and assumptions to one another, and in particular seem unaware that the following canon of imputation is illicit:

If *A* is convinced that *p* & *q* imply *r*, then *A* may impute acceptance of *r* to *B* whom *A* knows to accept *p*, even if *A* has no evidence that *q*, which is acceptable to *A*, is also acceptable to *B*.

In both of the above examples our philosophers act as though they are at liberty to follow this principle:

Example 1:

- p* is 'Being is infinite' (prominent Melissean Doctrine)
- q* is 'if *x* is infinite, then *x* is material' (firm Aristotelian doctrine, totally foreign to Melissus)
- r* is 'Being is material' (imputed to Melissus by Aristotle in accordance with the above canon, since it follows directly from *p* & *q*).

Example 2:

- p* is 'the four elements (and *a fortiori* all compounds thereof, hence all particular existents) are sensible and corporeal' (obviously true for Empedocles, since his elements are earth, water, air, fire)
- q* is 'whatever is sensible and corporeal is always in a state of becoming, never in a state of being' (firm Platonic doctrine: cf. *Ti.* 27B6–C2, noting especially the reasoning in the closing lines)
- r* is 'all particular existents are in a state of becoming, never in a state of being' (immediate inference from *p* and *q*, imputed to Empedocles by Plato in accordance with the same canon).

⁴⁵ I see no justification for the claim that 'Plato misrepresents Parmenides' doctrine when he describes it as *ἐν τὰ πάντα*' (Taran [1965, 270].) This particular formula does not, of course, occur in Parmenides' Poem. But since it is said there that Being is 'unique' and that 'nothing but Being exists' (see above, n. 38, (1)), it follows tautologously that Parmenides holds that *ἐν ἔστι*, *Prm.* 128D1 ('[only] one thing exists'—not, as in Cornford's translation, 'there is a One', as though Plato had written *ἐν τι ἔστι*, nor yet as in Solmsen's [1969, 4], 'the One is', as if Plato had written *τὸ ἓν ἔστι*. For the justification of the parenthetical expansion in my translation see above, n. 38, (1) *sub fin.*, noting especially the references to Melissus, who uses the identical formula in B5 and B6, *ἐν εἶη*, which Plato uses here for Parmenides). And since Plato substitutes *ἐν ἔστι* in 128D1 for the

and Zeno an anti-pluralist.⁴⁶ The sum and substance of Plato's fault is that he foists on each of them his own sense of the *importance* of the unity of Being relatively to its other attributes. Having reached this conviction himself at a certain stage of his own philosophical development,⁴⁷ he does not scruple to project it on other philosophers, Parmenides and Zeno among them. This is the extent of his error.⁴⁸ Having acknowledged it, we can go on to press the one question that really matters in this inquiry: does this specific misrepresentation of Zeno which is explicit at (B), and of both Parmenides and Zeno which is implicit at (D), discredit the veracity of Plato's testimony at (C) above?⁴⁹ Does his

formula *ἐν εἶναι τὸ πᾶν* ('the all is one thing') he had used for Parmenides' thesis a few lines earlier (128A8–B1), it is clear that Plato takes the formulae to be strictly equivalent, as indeed they are: if only one thing exists, it follows immediately that whatever does exist (or all that exists, 'the all') is identical with that one thing. So it would be arbitrary to suppose that the variant formulae by which Plato expresses Parmenidean monism in *Thi.* 180E, *ἐν . . . πάντα εἶναι*, or in *Sph.* 252D5–6, *ὡς ἐνὸς ὄντος τῶν πάντων καλουμένων*, involve any misrepresentation whatever of Parmenidean doctrine (the plural form, *πάντα* in these two phrases could not be meant to carry existential significance: note the implied demurrer in *καλουμένων* in the last citation: what is so called is in fact one, according to Parmenides; and note the alternative use of the singular *ἐν τὸ πᾶν*, in *Sph.* 244B [quoted also above, n. 38]). Nor could I concur with Mourelatos' view [1970, 130 ff.] that we should distinguish 'holistic' from 'nonholistic' monism, ascribing only the latter to Parmenides; I fail to grasp the validity of such a distinction for Parmenides: if, as Mourelatos says, 'the formula of nonholistic monism is that of uniqueness', and that of 'holistic' monism is 'all things are one', then the two would be logically equivalent for Parmenides unless we were to read ontological import into the plural of *πάντα*; and why should we do that? Would anyone read ontological import into the plural *μὴ εἶναι* in B7, 1? Certainty Plato does not do so when he represents Parmenides as holding *ἐν πάντα εἶναι*, else he would be charging the 'great' (*Sph.* 237A) Parmenides with planting an explicit contradiction into the very enunciation of his doctrine.

⁴⁶ There would be, of course, if Zeno had argued not only against plurality (as he does in the 'hypothesis' of the argument reported by Plato and in that of B1 and B3) but also against unity which, in my opinion, he does not; the allegation that Plato represents him as so arguing in *Phdr.* 261C will be examined below.

⁴⁷ We see this most clearly expressed in the *Sophist*: when he winds up his critique of Parmenides' interdict on Not-being (237A–241D) and proceeds to investigate the positive conception of Being in antecedent philosophising (242C ff.), the whole discussion is focussed on the question, 'Is Being one, or many, or one-and-many?'; the Eleatic doctrine is immediately identified with the 'One' answer (*ὡς ἐνὸς ὄντος τῶν πάντων καλουμένων*, 242D5–6) and the critique of Parmenides is given over to the refutation

of this one thesis (244B ff.). Plato must have reached that conviction already in the *Theaetetus*, else he would not have dragged in the monism of Parmenides there, in a context where it does not belong (the topic under discussion is fluxism, 152E ff.), and placed it ahead of immutabilism in the epitome of Eleatic doctrine he gives in 180E1–4. By assuming that he had reached this view already in the *Parmenides* we can account for the misplaced accent on this part of Parmenides' doctrine in the *Theaetetus*.

⁴⁸ Error we are compelled to reckon it, since we cannot explain away its departure from the truth as a deliberate fictionalising of the figures of Parmenides and Zeno for Plato's own dramatic purposes in this dialogue: there is no more reason to assume fictionalised imputation of anti-pluralism to Zeno than of monism to Parmenides (the latter imputation is made also in other dialogues where fictional intent is totally excluded); moreover we know that the same monistic doctrine is ascribed to Zeno no less than to Parmenides by Aristotle (see (I) in n. 17 above) and Simplicius (*passim*). Once satisfied that Plato really errs in his interpretation of both Parmenides and Zeno at this point, we should bear in mind that even modern scholars—good ones, equipped with all the resources of philological research—have been guilty of misinterpreting Parmenides in ways which are at least as grave. Thus Burnet [1930, 178 ff.] thought Parmenides a hard-line materialist, and Cornford [1939, 29] thought that the unity of Being was for Parmenides an underived axiom from which all of its other attributes were deduced. I do not believe that Plato made either of these mistakes—certainly not the latter: in spite of the exaggerated importance of the unity of Being in Plato's account of the Parmenidean system, he never suggests that this premise was the logically primitive assumption of the system. Plato has good insight into Parmenides' ground-breaking innovation, his semantic critique of the concept of Not-being. The language Plato uses in *Sph.* 237A when introducing Parmenides' ban on Not-being shows that he was well aware of the foundational (*ἀρχόμενός τε*) and pervasive (*καὶ διὰ τέλους . . . ἐκάστοτε λέγων*) consequences of this radical new departure for the whole of Parmenides' ontology.

⁴⁹ This seems to be the gravamen of Solmsen's critique of Plato's testimony about Zeno in the *Parmenides*, though he never puts it in this (or in any clearly equivalent) way, because (as I have pointed out above in n. 35 *sub fin.*) Solmsen does not take

saying that all of Zeno's arguments were directed against plurality destroy the credibility of his allegation that Zeno is a devoted partisan of Parmenides?

The answer would certainly have to be 'Yes', if the misrepresentation had been so formulated as to assert or imply (1) above, i.e. that the plurality thesis had been the formal refutand of all of Zeno's arguments. Had that been Plato's testimony, the consequences for the credibility of his whole account would have been shattering. For since we could hardly believe that Plato was unaware of the existence of Zenonian arguments, like the ones against motion, which make absolutely no mention of plurality nor any allusion to it, we would then have had to infer that his allegation at (B) was being made in open defiance of historical verisimilitude.⁵⁰ And in that case would not know what to believe in his testimony: why should he not also be thumbing his nose at verisimilitude at (C)?⁵¹ That is why I have laboured so heavily the point that (B)—i.e. proposition (2), in contrast to (1), at the start of this section—is all Plato alleges in the text: this allegation, though certainly false, involves only Plato's own interpretation of the data, not their wilful distortion in a dramatic fiction. Once satisfied of this, we may proceed to satisfy ourselves that the mere fact that Plato is mistaken at (B) is not at all a sufficient reason for thinking that he must also be mistaken at (C). To conclude that if erring at (B) Plato must also be erring at (C) we would have to assume that he had no *other* grounds for believing in (C)—that he believed in (C) only because he thought that all of Zeno's arguments were directed against plurality. And, of course, that assumption would be so weak that it would be hardly worth defending. To see this, consider the elementary logic we would apply when a witness gives us two statements, P and Q, concerning which we know that while P is certainly false, Q is true, *and would be known to be true by the witness himself even if the thought of P had never entered his head*. In such a case the fact that he asserts P along with Q, believing both of them to be true, would not damage, would not even touch, the veracity of that part of his testimony which only concerns Q. Such is surely the case with respect to (B) and (C) in Plato's testimony. For suppose that Plato had never taken so much as a look at Zeno's book and knew no more about its contents than even philistines would know, i.e. that it contained arguments purporting to prove that all motion is illusory. Would not that knowledge, all by itself, have led Plato to infer forthwith that Zeno had been Parmenides' philosophical partisan? Where else in the whole of the known spectrum of fifth-century philosophical views would there be room for one who rejected what everyone except Parmenides, had accepted as a foundational, absolutely certain truth, about the world? From just this consideration we can infer that the veracity of Zeno's belief in (C), which Zeno could, and would, have had even without (B), could not be impugned by the latter's falsehood.

account of the import of the distinction between (B) and (C). Thus when he declares (119) that 'the two summaries [of Parmenides' and Zeno's positions in 128B3-4, "the one asserts unity, the other denies plurality"] interlock, and if one of them is discredited the other too', what he has said so far is unimpeachable. But when he continues 'and with it the thesis of an ultimate convergence between the two works are [*sic*] compromised', he *appears* to be assuming (without argument) that the value of Plato's testimony concerning (C) has been compromised by the discrediting of his testimony concerning (B); I have italicised 'appears' because the import of the phrase 'ultimate convergence' in Solmsen's statement is not entirely perspicuous and I am surmising that over-all doctrinal agreement between the two works is what he means. (And *cf.* n. 51 below.)

⁵⁰ Something that never happens in any Platonic dialogue, to our knowledge. In all of the fictional scenes in which Plato brings on the stage historical figures like Protagoras, Gorgias, Thrasymachus, of whose views we have some independent knowledge from other sources, not once is there a case of such distortion. The Platonic portrayal of the personage in a given dialogue may be highly selective (e.g. no mention or direct allusion to the *homo mensura* doctrine of Protagoras, nor to any of his epistemological doctrines, in the dialogue that bears his name), but there is never bare-faced misrepresentation, such as would have been incurred had Plato alleged that plurality had been the explicit target of every argument in Zeno's book.

⁵¹ Which may be what Solmsen is suggesting, though I cannot be sure: the urbanity of his style of

The assurance that Plato would have come to Zeno's book already convinced that its author was a disciple of Parmenides permits us to go one step further: we can even learn something positive from the testimony at (B) before consigning it to the junkheap to which it belongs. We can reason that when Plato did get into Zeno's book he was so impressed by the anti-pluralist, pro-Parmenidean, import of the arguments he encountered there, that he did not hesitate to credit Zeno with having written the whole book with that intention. To be sure, we do not know how far in Zeno's book Plato actually read. But since the arguments in which plurality was the explicit refutand came first, it would be reasonable to suppose that he had read several, perhaps all, of these, and that none of them had rebuffed his antecedent expectation that what he would find in the book would be true-blue Eleatic polemic.⁵² Thus what Plato says at (B), in spite of its falsehood, could even lend a measure of support to his testimony at (C); in any case, it certainly could not undermine it. To undercut (C) further evidence would be needed. Is there such evidence? The following items have been thought to be such:

- (a) The argument against plurality reported by Simplicius in *Phys.* 139, 7–19 and 140, 34–141, 8 has been supposed⁵³ to have contained, in its first arm, an argument against unity.
- (b) Alexander *ap.* Simplicius, *Phys.* 138, 3–28 and 141, 8–11 and Eudemus *ap. ibid.* 99, 7–16 have been thought⁵⁴ to be referring to Zenonian arguments against unity.
- (c) The allusion to Zeno in *Phdr.* 261C has been taken to imply that he was prepared to argue against, no less than for, Parmenidean theses.⁵⁵
- (d) The allusion to Zeno in *Alc.* I, 119A has been taken as evidence that he was a professional sophist.⁵⁶

Items (a) and (b) I reserve for a separate discussion in the near future.⁵⁷ Item (d) I shall discuss in the Appendix. Item (c) will be covered in the discussion of *Phdr.* 261C to which I proceed directly.

argument is not conducive to the crass assertion of so extreme a claim.

⁵² When Solmsen asks, 'Had he [Plato] carefully and with something approaching philological accuracy worked his way through all *ὑποθέσεις* in the treatise and found out to his satisfaction what purpose they served?', we can, of course, agree that there is not the remotest chance of this: the last thing we could expect from him, or from any ancient philosopher, is scanning the books of earlier thinkers with the point of view of a scholar engaged in philological research. However, what is at issue here is whether Plato, after reading through a book which, as Solmsen holds (*cf.* n. 17 above), contained arguments against unity, no less than arguments against plurality would still want to maintain (before a public containing numerous readers of that book) that every argument in the book had been meant to be an argument against plurality.

On the same ground I would argue against the view of von Fritz that Zeno had meant to serve Parmenides not 'dogmatically', but 'aporetically', deploying arguments for both thesis and antithesis 'in order to expose the difficulties in both assumptions' [1970, 58; *cf.* also *ibid.*, 75 and 78; and 1971, 42]. Now certainly dogmatic proof is totally alien to Zeno's method: his surviving arguments are visibly dialectical, proceeding always from premises supplied by the adversary. But neither may his mode of argu-

ment be correctly described as 'aporetic': that term should be reserved for philosophical argument eventuating in *unresolved* perplexity, while Zeno employs argument whose logical form is that of *reductio ad absurdum*: if successful, they would eventuate not in perplexity, but in the refutation of the hypothesis (with the qualification to be noted below, n. 64), and hence in the certainty that the premises from which the contradiction was deduced formed an inconsistent set; and this would involve Zeno himself in no perplexity whatever, since he does not subscribe to the premise-set; perplexity would result only for the adversary, and for him only so far as he might be left wondering what he could do, short of total capitulation, to revise his belief-system to make it invulnerable to attack. In any case, if Zeno were equally bent on exposing difficulties in the monistic thesis *and* in its pluralist antithesis, how could Plato, having read the book, portray its author, as Plato does at (D) above, as maintaining 'virtually the same thing' as Parmenides?

⁵³ Solmsen [1971, 129–37]: he argues that Zeno 'knock[s] out "the One"' on the way to knocking out 'the many'.

⁵⁴ Diès [1956, 16]; Solmsen [1971, 128–9].

⁵⁵ See note 16 above.

⁵⁶ Diès [1956, 16].

⁵⁷ But I may at least point out two things here: In the case of (a): the crucial lines in Simplicius

II. QUESTIONS ABOUT *Phaedrus* 261C6–8

'Do we not know that the Eleatic Palamedes by his art of speech made the same things appear to his hearers to be both like and unlike, both one and many, both resting and moving?'

We are presented with three assertions:

P [All existents]⁵⁸ are alike *and* they are unlike

Q [All existents] are [i.e. constitute] one thing *and* they are many things

R [All existents] are at rest *and* they are moving.

Each of these three conjunctions is supposed to be a genuine contradiction. We know that this supposition is false—clearly so in the case of *P* and *Q*, and possibly also of *R*.⁵⁹ But this is immaterial to our present business. All that matters here is that Zeno and his public *would* undoubtedly have reckoned each of the three a contradiction, and that Plato is not here concerned to challenge that assumption.⁶⁰ In this context he is willing to indulge it.⁶¹ This being the case, what precisely does he mean to tell us about Zeno? Is it that it was Zeno's intention to prove that each of the conjuncts in each of the three conjunctions, *P*, *Q*, *R*, is true? If so the clash with (C) above would be blatant and the consequences would be devastating. A Zeno intent on proving both thesis and antithesis in *P*, in *Q*, and in *R* would be no ally of Parmenides. If this were really how Plato wants us to think of the historical Zeno, the picture of him in the *Parmenides* would have to be reckoned a travesty of the truth. But is that really what Plato means to tell us here? Before we can decide this we have to ask ourselves if we should suppose that Plato (*a*) had, or (*b*) had not, made contact with⁶² Zeno's book by the time he wrote our text in the *Phaedrus*.

(139, 16–19), into which a Zenonian argument against unity has been read, contain nothing, to all appearance, which constitutes an argument against unity as such: all that Zeno had argued in this portion of the argument, according to Simplicius, is that if Being were One, it would have no size; and we know from Melissus (B₉) how an Eleatic would use such an inference: he would take it as proving the denial of size, not of unity, to Being (see Vlastos [1971], 119–20; and *ibid.*, 122, for the terms on which this is understandable in an argument against plurality [which was indubitably the formal refutand of the whole argument in which this particular inference was embedded: Zeno *ap.* Simplicius, *Phys.* 139, 8–9 and 141, 6–8]). In the case of (*b*) neither Eudemos nor Alexander seem to be speaking from direct knowledge of the Zenonian texts; and we can track down one of the sources of their impression that Zeno 'refuted the One' to their demonstrable misunderstanding of the context in which Aristotle introduces his paraphrase of a part of Zeno B₂ in *Metaph.* 1001B7–8: *ἔτι εἰ ἀδιαίρετον αὐτὸ τὸ ἐν, κατὰ μὲν τὸ Ζήνωνος ἀξίωμα οὐθὲν ἂν εἶη*; they take this to mean that Aristotle is here reporting Zeno's assertion that 'if the One were indivisible, it would be nothing' (see Eudemos *ap.* Simplicius, *Phys.* 99, 10–12; Alexander, *Metaph.* 227, 11 ff.), while a careful reading of the statement I have just cited from Aristotle in its own context (see the sequel, 1001B4–19, and the analysis in Vlastos [1971, 134–5]) will show that it does not profess to report an inference drawn by Zeno, but only one which Aristotle takes it upon himself to draw on the strength of what he

calls 'Zeno's axiom'. Nor is it at all clear that Eudemos and Alexander were referring to Zenonian arguments which they thought were directed against unity as such rather than against *the unity of physical things* (whose very existence an Eleatic would seek to disprove).

⁵⁸ There could be no doubt that by τὰ αὐτά in *Phdr.* 261D7 Plato is referring to τὰ ὄντα (*cf.* n. 8 above) and to all of them without exception (as is clearly the case in B₁ and B₃).

⁵⁹ There is no contradiction in saying in *P* that any two things are 'alike' in one respect, unlike in another; or in saying in *Q* that anything is one *F* and many *G*'s. And there would be no contradiction even in *R*, if motion and rest are treated as relative concepts (*x* moving relatively to *y* while at rest relatively to *z*) or qualified as to respect (*x* moving in one respect, resting in another).

⁶⁰ Though Plato is by no means entirely clear on the topic of relational properties, his Socrates argues in the *Parmenides* that in the case of *sensibles* the same things could be both like and unlike, both one and many: 128E ff. (*cf.* n. 34 above); in the *Republic* (436C–E) he points out that there is no difficulty in a thing's moving in one respect in relation to a given thing while stationary in another respect in relation to other things.

⁶¹ He clearly implies it in characterising Zeno's art as *ἀντιλογική* having illustrated *ἀντιλέγουσιν* just before (261C ff.) by contradictory contentions of adversary litigants and of rival demagogues.

⁶² To dot the i's and cross the t's we would have to add: 'with good recollection of what he had read'.

Suppose (b). In that case, whatever Plato might mean to be telling us here could not unsettle the testimony he gives in the *Parmenides*, by which time he *had* got into the book.

Alternatively, suppose (a)—and this is surely the most likely possibility,⁶³ the only one worth serious consideration. In that case Plato would know, as he does in the *Parmenides*, the place which *P* had occupied in Zeno's discourse. He would think of *P* as the apodosis of a conditional statement, whose protasis was the hypothesis,

H The things in existence are many,

this being the refutand of an argument which contrived the refutation by showing that *H* entails⁶⁴ the necessarily false conclusion, *P*.⁶⁵ Plato then would know that what Zeno was arguing for was not *P*, but (*P*, if *H*). He would thus know that Zeno was no more concerned to prove the (supposed) contradiction that all existents are both alike and unlike, than that he (Plato) was concerned to prove that there is no knowledge when he argued in the *Cratylus* (440A–C) that this enormity is entailed by the hypothesis that *everything is in total flux*. In saying this I do not wish to slur over the fact that the language Plato uses in our text in the *Phaedrus* ignores completely the all-important distinction between

Zeno tried to prove *P*

and

Zeno tried to prove that *H* entails *P*.

If our present text in the *Phaedrus* had been the only reference to Zeno in the Platonic corpus, it would have been proper to infer that Plato thought of him as arguing for both arms of the (supposed) contradiction in *P*, for this interpretation of his text would be the simplest, the most economical, supposition of what Plato meant by *ὥστε φαίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀκούουσι τὰ αὐτὰ ὅμοια καὶ ἀνόμοια*. As things are, knowing, as we do from the *Parmenides*, the very argument of Zeno's which Plato must have had in view when he wrote those words in *Phaedrus*, we are entitled to put on them a different accent: *ὥστε φαίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀκούουσι τὰ αὐτὰ ὅμοια καὶ ἀνόμοια*, that is to say, take them to mean that it was *to his hearers*—who thought Parmenides' doctrine preposterous, *not* to all, including the enlightened, who knew better—that Zeno made it 'appear' that the same things are both like and unlike,⁶⁶ which he accomplished by proving to them that this (supposedly) horrendous

I take this for granted so as not to complicate the argument unduly. Explicit allowance for it would not affect the drift of my argument.

⁶³ In the absence of any relevant information it would be arbitrary to assume that a work whose paradoxes became so notorious in the fourth century (as we know from the fact that they are among Aristotle's favourite examples in his logical writings) got into Plato's reading just in the interval that separates the composition of the *Phaedrus* from that of the *Parmenides* (a few years, perhaps no more than two or three).

⁶⁴ In a modern context we would, of course, want to say it does so in conjunction with further premises whose truth is not in controversy. This qualification, generally ignored in the classical period, does not affect the argument, and I am, therefore, leaving it out of the text as a needless complication.

⁶⁵ This seems to be disregarded when Solmsen [1971, 140], glossing our text in the *Phdr.*, speaks of Zeno's 'curiously contradictory ὑποθέσεις'. Unless one is to argue (as Solmsen does not, and

could not have argued with any plausibility) that in *Prm.* 127E1–2 (*εἰ πολλά ἐστι, ὡς δεῖ αὐτὰ ὅμοια τε εἶναι καὶ ἀνόμοια*) Plato had given an incorrect statement of the form in which *τὰ αὐτὰ ὅμοια καὶ ἀνόμοια* got into Zeno's argument, one should recognise that the latter phrase is not meant to refer to *two hypotheses*, but only to two conclusions *from the same hypothesis*—conclusions derived only for the purpose of refuting that hypothesis. We may note here that this is precisely the form in which the pairs of contradictory statements make their appearance in original fragments: that existents are 'so small as to have no magnitude' and 'so large as to be infinite' (B1) and, again, that they must be finitely many and infinitely many (B3), are not statements of *contradictory hypotheses*, but contradictory conclusions which refute the hypothesis that *πολλά ἐστι*.

⁶⁶ For the use of 'making *p* appear' in a context where *p*, itself false, has been shown to follow from a refutand, cf. Democritus B155, *φανέται τὸ τοῦ κλιῆ-νδρον πεπονηθῶς ὁ κῶνος*.

conclusion is entailed by their own innocent beliefs about the world which, of course, include *H*. This interpretation, which would have been too far-fetched to be worth arguing for if the *Phaedrus* text had stood alone, is a perfectly reasonable one on our present supposition that the man who penned that text knew that Zeno had not argued for *P*, but only for *P-if-H* in his book.

What then of *Q* and *R*, which Zeno had also made 'appear to his hearers'? We have no report of a Zenonian argument which made a place for either of them. Should we suppose

- (i) that Zeno's book did contain one or more such arguments, or
- (ii) that it did not?

Let us consider each alternative:

First, (i). If Zeno had produced such arguments, the reasonable supposition would be that they followed the same pattern as that of the argument we have just examined.⁶⁷ In that case each of these contradictory conjunctions would have played the same role as did *P* in that argument, namely as the *absurdum* in a *reductio ad absurdum* argument. Hence once again there would be no clash with the *Parmenides*: as before, the contradictory 'appearance' they enunciate would 'appear' only to those who grant the hypothesis which is the refutand of Zeno's argument; Zeno would be arguing not that *Q* and *R* are true, but that they would be true if, *per impossibile*, the hypothesis were true.

Suppose, alternatively, (ii)—that Zeno's book contained no arguments in which the second and third pair of contradictory assertions had any place at all. This is certainly a possibility to be reckoned with. Thus in the case of *R* the Zenonian paradoxes known to us contain only arguments undertaking to prove that existents are not in motion. There is no place in any of them for the proposition that existents both are, and are not, in motion—hence none for 'both at rest and in motion'. Even so it is entirely possible that Plato, considering just the arguments which are known to us, would still have represented Zeno as 'bringing it about by his art of speech that the same things appear to his hearers to be . . . both resting and moving'. For Zeno would not need to *produce* the appearance that 'things are moving': he could take that appearance for granted, given the stock of perceptions and beliefs his hearers had been harbouring since their infancy; to get these people into the frame of mind in which it appears to them that all things are 'both resting and moving', all he would have had to do would be to construct arguments to prove that all things are resting—the very arguments of which we know. Plato might well be thinking of readers carried along by Zeno's inexorable-seeming logic to a point where though the familiar world still looks the same to them, things in it seeming to move and change as much as they ever did, their mind, bewitched by Zeno's magic, protests that no race-course is ever traversed, no arrow ever flies. So too in the case of *Q*: here again the appearance of plurality would antecede and survive the arguments against it with which Zeno plied his hearers; so the contradictory 'appearances' would be produced only by Zeno's arguments, deployed on minds powerless to rebut his proofs, yet also powerless to deny the message of plurality they still kept getting from their senses.

So far then as *Phdr.* 261D5–6 goes, there is no difficulty in squaring its Zeno with the one pictured in the *Parmenides*. Would this remain true if we were to take the context into account? I suspect that this, more than the three lines in 261D5–6, is what has created the impression recorded in Cornford's gloss on the passage:

But Plato seems to think of him as a mere sophist. At *Phaedrus* 261D, 'the Eleatic Palamedes' who 'can make the same things appear to his hearers to be both like and

⁶⁷ And that of the arguments in the original fragments B1 and B3—which is far more important, since in their case there can be no doubt that the conjunction of the pair of contradictory assertions is not itself the refutand but the conclusion which refutes the refutand.

unlike, one and many, at rest and in motion', is classed as a controversialist (*ἀντιλογικός*) with the demagogue and the forensic orator, who can make the same action seem right or wrong as they please. All this is described as a rhetorical art of deception, ignorant of the truth and going in chase of mere belief. [1939, 67–8.]

Of the various things said here, one is quite correct: Zeno is indeed classed with the rhetoricians as an *ἀντιλογικός*.⁶⁸ But does that warrant the inference that Plato thinks him 'a mere sophist' practising 'a rhetorical art of deception'? If so, his present picture of Zeno would belie not only the one he draws in the *Parmenides* but also his brief but tell-tale allusion to Zeno in another passage which I have not yet brought into the discussion: this occurs in the opening lines of the *Sophist*, where the Eleatic Stranger is introduced as *τὸ μὲν γένος ἐξ Ἑλέας, ἑταῖρον δὲ τῶν ἀμφὶ Παρμενίδην τε καὶ Ζήωνα*.

Here Plato couples Zeno's name with that of Parmenides for the purpose of identifying the philosophical group with which the Stranger has had friendly association.⁶⁹ This fits perfectly Plato's representation of Zeno at (C) above, and not at all the picture of 'a mere sophist' practising 'an art of deception': no one answering to this description could have stood in Plato's mind side by side with Parmenides, that 'reverend and awesome' figure,⁷⁰ at the centre of the Eleatic circle. Since this reference to Zeno in the *Sophist* is not connected dramatically with the *Parmenides* in any way whatever—there is no allusion here to a meeting of the two in Athens or to anything else which would suggest that Plato is harking back to the imaginary *mise-en-scène* of that dialogue—it cannot be explained away as dramatic fiction; it must be taken as a true indication of the way Plato really thought of Zeno's place in the Eleatic movement and his relation to its founder.⁷¹ And since the composition of the *Sophist* certainly postdates that of the *Parmenides*, hence postdates the time by which Plato is known to have had access to Zeno's book, we are compelled to believe that this close bond between Parmenides and Zeno gibed with what one would learn of Zeno's philosophical orientation from a reading of his work.

Can this be reconciled with the fact that in the *Phaedrus* Plato classes Zeno as an *ἀντιλογικός*? Could Plato have thought of some one as addicted to *ἀντιλογική* without thinking him a deceiving sophist? If we were convinced that the answer to this question is 'No', we would simply have to conclude that for reasons unknown Plato wrote the *Phaedrus* with a radically different mental picture of Zeno from the one he presents in the *Parmenides* and

⁶⁸ This is clearly implied by the connective (*ἄρα*) in 261D10: from the reference to Zeno as 'the Eleatic Palamedes' it is inferred that the scope of *ἀντιλέγειν* covers not only the law court speech-writers and demagogues (who illustrate *ἀντιλέγειν* in 261C4–D5) but many others as well who do not engage in public oratory (*περὶ πάντα τὰ λεγόμενα* here; cf. *ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ἰδίῳ* after *οὐ μόνον ἐν δικαστηρίῳ καὶ ἄλλοι δημόσιοι σύλλογοι* in 261A8–9). This shows that Zeno is meant to fall inside the range of those engaging in *ἀντιλέγειν*, but outside that of those two classes of rhetoricians.

⁶⁹ I would not press as far the implications of *ἑταῖρος τῶν περὶ Παρμενίδην τε καὶ Ζήωνα* as does Lewis Campbell [1867] (followed by Cornford) in translating 'adherent of the school of Parmenides and Zeno'. There is no evidence that *ἑταῖρος* in Plato ever quite carries the sense of 'philosophical partisan or adherent' which is so common in the doxographic literature: Campbell's only reference (to *Th.* 180C) is no such evidence, for it indicates philosophical congeniality, not doctrinal partisanship—the latter

is not in question in that context. Anyhow, the Eleatic Stranger is depicted as a singularly free spirit, whose association with the Eleatic circle does not prevent him from criticising some of its most fundamental doctrines, as he proceeds to do in the dialogue.

⁷⁰ *Th.* 183E. Parmenides is the one predecessor (with the possible exception of Socrates) for whom Plato has a filial feeling: cf. the reference to 'father Parmenides' in *Sph.* 241D.

⁷¹ Zeno is similarly associated with Parmenides at, or near, the centre of the Eleatic movement by Aristotle in *Sph. El.* 182B26, as I have pointed out above, n. 17, where I proceed to point out that Zeno is similarly associated with Parmenides in the doxographic tradition; to the references given there I may add Cicero, *Acad. Prior.* 2, 14, 129: referring to the Eleatic antecedents of the Megarians, he names Xenophanes who, he says, was followed by 'Parmenides and Zeno, after whom the Eleatic philosophy was named'.

sustains in the *Sophist*. Fortunately we do not need to resort to so extreme a hypothesis. We have the means of satisfying ourselves that while *ἀντιλογική* has always unfavourable connotations in Plato, these are by no means so discreditable as to imply that by labelling someone *ἀντιλογικός* Plato is consigning him to the outer darkness of 'mere sophistry' and deception⁷²—that for Plato *ἀντιλέγειν* may be an honest, though small-minded and unproductive, species of philosophical debate.⁷³ We are assured of this by specimens of dialectical procedure within the dialogues which the Platonic Socrates calls *ἀντιλογική*. Thus in *Tht.* 164C Socrates deprecates his refutation of Protagoras⁷⁴ saying that we seem to have won the argument *ἀντιλογικῶς*, which is unworthy of us, since we profess to be philosophers, not contestants. If we go over that argument and its sequel, we can see that never does it lapse into sophistry: in none of his inferences does Socrates resort to verbal trickery, at no point does he try to palm off a fallacious argument on his interlocutor.⁷⁵ His fault is that of a contentious—not a dishonest—prosecutor: he wins his case by taking advantage of 'verbal admissions' (*πρὸς τὰς τῶν ὀνομάτων ὁμολογίας*)—admissions the adversary makes 'when giving no more thought to the words he is using (*μὴ προσέχων τοῖς ῥήμασι τὸν νοῦν*) than we commonly do when making admissions and denials'.⁷⁶ Later on in the same dialogue (197A) Socrates says he would not allow himself now the use of 'knowing', 'knowledge', and their contraries if he were *ἀντιλογικός*, since at this stage of the inquiry the meaning of these terms is still in controversy; the *ἀντιλογικός* would protest any use of these terms in the argument before an agreed upon sense had been reached; it would not be 'clean dialectic' (*καθαρῶς διαλέγεσθαι* 196E) to do so, the *ἀντιλογικός* would say. Here this character is the very opposite of the sloppy or unscrupulous arguer; he is one who insists (too much) on the observance of strict rules of disputation; he is the sticky debater who confuses procedural rigidity with intellectual rigour. With all the fuss he makes about formalities, he misses the weightier procedural points: thus he fails to realise that once the adversary has been allowed to argue *ἐξ ὑποθέσεως* only inferences drawn from the hypothesis, not the hypothesis itself, should be contested;⁷⁷ and he lacks the capacity to 'investigate the topic under discussion by dividing things into kinds',⁷⁸ which is for Plato the *sine qua non* of productive inquiry in philosophy.⁷⁹

Clearly then Plato has a low opinion of *ἀντιλογική* as a style of philosophical debate. But not one of the charges he brings against it would suggest that he thinks of it as 'mere sophistry' and 'an art of deception'. Hence no such imputation to Zeno can be inferred just from the fact that he is classed with the *ἀντιλογικοί*. To justify the imputation further evidence would be needed. Where would we find this? Certainly not in the phrase 'Eleatic Palamedes'. For the Greeks of the classical era Palamedes personifies inventive genius, not crookedness.⁸⁰ Though he displays craft and cunning in some of the tales,

⁷² For Plato the two are inseparable: the sophist's art is a species of deception (*τὴν τέχνην εἶναι τινα ἀπατητικὴν αὐτοῦ*, *Sph.* 240D; cf. *Sph.* 246D).

⁷³ With the broader use of *ἀντιλέγειν* to mean simply 'contradicting' we are not concerned in the present discussion.

⁷⁴ 163A–164B, continued in the same vein in 165B–E.

⁷⁵ Grave as are the defects of the tactics used by Socrates against Protagoras in *Tht.* 163A–164B and 165B–E, they would differ as day from night, in Plato's view, when compared to those used against Socrates by the protagonists of the *Euthydemus*, whose art, denominated *ἐριστική* (272B10), not *ἀντιλογική*, is said to display itself in the ability 'to engage in verbal combat and to refute any given statement, be it false or true' (272A–B).

⁷⁶ I.e. admissions that would not have been made if the adversary were exploiting more intelligently and resourcefully the options left open to him by his own position—as Protagoras is represented as doing in that marvellously ingenious argumentative palinode that Plato makes up for him in 166A ff.

⁷⁷ *Phdo.* 101D–E and *R.* 437A.

⁷⁸ *R.* 454A; cf. *Phdr.* 265E.

⁷⁹ It is the method of Division and Collection that distinguishes for Plato true dialectic from every other mode of inquiry (*Phdr.* 266B–C). His confidence in this method is so vast that it prompts him to claim for it in the *Philebus* (16C) every [philosophical] discovery ever made!

⁸⁰ In the Aeschylean tragedy which bears his name he claims the discovery of number and of so many other useful inventions as to have rescued 'Greece and its

resourceful contrivance, not double-dealing, is his characteristic trait.⁸¹ When Dionysus says to Euripides in the *Frogs* (1451)

εὖ γ, ᾧ παλάμηδες, ᾧ σοφωτάτη φύσις

he is expressing admiration for the shrewdness of what Euripides had suggested,⁸² and for that alone: there was no trickery in the suggestion, and none is imputed. And that Plato himself is not making an eccentric use of the figure of Palamedes to suggest that Zeno is a deceiving sophist may be gathered from the immediately preceding lines: Socrates had introduced the figure of Palamedes (261B) as an orator of a different stripe from both Nestor and Odysseus; and Phaedrus had chimed in to say, without objection from Socrates, that Nestor stands for Gorgias and Odysseus for Thrasymachus and Theodorus. Thus Plato is dissociating Zeno from both the verbal pyrotechnics of a Gorgias and from the unscrupulous tactics of sophists like Thrasymachus. And the latter contrast is the sharper one, since Thrasymachus' heroic stand-in, Odysseus, is the legendary rival and destroyer of Palamedes. So if there were imputation of deceit to anyone, it would be directed not at Zeno—no more at him than at Gorgias—but at the likes of Thrasymachus, for it is their patron hero, Odysseus, who, as we know, typifies for Plato deceit and guile.⁸³

I conclude that there is nothing in this whole passage in the *Phaedrus* to lend colour to the notion that Zeno is portrayed here as a 'mere sophist', instead of the serious and honest, if narrowly disputatious, dialectician he would have had to be to fit the role Plato assigns him in the *Parmenides*. To be sure, neither do we get any information in the *Phaedrus* which would of itself have given us reason to cast Zeno in the latter role. But this passage is not needed for that purpose: for that the *Parmenides* is amply sufficient, and it is further assured by the association of Zeno with Parmenides in the *Sophist*. All we need here is to satisfy ourselves that what is said in the *Phaedrus* does not undermine what is said in the *Parmenides*. And that, I trust, has now been done.

APPENDIX: *Alcibiades I*, 119A1–6

'But can you mention some other person—Athenian or stranger, slave or freeman—who was made wiser because of his association with Pericles, as I [Socrates] can cite Pythodorus, son of Isolochus, and Callias, son of Calliades, each of whom became wise and highly reputed, having paid one hundred minae to Zeno?'

Zeno is represented here as teaching for pay: this is clearly the force of *τελέω* in *ἐκατὸν μῶνας τελέσας* as e.g. in *Ap.* 20A, *ὅς τετέλεκε χρήματα σοφισταῖς*.⁸⁴ To so represent him is to portray him unmistakably as a professional sophist: a man mentioned in an ostensibly Platonic work as making others 'wiser' for pay could not have been thought of as anything but this; I know of no counter-example to this generalisation, which is based on a plethora of testimonia.⁸⁵ Now if this is what Zeno had been in fact, how could we account for the

allies' from a brutish to a civilised state (*frg.* 182A). In Gorgias' *Defence of Palamedes* (B11a(30)) he claims to have done as much not only for Greece but 'for all men', itemising such inventions as written laws, writing, weights and measures, number. See Kleingünther [1934, 78–84] and, for a detailed account of his place in the legend, H. Levy, Roscher's *Mytholog. Lex.* III 1271 ff.

⁸¹ In Aristoph., *Thesm.* 769, *πόρον ἐκ τοῦ Παλαμήδους*, the word *πόρος* is misleadingly rendered 'trick', as is also *ἔργω πορίμω* a few lines later, by B. B. Rogers in his translation; the reference is to a clever contrivance.

⁸² To put its trust in the 'good' (conservative) people and distrust the demagogues (vv. 1445–50).

⁸³ The theme is developed at length in the *Hip. Mi.*, where the Homeric Odysseus is represented as not only *πολύτροπος* and *πολυμήχανος* but as a thorough-going liar, a man full of deceit and guile (*ψευδής*, 365; *δολερόν τε καὶ πολλὰ ψευδόμενον*, 369C).

⁸⁴ And cf. the numerous references collected in Ast, *Lex. Plat.*, s.v. 'τελῶ', last 7 lines of p. 374 and first 4 of p. 375, for payment of fee to sophists.

⁸⁵ Cf. Harrison [1964, 191 and notes]: 'nothing emerges more clearly from the dialogues than the fact that, for Plato, this feature of sophistry was crucial'. He gives over thirty references to Platonic passages which bear out the generalisation.

portrait in the *Parmenides*? Do we not know Plato's veneration for Parmenides, his scorn for sophists as hucksters of pseudo-wisdom and pseudo-virtue? Even if we were to think of that portrayal as pure invention, this would not mitigate the difficulty: even in a fictional setting, why should Plato have cast a *sophist* in the role he gives Zeno there—that of Parmenides' faithful disciple and intimate friend, erstwhile boy-love,⁸⁶ now travelling-companion and fellow-guest in the home of an upper-class Athenian?⁸⁷ On just these grounds, I submit, the historical veracity of this text in the *Alcibiades I* would be highly suspect. So it is strange that its credibility should have been conceded unquestioningly by the overwhelming majority of the scholars who have referred to it.⁸⁸ It is high time the bill of particulars was drawn up against it.⁸⁹

The preponderance of learned opinion has inclined against the authenticity of *Alcibiades I*,⁹⁰ and I shall proceed on a long-standing conviction, for which I cannot undertake to argue here, that the dialogue as a whole is spurious.⁹¹ But this, of course, would be much too general a ground on which the case against this particular text could be made to rest. For though a forgery, its composition need not have been late. It could have been written within two generations of Plato's death.⁹² So the author might have had access to reliable information had he sought it—had he been interested in getting facts instead of indulging his own invention. There is no indication that any historical inquiry lies back of this allusion to Zeno as the supposed instructor in 'wisdom' of two prominent Athenians. The question the author puts into Socrates' mouth is simply meant to drive home the Platonic doctrine that if one knows, one can teach,⁹³ which is invoked here in the more special form it assumes in the *Gorgias*: There Socrates had argued that proof of one's possession of a given skill (e.g. the physician's) must come in one's actual use of it to improve persons with whom one deals. He had explained that if he, Socrates, had professed to be a public physician, it would be proper to ask him,

Is there anyone . . . slave or freeman, who has ever been rid of disease because of Socrates? (514D7–8.)

⁸⁶ An erotic relation would be for Plato a coarse, even a shameful thing, if it did not involve deep intellectual and spiritual rapport. Could Plato have thought of the 'great' Parmenides having that kind of relation to a young sophist?

⁸⁷ In Plato the sophist's profession bears a social, no less than an intellectual, stigma: see *Prt.* 312A. Would Parmenides want to advertise the liaison by bringing along the young demi-mondain to Athens as Pythodorus' house-guest?

⁸⁸ Including all of the following: Boeckh [1842, 121]; Diès [1923, 16]; Burnet [1924, 87: on *Ap.* 20B9]; Lee [1936, 5]; Nestlé [1942 259]; Guthrie [1965, 80–1].

⁸⁹ It is astonishing to see Zeller, normally so thorough, rejecting the testimony of our text with the off-hand remark that 'the first *Alcibiades* is too poor a source' [1923, 743, note].

⁹⁰ For a good *précis* of the case against authenticity in the older literature see Heidel [1896, 61 ff.]. References to the later literature in Cherniss [1960, 71–2]; the most valuable is the critique by É. de Strycker [1945, 101 ff.] of defenses of the authenticity of the dialogue.

⁹¹ One of the later contributions to the literature, Clark's [1955, 231 ff.] argues that 'the first two-

thirds of the dialogue are the work of a pupil or follower of Plato, while the last part is by Plato himself, written in his middle period or at some time after the *Republic*'. I find it hard to believe that Plato, in years of great productivity, would take the time to put this kind of patch on a pupil's work—work which, along with a plethora of echoes and regurgitations of what he had said better in his own works, propounds notions which he would surely have found unacceptable (such, certainly, is the extraordinary, and extraordinarily favourable, picture of the education of the heir-apparent to the Persian throne [121C–122A]: cf. the deplorable education of Cyrus and his sons at the hands of women and eunuchs in *Laws* 694C–695B—the contrast is surprisingly overlooked by champions of the authenticity of *Alc. I*, as in Friedländer [1964, 236 and 350–1]). However, even on Clark's view the Platonic provenance of our present text would be denied, since it falls in his rejected 'first two-thirds' of the dialogue.

⁹² 'We run no risk in dating it not later than the beginning of the third century B.C.', Heidel [1896, 71]. Others would place it earlier.

⁹³ For copious references to this doctrine in the Platonic corpus see Shorey [1933, 652].

So, too, Socrates had continued, it would be proper to test Callicles' political pretensions by asking,

Say now, has Callicles ever improved any citizen? Is there anyone—alien or citizen, slave or freeman—formerly a bad man, unjust, intemperate, unwise, who was made noble and good because of Callicles? (515A4–8.)

And as Plato there had used Pericles (515C ff.) as an example of a man whose reputed wisdom fails the crucial test, so does our author here: his Socrates raises the same question about Pericles which the Platonic Socrates had put to Callicles, recycling some of the phraseology Plato had used there—alien/citizen,⁹⁴ slave/freeman.⁹⁵ Our author improves on the *Gorgias* by setting up Zeno as an example of a wise man who passes the test Pericles fails,⁹⁶ and picks the fortunate beneficiaries of Zeno's wisdom from the Platonic corpus: Pythodorus from *Prm.* 126B ff.,⁹⁷ Callias from many references in the dialogues to his lavish patronage of sophists.⁹⁸ And he has them paying fees whose magnificence, he thinks, would fit the opulence of the clientele, lending colour to Socrates' remark in the *Apology* (20A) that Callias had 'spent more money on sophists than everyone else put together' (translation by F. J. Church). So our text in the *Alcibiades I* makes as much use of Platonic materials as could be expected in a moderately skilful pastiche.⁹⁹ But I realise that this line of objection will hardly move scholars committed to the dialogue's authenticity. Can the case against the reliability of this particular testimonium be made to rest on more specific grounds? It can:

First and foremost among these I would place the clash of this Zeno-sophist of our text with the figure portrayed elsewhere by Plato as Parmenides' right-hand man. I have already alluded to this point, and will not labour it further. But I may add the following: The Zeno-sophist of our text would be equally hard to reconcile with the philosopher

⁹⁴ Substituting 'Αθηναῖος, in lieu of ἀστός, with good Platonic precedent (cf. 'Αθηναῖοι καὶ οἱ ξένοι, *Grg.* 472A), though Plato's usual way of making the contrast is by pairing ξένος with ἀστός (*Ap.* 30A; *R.* 613D; *Th.* 145B; *Grg.* 473D and 513A above).

⁹⁵ Here, I think, the forger is caught out, for he has missed something Plato would not have missed: the suggestion that no less a personage than Pericles could be expected to prove his wisdom by passing it on to slaves as well as freemen would have struck Plato's public as a curiosity, if not an absurdity. A better writer would have counted on some way of cushioning the shock of the suggestion by preparing the reader for it. This Plato had done in the *Grg.* by introducing a few lines earlier the slave-freeman phrase in the context of the public physician, where the notion that slaves too are a proper part of his constituency would have been entirely acceptable (cf. Dodds [1959] *ad* 514D8). By bringing in the politician in this passage on the physician's coat-tails Plato establishes a *prima facie* plausibility for what would otherwise have seemed an outrage—the expectation that to make good as a politician Callicles must make even slaves καλοὶ κάγαθοί! Nothing comparable in our text in the *Alc.* whose author, I suggest, missed the link between 514D and 515A in the *Grg.* when wrenching the 'slave or freeman' phrase from the latter passage.

⁹⁶ The incongruity of Plato's picking, without apparent irony, a sophist to serve as a true instance

of wisdom does not seem to strike our author. Compare the urbane, but unmistakable reservations in the reference to Evenus as a σοφός (especially the trailer in 20B9–C3) and to Callias in *Crat.* 391B, who πολλὰ τελέσας χρήματα σοφός δοκεῖ εἶναι.

⁹⁷ He probably took the phrase ἀλλὰ καὶ πρότερον ἀκηκοέναι [*sc.* Pythodorus] τοῦ Ζήνωνος in 127D4–5 to mean that Pythodorus had been Zeno's pupil. This is, of course, an acceptable use of ἀκούειν τοῦ δεῖνα. But it is almost certainly not the sense here: the cited clause follows ἐπακοῦσαι τῶν γραμμάτων in the preceding colon (127D3–4), which had been preceded a few lines earlier by ἀκοῦσαι τῶν τοῦ Ζήνωνος γραμμάτων (127C3); so the continuity of the thought would require us to understand after ἀκηκοέναι τοῦ Ζήνωνος something like ἀναγινώσκοντος, unless some new material had been interpolated to dictate a change of sense.

⁹⁸ See under 'Callias' in the Abbott-Knight Index in Hamilton and Cairns [1961, 1625].

⁹⁹ Which is true of the dialogue as a whole. Cf. Shorey's remark that Plato 'repeats or quotes himself more' in this dialogue than in any of his genuine works [1933, 415], and Heidel's words: 'In its character as a primer of Platonism in regard to ethics and politics *Alc. I* contains a greater number of distinctive Platonic thoughts than can be found in any of even the greater single works of Plato. In this respect the dialogue may be pronounced *too* Platonic.' [1896, 62.]

Plato pairs in the *Sophist* with Parmenides as the central figures of the Eleatic circle,¹⁰⁰ and with the like position Zeno occupies in Aristotle and in the doxographic tradition,¹⁰¹ as also in Simplicius.¹⁰² No such difficulty would arise over the Zeno depicted as ἀντιλογικός in Plato's *Phaedrus*, as the inventor of dialectic in Aristotle,¹⁰³ as an eristic in some later writers:¹⁰⁴ all of these designations are understandable as different shadings of the very thing we are told about him in the *Parmenides*: that he is only a controversialist, had no constructive doctrine of his own, invests all of his intellectual capital in purely destructive arguments, directed against anti-Parmenidean theses which are the backbone of the common sense view of the world.¹⁰⁵ And to say this, obviously, does not begin to say that he was a sophist.

Secondly, we must reckon with the fact that the story about Zeno in our text seems to have gained no credence in antiquity, and this in spite of the fact that the Platonic authorship of *Alcibiades I* was widely accepted.¹⁰⁶ For if it had been believed, Zeno would have been a star-example of the fee-charging sophist for the ancient historians, and his name would have vied with those of Protagoras and Gorgias in allusions to the great lights of the sophistic movement, while the fact is that there is not a single mention of Zeno as a professional sophist in any of our sources.¹⁰⁷ Not only does the story in our text pass without corroboration;¹⁰⁸ it seems to be denied by implication in Diogenes

¹⁰⁰ *Sph.* 216A, discussed in Section (II) above.

¹⁰¹ *Cf.* nn. 17 and 71 above.

¹⁰² *Cf.* n. 17 above.

¹⁰³ *Fig.* 1 (Ross) [*ap.* Diogenes Laertius 8, 57]: 'Aristotle says in the *Sophist* that Empedocles was the discoverer of rhetoric, Zeno of dialectic.'

¹⁰⁴ Galen (*Hist. Philos.* 3; DG 601, 8–9) cites him as Z. ὁ Ἐλεάτης ὁ τῆς ἐριστικῆς φιλοσοφίας ἀρχηγός. Epiphanius (*Advers. Haer.* 11; DG 590, 20) speaks of him as Z. ὁ Ἐλεάτης ὁ ἐριστικός to distinguish him from 'the other Zeno'.

¹⁰⁵ This fits perfectly Aristotle's view of the dialectician as arguing not from philosophically demonstrable premises, but from generally received opinions (ἐξ ἐνδόξων) and, in particular, from beliefs already held by his interlocutor (τὰς τῶν πολλῶν κατηρθμημένοι δόξας οὐκ ἐκ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν οἰκείων δογμάτων ὁμιλήσομεν πρὸς αὐτούς, *Top.* 101A31–2). Sophistry is, of course, firmly distinguished from dialectic in Aristotle (see e.g. *Top.* 171B4 ff. and *Rhet.* 1355A25–B25), but not from eristics, which Aristotle tends to conflate with sophistry. And if Galen had applied eristics to Zeno in that sense, that would certainly show that he was thinking of Zeno as a sophist. But Galen has a drastically different sense in view: his eristics are notably the Megarian and Eretrian dialecticians (ἐριστικούς δὲ κεκλήκασιν Ἐδκλείδην καὶ Μενέδημον . . . [*Histor. Philos.* 7; H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, 604, 15–16]).

¹⁰⁶ Two examples: Diogenes Laertius so speaks of it (*Vita Philos.* 3, 51) citing it as a specimen 'maieutic' dialogue; Plutarch says Πλάτων ἰστόρηκε when citing the dialogue as a source (*Vita Alc.* 1; and *cf.* his probable, though unacknowledged indebtedness to *Alc. I*, 106E, in *ibid.*, 2 [p. 259 in the Teubner edition of *Vitae parallelae*, vol. I, fasc. II, by Cl. Lindskog and K. Ziegler]).

¹⁰⁷ Nor, to my knowledge, any reference to him as σοφιστής at all. When Taylor [1934, 38] says that

'writers who wish to distinguish Zeno of Elea from Zeno of Citium and other persons of the same not unusual name call him ὁ σοφιστής', he gives no reference; I think he is bluffing. The usual, and perfectly sufficient, mode of reference for this purpose is simply ὁ Ἐλεάτης (so e.g. ps.-Plutarch, *Strom.* 6 [cited in n. 16 above]; so too in Galen, *Histor. Philos.* 7: *Doxographi Graeci*, 604, 14), but often with additions, τὸν Ἐλεάτην τοῦ Παρμενίδου γνώριμον, Alexander, *Met.* 227, 13–14 (and *cf.* n. 104 above). But, of course, if Zeno were called ὁ σοφιστής somewhere or other in the literature, this would of itself prove nothing for the point at issue, namely that, as Taylor contends, Zeno was thought of as a professional teaching for pay: Pythagoras is so called by Herodotus (4, 95); Anaxagoras by Diodorus Siculus (12, 39) and Athenaeus (5, 220B); Hecataeus of Abdera by Plutarch (*Vita Lys.* 20).

¹⁰⁸ The closest we get to this anywhere in our sources is Plutarch (*Vita Per.* 4, 3):

And Pericles heard also Zeno the Eleatic discoursing about nature like Parmenides (πραγματευομένου περὶ φύσιν, ὡς Παρμενίδης), but practicing a certain kind of refutation and, by means of contradictions, trapping one in perplexity (ἐλεγκτικὴν δὲ τινα καὶ δι' ἀντιλογίας κατακλείουσιν εἰς ἀπορίαν).

But note that there is no suggestion of Zeno's teaching Pericles for pay, and that by using the phrase πραγματευομένου περὶ φύσιν to describe the theme of Zeno's discourses Plutarch connects him with the natural philosophers rather than with the sophists, while recognising that, unlike the discourses of the *physiologoi*, Zeno's were predominantly elenctic and aporetic. (The simplest explanation of this peculiar tale is that it is an embroidery on our text in *Alc. I*—if Pythodorus and Callias are to be beneficiaries of Zeno's teaching, why not also Pericles, that connois-

Laertius,¹⁰⁹ who observes that

Zeno preferred his own native city . . . to the magnificence of Athens, having never sojourned there (οὐκ ἐπιδημήσας πώμαλα πρὸς αὐτούς), but having lived at home throughout his life (ἀλλ' αὐτόθι καταβιούς). (*Vit. Philos.* 9, 28.)

Since ἐπιδημεῖν would certainly cover a residence in Athens long enough to give Pythodorus and Callias their money's worth of sophistic instruction,¹¹⁰ Diogenes' statement implicitly denies that there was any such period in Zeno's life. Though he cites no source and does not indicate his reasons, it is significant that he should have gone out of his way to issue that denial in the face of our text in *Alcibiades I*¹¹¹ which he would have thought backed by Plato's own authority:¹¹² it shows, at the very least, that his own sources, so much more abundant than those in our possession, offered him no creditable corroboration of the story in our text.¹¹³

Finally, we can spot within our text a very peculiar item which, I shall argue, is a recognisable fiction: the hundred mina fee.¹¹⁴ The going rates for sophistic instruction around this time we can judge from contemporary evidence of unimpeachable authority. In the *Apology* (20B) Socrates mentions what Callias expects to pay Evenus of Paros for the instruction of his sons: five minas. Socrates says this in an address to several hundred Athenians many of whom would be in a good position to know what sophists were charging.¹¹⁵ Isocrates speaks of the sophists teaching for 'three or four minas'.¹¹⁶ That he himself

seur of fine intellectual imports?—made by somebody or other who is familiar with the general content and temper of Zenonian dialectics. Plutarch's source included edifying tit-bits, like Zeno's retort to Pericles' detractors about δοξοκοπεῖν in 5, 4).

¹⁰⁹ As would be also the one in Plutarch cited in the preceding note, if Diogenes knew it (as he well might: he cites twice a Plutarchean *Vita* [Lysander's] as a source [4, 4; 9, 60]) and took it to mean that Zeno's contact with Pericles involved a stay at Athens long enough to count as ἐπιδημεῖν (as Diogenes might: both the context and the use of the verb διήκουσε suggest more than a brief encounter during a few days' visit).

¹¹⁰ A sophist's residence in a city for the period he would need to give a course of instruction would come well within the scope of ἐπιδημεῖν: see e.g. the numerous uses of the term for just this purpose in Plato, listed in Ast s.vv. 'ἐπιδημῶ', 'ἐπιδημία'. Guthrie seems to ignore this well-documented usage when he assumes [1965, 80–1] that Diogenes' denial would not exclude visits in Athens such as would be required by our text in *Alc. I*.

¹¹¹ Cf. n. 106 above.

¹¹² Though Diogenes' historical judgment is wobbly, his greatest fault is uncritical receptivity to what he finds in his sources. Without strong reason to the contrary he would be vastly more likely to accept than to reject a testimony whose authority he thought Plato's own.

¹¹³ And that he did not so count the tale in Plutarch.

¹¹⁴ I must argue against this figure in detail, for it has gone virtually unchallenged in the scholarly literature. The only eyebrow it has raised, to my

knowledge, is Zeller's and that only in another context (when confronting its ascription to Protagoras [1920, 1299, n. 3] he remarks, 'Jene Summe ist ohne Zweifel sehr übertrieben').

¹¹⁵ That five minas is no lower than the prevailing rate and is quite likely higher we may infer from the fact that Socrates is speaking of a case where the prospective client is Callias and is alluding to the great sums this rich man—the richest in Athens—has spent on sophists (cf. the quotation from *Ap.* 20A in the text above).

¹¹⁶ *Adv. Soph.* 3–4. It is a mistake to speak of this as an 'absurd' (i.e. absurdly low) figure ('Spottpreis', Zeller [1920, 1344, n. 3]): thus four minas, though little enough for what the seller claimed he would deliver for it (σύμψασαν . . . τὴν ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν), would be no paltry sum in itself: it would be considerably larger, for example, than what a good mason would earn in the course of a whole year. [In the accounts of the construction of the Erechtheum on the Acropolis in 409–06 B.C. 'the daily wage of the artisan, whether citizen, metic or slave, was one drachma, irrespective of the work in which he was engaged . . . Even the architect received only one drachma and his assistant secretary only five obols a day, but these were regular stipends paid each prytany and not dependent upon the number of working days' (Tod in *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. V [1953, 24–5]). If Evenus had collected five minas from each of, say, ten students in the course of a year [for this figure see n. 122 below] he would have enjoyed an income more than 13 times greater than the combined income of the architect, his secretary and eight skilled masons.]

charged ten for the *de luxe* course of instruction in his school we know from Demosthenes.¹¹⁷ But when we come to later authors the fee supposedly charged by the great sophists shoots up to 100 minas. Diodorus Siculus (first century B.C.) has Gorgias charging this figure;¹¹⁸ Diogenes Laertius ascribes it to Protagoras.¹¹⁹ Where these authors have fished up this startling figure (100 minas = 10,000 drachmas = $1\frac{2}{3}$ talents) they do not say: neither gives any indication of a source. That it is false we can judge from two considerations. First, it is wildly out of line with the earlier figures which have just been cited, all falling within the range of from 3 to 10 minas, the highest of them being the one charged by Isocrates, as famous and fashionable a teacher of rhetoric in his time as Gorgias had been in his, and for a course of study which Isocrates says¹²⁰ lasted from three to four years, while we have no indication that the term of instruction given by Gorgias or Protagoras was nearly as long.¹²¹ Secondly, we have the account of Hippias' instructional tour in Sicily in Plato's *Hippias Major*. Socrates had just remarked that Gorgias and Prodicus had each 'earned more from his wisdom than had any craftsman (*δημιουργός*) from any craft whatever'¹²² and that 'so had Protagoras before them' (282E). Hippias replies:

I went to Sicily once while Protagoras was residing there (*ἐπιδημοῦντος αὐτόθι*) and enjoying a great reputation. Though he was much the older of the two of us, I made in a short time much more than 150 minas . . . I rather think I have earned almost twice as much as have any two other sophists you might care to mention (282D-E).

If Hippias, bragging of his success in the Sicilian market, reports his total take at 'much more than 150 minas' (presumably not very much more, else he would have named a higher round number), while representing himself as having earned 'almost twice as much' as any two other sophists picked at random, the notion that Protagoras had been in the habit of collecting 100 minas *from a single student* is obviously fantastic.¹²³ So there is even

¹¹⁷ *C. Lacrit.* (Or. 34) 42. Same figure in the pseudo-Plutarchian *Vitae X Or.* ([Plut.] *Moralia*) 837C; *Vita Isoc.* 43.

¹¹⁸ 12, 53.

¹¹⁹ 9, 52. Other references in Boeckh [1842, 121, n. 576].

¹²⁰ *Ant.* 87.

¹²¹ One gets the opposite impression from the absence of any allusion to residence by Protagoras or Gorgias at Athens for any period even remotely approaching such a length.

¹²² The highest pay I have encountered for a person whom Plato would reckon a *δημιουργός* is in Herodotus (3, 131) for Democedes, the most famous physician of his age: Aegina hires him from Croton at one talent per annum, a year later Athens from Aegina at 100 minas, the year after Polycrates brings him to Samos from Athens at 2 talents. Even if we assume that Socrates would have in view this last figure (escalated under exceptionally heavy intercity bidding) and would think of it as earnings by a craftsman rather than as the indulgence of a tyrant's whim, his comparison would still be sustained by allowing the sophists Socrates has in view to be charging no more than the highest of the above mentioned rates for the fifth and fourth centuries. The sophists would have needed to take in no more than thirteen students at 10,000 drachmas a head to exceed comfortably the two talents it had cost Polycrates to wrench Democedes away from Athens. (The only apparently reliable figure I have for the

number of students enrolled by a teacher of rhetoric is the one for Isocrates at Chios in [Plut.] *Mor.* 837B: he had nine students there when only just starting his teaching career; he must have had many more later on as his fame soared, and it would be safe to make the same assumption for Protagoras & Co. in the fifth century (the figure of 100 given for the students in Isocrates' school in Athens by the same source [837C] looks too much like a soft round figure to be taken seriously). This reckoning is well in line with the other comparison between the earnings of craftsmen and sophists in the Socratic dialogues: Socrates says in the *Meno* (91D) that he knows 'Protagoras made more money from that wisdom of his than did Phidias and ten other statuaries'. If we allow Protagoras peak-earnings of no more than 13,000 dr. per annum (which would still be only 30 per cent more than the 100 minas given him by Diogenes *for a single student*), Socrates' comparison would be sustained if 'Phidias and ten other statuaries' were earning as much as 1,100 dr. on the average (which would allow much more for Phidias than for most of the rest), i.e. considerably more than would be required by Erechtneum figures cited in n. 115 above.

¹²³ A similar argument against the 100 mina fee Diodorus Siculus gave Gorgias can be premised on the fact that Gorgias, though highly successful in his trade, is known to have left an estate of only a thousand staters [=20,000 drachmae] (Isocrates, *Ant.* 156), while Isocrates charging fees one tenth the

less reason to take it seriously in the case of Zeno on the strength of our text in *Alcibiades I* whose authority is already doubly suspect on the grounds mentioned above. That the author should have made Zeno a present of this grandiose figure when casting him as a sophist is a good reason for distrusting the veracity of the whole of his little tale. There-with the allegation that Zeno was a practising sophist loses its sole claim to creditable support in the ancient literature.

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size is said 'to have made more money than any other sophist, so that he was even a trierarch' ([Plut.] *Moralia* 837C). It is true that fees of instruction were not the whole source of Isocrates' income: 'he not only collected money from his pupils, but also received from Nicocles, king of Cypurs, son of Evagoras, twenty talents for the oration written in his

honour' (*op. cit.* 838A). But his teaching was the main, and the only regular, source of his income. If he had been so fortunate as to collect 100 mina fees from pupils, he would have quickly become richer from this source alone than the very tyrants whose subventions he courted.

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