

Theory and History of Ontology

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Annotated Bibliography on Plato's *Parmenides*

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"In the relatively naive early theory of forms, Plato uses unreflectively such words as "one," "being," "whole," "same," "other"; when he came to reflect on these words and to treat them as signifying forms, he encountered many difficulties -- especially in view of his principle of "self-predication," that the form (being) is itself. An attempt is here made to delineate the "new" theory involved in the "Sophist" and "Parmenides", in two main aspects: participation of one form in another, and negation and incompatibility. A constructable model for these relations of forms is described. "

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"The antinomies of the *Parmenides* were composed for the purpose of showing that the Eleatic dialectic of Zeno when applied to the monistic Being of Parmenides produces the same paradoxes as when used against pluralism. It is demonstrated that the second part of the dialogue is formally an elaborate parodia of the poem of Parmenides and metodically a parodia of the logic-chopping of Zeno. By this means the psychological purpose of the dialogue is elucidated, the unity of the dialogue is made evident, and its relationship to the Sophist is established."
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"The paper challenges the view that in both the "Parmenides" and the "Sophist" Plato suffers from confusion about identity and predication. I claim that the arguments of part II of the "Parmenides" are not infected with this confusion. Further, I argue that part II of the "Parmenides" explores and investigates ideas (especially about being and not-being) that are crucial to the solution of the problem of not-being in the "Sophist" (a solution that does not depend on distinguishing identity and predicative senses of 'to be')."
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"Plato's *Parmenides* contrasts with Plato's other works in several ways. For example, Socrates is depicted as "very young" (127c5), perhaps fifteen or perhaps nineteen. Parmenides questions Socrates, who contradicts himself; in other dialogues of question and answer, Socrates typically questions others, who contradict themselves. Parmenides refutes Socrates on the topic of forms, items such as justice itself and good itself, while the older Socrates of other dialogues presents forms as central to philosophy; the dialogue thus raises the question whether its criticism of forms signals Plato's revision of views expressed in previous writings. The *Parmenides* is the only dialogue in which forms are the main topic. The dialogue's second part, 137c-166c, is the longest passage of unrelenting argument in Plato's writings. Its arguments are his most puzzling." (p. 383)

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"The aim of this paper is to give a synthetic and overview interpretation of what Plato intends by "participation" in several dialogues. "*Phaedo*", 100 sqq.: participation is the effect of the Forms' presence in things and of their having something in common. "*Parmenides*", 248-249: participation consists of things "being-caused-as-images-of Forms," where "cause" will in later dialogues be disclosed to be the Forms as models and goals and intellects as agents. "*Sophist*", 219 sqq. and 266a sqq.: by productive art intelligent agents -- human and divine -- cause products to participate through contemplation of Forms as models. "*Timaeus*", 26b-30d and 47e sqq.: working with the receptacle as the participant underlying all participation, the divine craftsman uses the Forms as models and telic causes in producing individual souls and bodies, together with the entire visible universe itself. "*Symposium*", 210e-211b, "*Phaedo*", 79d and "*Republic*", vi, 511d suggest that Plato's philosophy is not a phenomenology."
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