INTRODUCTION

Demonstration has been the cornerstone of claims to knowledge since at least the time of Aristotle.[1] But demonstration, and, more specifically, the extended deductive argumentation that forms its backbone, has a history. As is widely agreed, that history begins with Parmenides of Elea, in whose poem we find the first recorded extended deductive argument – and with it, the first outline of a demonstration.[2]

This is not the only reason why Parmenides has won acclaim, even veneration, from leading Western thinkers. Since the time of Plato[3] (and – to judge from Parmenides' influence on Zeno, Melissus, Democritus, and others – probably before), philosophers of many stripes, from Hegel[4] to Heidegger,[5] Russell[6] to Popper[7] to Anscombe,[8] have celebrated Parmenides' unique importance as

---

[1] See esp. Arist. *Top.* 100a2 ff.
[2] See especially Lloyd (1979) 67–79; Lloyd (1990) 81–83; Lloyd (2000) 244–45. More generally, see also the comments in e.g. Mansfeld (1990) 17–18; Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007); Schofield (2003) 61–64; McKirahan (2010) esp. 150–51, 172–73; Osborne (2004) 39–50 (and the critical Osborne (2006)); and Warren (2007) 79.
[3] See e.g. Pl. *Soph.* 241d, *Tht.* 183e–84a.
[4] See e.g. Hegel (1833) 296–7: 'Mit Parmenides hat das eigentliche Philosophieren angefangen.' ('Real philosophy begins with Parmenides.')
[5] See e.g. the rhapsodic remarks at Heidegger (2000) 100–03, 145–54, where he enshrines Parmenides as the founder of Being (even, with Heraclitus, 'the founder of all thinking', p. 145), the first thinker to thematize Being-as-such and so open the field of ontology.
[6] See e.g. Russell (1972) 55: 'What makes Parmenides historically important is that he invented a form of metaphysical argument that . . . is to be found in most subsequent metaphysicians down to and including Hegel. He is often said to have invented logic, but what he really invented was metaphysics based on logic.'
[7] See e.g. Popper (1998a) 146, where we read of 'the almost unlimited power still exerted over Western scientific thought by the ideas of a great man who lived about 2,500 years ago: Parmenides of Elea'; see the same work for a discussion of Parmenides' revolutionary conception of knowledge as the defining feature of Western science and rationalism (pp. 159–60). It is telling that Heidegger and Popper, whose mutual contempt was as deep as their ideas were incompatible, should both revere Parmenides as a heroic oecist of the city of *logos*.
[8] Who one-upped Whitehead by declaring that 'subsequent philosophy is footnotes on Parmenides': Anscombe (1981) xi.

1

the grandfather of their profession – though not always for the same reason. Historians of ancient philosophy and science similarly agree on the epochal importance of Parmenides' contribution to Western thought but disagree on where, precisely, this importance lies. Some herald Parmenides for his primordial articulation of the notion of modality;[9] others laud his groundbreaking advances in astronomy, especially his remarkable observation that the moon reflects the sun's light (and, therefore, that the earth is spherical);[10] others still foreground his seminal position in the atomic tradition.[11] Whatever their differences, however, nearly all acknowledge that Parmenides is the first recorded person to make an extended deductive argument, and nearly all accept that his poem shares key features with what Aristotle will later call *apodeixis* or 'demonstration'. As one of the 20th century's leading historians of ancient thought put it, 'the *aims* of *The Way of Truth* are clear: Parmenides sets out to establish a set of inescapable conclusions by strict deductive arguments from a starting point that itself has to be accepted. Those are features it shares with later demonstrations.'[12]

Parmenides' many other astonishing achievements do not, however, eclipse the fact that his confection of these three features – (i) proceeding from a starting point that has to be accepted (ii) by strict deductive arguments (iii) to establish an inescapable conclusion – marks a fundamental inflection point in the history of Western thought. The clarity with which we may state this is matched only by the intractable obscurity surrounding the development and fusion of these three features in Parmenides' poem. This remains so despite agreement about Parmenides' importance, and despite the quantity (and quality) of recent scholarship devoted to understanding Parmenides in relation to his

---

[9] See e.g. Palmer (2009).
[10] See e.g. Popper (1998d), Popper (1998c), Popper (1998b), Popper (1998e), Cerri (2000), Cerri (2011), Graham (2002b), Graham (2006), Graham (2013), Mourelatos (2013b).
[11] See e.g. Curd (1998b), Curd (2006) 47–49, Graham (2006) and Graham (2013), Palmer (2009), Cerri et al. (2018).
[12] Lloyd (2000) 244–45. See also Lloyd (1979) 67–79; Lloyd (1990) 81–86; and, more recently, and for an even more macroscopic perspective, Lloyd (2009) esp. 15–17; Lloyd (2017b) esp. 58–87; Lloyd (2018) esp. 39–56; and now Lloyd and Zhao (2018), for a comparison with ancient Chinese thought.

2

Presocratic predecessors and successors.[13] Exploring the origins of this complex of features (i–iii) and providing an account of their emergence, both as individual items and as a complex formed from them (viz. a 'demonstration'), forms the central task of this book.

Two Enduring Problems: A Parmenidean Greek Miracle, and 'Why Verse?'

There are good reasons for this intractability. The task of relocating Parmenides in his intellectual context is beset by deep, even potentially insurmountable challenges. The few *ipsissima verba* of Parmenides' Milesian predecessors are embedded in settings, doxographical or otherwise, strongly marked by their pursuit of other, post-Parmenidean, agendas.[14] Unless new original fragments appear, or a new understanding of the spread of people, information, and ideas can be persuasively established – or both – attempts to pin down the relationships between Parmenides and Xenophanes, or Anaximander, or Anaximenes[15] (not to mention Heraclitus)[16] will remain largely speculative[17] (and may say more

---

[13] Following the initial move by Barnes (1982), Curd (1998b) and Curd (2006), Osborne (2006), and Palmer (2009) re-examine Parmenides' relationship to Empedocles, Anaxagoras, and the atomists. For predecessors and possible contemporaries, see nn. 15–17 below.

[14] See e.g. Osborne (1987), also Coxon (2009) [1986] 1–7, Mansfeld (1999) and Mansfeld (2015), and Runia (2008) for overviews, Palmer (2009) 1–45 for discussion and bibliography; see also esp. Cordero (1987) for Parmenides' poem itself.

[15] For a sophisticated treatment of 'grand narrative' approaches from Zeller (1892 and 1919) through Cherniss (1935) and Guthrie (1962), Guthrie (1965) to the surveys of Barnes (1982) and Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007), see Palmer (2009) 1–45, esp. 20–25; and also Graham (2006), Graham (2010), Graham (2013). The critique of Osborne (2006) remains trenchant. Much good work on Xenophanes has appeared in the last two decades, considerable portions of which have a bearing on his relationship to Parmenides; see esp. Lesher (1999); Lesher (2008); Lesher (2013); Mourelatos (2002); Mourelatos (2008a); Mourelatos (2008b) xxii–xxiii, xxii n. 14; Mourelatos (2013b); Mourelatos (2016a); Mogyoródi (2006); Bryan (2012); also discussion in Curd (2011) 10–13, and now esp. Tor (2017).

[16] See e.g. the deflationary comments of Cordero (2004) 8. Embers of the debate still smoulder: see e.g. Graham (2002a) and Nehamas (2002), followed up by Hermann (2009); Osborne (2006) 231–37 offers a different perspective on the controversy.

[17] Not to mention possible relationships with Orphic and Pythagorean thought, and/or the myths and rituals of mystery cults; see n. 82 below.

about our own conception of how 'philosophy' ought to work than anything else).[18]

Furthermore, our knowledge of the social, political, and intellectual dynamics of archaic *poleis*, especially in Magna Graecia, is too lacunose to identify with precision the influence of existing cultural, political, and legal institutions and practices on Parmenides.[19] Vernant, responding to the connection between Hesiod and the Milesians posited by Cornford, mocked Burnet's notion of the 'Greek Miracle', as if '[a]ll of a sudden, on the soil of Ionia, *logos* presumably broke free from myth, as the scales fell from the blind man's eyes. And the light of that reason, revealed once and for all, has never ceased to guide the progress of the human mind.'[20] These words first appeared more than half a century ago, and in the interim an army of distinguished scholars has laboured to disassemble the Greek Miracle edifice block by block. Parmenides' great foundation stone has escaped untouched, however: even now, we still have no detailed account that would explain just how Parmenides invented deductive argumentation, nor even one that links it to his predecessors' modes of speaking and writing persuasively. Before Parmenides, Presocratics merely asserted;[21] after him, they argued, and attempted to demonstrate.[22] It is still as if, all of a sudden, on the soil of Elea, deductive argumentation and the practice of demonstration broke free from mere assertion, as the scales fell ... In practice, the result is, as Malcolm Schofield put it, that 'it is nowadays commonly supposed that Parmenides was a creative genius not much in debt to anybody'.[23]

---

[18] See esp. Osborne (2004) and Osborne (2006).
[19] To the extent that they elucidate larger sociopolitical trends with direct bearing on Parmenides' context much more generally, classic studies such as Vlastos (1947), Vernant (2006g), Vernant (1982), Vernant (2006a), Vernant (2006f), Detienne (1996), Detienne (2007), Lloyd (1979), Lloyd (1987) help us grapple with the larger 'Why?' but do little to address the 'How?' of precise developments pertaining to Parmenides (see e.g. Lloyd (1990) 96). For relatively recent studies on law, see Gagarin (2002) and Asper (2005). We can now also add interest in archaic architectural practices: see e.g. Tzonis and Lefaivre (1999), Hahn (2001), and Giannisi (2006).
[20] Vernant (1982) 104.
[21] E.g. Curd (1998a) esp. 5–6; this point will be discussed extensively in Section 6.1, '*Sēma* I' below.
[22] Though see qualifications by Curd (1998b), Osborne (2006), also Barnes (1982) 177.
[23] Schofield (2003) 44.

4

It is useful to juxtapose the scarcity of our knowledge of Parmenides' social, cultural, and political setting with another quirk of the last century and a half of scholarship on Parmenides. While we often seem to be able to say too little about the tradition within, and out of, which Parmenides developed extended deductive argumentation and the skeleton of demonstration, scholars have ignored, and even lamented, aspects of his poem about which we might say much.[24] They have registered with dismay Parmenides' linguistic extravagance, finding it incongruous with the triumph of austere reasoning whose birth we are supposed to witness in the 'Route to Truth'.[25] How could Parmenides have elected to compose in verse?[26] (Especially if, as the consensus since Diels and Wilamowitz – not to mention Plutarch – has it, that verse is so defective.)[27] What could have motivated him to use such richly textured, imagistic language to formulate a deductive argument?[28] Why did he deploy the narrative mechanics and

---

[24] See nn. 27–28, 79–81 below, for discussion of earlier treatments of Parmenides as poet. Fortunately, this book seems to be part of a groundswell of more culturally or poetically oriented assessments of Parmenides' poetry, which, to my knowledge, have arisen independently of each other: see n. 28 below.

[25] This attitude is no mere relic of the past; for a recent example, see Wedin (2014).

[26] Barnes (1982) 155 captures what was until recently the *communis opinio*: 'It is hard to excuse Parmenides' choice of verse as a medium for his philosophy.' More nuanced discussions on the topic have appeared sporadically in the last two-plus decades, including Coxon (2009) [1986], Floyd (1992), Wöhrle (1993), Wright (1997), C. Osborne (1997), Most (1999a) (with concurring remarks in Kahn (2003)), Cerri (1999), Robbiano (2006), Granger (2008) 3–4, Gemelli Marciano (2008) and Gemelli Marciano (2013), and now Sassi (2018) 151–55. For predecessors in this debate, see Mourelatos (2008b) 4–11 and the polemical Tarán (1977); I discuss the question at length in Ch. 2.

[27] Barnes again: 'the difficulty of understanding his thought is not lightened by any literary joy: the case presents no adjunct to the Muse's [*sic*] diadem' (Barnes (1982) 155); cf. Plut. *De aud. poet.* 45b. Further denigration of Parmenides' verse at Hussey (1972) 79, Tarán (1977) 653–54, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007) 241; see Wöhrle (1993) for discussion.

[28] See Mourelatos (2008b) 222–63 for an early embrace of linguistic polyvalence in Parmenides – and, exceptionally even by later standards, not only in the proem. After a hiatus, one finds Coxon (2009) [1986], Couloubaritsis (1990), Mansfeld (1995), Cerri (1999), Morgan (2000) 67–87, Miller (2006), Gemelli Marciano (2008) and Gemelli Marciano (2013), Palmer (2009), and Sassi (2018) – all of whose interests in linguistic ambiguity or polyvalence focus mostly, or exclusively, on the proem. Thankfully, times have begun to change. Robbiano (2006) makes use of Iser's audience-oriented reception aesthetics (see esp. 22–34) to develop a more multifaceted account of Parmenides' use of language and imagery, which are seen to work in service of transforming the audience itself. A recent entrant into the field, Ranzato (2015), drawing inspiration from Gernet's notion of 'the polyvalence of images' as 'a phenomenon of social memory' (Gernet

5

dramatic scenario of myth to stage reason's great debut in Western thought?[29]

The impulses animating these questions are perhaps understandable. It will always be both tempting and, at least to some extent, unavoidable to read Parmenides backwards through the prism of the formalized second-order analysis of demonstration and deductive argumentation established by Aristotle. There is no obligation, however, to read Parmenides exclusively according to the rules of this canon, even though, in many of its essential features, it continues to define the way that we think and argue.[30] In fact, it is precisely *because* the object of study here is in so many ways directly connected, and therefore immediately accessible, to our own intellectual practices, to what intuitively constitutes 'good thinking' today, that we must take special care.

How are we to do this? The question gives an extra bite to Geoffrey Lloyd's insistence on the value to historians of ancient thought of the anthropologist's distinction between 'actors' categories' and 'observers' categories'.[31] As a basic methodological principle, anthropologists attempt 'to express the ideas, beliefs, [and] practices of the society in question in the terms used by members of society themselves – the actors'.[32] What is at stake in doing so?

(2004) 48, excerpted at length in Ranzato (2015) 16–17), uses 'polyvalence' as a sort of master term through which to approach Parmenides' poem (see discussion at Section 4.3, 'Concluding Remarks', and notes 79, 80–82 in this chapter for more general differences between the respective fields, methods, and aims of our projects). Despite these differences, the present book operates in broad, if originally unwitting, allegiance with Ranzato's work, along with a new generation of reassessments including Tor (2017), Ferella (2017) and Ferella (2018) (see note 76 below), and Mackenzie (2015), Mackenzie (2016), and Mackenzie (2017) (see note 79 below), in seeking to relocate Parmenides in his larger sociocultural, poetic, linguistic, religious, and physical context.

[29] For welcome exceptions, see Most (1999a), Kahn (2003), Nightingale (2007) 190, Laks (2013), Sassi (2018), also Morgan (2000) 67–87, and the more recent works mentioned in n. 28 above. Much of the research cited in n. 82 below takes the opposite tack: emphasizing the mythical aspects of Parmenides' poem, these scholars deny its status as a founding document in the Western tradition of philosophical reasoning and argument – or that it contains arguments at all (in e.g. Gemelli Marciano (2008) and (2013); see n. 83 below for further discussion. As with many of the works cited in n. 28, these discussions nearly always focus on the proem (on this point, see n. 56 below).

[30] Including, of course, the way that the author of a book such as this one is expected to argue, here and in what follows; see also remarks in Part III.

[31] See Lloyd (1992) and Lloyd (2004) viii–ix. For similar remarks on the history of philosophy, see likewise Lloyd (1991a).

[32] Lloyd (1992) 566.

6

The aim of keeping as close as possible to the actors' own categories is two-fold. Negatively, first, it helps to minimize the risks of assimilating alien ideas to our own, of assuming that the subjects studied have the same conceptual framework in mind that is suggested by the interpreter's own (observer) categories. Positively, second, it allows an alien network of meanings to be built up in its own terms and be seen for what it is, as alien.[33]

Both factors should be carefully considered in the case of Parmenides. While reading his 'Route to Truth' as no more and no less than the earliest attested example of an extended deductive argument helps us pinpoint one of Parmenides' most important contributions to the history of thought, paradoxically, doing so blocks us from examining just how he accomplishes the very act – inventing extended deductive argumentation and the outline of demonstration – that we would study.

This is true on several levels. First, to characterize Parmenides' poem as a deductive argument is implicitly to bestow upon it from the start all the qualities we today understand a deductive argument to possess; suddenly fragments 2, 6, 7, and, especially, 8, as 'deductive arguments', are truth-preserving, and so proceed according to a specific kind of logical necessity anchored *a priori* in what we would call the laws of non-contradiction and the excluded middle.

Or at least they ought to. For, second, labelling the poem a deductive argument has the consequence of establishing a distinctive interpretive frame and corresponding set of hermeneutic expectations.[34] Understanding it as a deductive argument first and last, one reads the poem against such criteria as validity and soundness, guards against such things as illicit modal upgrades[35] or confusions of *necessitas consequentiae* and *necessitas consequentiis*,[36] discusses its language and structure in the philosopher's idiom of quantification and predication,[37] claims

---

[33] Lloyd (1992) 566.

[34] Again, Barnes is exemplary: 'Thus I shall ... treat [Fr. 8] as an ordinary deduction' (Barnes (1982) 177–78).

[35] Hardly a relic of past attitudes: see e.g. discussion in the astute Palmer (2009), and the arguments of Lewis (2009) and Wedin (2014) for the enduring importance of the question of the 'illicit modal upgrade'.

[36] See e.g. Barnes (1982) 164, Goldin (1993), Crystal (2002).

[37] Little wonder that so much confusion surrounded Parmenides' use of *esti* for so long – if one renders his argument in notation whose lexicon includes '∃' and 'φx', one is not only trapped in the anachronism diagnosed by Brown (1994), one is perhaps blind to this very possibility, and thus also prevented in advance from transcending it.

7

made *de dicto* and *de re*.[38] Appropriate intertexts become the *Discourse on Method*[39] or the *Critique of Pure Reason*,[40] 'On Denoting'[41] or the *Tractatus*.[42] This has consequences. Judged by rules unformed and standards yet unknown for hundreds or thousands of years, Parmenides is perpetually – but also, given his nonpareil innovation as a practising logician, inexplicably – on the verge of suffering amateurish lapses or committing schoolboy blunders.[43]

Even more significantly for the present discussion, such a stance excludes from analysis – because by definition they should have no bearing on the deductive validity of the argument itself – the imagery that shapes, guides, and inflects the language and structure of Parmenides' argument; the argument's dramatic framing; its intertextual relations (except insofar as these intertexts are other deductive arguments); and its relationship to its sociocultural and historical context. In fact, such a hermeneutic stance not only

[38] Barnes (1982) is not alone in succumbing to the urge to render Parmenides' argument in formal logical notation; analysts as diverse as Wedin (2014) and Mourelatos (2008b) do the same.

[39] Owen (1960) 95–96, Gallop (1979) 71, Hintikka (1980), M. Mackenzie (1982), among others, examine the analogy with Descartes's *cogito*. See remarks in Schofield (2003) 44, also Ch. 5 below.

[40] 'Burnet once said ... that we must not (as Th. Gomperz did) interpret Parmenides as Kant before Kant ... But this is exactly what we must do' (Popper (1998e) 143–44); see also Mourelatos (2008b) xlii–xliv and Mourelatos (2013b).

[41] Owen's 'Russellian' interpretation of Fr. 2 remains influential: see Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007), esp. 245–46, and the discussions in Palmer (2009) 19–25, 74–82 and Mourelatos (2016b).

[42] Wittgenstein remains the most popular point of comparison in the anglophone world (though not only here – see also Jantzen (1976)); see, *inter alia*, Owen (1960) and Owen (1974) 275–76, Kahn (2009b), Williams (1981), the explicitly Wittgensteinian Mourelatos (2008b), M. Mackenzie (1982), Austin (1986) 15–16, and Wedin (2014). To this list we might also add Wilfred Sellars, a comparison detailed at length by Mourelatos (2008b) xliv–xlix and Mourelatos (2013b); Spinoza, Berkeley, Meinong are also in the mix (see e.g. Mourelatos (2013a) 161–63). The phenomenon is not strictly limited to latter-day philosophers; one even finds comparisons to Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* (Cerri (2000) 67–69), while Popper is happy to place Parmenides' ideas alongside those of Boltzmann, Einstein, Gödel (see here also Wedin (2014)), and Schrödinger (Popper (1998a)).

[43] See some of the discussions cited in nn. 37–38, esp. Barnes (1982) and Lewis (2009). In response, some would-be 'defenders' of Parmenides, such as Wedin (2014), must find ways to explain that Parmenides actually 'got it right'. More subtly, this impulse can become a guiding interpretative assumption through a charitable desire to 'make Parmenides' arguments good' (Sedley (1999), McKirahan (2008) 173, Palmer (2009) 63–105). This last remark is an observation, not a criticism; see Ch. 6, esp. n. 164, for further discussion.

8

prevents these dimensions from being considered, but configures basic features of the text as problems. Why verse for a deductive argument?[44] Why the dramatic encounter between *kouros* and goddess in a proof about the nature of what-is?[45] Why so many images, such figurative language?

Similarly, referring to the poem as (simply) a deductive argument makes it hard to avoid retrojecting onto the poem's earliest audiences a sense of the privileged status deductive argumentation today enjoys as the authoritative means by which to prove the validity of a claim. But why should a contemporary of Parmenides have found the sequence into which he ordered his claims compelling in and of itself?[46]

Third, to approach the 'Route to Truth' from the presumption that one is reading a deductive argument is to accept as a *fait accompli* the very achievement one wishes to examine as the product of a complex process. The notion of a systematic argument of interlinked claims which begins from a necessary point of departure, proceeds from one claim to the next according to some kind of necessity, and ultimately arrives at a final destination, is all taken for granted of a demonstration (not least since these are among its defining features). But these are precisely the new elements that Parmenides introduces onto the discursive scene. To refer to Parmenides' argumentative style as 'deductive' (and leave the matter there) is therefore to accept as a finished article that which we are in fact seeing fashioned before our eyes.

And this in turn, fourth, short-circuits from the start any attempt to examine the specific strategies and techniques by which Parmenides develops these new elements – precisely what we are interested in here. Calling this portion of his poem no less and no more than a deductive argument makes it seem as if this specific manner of advancing a claim (obviously and inherently superior, on this view, to its predecessors) had always been sitting around waiting to be discovered. To refer to Parmenides'

---

[44] See nn. 26 and 27 above.
[45] See nn. 28 and 29 above.
[46] See e.g. Detienne (1996). The question is of course only as strange as, for example, the fact that the ancient Chinese felt little need to bother much with rigorous argumentation or proof; see Lloyd and Sivin (2002), Osborne (2006).

9

fragments 2–8 as a 'deductive argument' or a 'demonstration', with no further elaboration, thus threatens *ipso facto* to prevent us from gaining fundamental insights into the process by which deductive argumentation emerges, the very techniques and strategies Parmenides used to make this manner of expressing claims about the nature of what-is seem plausible, or even intelligible.

The Two Problems Resolve Each Other

Against this backdrop, Lloyd's remark concerning the benefits of allowing 'an alien network of meanings to be built up' could hardly be more salutary. It is true that 'the terminology in which [Parmenides] describes what he is doing is a very limited one' and that '[h]e has no word for deduction'.[47] (Indeed, why would he?) But Parmenides *does* have language to describe the arguments that span fragments 2, 6, 7, and 8: and this centres on the programmatically repeated notion of what he calls a *hodos dizēsios* or 'route of inquiry'.[48] What is more, if this 'terminology' is indeed 'limited' insofar as it is not part of a larger system of technical vocabulary coined for special purposes, it is in other ways far richer, deeper, and of more subtle texture for precisely the same reason. These terms, not being 'technical', remain the more powerfully charged by the currents of polysemy, ambiguity, intertextuality, and the play of signifier and signified, for remaining enmeshed in the web of language.

Or, rather, network. For in light of Lloyd's call to use actors' categories (and not – or not only[49] – our own), the gap (between Parmenides and his predecessors) and the excess (in Parmenides' use of language and imagery) discussed above can be seen to form two sides of the very same Parmenidean coin. More: these two mysteries (where did Parmenides' extended deductive argument

---

[47] See also Lloyd (1990) 81–84. One must be fair: the (important) point Lloyd makes concerns the importance of a well-developed technical vocabulary and other aspects of formalization, systematization, and other second-order activities.

[48] Mourelatos (2008b) makes a strong case for this translation; for the semantics of the word *hodos*, which can mean, *inter alia*, 'road', 'route', 'way', or 'journey', see Folit-Weinberg (forthcoming, 2022) and Section 1.2 below.

[49] It is ultimately, of course, the interplay between Parmenides' terms and our own that will be of interest to us.

10

and move towards demonstration come from? Why the poetry, the polyvalent language, and myth's mosaic of imagery?), once viewed together, cease to be mysteries at all. Rather, each can be seen to provide the key that unlocks the other. To address the question of how Parmenides invented extended deductive argumentation, that is, we must return to his poem prepared to read it *as a poem*: to attend to the densely imbricated richness of his language and the many layers of resonance compressed in, and radiating out from, key words; to trace with care the imagery that Parmenides puts into circulation and mobilizes, activates, and exploits; to read and hear this poem alongside its major predecessors in dactylic hexameter, with ears sharply attuned to echoes in linguistic and imagistic detail, dramatic setting, plot mechanics, and formal organization and structure; and to relocate this poem in the physical and social reality of its time and place.

In the 'network of meanings' Parmenides builds up in his poem, no nexus of language and imagery bears a greater symbolic charge, or is asked to do more work, than the figure of the *hodos* just cited and its related language of roads, travel, and journeying.[50] My core claims are premised on the idea that providing an account of Parmenides' invention of extended deductive argumentation requires that we examine the network emanating from, and compressed into, the phrase *hodos dizēsios* along three axes: the relationship between word and world, the relationship

---

[50] Its major role is often acknowledged, only to slip from view immediately. Cordero (2004) is exemplary: we read that 'it is precisely the image of the journey and the way (i.e. route) . . . that will be central in Parmenides' philosophy. *Indeed, this will become the presentation of the single way for thought to travel, and the demonstration of the foundations establishing that only this way exists.* The notion of "way," represented . . . mainly by *hodos*, appears 15 times in the Poem. This fact, which is not accidental, shows that for Parmenides, knowledge is gained by a "route," a "journey," a conceptual course, . . . we may say that with Parmenides' Poem, the image of the way, or more broadly, that of a "journey" as a method of access to the truth, makes its entry in definitive form into the domain of philosophy' (p. 23, emphasis original). Even as he acknowledges that '[w]ith respect to this image in Parmenides, the most complete study continues to be Chapter 1 of Mourelatos (1970)' (Cordero (2004) 23 n. 68), he develops this line of analysis no further, and the point does not reappear; Couloubaritsis (1990) deserves mention as an exception of sorts. See even now: 'although the Parmenidean image or motif of the way (*hodos*) has a decisive function and far-reaching consequences . . . it has been somewhat neglected' (Hülsz Piccone (2013) 153).

11

between signifier and signified, and the relationship between text and intertext. I shall address these points in turn.

The Agenda: A General Outline of the Book

First: archaic Greek roads were not at all like our own. The physical nature and social function of archaic Greek roads (to be discussed in Chapter 1.1) have been neglected by analysts of Parmenides, but have a crucial bearing on our understanding of Fragment 8. One of the most striking features of Parmenides' text is the notion of necessity that defines the claims he advances and, depending on one's interpretation, the sequence in which these claims are advanced.[51] The multifarious techniques he uses to express this notion – including the invocation of personified forms of *dikē*, *anankē*, *moira*, and (possibly) *themis*; the deployment of images of binding or fettering (frs. 8.14, 8.26, 8.31, 8.37) and reference to 'bounds' or 'limits' (Fr. 8.26); and, most arrestingly, the repeated use of the words *chrē* and *chreōn* with a sense that is still hotly disputed[52] – have been much discussed, with one exception: the physical nature of ancient Greek roads.

Second: the semantics of the word *hodos* and its neighbours in the Homeric semantic field impose a distinctive shape upon the overarching contours of Parmenides' *hodos dizēsios*.[53] The semantic analysis conducted in Chapter 1.2 will suggest a conceptual footprint whose outlines are defined by the fact that in the Homeric semantic field, a *hodos* is always a *hodos to somewhere*, a journey oriented towards, and undertaken with reference to, a fixed, stable final destination, to an *end*.[54] The thematic use of the word *hodos* thus inscribes the endeavour denoted by the phrase *hodos dizēsios* within a distinctively teleological framework.

---

[51] The relationship between different interpretations of Fragment 8 and this point will be discussed at length in Ch. 6 below.

[52] See e.g. Mourelatos (2008b) 25–29, 277–78 for an analysis of what Mourelatos terms the 'Fate-Constraint' and his study of the semantics of *chrē* and *chreōn*, respectively; see also Benardete (1965) and Palmer (2009).

[53] Here I draw inspiration from the theoretical framework of Skinner (2002a) and esp. Skinner (2002b) 160–62, and the applied practice of Nightingale (2004) 1–93, esp. 40–71.

[54] This is part of a larger study of the semantics of road words in Homer; see Folit-Weinberg (forthcoming, 2022).

Finally, Parmenides' use of the figure of the *hodos* orchestrates a complex web of associations with the use of the word and image in the *Odyssey*, and *Odyssey* 10–12 (and especially 12) more precisely. Here we are fortunate to be able to draw on two important studies of this relationship. Nearly six decades ago Eric Havelock first made the case for a Parmenides inspired by *Odyssey* 10–12:

> We suggest . . . that he composed a philosophical poem partly in the mood of an Odysseus, voyaging successively to Hades and past the Planctae and Scylla and Charybdis to Thrinacia's isle . . . Once books ten to twelve of the *Odyssey* (or a section approximating thereto) are accepted as his central frame of reference, the patterning of his poem becomes clearer and some of his symbols become easier to interpret.[55]

Another of Havelock's major insights was to reject the commonplace – still evident even in many sophisticated contemporary accounts – that one should draw a clear distinction between Fragment 1, with its symbolism, imagery, and narrative mode of organization, and the remaining fragments, particularly 2–8, where the 'real philosophizing' is thought to occur; his insistence that the influence of the 'Homeric echoes' in Parmenides 'is not confined to the "proem" but affects also the general structure of Parmenides' philosophical argument' is of decisive importance.[56]

Alexander Mourelatos's influential 1970 study, *The Route of Parmenides*, developed this fundamental insight in a number of essential ways.[57] One important step forward was his elaboration of Havelock's vague parallels between the itineraries Circe narrates to Odysseus and those Parmenides' goddess

---

[55] Havelock (1958) 137–38. Havelock (pp. 138–40) teases out five points that constitute this 'central frame of reference' for an intertextual reading of Parmenides alongside *Odyssey* 10–12: (i) a journey of questing/inquiry that involves (ii) a *hodos* that splits and (iii) traverses terrain beyond normal human bounds through a domain of special knowledge (iv) under supernatural directive (v) to a place where there is no becoming and no passing away.

[56] Havelock (1958) 135–36; he continues: 'It is one of the oddities of all this criticism [of Parmenides' poem] that while most – though not all – of the Homeric echoes in Parmenides have been noted, the evocative contexts in Homer, from which they are mostly drawn, have been ignored'.

[57] Mourelatos (2008b) 1–46, esp. 16–25, 29–34, 39–41. For Havelock's personal influence on Mourelatos, see Mourelatos (2008b) xvii–xviii. In addition to these two studies, see Pfeiffer (1975); Böhme (1986) 35–85; and Coxon (2009), esp. 7–11; as well as Cassin (1987); Cassin (2011); Floyd (1992) 251–60; and Granger (2008).

narrates to the *kouros*.[58] Perhaps even more importantly, Mourelatos explicitly theorizes the relationship between these two texts, pairing the distinction between 'motifs' and 'themes' with a theory of metaphor according to which a metaphor sometimes 'fashions a new outlook, a new concept'.[59] Just as when metaphors of this type are used, 'old words, old motifs, old images are appropriated and extended towards the expression of ideas and concepts which are still in the process of development and formation', so Mourelatos claims that 'Parmenides uses old words, old motifs, old themes, and old images precisely in order to think new thoughts in them and through them.'[60] Specifically, 'the image of the route mediates a new concept of the nature of thinking and knowing'.[61]

By pointing the way towards a reading of Parmenides that identifies the profound influence of Homer on his poem, Havelock and Mourelatos have each taken us forward a long way. Even so, their analyses leave several fundamental questions unanswered. Just how does Parmenides actually accomplish his mediation of a new concept of thinking and knowing? What specific role does the figure of the *hodos* actually play? In other words, how does the surface level of language (words, motifs, images) examined by Mourelatos relate to the 'general structure of argument' that Havelock invokes? And how do the individual words and images that Mourelatos studies achieve the revolutionary outcome – an 'entirely new mode of thinking and knowing' – that he identifies? Between individual words and general structure lies the entire domain of argumentation – its principles of construction, its architecture, its patterns of formation. And between

[58] Mourelatos (2008b) 24: 'In both cases, we have in this order: (a) an initial choice between two routes; (b) an explanation that one of these invariably leads to *planē* (cf. the very name Planktai in the *Odyssey*, the adjective *panapeuthea* in Parmenides); (c) a further explanation that the remaining route calls for expert navigation and that most mortals fail at it (*Od.* 12.73–110; cf. B6, B7); (d) detailed instructions for the correct navigation of this remaining route (*Od.* 12.115–26; cf. B8).'

[59] See Mourelatos (2008b) 11–12, 37–38 for his discussion of Erwin Panofksy's and Max Black's theories of metaphor, respectively. Mourelatos insists that the image of the route is a motif and not a theme; to call it a theme would require that 'Parmenides intended to give us an allegory of Odysseus' return journey to Ithaca' (p. 32) – an interpretation that Mourelatos resists, but Cassin (1987) advances.

[60] Mourelatos (2008b) 39.

[61] Mourelatos (2008b) 39.

14

the whence of the image and the whither of a new mode of thinking[62] lies the entirety of the (*met*)*hodos*.[63] The terrain that forms these 'betweens' is what we shall explore in chapters 3 and 4 (on Homer, and *Odyssey* 12 in particular) and chapters 5 and 6 (on Parmenides' 'Route to Truth', and especially fragments 2 and 8, respectively).

(*Met*)*hodo*logy

But how? We began with Geoffrey Lloyd's observation that it was Parmenides 'who was – as all recognize – the first to produce a sustained deductive argument'.[64] Note Lloyd's use of the word 'argument' rather than 'reasoning'. Though the relationship between argumentation and reasoning is theorized differently by different thinkers, Lloyd's use of 'argument' undoubtedly refers to a discursive undertaking, as opposed to the mental activity often captured by the term 'reasoning'.[65] It is thus the domain of discourse

---

[62] As Aristotle has it at *EN* 1174b5–6, for which see e.g. Ackrill (1997) [1965] and Graham (1980).

[63] As has been observed on occasion, Parmenides' '*hodos* of inquiry' represents the decisive first step in the transition from *hodos* to 'method' (*meta + hodos*), a transition I am currently examining elsewhere.

[64] Lloyd (1979) 69. Lloyd takes as one of his 'principal questions' the relationship of dependence between 'the development of philosophy and science' and 'the deployment of new *techniques of argument*' (p. 66, emphasis mine); see Lloyd's ch. 2 more generally, esp. 67–79.

[65] See here both Harman (1986) esp. 3–20, a prominent analytic philosopher, and Walton (1990), a prominent argumentation theorist. As Walton puts it: 'note that "argument" and "reasoning" are conceived here as two different terms. Reasoning is used in argument ... we define reasoning as occurring *within* discourse or argument' (pp. 402–03). Other aspects of the distinction between reasoning and argument: where reasoning involves beliefs, argument is merely formal. As a result, arguments are '*cumulative* in a way' that reasoning 'need not be. In argument one accumulates conclusions; things are always added, never subtracted. Reasoned revision ... can subtract from one's views as well as add to it' (Harman (1986) 4, emphasis original).

It should be emphasized that the value of the dichotomy as it is deployed here does not depend on the specific terminology one uses to articulate it (see e.g. Hacking (2012) 600, where hand-work as well as head-work come under the umbrella of 'reasoning', for a different way of parcelling up the field). Rather, the three benefits to the reasoning/argument distinction as deployed here are: (i) emphasizing that Parmenides' accomplishment is a discursive phenomenon, and must be studied accordingly; (ii) avoiding the misunderstanding that I want to claim that Parmenides is the first person to perform deductive inferences of any kind (I do not); and (iii) anticipating the possible objection that deductive inference is a fundamental cognitive capability with no history. Finally, note that unlike Netz (1999) (see esp. 6–7, and also Hacking (2012) 606–07), in this book I make no attempt to exceed the realm of discourse by linking my research to any field in the larger domain of cognitive studies (though I do not claim that to do so is necessarily mistaken).

that Lloyd identifies as the decisive locus of innovation of Parmenides' contribution to early Greek thought in this case.

This is a crucial insight. The distinction between reasoning and argument allows us to formulate a much more precise account of Parmenides' place in the history of thought. If it would be absurd to say that Parmenides was the first person to *reason* deductively, it is of the utmost importance that he is the first person we have any record of attempting to articulate his deductive reasoning in the form of an explicit (and extended) *discursive* framework. Accordingly, any attempt to examine the origins and early evolution of deductive argumentation, or to examine the strategies by which Parmenides develops it, must be located at the level of formal discursive organization. My claim will be that in its formal organization – in the articulation of its arguments and in the manner in which these arguments are connected to each other – Parmenides' revolutionary sequence of deductive arguments is deeply influenced by the Homeric strategies of narration deployed in *Odyssey* 12. These, I shall contend, form the basic underlying architecture of Parmenides' epoch-making arguments.

To tie all these threads together: if Parmenides' main achievement occurs at the level of discourse (not reasoning), and if his indebtedness to Homer can be found not only at the level of language or motif (as Mourelatos has it) but at the level of the poem's structure and organization (as intimated by Havelock), what we need is a theoretical apparatus that allows us to identify, at the level of discourse (i.e. spanning the levels of both the individual word and, especially, 'general structure'), the structural continuities that link Parmenides' fragments 2, 6, 7, and 8 to *Odyssey* 12.

Michel Foucault's analysis of discursive regularities, undertaken in his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, offers just such an apparatus. Although this neglected masterpiece has been criticized for presupposing too static a view of discursive regularities (and therefore having difficulty accommodating, let alone explaining, change), this quality is precisely what makes it so valuable in this setting:[66] for all that Parmenides' deductive

---

[66] Though the accusation is misguided; see esp. Kusch (1991) for a thorough defence of Foucault's project.

16

argumentation has traditionally been presented as a radical rupture with the past, one of my main goals in this book is to emphasize its fundamental similarity to the mode of narration that structures *Odyssey* 12.

Explaining how Foucault's notion of 'discursive regularities' can help us identify more precisely the level at which Parmenides most relies on – and best analyse the specific ways he refashions – the Homeric poem he inherits requires a brief discussion of *Archaeology of Knowledge*.[67] It is helpful to understand the *Archaeology of Knowledge* as expressing a kind of methodological manifesto for a programme of an *Annaliste* epistemological history;[68] this is so insofar as it fuses the French *Annales* School's interest in the formation of series, viewed from the perspective of the *longue durée*, with a focus on the processes of knowledge production and a fine-grained concern for distinctive layers or strata of continuity and discontinuity that define the relationships between these different processes.[69]

One of the fundamental units of analysis produced by this fusion is the discursive regularity. For the *Annales* School so closely associated with it, investigating the *longue durée* involved looking at regular patterns or 'structures' formed by the relationship between such things as, for example, 'geographical frameworks, certain biological realities, certain limits to productivity' and specific patterns of human activity – such as, for example, 'the

---

[67] Incidentally, the focus here will primarily be on just one component of discursive regularities, namely the 'level of concepts', and, even more specifically, the sublevel of 'forms of succession' (see esp. Foucault (1972) 34–43, 79–88, and discussion in Ch. 3 below).

[68] See remarks in Foucault (1972) 3–22. Kusch (1991) 12–40 gives a thorough overview of both the *Annales* School and the French tradition of epistemological historiography; though it treats matters from a different perspective, Hacking (2002a) is also illuminating, as is Gutting (1989) esp. 227–60.

[69] It is with respect to this complex of features that the term 'archaeology' comes to the fore. Other parallels include: an interest in prehistory, either of a culture or of a discipline or science; the use of a relative, rather than an absolute, chronology where what matters is whether strata come above or below each other; and an interest in delimiting discrete strata that are linked by regular or repeated instantiations, either of material culture or of discursive productions. See especially the charts in Kusch (1991) 108 and Elwick (2012) 622; these can help us conceptualize the different levels at which Parmenides might be influenced both by Homer on the one hand (e.g. at the level of concepts), and thinkers such as Anaximander, Anaximenes, Xenophanes, or Heraclitus on the other (e.g. at the level of objects) – or both (e.g. at the level of enunciative modalities).

17

persistence of certain sectors of marine life, the endurance of roads and trade routes, and the surprising unchangeability of the geographical boundaries of civilizations' – that they shape.[70] For Foucault, the patterns of human activity to be investigated are made of words: Foucault's structures are formed by series of utterances, inscriptions, texts – of discursive events.

The 'event' in 'discursive event' is important. Foucault sets his sights not merely on what might (according to the rules of grammar or logic) have been written or said, but rather on what was actually written or said – at a particular moment, by a particular historical actor using a particular conceptual vocabulary, in a particular format, and via a particular form of publication. As suggested, however, it is not single events but rather series of them that are of interest. And just as any historical set of events can form a series, so discursive events, in the fact of their being said or written (when other linguistic sequences could have been produced, but were not), can form a series, too. Likewise, just as the series that members of the *Annales* School investigated have their own underlying patterns and rules of production and accumulation, so, too, will the category of series formed by discursive events: namely, a discursive regularity.[71]

What Foucault's notion of discursive regularities provides historians of thought, then, is an excellent set of tools to examine discursive landscapes from the perspective of the *longue durée*. It is precisely in this landscape that, as we saw, Parmenides' great innovation is located – and also where his relationship to Homer's *Odyssey* must be excavated. We can therefore restate Mourelatos's

---

[70] Braudel and Wallerstein (2009) 178–79. Taken together, these form various levels of 'slow history' that collectively form an 'infrastructure' (Braudel and Wallerstein (2009) 181) which 'traditional history has covered with a thick layer of events' (Foucault (1972) 3); see also Wallerstein (2009) for an illuminating excursus on the notion of the *longue durée*. It would also be possible to frame this project's topic of investigation in terms of a discursive infrastructure underlying Parmenides' pioneering use of extended deductive argumentation.

[71] For example, between statements; 'between groups of statements thus established (even if these groups do not concern the same, or even adjacent, fields . . .); relations between statements and groups of statements and events of quite a different kind'. Provided one 'defines the conditions clearly' it would be 'legitimate to constitute, on the basis of correctly described relations, discursive groups that are not arbitrary, and yet remain invisible' (Foucault (1972) 22). This network of relations, then, is what Foucault attempts to capture with the phrases 'discursive regularity' and 'discursive formation'.

18

premise – 'the image of the route mediates a new concept of the nature of thinking and knowing'[72] – with a new level of specificity and insight: the discursive regularities (explored in chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6) that link Parmenides to Homer mediate the transition from the *Odyssey*'s narration of human movement through physical space in time to Parmenides' path-breaking deductive argumentation (movement through logical space in discursive sequence) and move towards demonstration. Even more specifically, and to preview one of my primary claims here in full: Circe's *hodos* lays before our eyes a blueprint of the discursive architecture that Parmenides used to build the first attested sequence of extended deductive argumentation in Western thought.

Aims: What Is and Is Not at Stake

Above, I emphasized the importance of reading Parmenides' poem as a poem, not merely an argument; this is particularly important, I suggested, where the relationship between Parmenides' poem and Homer's *Odyssey*, particularly book 12, is considered. This might imply that I intend to proceed according to the rules of intertextuality as normally understood: namely, line up two bits of text; show, via distinctive features common to both, that there is a high probability that the later text interacts with the former; and then tell a good story about how part of the second text's meaning is generated as a result of this interaction.[73] Inevitably, some version of 'lining up the texts' will indeed occupy much of what follows, and I shall discuss in a number of places the points of overlap between *Odyssey* 12 and Parmenides' poem that are sufficiently marked to justify the exercise.[74] This procedure remains an invaluable component of sound textual analysis in my view; indeed, it is worth emphasizing that the fundamental

---

[72] See n. 61 above.

[73] See e.g. Fowler (1997a) and Hinds (1998) for lucid discussions at a general level, and esp. Kelly (2015), along with Bakker (2013) 157–69 and Currie (2016) 33–36 for versions of this conversation specific to archaic poetry.

[74] See in particular chs. 5 and 6, also Section 2.5, 'Parmenidean Strategies' and Section 4.3, 'Concluding Remarks'. But, as always, there are also places where the level of markedness is less clear-cut, and one should be careful not to press the point too far; see again esp. Section 4.3.

19

observation that prompted the current study is the deep but hitherto unobserved set of similarities between *Odyssey* 12 and Parmenides' 'Route to Truth', and that these similarities remain the starting point, and the anchor, for all that follows below.

Intertextuality takes many forms, however, and can be evaluated from many perspectives. The crucial difference between this endeavour and most literary criticism now practised in Classics is that what the two poems under consideration here share most of all is a discursive architecture, a similar manner of structuring different units of text. That is to say that the intertextuality between Parmenides' poem and *Odyssey* 12 does not so much generate meaning in the former text (though it may also do this at times) as provide a framework or structure for its shape at a variety of different levels. It is for this reason that I referred above to the 'discursive blueprint' that *Odyssey* 12 offers Parmenides, and it is for this reason that the toolkit offered us by Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* is so valuable.[75] It is because my aim is to confront this last relic of the Greek Miracle – the genius Parmenides indebted to no one for his invention of extended deductive argumentation – that I have given such prominence to Foucauldian archaeology.[76]

---

[75] See Section 4.2.3, and especially Ch. 4 nn. 62 and 63 for further discussion of Bakker, Kelly, and Currie in the context of the intertextual relationship between Parmenides' poem and Homer.

[76] It is this specificity of insight provided by Foucault's toolkit that I believe justifies the decision not to discuss in terms of metaphor the relationship between Homer and Parmenides, word and concept, and image and structure, as Mourelatos and others do. As noted above, what Mourelatos's account lacks is a clear connection between the micro-structure of word and image and the formal macro-structure of deductive argumentation and the other two features of demonstration highlighted above. At best, the framework of metaphor simply does not offer the same highly nuanced and precise level of insight as Foucault's system.

There may also be other reasons for caution, however. In light of the distinction between actors' and observers' categories, if one takes seriously Lloyd's analysis of Aristotle's (highly polemic) invention of the concept 'metaphor' (see especially Lloyd (1987), but also important subsequent discussions in Lloyd (1990), Lloyd (2004), Lloyd (2012) 72–92, Lloyd (2015), Lloyd (2017a), and Lloyd (2017b)), there would be important risks associated with relying on a dichotomy between the literal and the metaphorical when discussing Parmenides. For, as others have shown, the concept of the literal is surprisingly difficult to pin down when discussing early Greek texts (see e.g. Padel (1992) 9–11, 41–42 on 'pores', and Stevens (2003), esp. 69–92 on the 'long arm of Zeus' in *Iliad* 15.694–95). In Parmenides' poem, one might ask which *hodoi* are 'literal' and which 'metaphorical'? And – no less importantly – what precisely is to be gained from making such a distinction in the first place?

20

In Chapter 2 I argue that, since Parmenides is operating within the same cultural and poetic milieu as his late archaic comrades in verse, we should approach his poem with the same general assumptions about late archaic receptions of Homer that we bring to bear on his fellow poets. I therefore assume that Parmenides is interacting directly with a Homeric text that is relatively fixed, and that this text is largely similar to the one that has come down to us. I have adopted this position partly for convenience, since doing so enables me to 'line up the texts' and compare their discursive architecture and other features in the most concrete fashion. Incidentally, I also take the view that this assumption is in fact correct, a point I shall touch on again at the beginning of Chapter 2, where I discuss late archaic receptions of Homer in greater detail. It does not seem to me, however, that the core thesis for which I argue below would be much damaged should one adopt a different perspective on any number of Homeric questions. Provided that one's view of the process of Homeric textualization or canonization still allows one coherently to discuss, for example, the A-B-C pattern, or the notion of catalogic discourse in Homer, there is ample scope to discuss the possibility of a similar discursive phenomenon associated with narrating the itinerary of a *hodos*.

If the markedly close correspondences between *Odyssey* 12 and Parmenides' proem and the 'Route to Truth' allow us to posit an intertextual relationship between the two texts, there is no need to commit to a more specific characterization of this intertextuality. Whether this intertextuality is 'deliberate', whether Parmenides' 'Route to Truth' is part of a larger discursive regularity involving not only Homer, but an entire body of now-vanished poems

---

There is, finally, one more concern regarding the kind of analysis to which discussion of Parmenides' poem in terms of 'metaphor', such as Ferella (2017) and Ferella (2018), often leads. Cognitive theories of metaphor begin from the ahistorical, socioculturally ungrounded assumption that the essential nature of the human mind and body make the 'conceptual metaphor AN ARGUMENT DEFINES A PATH' a sort of pre-discursive, universal Ur-notion (presumably somehow prior to language), of which Parmenides' poem is but 'one linguistic realization' (Ferella (2017) 107–08). But what evidence should compel us to find such a view persuasive, especially in light of research demonstrating fundamental differences in spatial cognition across cultures? (See e.g. Levinson (2003) and remarks in Lloyd (2007) 23–38 and Lloyd (2017b) 336–39.) Indeed, my analysis will in fact attempt to show that, as a historical matter of fact, precisely the opposite is true: in Parmenides' poem, and thus, so far as we know, in the development of extended deductive argument as such, it is rather the case that *the path* (=hodos) *defined the argument*.

portions of which were organized by the figure of the *hodos* (or whether both are or can be true!), are questions about which I remain agnostic.[77] What matters is that the texts are so similar in the way intimated above and analysed below. I submit that the primary discussion that follows in chapters 3–6 stands up just as well whether one chooses to see these similarities as emerging organically out of a thought culture for which Homer is our best witness or as the product of deliberate invocation of Homer – or indeed to see them as anything in between.[78] In every case, what remains true is that, once one accepts the discursive similarities between Homer and Parmenides, the latter is no longer a 'creative genius in debt to nobody'.

These questions about the relationship between Homer and Parmenides having been addressed, it is important to take a step back. By staking out this field (Parmenides' poem, along with the necessary context: physical, linguistic, cultural, and, above all, poetic and discursive), this method (Foucauldian archaeology, supplemented both by more traditional literary criticism and by attending to discussions of Parmenides' arguments), and, most of all, this strictly delimited aim (explaining Parmenides' invention of the outline of demonstration and the practice of extended deductive argumentation), my intention is to avoid a number of other possible issues. Despite my insistence on the importance of reading Parmenides' poem as a poem, it is not my goal to examine Parmenides' relationship to the larger hexameter tradition or the rich world of archaic poetry as a whole.[79] While I shall indeed conduct a strategically targeted survey of these topics in Chapter 2, because my principal goal is to provide an account of Parmenides' invention of extended deductive argumentation and the practice of demonstration, the main task is to identify and articulate the ties that

---

[77] In an ideal world, one could recapture one of the main virtues of the term 'intertextuality' as originally used, namely, the ability to sidestep questions of authorial intentionality that do not seem to be of great consequence for the present discussion.

[78] I owe the formulation of the above dichotomy to an anonymous reader for Cambridge University Press.

[79] For a study along these more comprehensive lines – though one which, in keeping with the ideas of Gernet (2004), centres around myth rather than poetry strictly – see Ranzato (2015), also Tor (2017).

22

bind the extended deductive argument and characteristic moves of demonstration that Parmenides makes in fragments 2, 6, 7, and especially 8, *specifically* to his time, place, and linguistic and poetic milieu. This is not, of course, to deny or devalue the connections between Parmenides and other predecessors in hexameter verse, notably Hesiod and notably in the proem;[80] rather, these simply do not have a great bearing on a discussion of Parmenides' invention of extended deductive argumentation. Similarly, my interest in siting Parmenides within the world in which he lived and, especially, in relation to his poetic predecessors, means that, while I shall make some strategic comparisons between Parmenides and his poetic contemporaries – especially Pindar[81] – in Chapter 2, I shall not attempt to examine these relationships in a comprehensive way. Illuminating and valuable though such a project would be, it is not clear this would shed much light on Parmenides' use of extended deductive argumentation.

A similar point may also be made regarding the tradition of reading Parmenides' poem against the backdrop of ritual, mystic, mantic, or other religious texts and contexts. Attempts to reconsider Parmenides in his sociocultural context or to attend to the poetic texture of his language have often come from scholars who have searched for evidence to support readings in this vein.[82] However

---

[80] As examined in e.g. Fränkel (1975)[1930]; Fränkel (1973)[1951]; Fränkel (1968) [1955]; Bowra (1937); Gigon (1945); Jaeger (1948); Dolin (1962); Schwabl (1963); Furley (1973) 3–4; Heitsch (1966) 201–02; Heitsch (1974); Pfeiffer (1975); Pellikaan-Engel (1978); Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007)[1983] 256 n. 1, 262; Couloubaritsis (1990); Wöhrle (1993) 172–73; Tulli (2000); Miller (2006) 7–9; Robbiano (2006) esp. 150–54; Most (2007) 80–84; Palmer (2009) esp. 54–55; Kraus (2013) 454. See now especially Ranzato (2015), and extensive discussion in Tor (2017). For a fuller discussion of Parmenides and Hesiod, see Ch. 2 below.

[81] For Pindar, in addition to the works by Fränkel and Bowra cited in n. 80 above, see notably Deichgräber (1959); Mansfeld (1964); Woodbury (1966); Pfeiffer (1975) 68–69; Böhme (1986); D'Alessio (1995); also Morrison (1955) 60; Durante (1976) 123–34, esp. 131–33; Slaveva-Griffin (2003) 231–32; Ranzato (2015) esp. 25–26, 128–29, 148–49.

[82] See esp. Burkert (1969), Feyerabend (1984), Sassi (1988), Kingsley (1999), Gemelli Marciano (2008) and Gemelli Marciano (2013), and Ustinova (2009) and Ustinova (2018), many of which are developed by Robbiano (2006), Ranzato (2015), and Tor (2017) 265–77 (see also discussion below in Section 4.2.3, '*Krisis*: Assessments and Cautions', where extensive bibliography can be found). One of the main challenges to the view that we misread Parmenides' poem by failing to locate it primarily within a mystic tradition is the fact that, as Mourelatos (2013a) 163 points out, 'within less than a generation, Parmenides' text was placed in the same genre as the works of Melissus, Philolaus, Anaxagoras, Leucippus, Democritus, Diogenes of Apollonia', while these

stimulating these discussions may be in their own right, however, they too have little bearing on the task of accounting for Parmenides' invention of extended deductive argumentation. This is partly because much of this branch of scholarship focuses on the proem, and is much less convincing when it moves beyond this, especially to fragments 2–8, the main focus of my analysis.[83]

While this line of thinking does little to illuminate Parmenides' invention of extended deductive argumentation in its own right, the two strands of scholarship are neither necessarily hostile nor incompatible. As has recently been argued, accepting the notion that Parmenides' poem represents, or is the product of, a divine revelation, or is otherwise tied to mystic rituals, does not preclude an interest in the rigour or origins of his argumentation.[84] In short, however rich this vein of research is, it operates at a tangent to the current inquiry into the emergence of extended deductive argumentation and the practice of demonstration.[85]

On another note, despite my insistence on the value of Foucauldian archaeology to the endeavour at hand, I do not claim to have delineated any kind of larger archaic Greek discursive regularity or regularities *per se*. It is tempting, of course, to consider how the topics discussed below might constitute some part of such a thing, and the discussion in Chapter 3 of A-B-C patterns and catalogic discourse, for example, gestures towards what part of a hypothetical discursive regularity of this sort might look like; likewise, the common features shared by the two *hodoi* described in *Odyssey* 10 and 12 offer us enticing grounds for speculation. The overwhelming absence of other texts from this period, however, prohibits us from going further.

Comments of a similar sort might also be made regarding the so-called *Doxa* portion of Parmenides' poem. Much of the most exciting

---

thinkers 'found in Parmenides' text arguments and challenges to which they felt compelled to respond'.

[83] See particularly Mourelatos (2013a) for a powerful response to the attempt in Gemelli Marciano (2013) to push the line of thinking presented by the works cited in n. 82 into the argumentation that makes up frs. 2, 6, 7, and 8.

[84] See Tor (2017) 10–60 (esp. 10–19), 339–46. See also remarks in Gemelli Marciano (2013) 46 and the perceptive response in Mourelatos (2013a) 176–77.

[85] For example, though one may strongly disagree with the thrust of the readings advanced in Gemelli Marciano (2008) and Gemelli Marciano (2013), one can still learn a great deal from the many fine observations on display there concerning the poetic texture of Parmenides' poetry.

24

recent scholarship on Parmenides has involved reconsidering the old, vexed question about the relationship between *Doxa* and the 'Route to Truth'.[86] These discussions of *Doxa* have certainly given us a more robust understanding of what Parmenides hoped to accomplish in his poem, and they are an important step forward. Be that as it may, the question of Parmenides' invention of extended deductive argumentation and the outline of demonstration are not, so far as we can tell, immediately connected to the *Doxa* section of his poem. As a result, the only occasion to discuss it will come in the final section of this book (Part III: *Doxai*), a deliberate non-conclusion that offers more general reflections on the *Doxa* section's relationship to the 'Route to Truth', particularly in the light of the Homeric analysis developed here.

If it is not my goal to provide an exhaustive view of Parmenides in relation to his poetic or religious context, neither will it be my concern to advance my own specific interpretation of Parmenides' arguments,[87] less still to stake out a view on what precisely Parmenides' larger philosophical positions are. (Though in Chapter 6 I shall examine how the view advanced in the pages below might square with various interpretations of Parmenides' arguments presented by others, and what new light the account offered here can shed on these interpretations.) By the same token, however, I *do* claim that those who in the future wish to offer specific interpretations of Parmenides' arguments will need to explain how their interpretations can be reconciled with the analysis undertaken in this project. The point is not categorically to deny that a given thinker, on account of thinking from within a specific tradition, is able to argue in a specific way or to make specific arguments (especially when that thinker is as radical and innovative as Parmenides).[88] But no such categorical denial need be presumed here; if some readers will insist that form cannot

---

[86] See, among many others, e.g. Curd (1998b), Granger (2002), Graham (2006), Robbiano (2006), Miller (2006), Thanassas (2007), esp. Palmer (2009) 159–88, Cordero (2011), the material summarized in Curd (2011), Mourelatos (2013b), Kraus (2013) 489–96, Cosgrove (2014), and now the valuable Tor (2017) esp. 155–221 (where further bibliography can be found) and Bryan (2018).

[87] Though I intend to address this in forthcoming publications.

[88] Though one could nevertheless imagine a set of claims approaching this; see e.g. Hacking (2002b).

25

determine content, we must equally insist that form *does* necessarily shape the matrix of possibilities for content in a distinctive way. To conclude: if the domain explored in this project is not deemed prior to philosophical analysis of Parmenides' arguments, neither should philosophical analyses of Parmenides' arguments take rigorous priority over considering the argumentative form in which they are expressed. That is, should the claims advanced in this book be found persuasive, they would need to be borne in mind as a crucial set of factors for scholars to use in formulating their understanding of Parmenides' arguments. From this, it also follows that the findings presented here ought to serve as one of the main criteria by which the strengths and weaknesses of interpretations of Parmenides can be assessed.

One final observation: I do not actually get down to the nuts and bolts – the particles, the modally charged negations, the aspects and tenses – of Parmenides' text until Chapter 5, halfway through the 'Routes' portion of the book. In structuring my overarching argument this way, and in the manner in which I have elected to style the book's larger programme and Table of Contents, I have assumed a relatively high degree of familiarity with Parmenides' poem on the part of the reader; without this, the relevance and importance of the material discussed in chapters 1, 2, and especially 3 and 4, to the problem at hand will be less clear. This strategy is not without its risks. Parmenides is hardly a ubiquitous presence in the contemporary Classics curriculum, and proceeding on this assumption may induce some frustration in a portion of my potential audience. Nevertheless, I hope that scholars of the archaic reception of Homer, and of Homer himself, will find material of value in Chapter 2, and in chapters 3 and 4, respectively; likewise, I hope that all who have occasion to consider ancient Greek roads and their associated lexicon will find something useful in Chapter 1. On the other hand, I have faced a challenge of the reverse nature in writing Chapter 2, where my goal is to bring the discussion of Parmenides into contact with recent advances in the study of the archaic reception of Homer; here I have tried to make the discussion rich enough to be fruitful for scholars of Parmenides without being tiresome for scholars in the field of literature. This proved a delicate balancing act; in view

26

of the risks and rewards of writing for different – and sometimes rather distant – subfields of the discipline, I ask forbearance from readers who would have charted the *hodos* of argument otherwise.

***

These, then, are the stakes. From one perspective, the scale of this project might be deemed enormously ambitious: to trace the origins and early evolution of extended deductive argumentation and the practice of demonstration, thereby delineating a key portion of the genealogy of the Western conception of knowledge. From another, however, the domain of inquiry is narrow and its epistemic stance humble: this is simply an attempt to read a poem with attention to the richness of its language and imagery, in relation to its cultural context, and alongside its poetic predecessors – no more and no less than what any poem deserves. To perform an archaeological excavation of this buried *hodos* and recover the first instalment of this invention of the concept of method – a μῦθος ὁδοῖο, if ever there was one – we must rethink and re-examine the methods of our *hodos* and the *hodos* of method.

27